



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Welcoming and Inclusive Community Assessment: Results

Fergus Falls, Minnesota

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Department of Community Development - Leadership and Civic Engagement

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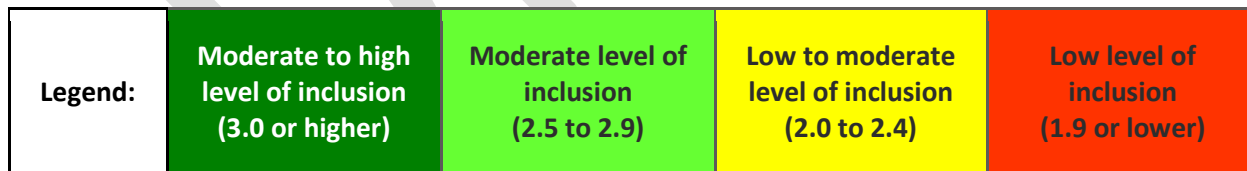
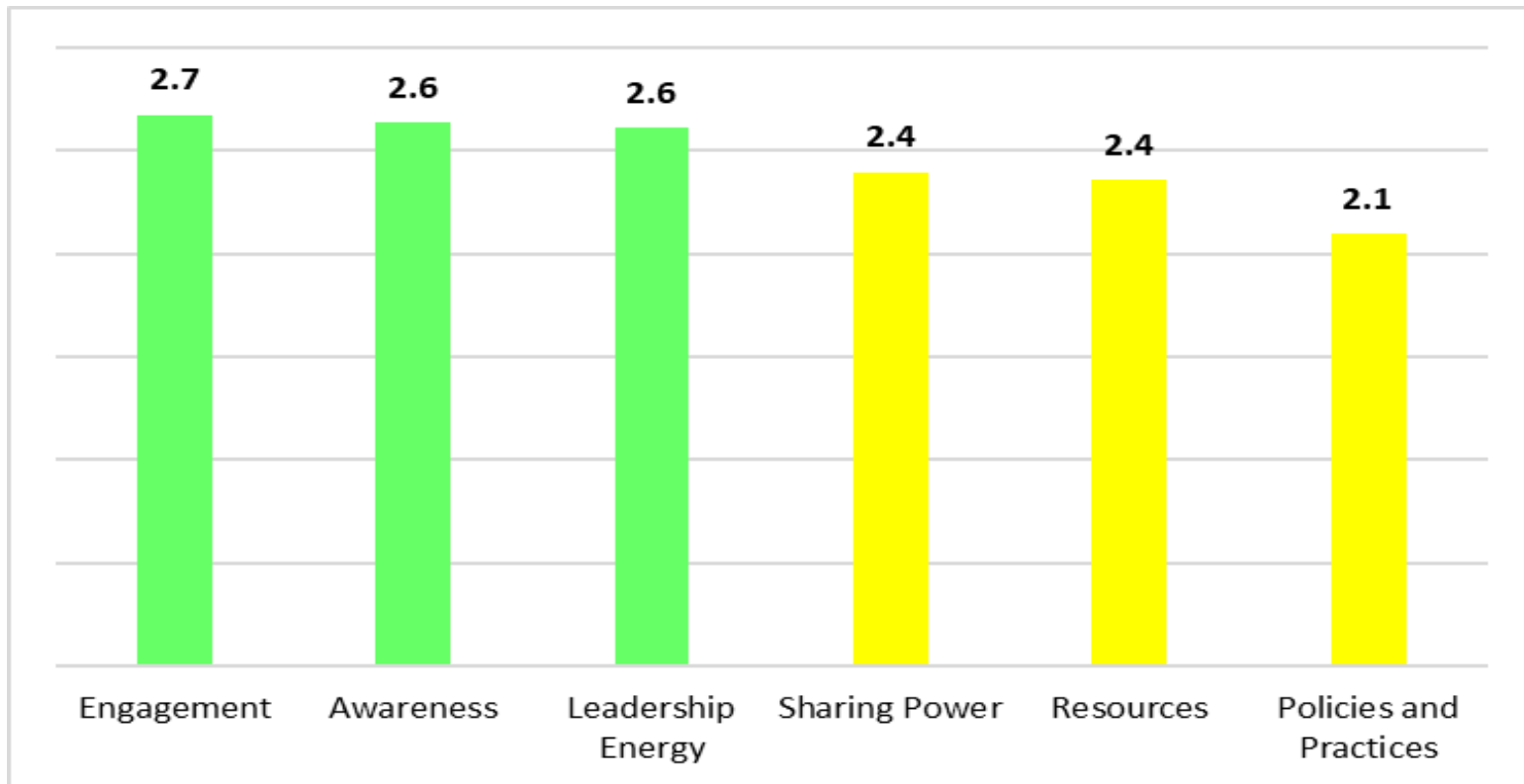
FERGUS FALLS: THE BIG PICTURE OF THE SECTORS AND DIMENSIONS OF INCLUSION

Sectors	Dimensions of inclusion					
	Awareness	Leadership Energy	Engagement	Resources	Sharing Power	Policies and Practices
Nonprofit organizations	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
School system	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Religious organizations	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Business	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Local government	Light Green	Light Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Health care	Light Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Law enforcement	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow

Legend:	Moderate to high level of inclusion (3.0 or higher)	Moderate level of inclusion (2.5 to 2.9)	Low to moderate level of inclusion (2.0 to 2.4)	Low level of inclusion (1.9 or lower)
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* Average scores for questions in each dimension of inclusion, based on a scale of 1 - not at all, 2 - to a slight extent, 3 - to a moderate extent, 4 - to a great extent.

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS (68 completed assessments)



Additional Comments from Survey

Part 1 - Awareness

- We have two or three churches who do this well. The overwhelming majority of churches in this town do not.
- Our church has a welcoming statement but we don't do much about getting people into our church to read it.
- The church I attend is very aware and focused on diversity and inclusion.
- See a very welcoming community. But mostly Scandinavian. Now I see organizations trashing white peoples
- I can count on one hand the number of churches that have expressed any interest in inclusion and diversity in my community. Churches are at the root of the problem in my community. They perpetuate the bigotry, especially towards the LGBTQ+ and disability communities, that shapes the exclusionary and hateful culture in my community.
- The overall feeling of the religious community is that we want to be welcoming but find it difficult to really welcome those who look, think, or act differently than the majority. - white Christian cis, straight
- I imagine that most religious organizations provide "in-home" learning opportunities, but wonder about to what extent they extend invitations to other groups of the public to participate (as a general practice). That would be a good thing
- In reference to the 2nd statement: It's possible that some do. They do not at my religious organization that I am aware of
- In reference to the 3rd statement: I have attended some inclusive services that do this. It depends on the denomination
- May be aware but not organized to perform
- Some churches are more engaged than others when it comes to awareness. There maybe awareness but lack of understanding of how to extend and implement that awareness
- There is a lack of diversity in culture
- We are a Christian Conservative community joining together to bring people to Jesus Christ. To defeat the demonic ideology that is creeping into our community, schools, and government.
- The religious organizations I have been a part of in the recent past (up to 2020) have training which only serves to "other" instead of include, teaching that people need to be saved from something or changed instead of being inherently good & worthy as they are. It's a despicable way of treating anyone. Evangelical organizations such as the Naz, Calvary Chapel, and Exhale which I have too many years of personal experience with only serve as echo chambers where they are "right" and others are wrong. Anybody who looks different or has different ideas are ostracized.
- Some churches are inclusive and some are very non-inclusive and denigrate the lgbtq folks
- We have had training in reaching out to transgenders. My evaluations are based on the experience of my own church, which is very mission-oriented and service-based. Hopefully, other churches in our community do the same, but I really don't know.

Part 2 - Engagement

- The church I am involved with is welcoming, but only to those who show up. There is no outreach.
- Anti-white theme now occurring by the state of MN
- Churches United of Fargo and their spiritual leader (pastor), Sue Kesterman, share/promote information to learn about diverse groups. AA and AI Anon, too.
- The churches struggle to gain trust of the younger generation. Struggle to provide religion to people with language barriers, diverse backgrounds (people of different ethnicity)
- Pastors of ELCA (Lutheran) churches are required to have anti-racism training.
- Religious organizations try to be available, not unavailable or exclusive. Do not want to exclude
- Most of the time this is limited to everyone in the congregation
- I don't generally participate in religions gatherings for the lack of a Jewish community
- Some of the religious organizations or groups are closed or only available to those with certain privileged lifestyles such as stay at home parents with no consideration to the working class. Dues are expected to be paid for every book club, bible study, and gathering. The only way they care about diversity is to extract the differences to build a monoculture. If you are BIPOC and do believe the same, don't expect to be able to get employment. They don't pay a living wage, at least not one that leaves BIPOC with any dignity. Sure they have decent marketing of ways to inform people of their soul sucking events. Stay far away if you value diversity. The only congregation in the area who values diversity & looking outside of white lived experiences is outside of Fergus in Underwood.
- We are to radiate the love of Christ. My church upholds the standards of the Bible. We are very engaged in our neighborhoods, loving and accepting all people. However, if some struggle with God's standards, they are apt to not attend our church. I have a transgender friend who will not accept my invitations because she, quite naturally, feels uncomfortable. But she has brought that on herself, not our church. We love, but we cannot lower God's standards to pacify feelings. We serve Him, not man. That, in itself, makes our church somewhat - not our choice - exclusive. Tolerance and compromise does not equal love, respect, and acceptance (end goals differ).

Part 3 - Resources

- I don't know what other churches are doing, but mine does not plan or budget for inclusion.
- Again, a couple of churches do this well- the overwhelming majority of churches in this town look down on differences and do not include you if your beliefs are not 100% in line with their message. Their support of Trump reflects this reality.
- Yes - to include more people but not intentionally trying to recruit new members based on race and culture
- Lots of misappropriation of funds. Lack of willingness to help others with different ethnic backgrounds. Lacking welcoming others from different backgrounds.
- Identifying groups or individuals is necessary and not easy
- Most of these inclusion efforts seem to focus on those with physical disabilities - not mental health disabilities or LGBTQ+, BIPOC, homeless, etc.

- Most religious organizations I am aware of have very limited budgets
- We will gladly back an organization that stands on our Holy Bible standards and are more than willing to talk with people about God Almighty and the importance of Jesus Christ in your life.
- At my church. Open to all who want to come

Part 4 - Leadership Energy

- My feeling is that the leaders understand the importance of inclusion, but their limited time and energy prevents them from implementing any plan.
- Again, two or three churches do this well. Most do not.
- Leadership energy seems to be directed more towards survival of the church than growth. Resources are limited due to declining membership. This seems to be a declining spiral situation.
- Now anti white. Also racist
- College sports coaches (at M State FF) requested participation by area churches to host a meal for student athletes.
- The more mainline denominations have leaders that work in this area - but it is limited to ELCA, Federated, Methodist in my experience.
- There is a Palestinian ELCA interim pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Fergus Falls
- Ready and willing! Methods -- unclear
- Our pastor does a great job of these, but I hear that others are not up to speed
- All the churches in town are Christian. Within that, most are Lutheran - but a variety of flavors. The most conservative are not at all inclusive and even shun their brethren if not on the same page with values, beliefs and priorities.
- I have seen no tangible signs of support towards diversity or including those with different lived experiences. Ruby's Pantry is great at utilizing surplus resources but does nothing to effect lasting change for those with food insecurity. Salvation Army potentially but has problematic beliefs regarding inclusion of LGBTQIA people, as do many evangelical organizations in the area. The Federated Church might be inclusive but is not very diverse in its congregation.
- Needs improvement - with regard to gifts and skills of their own people.
- Our church uses the Bible, the best God given source of information on the planet.

Part 5 - Sharing Power

- The majority of church leadership is male, and all leaders are white.
- Scandinavian community. But those of color are treated well here.
- It seems like the religious organizations in Fergus Falls contain middle and upper class WHITE citizens. The biggest religious organization only allows males to be on their leadership board.
- No religious organization besides the Unitarian Church of Underwood and one or two other Christian churches in my community have ever reached out to either the LGBTQ+ community or disability community for input on how they can be more inclusive as far as I know.
- If the opportunity presents itself the religious organizations and leaders are very willing to include

- The leadership of religious organizations in FF is very white and male. Very misogynistic, homophobic, and racist in their hiring practices.
- Honestly we have very little diversity in Fergus Falls (mostly Scandinavians), simply because we lack business and industry to draw people in for jobs. We would want them to feel productive and have input into a thriving community, which we are not right now. Most of our diverse groups are college students and jailed prisoners who move on eventually.

Part 6 - Policies and Practices

- My experience with multiple churches is limited, but I don't see these things happening.
- The majority of churches in town still fall under the patriarchal belief that men should be in positions over women. They might let women speak on occasion, but men have the final say.
- This is ridiculous
- Again this feels limited to the mainline denominations
- Religious organizations must be doing more than that with which I am aware
- The churches in Fergus Falls are all run by white privileged men who have no desire to be bothered by black and brown people, they will not hire any person black or brown, but they will give you false hope of getting hired.
- Evangelical organizations in FF have no concern for retention or advancement of diverse congregations or care of my lived experiences, whether during COVID, BLM uprisings, or challenging financial, mental health situations, or physical health challenges. Very ableist with no concern for masking during the pandemic, especially at the Naz and many other churches. The Federated Church was good in this regard.
- Hopefully, leadership is measured by skills and integrity, not color. Management abilities need to be the priority, along with commitment and perseverance. Advancements should be the result of hard work and dedication which reflects the character of the individual. Both white and colored people are capable of these opportunities.
- Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Right out of the good Book - the Bible!
- We have an open religious community and don't need socialistic input.
- I do not want other people to come in and destroy our Christian community by pushing their beliefs and trying to destroy ours.

Notes from Small Group Discussion: In-Person Session (11/14/23)

1. **What words or phrases caught your attention as you completed your assessment? For this question go around the circle and ask everyone to respond.**
 - Diverse – is the learning cohort about welcoming or diversity?
 - Diversity – we are welcoming, but we aren't diverse
 - Frequency of the opportunity to be welcome as the gauge – we don't have the opportunity very often
 - Our congregation is welcoming, but there isn't a lot of diversity. We don't realize the barriers that we put up to being welcoming or how to be more diverse
 - Using resources from inside and outside the community
 - Questions about what inclusion really means when it comes to a religious community

- Leadership energy – people are stretched to the limit, there is the desire, but not the time or energy or resources to do it
- Inclusion – it isn't happening for a person of color, no one extends the invitation, they just show up to test the waters
- Spread between leadership and institution of the “church” in town
- Leadership brings energy and desire, but the institution being comfortable with just the way we are
- Advocacy – there are opportunities for diverse groups to speak and share and advocate for themselves
- Lack of community for those who are those who are members of an “out” group
- Leadership energy – we get better as a church community because of the changes in leadership

2. What intrigued or surprised you about how you responded?

- No comments provided.

3. What insights do you have about how welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls is within this sector?

- Person of faith that is not Christian present who talked about how people trying to convert when sharing that their faith is not Christian – cite Bible verses
- Tired of being told that we wrong or that we need to change so don't even engage with the religious community in FF because we aren't Christian
- Calling a new pastor and the congregation had the opportunity to decide if they are open to calling a gay pastor. A member of the council said we cannot have a person who “chooses to sin” leading the church.
- Christians have standards that are set by God that we live by
- When you ask questions about what kind of a leader would you respect/tolerate it makes people really think about and answer what they believe and they realize that they aren't as welcoming as they think they are
- People want to learn from people of other faiths
- Opinion of LGBTQ being a sin or wrong causes people to leave the church/congregation
- Priority is that people will come to know and love Jesus Christ, preaching the Gospel – not diversity or inclusion, but everyone is welcome and loved
- All the religious organizations in Fergus Falls are Christian
- No questions about what it is like to live here for a person of color, no inclusion activity
- There might be inclusion but not equity
- With current events, have heard that people appreciate that Jewish people exist but do not seek to understand
- normative whiteness and normative Christian – not overtly “otherizing” but not inclusive, people don't think about how others might feel
- Church plays “spirituals” connects with a person of color
- Younger generations do not want to be a part of the church because of the lack of diversity, welcome, effort and the judgemental nature of the church

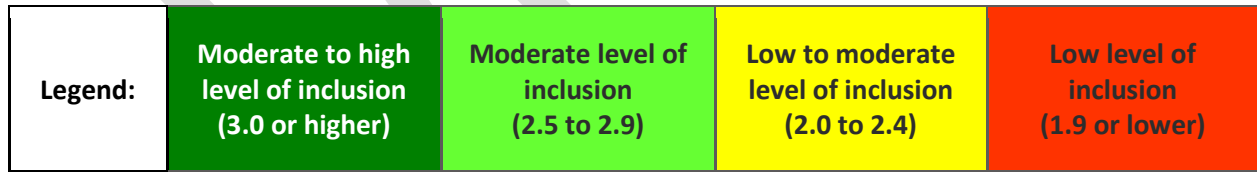
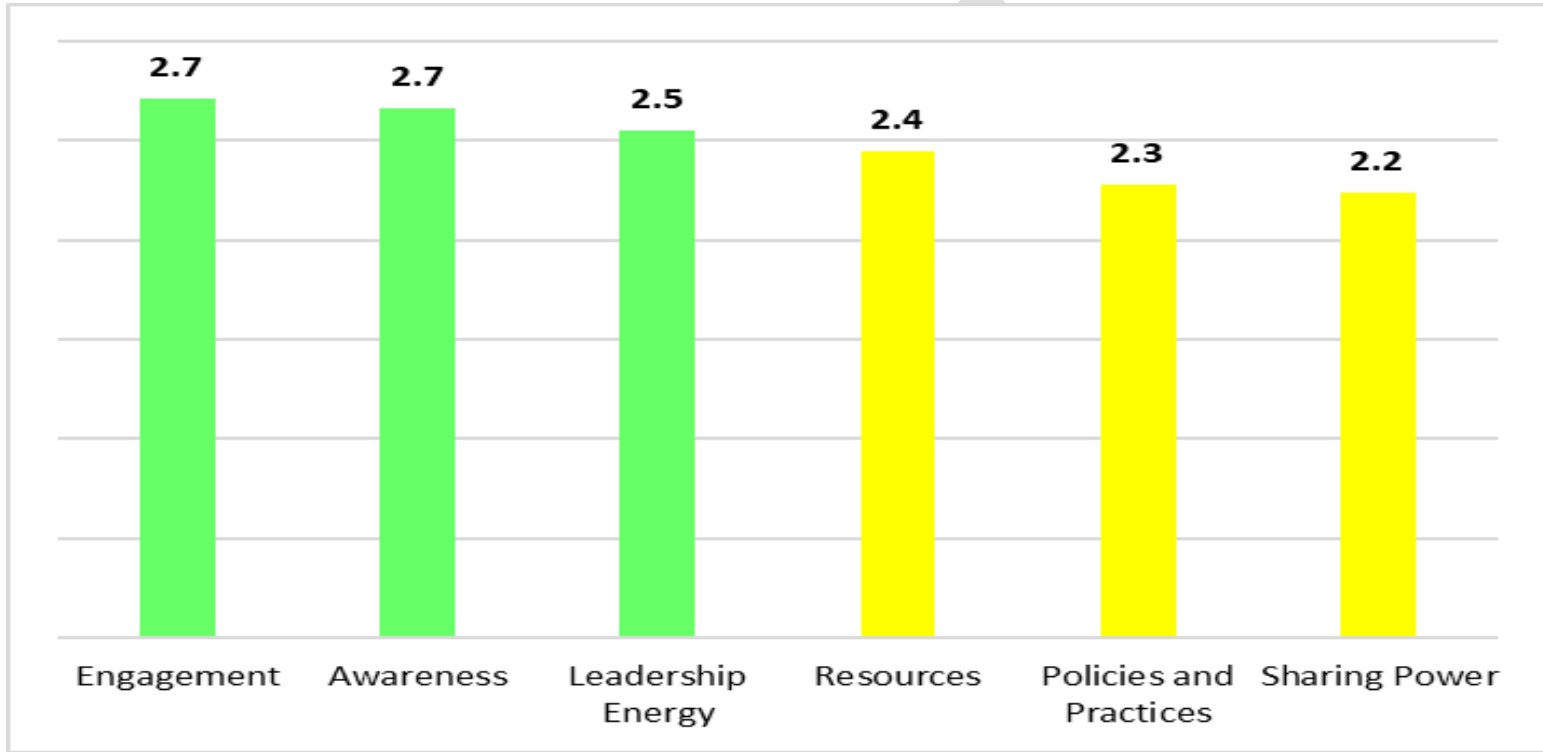
- Higher leadership levels (synod, national) are seeking to be more diverse but pushback from the local congregations
- Women leadership isn't always welcome
- We say you are welcome, but don't necessary welcome the differences

4. What action steps should be taken to foster a more welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls within this sector?

- Extend the welcome and invitation not just wait for people to show up in your place
- Seek to understand people of other faiths for their own value not to convert them
- there is a skill set in true integration of diverse groups (different races, beliefs) – you have to know how to do it
- Churches need to be educated in multicultural welcome

DRAFT

SCHOOLS (125 completed assessments)



Additional Comments from Survey

Part 1 - Awareness

- We need to teach more history. The kids today know nothing about history and are doomed to repeat the mistakes of their parents.
- Our school system leans too giving too much credence to inclusion. Catering to the desires and wants of the few to the detriment of the majority is not great and that already happens to a small extent more than it should. I think the school system does a good job of allowing everyone to have space to practice what they believe, without changing the whole paradigm to cater to the few by taking it away from the majority.
- The school does provide speakers on different topics for the students and staff, but these are not open to anyone beyond the school. For example, a friend and I asked if we could attend a school speaking event that appealed to us. This speaker is specifically on Native topics. We were nicely and politely told "no." These are for students and staff only. When I asked my junior classmate about the presentation, he responded that it was the same speaker they saw before, with the exact message. He said it is interesting but needs to change it up a bit. The school plays a pivotal role in the community, as a way to share and educate the community.
- I teach here. We have made progress but there is a long way to go. Our students of color face daily discrimination. Our LGBTQ+ students do as well. We have affinity groups but it's not enough.
- Both my sons left KSS for both medical and social issues. Both were targeted by bullies and felt that they didn't have a safe place to discuss their grievances. Both transferred to the ALC where issues improved but were still difficult for the first child. The second son is doing much better there and feels that they encourage inclusivity far more than the KSS did. My Saga Youth kids all concur. Many can't wait to leave KSS because they don't feel safe or heard.
- The school system may allow all types of students however they look the other way when those different groups clash.
- I don't have kids nor am I a student and am not really knowledgeable about this subject
- LGBTQ+ students are often bullied or ostracized by other students.
- White European descendants have a rich history and sacrificed to settle in this area. They are/were NOT privileged. They are still working to build a better community.
- The school system pushes the difference they want to push, but when it's something they don't agree with they don't. There's a lot of virtue signaling in the school. It's very clucky and if you don't agree with the agenda you are boxed out
- This inclusion and awareness is our government continuing to take more control of our lives.
STOP IT
- Unsure of public vs private schools
- There has been a lot of training opportunities, but I haven't seen much application of that
- The coming together is more of a product of education system than anything specific
- I have heard firsthand multiple children's negative experiences with inclusivity and fighting bullying within the school system, specifically towards LGBTQ+ students. This includes an account of the vice principal dismissing the identity of a transgender student and the

seriousness of their bullying experiences. The transgender student in question explained to me that the principal was very understanding but had a hard time enacting certain things that would help LGBTQ+ students due to the interference and objection from the vice principal.

- Retired now. But they did spend too much money on the last Construction Management of the move to Kennedy School. I went to that school the first year it opened. I worked on that overpriced remodel. I worked all over the state on over 50 schools projects across Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin.
- I have a son who is nonverbal and autistic, and he is included with his peers in a variety of ways, but it could always be better. When it comes to other areas of diversity, I think the school system could do MUCH better. The school system often aligns with white Christian folks without venturing out in other areas; there are some younger teachers who strive to make changes with this, but their voices are not always heard.
- Diversity= resiliency
- I homeschool so don't have personal experience with the public school system
- There are community job fairs held.
- Divorce, single parent
- I have never seen any mention of inclusion in any correspondence from the school.
- Our adopted children are Hispanic and have lived in a number of communities with varying levels of diversity. This community seems moderately diverse and it seems that students of color tend to flock together.
- The schools here, and especially the religious schools, are not very accepting of transgender persons
- I proactively donated a sign to my son's school at the time. It was the love your neighbor signs that were occasionally being spotted around town.
- After going around and around with the school administration and the former superintendent, Jerry Ness, it was decided that because of my sign - one of total inclusiveness, that all signs were banned from school grounds, despite there being no regulations regarding signs, other than political campaign signs. Because inclusiveness has become very political, especially in an under-informed landscape. We moved here from D.C., with love in our hearts. Soon after our move, I was taken over with the idea that we had just made the biggest mistake of our lives, bringing our child here, to grow up.
- I am very new to the area. So far it has been a great community and everyone has been very welcoming and helpful.
- In sports events, where the community can attend.

Part 2 - Engagement

- Facebook seems to be the main notification path for much of the city.
- Extracurricular Activity fees at Fergus Falls School district are VERY high and exclude many families that cannot afford them, even those who do qualify at a lower rate. My family can afford this fee, but it does bite into the budget. This is especially key when neighboring school districts have much lower fees.

- Programs that are built into the school system, such as music, art, FACS & industrial-based classes are much more accessible but tend to be earmarked by different student groups and looked down upon by others.
- I personally like "extra" activities and think they teach students vital life skills. My own children have been encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities that best fit their interests and to push their comfort zones, as a way to grow personally. I just wish activities were more accessible and accepted.
- I mean we had Anton Troyer come talk to us about being native, but that's about it.
- The school communicates in many forms. Too many of our students of color end up at the ALC. 544 teachers are offered an LGBTQ+ training but they don't have to attend, so most don't.
- The only activities I'm aware of involve sports, music or drama. The schools do not host activities that celebrate diversity.
- Anyone who is not originally from here, who identifies as another gender as their birth gender or are not in agreement politically are not included.
- Fewer students and families from marginalized populations participate in extracurricular activities at the middle and high school level.
- School leaders look to the demographic group with the "loudest voice" and this is usually white privileged families, and not families from Indigenous/Black/LatinX culture
- I am aware of some of the cultural learning opportunities that are made available to K-12 students, basically right before or after the fact because of what my enrolled student tells me. I do not feel that these are highlighted or celebrated in a way that creates engagement. Recently, there was a Native American scholar who visited KSS middle school. I've been told by my student that it's now become a trend to mock Ojibwe culture by chanting made up songs as a way to denigrate Native people. I am horrified that this has become/allowed to be a norm for these kids.
- My experiences may miss different information delivery systems. We all tend to stick to our normal sources
- They didn't want to learn about my experiences as a disabled person and rejected my input and my parents input even when it was offered
- Too much busing and open enrollment costs.
- I'm seeing there is still a hierarchy in school favoring the well to do
- The schools are open to community events through gyms and playground facilities and ice rinks in the winter plus a skateboard practice area in a close park - also tennis courts. Community participation is limited by their willingness to go beyond their doors and walls to become part of our community.

Part 3 - Resources

- Children of color and those from poorer backgrounds don't have the same access to activities after school. Money and transportation barriers prevent them from being able to gain important and varied experiences of extracurricular activities.
- Based on the lack of sharing of any financial or PR supporting inclusion, I would think there is very little to none.

- School needs to put the money they have to better the education off all students but just spend it on the agenda they want to push
- Public school not enough \$ because the staff has not seen this to be a priority after voting, unfortunately
- Schools need some money. BUT the Real Estate taxes on 122 acres of our non farmed forest land with a hunting shack is now valued at \$591,600. Because of the Henning School District we are paying way too many taxes. We do not use the school district or have children who have ever used the school. The taxes have gone up 30% over 2 years. They are over spending like drunken sailors. Too damn many frills.
- We have to use the facilities or if a need isn't promoted it may be developed in other areas.

Part 4 - Leadership Energy

- Boys need to be taught how to be strong confident men, they should not be told they are bad people simply because of gender
- I think leaders are aware of the needs and do try, but often are met with outside barriers and groups that try to influence their decisions. I have heard stories of program leaders who are trying to implement new curriculum or a specific training for staff, and they fear backlash from outside groups, such as Moms for Liberty.
- Despite the fact that it is a requirement that schools in session on Indigenous Peoples Day must then include a Lyceum or curriculum about Native American history heritage culture, two principals in the school district neglected to do so.
- We could be so much farther than we are.
- A couple of leaders try to do this at the high school level. The elementary leadership and a couple at the HS do not exude this at all.
- Focus on who is best for the job, not who checks the boxes in order to fill the job. They are focusing so much on inclusion that they create division
- Note that my responses depend on my speaking with others, I have no DE in the school system
- All the leadership staff is white - non-marginalized
- I need inclusion into this over spending, over busing ,open enrollment bullshit !!!!!
- As a parent and former educator in this district, I can say the school leaders definitely have these factors in mind and would do more if they could. We have intelligent, compassionate leaders in this school system overall.
- decisions for selections to fill a role, do not look at the best person. But allow teacher educators to choose on their own. This may not be in the best interests of the students or program.
- As a parent of school-aged kids, I have not received any information from the school that demonstrates any effort targeted toward diversity and inclusion.
- Fergus Falls has been a member of an area Special Education cooperative for a number of years and have prepared documents of inclusion for students who are struggling in those neighboring communities (Individual Education Plan) and have opened special needs classrooms for students struggling in their home community.

Part 5 - Sharing Power

- All of our leadership is from majority culture. Most of our staff is, too.
- Teachers and administrators are all white- we do not work to recruit people of color in hiring.
- Little diversity in staff and faculty at public school
- The K-12 system is staffed predominantly by white hetero teachers/admin, etc. It also often feels that there's an unspoken assumption that the student body is made up of families from a Christian background. Diverse kids don't really feel like they have a voice and thus are shut out from power.
- The pool of folks to draw from in order for there to be needed diversity is limited. Not only by population but by how these folks are encouraged to lead
- The board for the schools are run by privileged white people who are concerned with keeping the schools welcoming to white people but hostile to black and brown people.

Part 6 - Policies and Practices

- If the schools do these things I haven't seen where the information is available.
- The schools need to reject transgenderism and offer counseling to those who are gender indifferent.
- I do know the school brings in speakers and presents ideas about diversity, but it doesn't seem to be that deep of an impact. For many students that feel "different," the Alternative Learning Center seems to be the only alternative.
- We are all different in our own way. Some students look different, others learn differently or identify themselves differently. Some of the conversations that I have overheard from my own children and their peers, make me sad. These conversations focus and pick apart the student's differences. This seems to be embedded within the school culture.
- Recently they held Veterans Day services and brought in a speaker who made several comments about the importance of being a Christian and was basically evangelizing for most of his speech. Definitely not evidence of the school thinking about inclusivity in practice.
- If you treated people equally you would have to focus so much on making this a priority. The school administration are some of the most small minded people they are only concerned with pushing the equity and and forget to educate students to help them be successful in life.
- It almost seems like we value diversity, equity and inclusion more than educating our kids. They are failing to learn to read, write and do math. Our schools need to focus more on equipping them for life - teaching what they need to become productive members of society. They need objective truth, not subjective indoctrination.
- I would love to see more curriculum/classes/teaching about current Ojibwe and Dakota language and culture. Students should be able to choose to learn placed-based languages. Also American Sign Language. I took French in high school and college and have never used it. Most White people think native people are in the past. Each building should have a land acknowledgment statement written with involvement from tribes. Morning announcement - Ojibwe word of the day, etc.

- Show kindness and compassion for children with special needs and to support anti-bullying campaigns + follow through with rules set in place (for teachers and students) regarding discipline.
- My husband's career was in the public schools here, and it is a great school!

Notes from Small Group Discussion: In-Person Session (11/14/23)

1. What words or phrases caught your attention as you completed your assessment? For this question go around the circle and ask everyone to respond.

- Inclusion and equity, mention it because MN is totally embedded in Equity 2030; it now drives DEI in all the colleges and universities as well as CRT
- Inclusion is a word that brings the emotions up
- Lived experiences
- Resources
- Inclusion, if it's an idea rather than a reality; it's an institutional policy rather than a realized agenda because if the rest of society is not inclusive then what's going on here or whatever else
- Power- There are people in power who can make decisions to make our students' lives safer and the people who want that safety feel as though they have a limited amount of power to make that happen
- Power - Schools don't always create a way for diverse groups of people to be in a leadership role
- Information- We can withhold information or disseminate information.
- Power - that's what drives so much of what we do
- Inclusion
- Training and the importance of it
- Leadership energy
- The definitions - it's all kind of new to me. What is equity; it's a broad topic
- Equity and inclusion together
- Priority
- Lived experiences; we may have the same ethnicity but we all have different experiences
- Learn from each others' lived experiences
- If they do anything to represent other heritages, races?
- Generally, people in Fergus Falls are not diverse. Visibly, teachers have been white.
- Resources page - allocation of the funding ongoing, recognizing that which is probably not. If it exists, or it's not

2. What intrigued or surprised you about how you responded?

- How many I Don't know I had. There are many uncertainties I have; there are many opinions I have but haven't done the legwork to get answers
- Agree - sometimes with inclusion you really have to be out there and be part of the process.
- I don't know because I didn't ask. Now I have some homework of my own. I don't have a whole lot of confidence that I will get those answers.
- I was disappointed in answering "not at all" or "to a slight extent" to a lot of questions. I'm on the school board in Fergus Falls.

- My experience is in the Underwood school system - sons and grandsons. My grandson went to Uwood and Fergus and he came out as gay when he was here. My experience now with my other grandson in Underwood. He is African and started out in LaCrosse. He is much happier here and has had only one negative experience when he was in 6th grade, when he was called the N-word; given 1 day in-school suspension, another boy 5 day OSS. Bullying is not accepted. He is very well-liked in Underwood.
- The amount of times I had to circle “don’t know”
- I just assumed that they’re trying to move in a positive direction and gave them the benefit of the doubt
- The thought of how I would have responded five years ago opposed to know
- Just how little I know about motivations, intentions of leadership within the education system
- I probably gave a lower score instead of saying I don’t know. Maybe I don’t want to admit that I don’t know.
- Looking around the community it doesn’t look very diverse; how do we promote and attract diversity when we don’t have it
- As I was going through those assessments for Education, some people questioned some kind of insight asking am I involved in any sorts of forms? No, I am not working with them, and they are not engaging with me in any substantive way. There are good changes that need to happen and skill sets that are necessary are not present in the current system, so we have to look outside - but we are not doing that. The question around “gathers people with different experiences in people” - I have not seen any evidence of that.
- Any effort to put diverse groups of students together, or show that other things exist - some other things exist. Not the nicest people? Especially those students (classmates) - principles don’t do much about it. Lot of people (classmates) in my class put Indigenous and Native American songs to it and they laugh at it. They make fun of those cultures.
- → It was sub-teachers (question about what did teacher do anything to resolve issues)

3. What insights do you have about how welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls is within this sector?

- I feel like I would contrast what you just shared with bullying, and we don’t address it all. It gets swept under the rug. There’s two sides to the story and usually the victim feels more victimized by the process.
- Friend of grandsons is also a Black child adopted by a white family; bad experiences in FF, now goes to Uwood.
- The recent survey the school sent out about the proposed expansion; I don’t think they gave you more choices than just male and female.
- The perspective I have is because of the youth group that I run - LGBTQ students. All the kids who feel discarded by the general population of the school. They don’t feel safe or protected at school; not worth bringing up because no one will do anything about it. Both my kids went to school at KSS and had issues; now other students come to me with issues.
- As a retired teacher, when kids got in trouble, they got a slap on the wrist. As a sub, the kids could call me the worst thing imagined, get a slap on the wrist, and come back to class. The

friends thought it was funny. The rest were tired of it. (Called it restorative justice) A couple times I stepped in because they were just going to break it up, I stepped in and said I hope one day you remember this incident and remember how you treated a teacher and a woman who has always been decent to you. There were special groups who got away with more behavior than others.

- I work in the schools as a sub and because of that I'm in all the different schools and see all the different age groups. My observation has been that there is a minority of students of different ethnic groups. I don't see a lot of discrimination happening. If anything I think the faculty go out of the way to ensure that they're fairly and lovingly treated.
- As someone who grew up in the school system, that was not my experience. I am both disabled and trans. I was bullied; no one ever did anything about it. If you tried to tell someone to get help, they'd yell at you for tattline. There were kids who threatened to kill me repeatedly, and they didn't believe me because he was popular. The only reason he didn't kill me is because I got really good at acting like a loose cannon so they were scared of me. People painted me as a liar and wouldn't believe me because the stories were too different from what they had experienced from the accuser. They let him continue to threaten to kill me every day. My friends just used me, they refused diagnosis. In late middle school and high school I was disabled and my parents couldn't get an IEP; they couldn't afford a diagnosis outside of the school because they were poor. They kept pressing the school to get it and the school said no, not till they're failing a grade. I was doing fine in school but my parents were helping me do it at home. My parents had to fight to get me a study hall and they kept taking it away. When they couldn't get good grades, they would basically get punished and uninvited from activities. I have OCD and I'm so terrified of failing; I would work to the point where I wouldn't eat or sleep; my parents would pry the laptop from me and make me eat while I cried. I got burned out so badly that I'm still dealing with it 12 years later. My older sibling had it worse. The abuse was really bad, too. My sibling and I watched students with disabilities get bullied, milk cartons thrown at them, we distanced ourselves from them.
- In 2009, I moved and interviewed along the areas - what blew my mind was that - when we went to interview schools to see where we would place our children, we would meet with principals. In Fergus Falls, we were pushed towards the counselors office - and the first thing that question was asked to my child was - what sport do you play? Now, I am still hearing similar stories from those who are in Fergus Falls district and my child was not in the region.
- They can be welcoming, but it's not super welcoming. Inclusivity - it's mediocre, they do some stuff to bare minimum so that parents don't call. But it's not great. HillCrest Private Christian Schools - school bus drivers were asking students to read bibles allowed on speakers.

4. What action steps should be taken to foster a more welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls within this sector?

- Do we have a school system where you go along to get along, you don't raise real questions about inclusion, you do the things I see in American, caucasian institutions where you don't bring up and deal with, address, and correct the ugly stuff. I've only been here a year and a half. My point is to learn whether FF is a typical biased rural community or is there actual inclusion

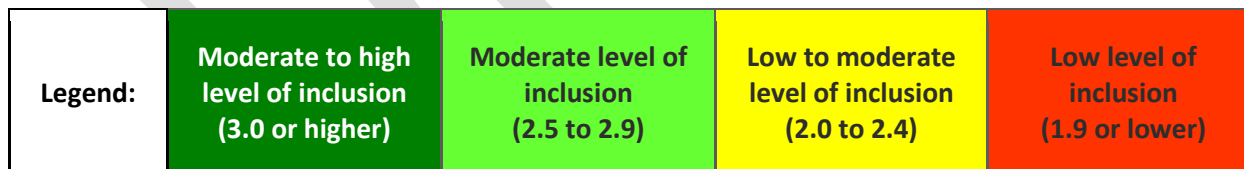
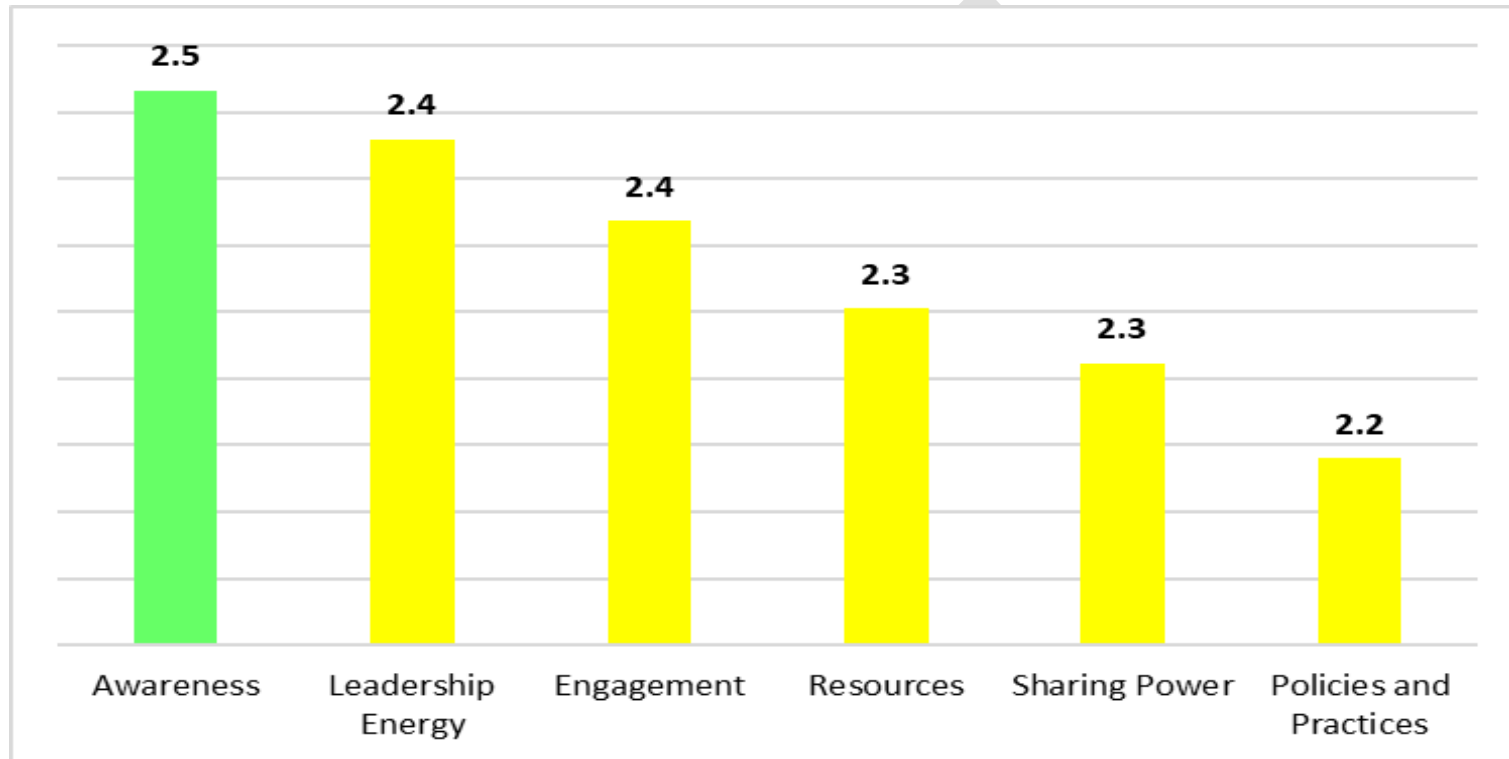
here. What you should do is get honest about what's really going on in your institutions. You need to state point blank that as a FF student what different people experience here. Institutional blindness.

- The big thing would be the actual culture. For me where I used to work, safety. If you do all the steps and say you are doing all the stuff for inclusion, that's one thing. But is there actually a culture of inclusion? Is it more like a show or is it more like people feel like it was authentic? Need authenticity.
- I think Minnesota is going down a dangerous path if it's going to make all white kids think they are oppressors. It's going to destroy relationships with kids who are not in that category. I'm afraid we push for inclusion, what's happening with this 2020 equity thing, it's going to cause a lot of problems. I've taught in schools where kids were half black and half white. It's going to drive a wedge in between them. To suggest that this is a racist community, I resent having that said. This has been a kind community forever.
- Listen to the people with their lived experiences. If they're telling you they've had uninclusive, racist experiences, you need to believe them.
- To piggyback off of ___'s story; bullying is a tale as old as time. They get it from how they grow up. What it comes down to is accountability within the school system. Liken it to the NFL - the commissioner is both judge and jury. The people who are tasked with protecting those institutions and run well are not always the people who should be addressing the issues coming up. You hope for integrity but there's also going to be some self-protection going on. We go to people with the problem and their problem is to protect the status quo or keep their seat on the board. We need to find another source within the school system for these types of issues to be brought to.
- Actively pursue student voices rather than having adults tell them what they think. Beyond student council; that might not be capturing all the perspectives.
- Youth rights; intersectionality; I knew that youth didn't get a lot of human rights compared to other countries. We treat our children more like property than people. This is one of the only countries that doesn't have student unions. Students and parents need to have more of a say in things. Teachers can't do their jobs when they don't have access to that feedback.
- Sometimes we don't utilize some of the resources they have. Voc rehab is an industry that protects people; maybe we need someone outside the system to help.
- Have part of the curriculum DEI, where children are learning about others' lived experiences and challenges they face. Why aren't we teaching that?
- Anton Treuer spoke at a school assembly and that was kinda cool.
- Breaking some of the generational things that I've learned. We are part of SAGA Youth (LGTBQ+) and at the parades we can always count on people to be disruptive. Throwing bibles, screaming at them. Some of that behavior is learned at home. If you're not teaching otherwise you're giving permission for them to do so. And if they hear you say it, that also tells them it's okay.
- Socioeconomic - activities, instruments - if someone doesn't have enough money, that's a barrier
- Nontraditional curriculums - the world is complicated; the standard curriculum isn't going to work for everyone. STEM, music, being outside more.

- Bilingual program
- Let's find the things they are good at and help them explore that rather than waiting till they're grown.
- We need budget line items in the school system to hire third parties for accountability and consultation with policies, procedures and practices for inclusiveness and feedback from the lived experience from diverse populations. Everyone has a right to be.
- It's super hard to get them to think about inclusivity and diversity - a lot of things will go laughed at - as kids don't take it seriously. One example - kids wave the Trump 2020 flag on the last day of the school. Parents complained to school boards to complain about teaching two genders. It was never fully implemented in place in public schools.

DRAFT

HEALTH CARE (55 completed assessments)



Additional Comments from Survey

Part 1 - Awareness

- I have never been treated so badly and rudely as I have at lake region Healthcare. I would never recommend the clinic or hospital.
- Recently I was looking for LGBTQ supported care for my daughter and searched the hospital website and it turned up no results.
- I was a student in the hospital system at Fergus Falls and was disappointed in the culture. While I was onsite a hospital staff openly shared their beliefs that same sex marriage should not pass in the state of MN when this was on the ballot in 2012. I also felt devalued as a person because I was a woman.
- Using local healthcare services in Fergus Falls is like playing Russian Roulette. Some doctors are extremely knowledgeable, understanding, and willing to learn while some are not. I will only see my primary care doctor and a handful of doctors at the walk-in and no one else for this reason. I will not use the emergency room for any reason however. I'd rather die than see anyone in the local emergency room. They've wronged me so many times, I get PTSD flashbacks going back there. The emergency room doctors are terrible. In the past, they've brushed me off, gaslit me, chalked up conditions that later turned out to be serious to my IBS or anxiety, given me medications that I never should've received, and even called a police officer to physically drag me away from my parents and lock me in an institution where I was fed allergens and written up as stubborn for refusing to eat food that could sicken/kill me. This is also true of Lakeland Mental Health. They are the most ableist, bigoted doctors I have ever met and I've heard many personal horror stories about them from others in my community. I fear the local emergency room and Lakeland Mental Health Center above all else. I'd rather be shot by a bigoted police officer than be tortured by the medications that they never should have given me. They screwed up and then abandoned me to die an excruciating death drawn out over the course of months. I have never known any physical pain that even comes close to the pain that I felt on those medications and I've had my fingertip taped back on without anesthesia. Both of those services inspire existential dread on a level I cannot even begin to describe.
- Being the parent of multiple humans that are LGBTQ, I have seen people turn their back and working in the healthcare industry I have seen snobbery and hatefulness.
- I don't feel Fergus Falls has groups for various different cultures.
- They provide generic information about cultural sensitivity during orientation.
- Attended education sessions at the facility and in my professions. Orientation and in services include the topics and activities

Part 2 - Engagement

- Seems lots of people have to travel for any gender affirmation care or LGBTQ needs
- They are starting to learn more about the LGBTQ+ community, but they still don't understand much about disability or class issues. All American healthcare systems are inherently classist and ableist though. The fact that they are for profit makes them inaccessible to the lower classes and

the fact that they medicalize every single difference as a deficiency inherent to the patient without considering social and cultural influences makes them ableist.

- My family has utilized healthcare options at both Pelican Rapids / Essentia for a few years and more recently Lake Region in FF for several years.

Part 3 - Resources

- We have small amounts of money
- I'm making assumptions that this is a priority to such a large organization
- They still don't have plans to address disability issues or class issues though. They need to learn to stop infantilizing and dehumanizing disabled people and undermining their autonomy and they never should have been for profit. Our whole healthcare system is broken. Furthermore, there's no disabled doctors (not all disabilities make one unsuitable as a doctor), no LGBTQ+ doctors, and no doctors from lower class backgrounds (they can't afford school). As a result, no one really understands me.

Part 4 - Leadership Energy

- Again, I'm making assumptions
- Again, there's no disabled doctors, LGBTQ+ doctors, or doctors from lower class backgrounds in my community. They obviously can't become leaders if they can't even enter the field.
- If one is LGBTQ they're screwed as far as opportunities go in health care. Trans people can't even get an interview at LRHC, much less a job opportunity

Part 5 - Sharing Power

- Does not appear to from my lens
- There's only one Asian doctor (that I know of), and very few female doctors. The rest are all straight white cisgender able-bodied male doctors.
- Private nursing homes may have limited board members representation of diversity groups.

Part 6 - Policies and Practices

- I don't know what they do behind closed doors, certainly not enough or not the right kind of things for the minority communities I belong to.
- Things that would make Fergus Falls more inclusive: signs in English, Dakota, and Ojibwe. Land acknowledgment statement at facilities created in relationship with tribes.

Notes from Small Group Discussion: In-Person Session (11/14/23)

1. What words or phrases caught your attention as you completed your assessment? For this question go around the circle and ask everyone to respond.

- There seemed to be a big focus on what leaders in the health care sector are doing around inclusion and diversity experiences.
- Question about budget
- Opportunity to bring communities together

- Conflict between leadership and how we view the world and general demographics of the community. Leaders has wide experience of diverse background vs. homogenous locals
- Leaders are homogeneously white as well
- Part 5 title—sharing power. It just struck me and I didn't notice it last time.
- The resource allocation piece of it and I think about that for health care. There's not always knowledge about where to go.
- Health organization
- If I don't see people like me (in racials), policies, procedures, ways of communicating, opportunities to invite people from diversity - I'm not going to assume it's not important. I don't know if they do anything to retain it. 50+ years - have not seen any Native doctors or nurses.

2. What intrigued or surprised you about how you responded?

- I was surprised by how much I didn't know. I don't know if they planned activities or if they are trying outreach efforts. Maybe that's a sign that they are not if they don't know whether they are doing these things.
- I have a good idea of what we do as a health care system. But I don't know about public health and mental health.
- HOw frustrated and embarrassed I am about how far we are behind the curve as far as catching up with ethnicities and backgrounds. I grew up in Pelican Rapids and there was so much diversity. Perham has done so much to increase their workforce and attract international health care workers. In Fergus Falls, I can't tell you where that's happening. Seems we are a full decade or more behind
- How much I didn't know. I know what my organization is doing, but it's hard to answer broader than that. What came to mind is how much room there is to grow.
- The workforce issues—there is desire and then reality. We want to do better, but do we have the allocated resources to do better? There's good intent and then there's the pace at which we move and the work we do.
- Does inclusion mean diversity and how do we include it if we don't have a large definition.
- Having other folks to guide this leadership in health care.
- It's relevant nowadays. I don't recall - do you practice any alternative non-traditional meanings, what's spirituality? I had one doctor - acknowledge the fact that I want it to be open to non-western medicines and practices. Hospice → Uber Christian White Eurocentric - basically shamed me but did have a conversation later on. I want to have some hope.

3. What insights do you have about how welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls is within this sector?

- My experience is that nothing strikes as that they are not inclusive to diverse people and experiences. But, I am a white woman from the upper midwest so maybe I wouldn't know. So, nothing stands out to me.
- Here in town, Lake Region HealthCare —there are discrepancies in the way that we provide care to marginalized communities. This is an area that needs improvement. For trans patients,

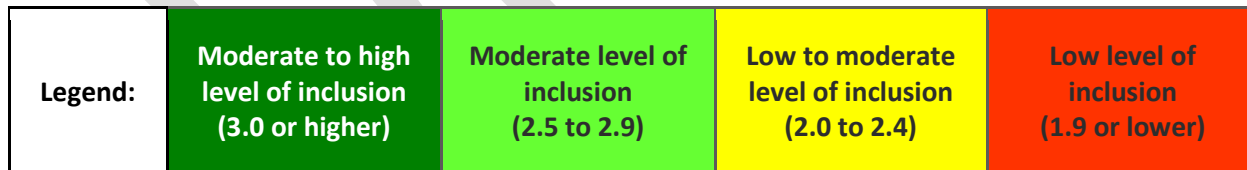
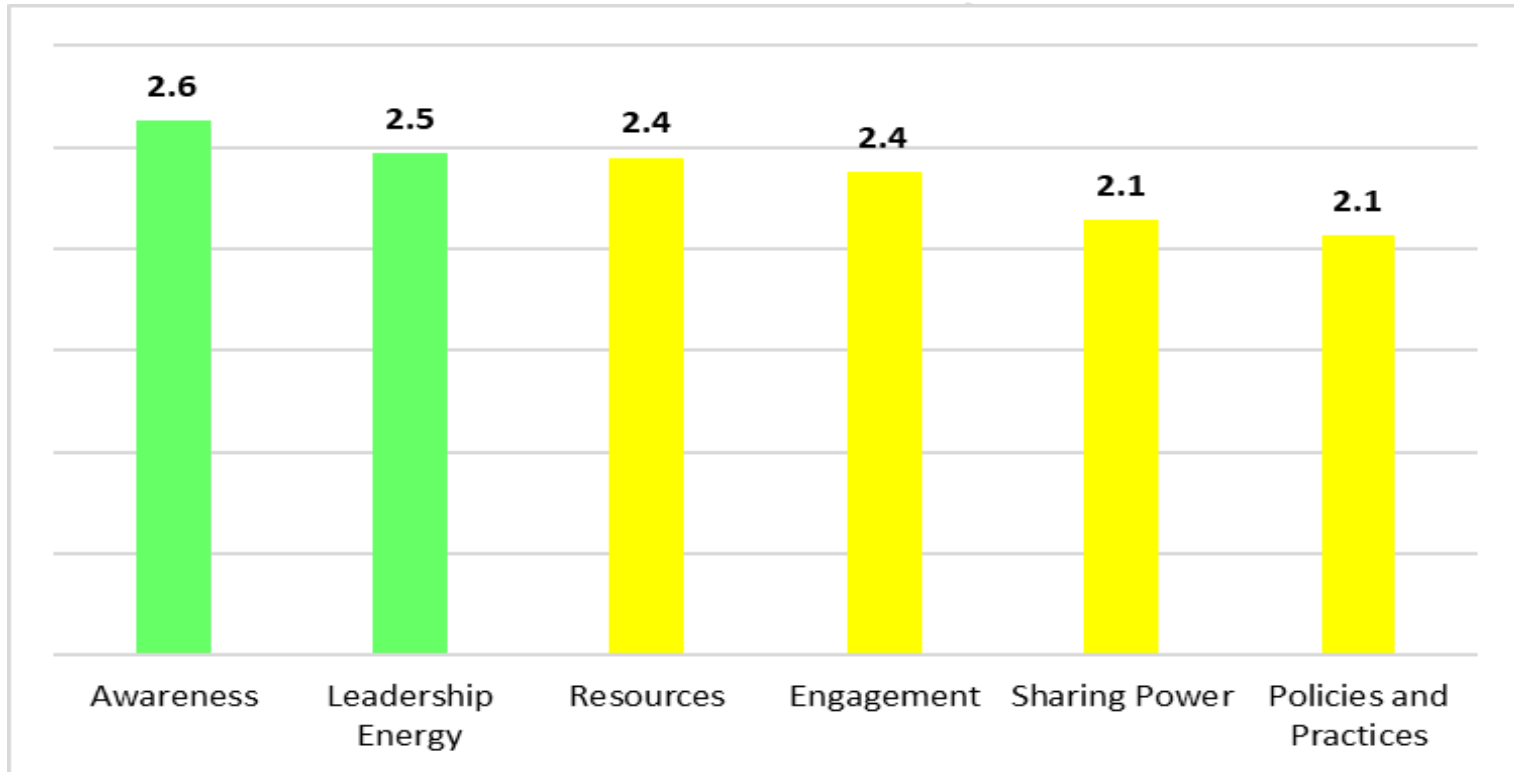
clinicians would dictate notes and would use terminology that was judgmental and not inclusive and not open to treatment options.

- For patients who are black, more likely to be diagnosed as bipolar, schizophrenia. If Black folks are late to an appointment, how the system would respond—would not be as likely to reschedule. Whereas if a white person, then they are more likely to reschedule.
- With reproductive health, discussion about rights as a woman—these discussions were shut down.
- If a patient has a tough time getting a ride or making their appointments. I don't know if we do a great job to partner with the community to support these communities. Quite honestly those patients are the most challenging—it's hard when they don't want to help themselves, but they still deserve care.
- I think there is a huge gap in hiring and traveling nurses that speak different languages or are of a different racial background, they couldn't leave Fergus Falls fast enough. How come I got stuck in this town? But, many doctors and nurses have integrated into this town—makes a huge difference between where you come and how you get here.
- With colleagues, nurses and doctors, if they identify as Black, Indian, they often experience microaggressions and macro aggressions, employment discrimination if there was an accent.
- I've had the opportunity to see other health systems in our counties. If I were to rank them, I would say Fergus Falls has the most opportunity to improve. The partnerships and how often the other systems reach out is more than than in the Fergus Falls system.
- There was an advertising campaign a few years ago and we could have done a better job with inclusion and representation of different communities. I would not feel as comfortable and open coming to this health care system because I did not see people of different representation.
- There are some great providers and there are also some providers that struggle to work with non-typical kiddos. There is a lot of room to grow.
- My daughter identifies as LGBT+, non-gender more than anything, and she has had a really hard time getting a doctor to help her navigate her needs related to reproductive health including getting her tubes tied. That has been a challenge and there is not a lot of understanding. The doctors are very dismissive about the questions that she has. She's getting what she needs, but it is not getting a lot of emotional support from them. The mental health care system has been pretty good for her.
- There's a real challenge getting to children's mental health care. This is a challenge for families. Sometimes I feel like communities have to go beyond the typical need so that folks know what is available. Organizations need to state their beliefs so people know it is a safe space. We are looking, for instance, at how we navigate cultural needs.
- White male Christian said "let's pray" - if they cared they would follow-up with you, but they didn't.

4. What action steps should be taken to foster a more welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls within this sector?

- Maybe making transportation available to pick up patients so they can make appointments. This could be a question that's easily asked when they make an appointment.
- There needs to be awareness and a willingness to change. Sometimes the appetite doesn't seem to be there.
- Also, accountability to change. Provide budget for DEI.
- Ask for answers from the organizations what are you doing to provide a more inclusive space in your organization.
- Need to be vigilant with workshops and training. There are lots of people who would love change and would like to go back to 1965 where the hospital was a regional hub and the state hospital was a buzz and there were state benefits. We're dealing with that mentality in this town, but it's there. It's who we are.
- How do you address this in a younger generation? To the library's credit, you do see that they are working to address some of these issues. You need to have persons of color represented in the books that are checked out at the library—it becomes normal for kids to see this and the library is doing a great job of trying to do this. Ensuring that there is representation.
- MSP VA has a forum where VA folks can come in and discuss their lived experiences as a patient and what lived experience have you had as a patient from your experience. It's a town hall, the head of the hospital is there listening, sharing that the hospital shares that this is not acceptable here. VA seems to be a good role model for what the health care sector can do.
- At VA we receive educational credits for education about DEI and disparities. It is embraced in a way that is not in Fergus Falls systems.
- Starting small with the easy topics, not with the hot topics. Many people who have moved here, have mentioned that it is really hard to feel welcome. Start with a gardening club, wine club, and then build the buy in for talking about inclusion.
- We experienced that. We did not have natural connections and folks have settled with their family. There's a book club at the library that talks about social justice issues. There are always signs about that in the library. For me that says, this is a safe space for being different.
- Welcoming to white, christian people is making them be like us. We want to proselytize. Our base religion is to recruit and bring them into the fold. To feel welcoming and included you need to have your own space and own practices where others who are not white and christian are. Places where folks can be themselves and not have to assimilate. What we don't have here is a place where folks can be themselves in the communities. They don't want to be assimilated.
- But, I think that is the mindset of folks here—if you want to feel welcome here, you have to be like us. In a different community, they bought a house for folks who practice Islam and it became a space that wasn't safe. So, that is tricky.
- If we're to be more inclusive, we might have to experience some discomfort for ourselves and let folks be different. What does it feel like to be in a relationship with people who are different?

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (51 completed assessments)



Additional Comments from Survey

Part 1 - Awareness

- They like to keep this community in the dark
- Workforce issues, productivity and accountability towards cost of services can make this challenging
- Local gov offers multi-cultural training including DEI discussion groups
- Family Resource Center
- Contract with University of Minnesota Morris
- The local government isn't very transparent on their stance about inclusion or the services they provide. I suspect that most services are through the state or federal government and not the local governments.
- This is the first EDI experience in which I have seen elected officials attending
- Being a religious community there is opposition from those who aren't religious to have a conversation. They are most likely to trigger if religion is brought up.
- The government spends too much time and resources on inclusion.
- When I moved here, 8 months ago, I actually asked people... what does Fergus need... just a survey from random people. Overwhelmingly, people started places to interact and get together. I still have the random opinions from residents on video too.
- The long term city administration in Fergus Falls dominates the decision making process. I was on the planning commission for many years and saw this first hand. A running joke - In FF is the good ol boys but unfortunately it isn't a joke.
- If you're a useful member of society, you're included! If not, you excluded yourself!

Part 2 - Engagement

- They provide information in many places (news, social media, web, utility inserts, etc.) but all is in English. Are they missing a group? Or knowing most Fergus Falls residents speak English (even if not their primary language) that is what they offer?
- Communicating to all classes of the community can be improved. Offering information in multiple languages. Reaching out to smaller businesses and areas of the community.
- I heard that someone started a steering committee for diversity and inclusion issues in our local community, but I have no idea how to get involved. Furthermore, no one gets into office around here unless they are straight, white, cisgender, able-bodied, and Christian around here. As a result, this demographic is the only demographic that has any say in government affairs.
- Townships need help to broaden inclusive thinking and embrace diversity
- Local government has started drag shows and parades to try to "help" push the community into accepting this way of life. Again, we are a religious community and will not go against God.
- Don't believe it is the local government's responsibility to provide training to the community. Human Services does not provide training, however pays for required continuing education of staff, has discussions of needed training for staff working with various diverse populations and

at least some supervisors look to offer additional options for individual training needs as identified. Attitudes experienced, other problems experienced are discussed by unit staff working with disabled, older populations.

- Where's the flyers, and notifications to our community? FB page? Ineffective.
- Regarding ways the local government uses ways to inform everyone about activities, I have seen info on social media & local flyers, information at the library, newspaper, local magazine, websites. Still confusing sometimes to figure out when and where things are happening like with scheduling and locations of events such as Over the River. More maps and calendar of events of specific information at times would be helpful on city websites and social media. Sometimes locals assume people know what certain locations are or where events are held, such as tree lighting at the bridge when there are multiple bridges in town or where to view the fireworks.
- The public meeting schedule does not promote public participation (meeting of the whole). The social media presence precludes any public comment or participation.
- The city specially excludes any input for sectors of the community that have different lived experiences than those in power
- This is such a White, conservative town and area. Most people of color I know try to stay quiet and tucked away.

Part 3 - Resources

- The Human Rights Commission is active. I don't think they have a budget.
- They want locals to foot the bill for others brought into the community.
- I think inclusion could be done without creating a department and spending a bunch of taxpayer dollars.
- This welcoming effort is the first effort in my 43 years in FF
- Term used in general: "inclusion efforts". What are these, or some at least?
- City and county are better
- Local government uses our money foolishly and is constantly raising "fees", and taxes. I'm sure we've paid for things that as a community we would never be involved in.
- Money allocated for required continuing education. U of M training is used.
- The structure for public inclusion in decision making is in place in committees and boards but is generally ignored by the city administration.
- Excluded people don't want inclusion

Part 4 - Leadership Energy

- Not as well as it could be. Regardless of the level, it feels like there is a "what's in it for me" attitude towards implementing change.
- Maybe there are more outlets that I am unaware of, to my knowledge local government tends to stay in rotation of the same groups of people. Not a lot of diversity in local government.
- Again, it's not possible for anyone that's not straight, white, Christian, cisgender, and able-bodied to become a leader in our local government, and only a handful of leaders in the

community understand and support inclusion. The mayor is probably one of them, but the community is so bigoted that he can't be transparent about it without risking his job.

- Again city of FF and county of OT better at these items than township
- Local government has their nose so far up Governor Walz butt, they can't see.
- Non white, non locals have been hired and appreciated in recent years. Certain directors' attitudes need work.
- City administration is a self perpetuating organization

Part 5 - Sharing Power

- They keep things close to their chest and try to get things done with little knowledge of the community
- Fergus Falls has a strong belief in the old boys' club
- Townships and school boards could do better about creating opportunities for diverse leadership
- Local government will flip over backwards to keep in Governor Walz pocket. Community is aware of it and will not be silent. We've had many town halls on this topic.
- City council leadership doesn't really reflect the demographics of the area with a mainly older white male group, only one woman and no BIPOC. BIPOC and women have run but not been elected.
- Stop worrying about a small specialized group, make the town better for the majority
- Can't judge by appearances.

Part 6 - Policies and Practices

- They can't even include walking and biking in road plans. Only vehicle users are prioritized.
- We need better regulations to understand the variables and how to change them
- Local government doesn't do anything without consulting Walz.
- You should focus more on the people already here instead of trying to create a "diverse" community.
- As is the trend, staff are being hired to measure... irregardless effectiveness..just following the trend, hiring more administration is very strong, hiring needed non administration staff, where need is very very strong, to do actual work with people is a clear NO, not a priority, not going to be a priority.
- Signs in English, Ojibwe and Dakota. Land acknowledgment statements in public buildings, facilities, parks. At least do something meaningful in the community for Indigenous People's Day, MLK Day of Service and other dates of note, Juneteenth, for POC. Would be nice not to have to go to Fargo or DL for these occasions, and I'm White!
- We don't need to get more regulations dictated by socialist operatives.

Notes from Small Group Discussion: In-Person Session (11/14/23)

1. What words or phrases caught your attention as you completed your assessment? For this question go around the circle and ask everyone to respond.

- If local government includes diversity
- We don't do a good job of looking for diverse people in government
- Resources- inclusion efforts, term is too general, need more definition
- Resources - financial obligations put towards inclusion
- Lived experience
- Resources - budget question caught me off guard
- City leadership, city resources, measurement
- "Local government"
- Leadership
- Demographics
- Leadership
- Experiences
- Leadership and demographics
- Advancement and retention of people from diverse groups and lived experiences
- Creating leadership opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds and lived experiences
- Power
- Diverse

2. What intrigued or surprised you about how you responded?

- It was hard to say- wish option between not at all, and slight extent, because we are at such beginning stages
- Local government gets the word out, don't sit on their fingers
- We want to be intentional, but we need to be realistic about what we can do versus what we should do
- 90% of the time I marked that it as to a slight extent or not at all- it solidified my opinion about majority of powers that be in this community
- This is the first time I've seen elected officials at a meeting such as this

3. What insights do you have about how welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls is within this sector?

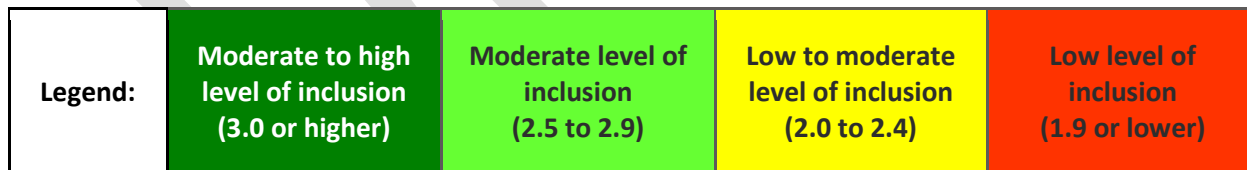
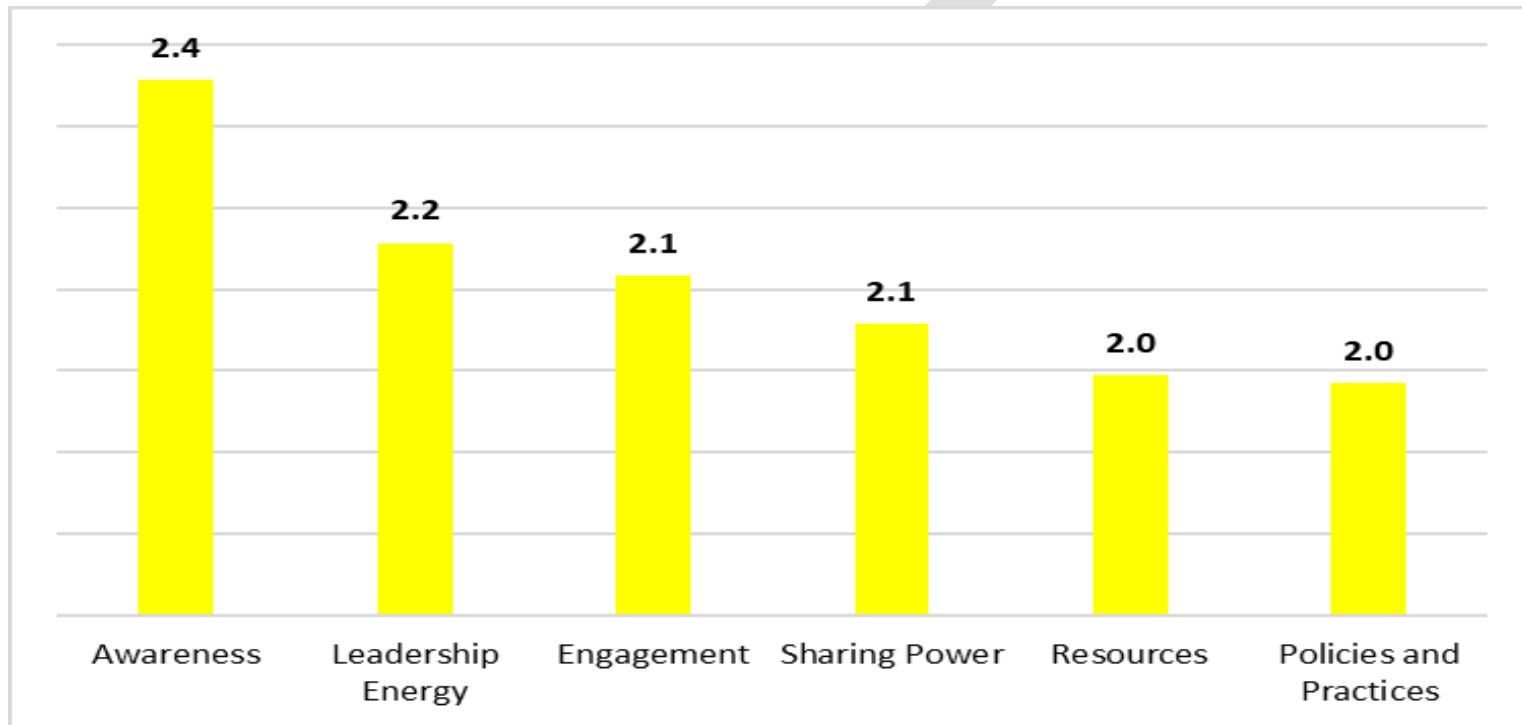
- I think it's still in the very beginning stages, there is growth. But room for more progress
- When I walk into govt office, it feels like my presence is a hassle
- When I ask a question, the process of asking for assistance makes me cringe, not sure if it's my skin color or my age, I feel like I get a roundabout answer. I dread going into the buildings.
- I spent 30 years in the army, it has been integrated tightly, I came back to MN what struck me is how homogenous this place is. Ethnic groups are very small, govt workers don't know how to act.
- It takes intention, I don't think our city intentionally tries to make people feel included

- This isn't something that's passive. It takes work.
- I am surprised about the blanket feeling that there isn't a problem when I go to local government, etc. There is a solid line in the sand between people who don't think there are issues and those who have issues
- Inclusivity issues that
- People are divided, we are a diverse community but you have to find your people

4. What action steps should be taken to foster a more welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls within this sector?

- Do you think more education moving forward would help soften interactions?
- I think decisions happen at committee level, diversify committee participants
- As a county board member, our meetings are scheduled at a time that would be extremely difficult for a single woman or even a working person to serve in the role
- I would like to see a more diverse council, more backgrounds and lived experiences who can give a more balanced perspective
- I would like to be heard
- The City council, county government need to say that DEI is an important value
- From county perspective, we've worked with UMN Extension and Morris, to bring DEI to county, the public doesn't know it is going on
- Recruitment- we need diverse people to apply for the positions so we can make our office more diverse.
- I agree, we are getting DEI training in govt, law enforcement, etc., there needs a better way to tell constituents this, but we are struggling to find candidates (from law enforcement person)
- Host a meet and greet as a sector to explain the training we are getting, etc.
- I realized that we need to look at how we structure what we look -for certain traits- we need to expand leadership opportunities to fit diverse people
- Focusing on these issues help our government folks more aware

LAW ENFORCEMENT (44 completed assessments)



Additional Comments from Survey

Part 1 - Awareness

- Our law enforcement does a great job. They do a good job of enforcing the law that connects with reality. They prosecute real crimes and do not waste their time and the community's time on insignificant things.
- My Grandmother's Hands should be required to be read by all police officers to understand the impact of racial trauma in law enforcement.
- Rude, self centered, only help themselves and their close knit group. No body cams and no dash cams, so no pure accountability and open disclosure. Deceptive behavior and lie in court
- They may be and likely are doing all of these things - I just am
- I hope so
- Some are aware of some inclusion issues to a slight degree, but not others. I've seen police officers in my town who support racial equality and the legalization of Marijuana lead a hate rally against the LGBTQ+ community. I've also seen officers (not necessarily in my community) post comments online about how all neurodivergent and disabled people should be removed from society, stripped of voting and autonomy rights, and locked away in institutions against their will. It was extraordinarily upsetting.
- With the exception of a few exceptional individuals working in law enforcement in Fergus Falls. The majority have a shoot first and ask questions later. Or don't consider the chance they've lived such a different life and may need help and hope instead of being thrown into the wheel of the system.
- I hope you also target local LE staff with this survey.
- Works well with multiculturals in events around the area.

Part 2 - Engagement

- They don't seem interested in learning about disabled and LGBTQ+ people at all. They are content to maintain and promote harmful stereotypes about us as groomers, etc. rather than hear about it from the horse's mouth.
- I have seen one female cop, not very many if any BIPOC employees. Have heard stories of racism experienced by the BIPOC family at the hands of the local law enforcement such as getting pulled over more often and racially profiled.
- The most commonly participated in law enforcement activity by diverse groups is the arrest process.

Part 3 - Resources

- I believe they likely do all of this - I am just aware
- I don't know how local law enforcement uses their money, only that nothing they have done has helped disabled or LGBTQ+ people.

Part 4 - Leadership Energy

- Attempts in recruitment to diversify the workforce understand the necessity and importance of training.
- If they had the leadership energy to understand and improve inclusion, local officers wouldn't be leading anti-LGBTQ+ hate rallies without losing their jobs. I will never trust another officer again after that incident. I'm afraid because the officer that led the rally is still on the force as far as I know.
- Future leaders in jail, yes.

Part 5 - Sharing Power

- I just don't know
- They don't ask any of the minority groups I belong to for input. This community is mostly white, but there are a few racial minorities. Even so, I don't know if there is any on the force. I think there's some women, but there's utterly no LGBTQ+ or neurodivergent people.
- Law officer is stationed in the central office area of the senior/middle school - so very visible.

Part 6 - Policies and Practices

- This is a terrible survey written to enforce the writer's goal to prove lack of inclusion. The questions are written to beg the question and force a biased outcome that the researchers are looking for. I also know that because I marked white male as my demographic then this survey will be used to "prove" the "white male supremacy" and "patriarchal society" and how disconnected white males are from the presupposed reality that this study is trying to prove. If you do a study where your conclusion is already written and you just have to gather data to support your conclusion, that is not how an unbiased study is done. I have an advanced degree and have read multiple scientific papers. This study is a clear example of making the research fit your predetermined conclusion.
- We have great law enforcement - I just really don't know
- Data reviewed and collected
- I don't know what law enforcement policies are in my community or how they measure the effects. I only see the results of those policies.
- There is no advancement, they measure the declining percentage of law abiding citizens from diverse groups. Their retention numbers prove so.

Notes from Small Group Discussion: In-Person Session (11/14/23)

1. **What words or phrases caught your attention as you completed your assessment? For this question go around the circle and ask everyone to respond.**
 - Our law enforcement does a great job. They do a good job of enforcing the law that connects with reality. They prosecute real crimes and do not waste their time and the community's time on insignificant things.
 - I don't know a lot about what Law Enforcement is doing.

- I've worked with Law Enforcement for thirty years, but I came to this to learn what people have to say. They do a lot with inclusion and I've seen the training. We do diversity training, it's long been mandated. Not sure if we are good at it.
- I didn't know a lot. If I did circle a number I was taking a stab in the dark. One that stuck out was the one about activities. I don't know about their activities. It does seem like there are minority groups that are overrepresented in our jails.
- I'm sure they do, but I don't know what they do for training. I felt like they were probably doing training. I've seen events with kids, giving away bikes
- I wish there was a category between moderate and great extent because it would have helped answer some of the questions.
- Shared experiences - for many in this community, they haven't shared ideas for new ideas.
- Reflecting the demographics in the Fergus Falls area. If you live in FF and you are from a family that is well known, you have more opportunities than people who come here. You see it reflected everywhere. There is no diversity in the city council. I never see anyone of my color who is doing something great.
- For the comment portion, the online survey says lived experience - that term jumps out at me as being important.
- I grew up in Fargo, and when I first moved here I didn't get into groups. If you aren't born there, there's a good chance you won't fit in right away. People tend to recognize their own group.
- I taught at a high school in Omaha and half the students were black. It has to do with personalities and willingness to connect.
- Much of this is about where do people look for information? People may not be looking for information about how the police are working on inclusion.

2. What intrigued or surprised you about how you responded?

- I feel like I need to know more about the community, like I need to do some homework to find out what is happening.
- How few specifics I'm aware of. I take the paper, but it's not something I have daily experience with or know. They must be doing a pretty good job or I'd be hearing about it.
- They do shop with a cop every year for Christmas, it's super special. They get a kick out of it with the kids. I've lived this. They are aware of families that need the support, but there is also an application process. The kids shop for the adults. It's one of my favorite things that I know happens.
- When I look at the questions, I've been out of law enforcement. I can't really answer these questions really. It depends on the staff.
- I was born and raised in Fergus Falls. If they didn't have a special niche, a special way to get involved, it was hard to be pulled into the community.
- Every community I've been in I've been an outsider. People know each other and are used to each other. I don't see this as a bizarre situation. I see kids reaching out to kids of other races.
- There are so many people who are related to each other in this town. Something that enters into the situation.

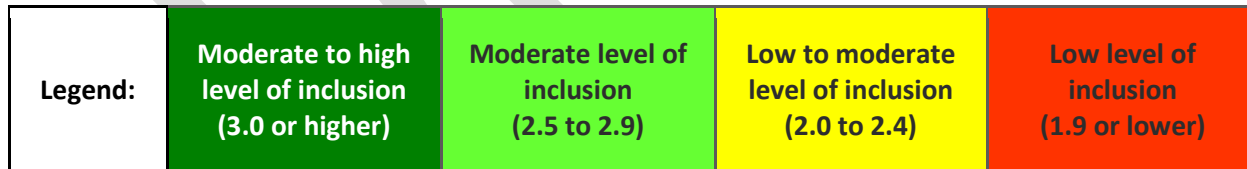
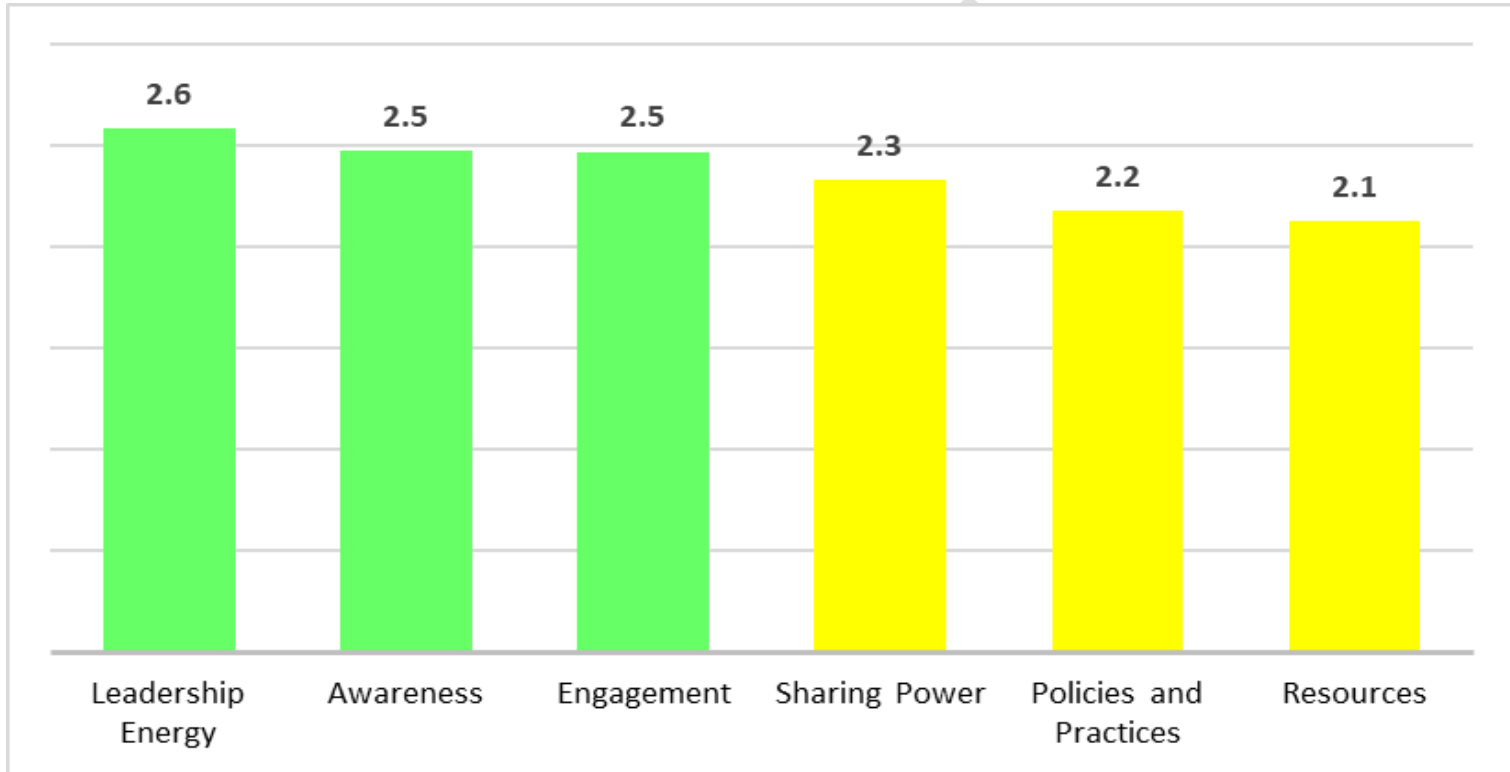
3. What insights do you have about how welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls is within this sector?

- Throughout my life and in my work at the library, we've had to call the police and they've been very responsive and helpful. They treat people with dignity. They know how to de-escalate situations in public spaces. They take care of situations in a respectful way.
- I hit a deer and I remember the officer was very concerned that I was okay to drive again.
- Our offices have not had that many intercultural experiences.
- The general workforce challenges - we are not getting applicants.
- It's not intentional.
- Getting people into law enforcement is a problem all across the United States because of the negativity of the "bad apples." You are finding fewer people willing to put their lives on the line. I wouldn't want my son to be an officer in this day and age. There are legislators who have condemned law enforcement.

4. What action steps should be taken to foster a more welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls within this sector?

- Newly hired social worker - working on transitioning people into the community from jail. This person would work with law enforcement to deal with people in crisis better.
- Our police chief was instrumental in getting this going. There was a presentation at the city council meeting. The sheriff's office is involved as well.
- Community engagement - law enforcement has tried to recruit more women and people of color into careers but it has been difficult. We try to get a more diverse workforce - hard to do this in rural Minnesota. Hard to get people to even apply and think about moving out here.
- There are good services in place for translation. There's a language line that officers can call. There's a different level for courts vs. law enforcement. It's used at other offices in county government as well.
- There used to be a federal translation line that they stopped using because they could ask about citizenship status.
- There is multicultural training in county law enforcement offered to the officers. I would guess there's something comparable in Fergus Falls.

BUSINESS (48 completed assessments)



Additional Comments from Survey

Part 1 - Awareness

- I am very new to the region but my experience with many businesses is a sense of neighborliness.
- I find that if you don't act or behave in a standard form that is able to be segregated in separate boxes you are shunned in the workplace.
- I find there is not a lot of diversity in Fergus Falls.
- I feel that more efforts can be made for inclusion of all languages and ethnicities. Especially small foreign businesses that could offer so much more inclusion and diversity
- The Halloween crawl was no costume no candy, what about the kids who can't tolerate wearing a costume due to sensory processing disorders? Why don't all the retail stores have Caroline's cart? Fleet farm and Walmart do. They were suggested to them and they promptly ordered one.
- Only a few businesses care about inclusion minority communities I belong to, but there is no training provided about these communities. There may be some training about women's issues, BIPOC issues, and disability issues, but not LGBTQ+ issues and certainly not invisible disability issues. It's unfortunate because most people spend their leisure time in local businesses and that is where there is the most opportunity for interaction between different groups.
- This study is invalid because it assumes that inclusion is an important factor, rather than assessing peoples' view of the issue in a non-partisan manner.
- A professional consultant from out of town we're working with forgot a piece of electronic equipment he needed to complete work with us just this past week. He was followed through Walmart by a loss prevention employee all the way through the store to the electronics department and then to the cashier. When he asked the employee if he saw anything suspicious, the employee told him he was paranoid. This consultant is working with us to recruit new Americans into our workforce here.
- I think that steps have been taken over the last years, but I feel we are in the infant stages of that. I think manpower and committee capacity limits what we can do.
- This whole survey misses the mark totally! Fergus Falls has a very strong attitude of if you haven't lived here and have strong, deep roots here, are not white, married, have kids..you are only going to be included by your church..one or more churches include more than others. I have lived here and raised my children and grandchildren here for almost 40 years and FF does not feel like home at all for any of us. We are all white, have had good jobs, participated in the community, etc. I was divorced when I moved here, but have seen the same for people that have chosen not to marry and have children. If you don't have multiple generations here, you don't belong nor deserve anything no matter anything else. However..multiple generations here, especially farming families have a strong sense and practice of caring for their own when needed..city and county wide.
- I have traveled to foreign countries and hosted exchange students.
- Most businesses are welcoming although there are a very few that are openly derogatory toward lgbtq people (and only some of the people working there are negative this way)

Part 2 - Engagement

- Chamber does a good job reaching out
- Everyone participates in activities put on by local businesses, but very few businesses seek information about diversity. The few that do (my mom and a handful of others) are owned by people who learn this information in nontraditional ways such as from books, Google results, social media, and interpersonal interactions. There's no formal training or resources for most small businesses especially with regard to invisible disability issues, LGBTQ+ issues, and intersectional issues. Most of these formal resources and training opportunities are only available through large businesses with affirmative action policies, and none of them cover LGBTQ+ issues or invisible disability issues. Even with regard to physical disability issues, most small businesses can't afford the changes required to accommodate physical disabilities. It would be nice if there were state grants that covered the entire cost for elevators, accessible bathrooms, accessible entrances, braille signage, etc.
- This study is invalid because it assumes that the highly-controversial concept of "inclusion" is understood the same way by everyone. It obviously is not.
- We have a lot of wonderful community events though I think they are often geared towards families with young kids. But I don't see evidence of the events highlighting being an inclusive, welcoming community.
- I hear people all the time saying I didn't know about that "event". We need to find and use different avenues. Sometimes we forget about the senior populations and that they may not be as technically savvy. Some are not on Facebook or whatever Twitter or whatever it is called this year.
- Single, white persons are not included, listened to anywhere near as much married, white persons, no matter your contribution to business and or community.

Part 3 - Resources

- I can't say for certain that businesses are not taking initiative to include and put equality forward. I do believe that there is a start to this open mindedness.
- Some businesses are able to access grants for inclusion and diversity, but almost none of these grants address disability or LGBTQ+ inclusion. Only large businesses have access to the finances to commit resources towards inclusion though and they only have plans for inclusion because they are required to by the state or federal governments. Again, these plans and resources almost never include the LGBTQ+ or invisible disability and/or neurodivergent communities. The one exception may be the local community college. They are still behind in their efforts to include people with invisible disabilities though. Some of my neurodivergent or chronically ill friends are still unable to access college. Plus, cost excludes most minorities anyway because poverty is rampant in every minority community.
- This study is invalid because it assumes that "inclusion" is something that should be supported, when a large segment of society sees the term as a code word for discrimination.
- This summer, when construction was taking place on Lincoln Ave to make the sidewalks handicap accessible, all I heard was negativity about how this was hurting businesses. The

messaging could have been spun to celebrate what the construction was trying to accomplish and encourage people to patronize downtown amidst construction. It wasn't.

- I'm a big fan of Greater Fergus Falls and the Downtown Riverfront Council. But I don't know what they're doing, if at all, to spur and sustain BIPOC, LGBTQ+ businesses
- I don't know that much goes into a budget item for this. The county is just starting to expand.

Part 4 - Leadership Energy

- Greater Fergus Falls has soon a great job as well as springboard for arts
- Unfortunately I feel as if I am one of few women and Latina owned small businesses
- I think there's many small business owners that are enthusiastic about promoting inclusion for at least one minority group because it tends to benefit business, but many don't know how and/or can't access the resources to do so. Moreover, there is still a lot of bigotry amongst some local business owners. Friends and family of one local business owner chased me down the street in a UTV in my own neighborhood while I was jogging because I looked too androgynous to them.

Part 5 - Sharing Power

- I do agree there are ways small businesses in Fergus Falls can communicate although I don't believe they include all ethnicity and diverse businesses
- Business leadership better reflects local demographics, but it's almost exclusively straight, white, cisgender, able-bodied men that own physical business fronts. None of the minorities can afford store fronts and are forced to rely on pop-businesses or shows only.
- I really don't see much about diversity in our business sector. It appears to be a great deal of white, Christian-owned businesses.
- A very few businesses are openly negative toward lgbtq people (only a few of their workers behave negatively, but it's unpleasant to shop there with some attitudes like that) (service food)

Part 6 - Policies and Practices

- A grocery store has seemed the same since I visited the community years ago and currently I get the same vibe when I shop there - it is not a good feeling. It is the only unwelcoming place I know of off-hand, and it was the only place I had visited before and judged this town by the people I had met in that store thinking that was the mindset of this town - unwelcoming and perhaps prejudicial to Hispanic and/or Native people. I have visited other businesses in the last year and I find Fergus Falls to be more welcoming, but that particular grocery store still has a feeling to it and I've witnessed the treatment of young customers and heard stories from clients about treatment there. The interactions are unfriendly and suspicious.
- It's been my experience as an employee or prospective employee for some local businesses that equity and inclusion isn't usually a priority.
- There is no reason to ask these questions -- this is an obvious attempt to foist a particular political view onto a community that wants no part in it.

- My first thought was to answer 1 because I see no evidence of any of these; however, I honestly have no idea.
- Highly doubt it
- We have enough government control brought to us by socialistic promoters.
- Big government should stay out of small government promoted by socialistic followers.

Notes from Small Group Discussion: In-Person Session (11/14/23)

1. What words or phrases caught your attention as you completed your assessment? For this question go around the circle and ask everyone to respond.

- Asking for assessment of business community was hard as some of us know one business but not all
- Im one business with a few employees do not know other businesses
- Relative to who you work for
- It's too much of an open-ended question - questions: are they making sure that we are engaging in a diverse group - technically I could say yes - yes they are doing it, but how much effort are they putting into it? It's hard to say - not at all, or slightly yes. HOW MUCH?

2. What intrigued or surprised you about how you responded?

- Giving the benefit of the doubt to some businesses not knowing what they really do
- I Live in twin cities but working in Fergus has had a positive welcoming experience in Fergus falls
- Kept having to figure out what inclusion means struggle with words its broad Means different thing to each of us
- Question on how Fergus got grant and process behind it
- Interesting that each pillar of community has the same question it will be Interesting to see different sectors and how questions
- Something along the lines of current businesses including other diverse businesses, they are up and coming, as we are diving into the diversity. In the past, no I don't think so and that's not an accurate statement. All inclusive salon - no gender haircuts - only one in the town that clearly defines that line of "we are all inclusive". Business sectors are getting better about it but there is a little bit of support. Not only for gender, but different hair textures - I might be the only one in town that does all hair texture, and some people have been turned down in other salons due to their difference in hair texture. I love to see more salons with different hair.

3. What insights do you have about how welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls is within this sector?

- Survey can get broken out by all sorts of ways
- Power will be in if we can get lots of people
- Is it MN nice or real welcoming to your face and something else in private
- More community events hosting opening events that drive tourism. Chamber.
- Not intentionally broadcasting that they are welcoming so if you are not saying it directly is that what people will assume

- Downtown discussion on Street construction could have really made the improvements a positive thing. But all we heard was the grumble on social media
- Interested in historic preservation celebrate the improvement that are being made to counter the negativity
- Much is on social media big senior population that gets missed
- You have to take that step and become educated. Salon teachers and educators start to become open to being educated. “Education” and “open-mindedness” is crucial. Personal dream - stylists educator. I would love to start off with something like gender affirming conversations within the salon. Small businesses - how can we do this together? All different stylists to come together would be great! We (Fergus Falls) are a growing community and I also want to continue growing “exclusive” - I love politics and I am all about democracy - would like to see more come through at the local government. We have so many immigrants in town, have a hard time shopping and give something back to the community of Fergus Falls. There are many businesses where they don’t offer services through multiple languages. Fergus Falls used to be a hub for deaf community and they would bring them to Saint Cloud to educate them.

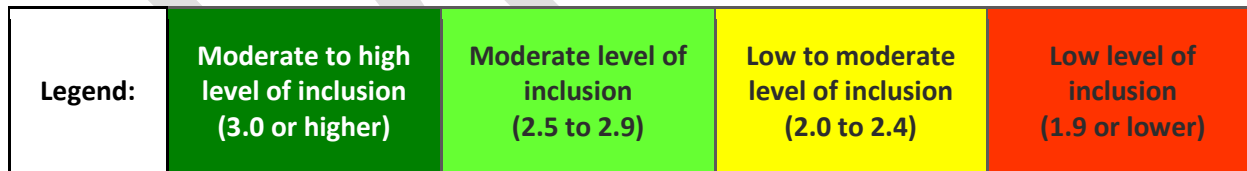
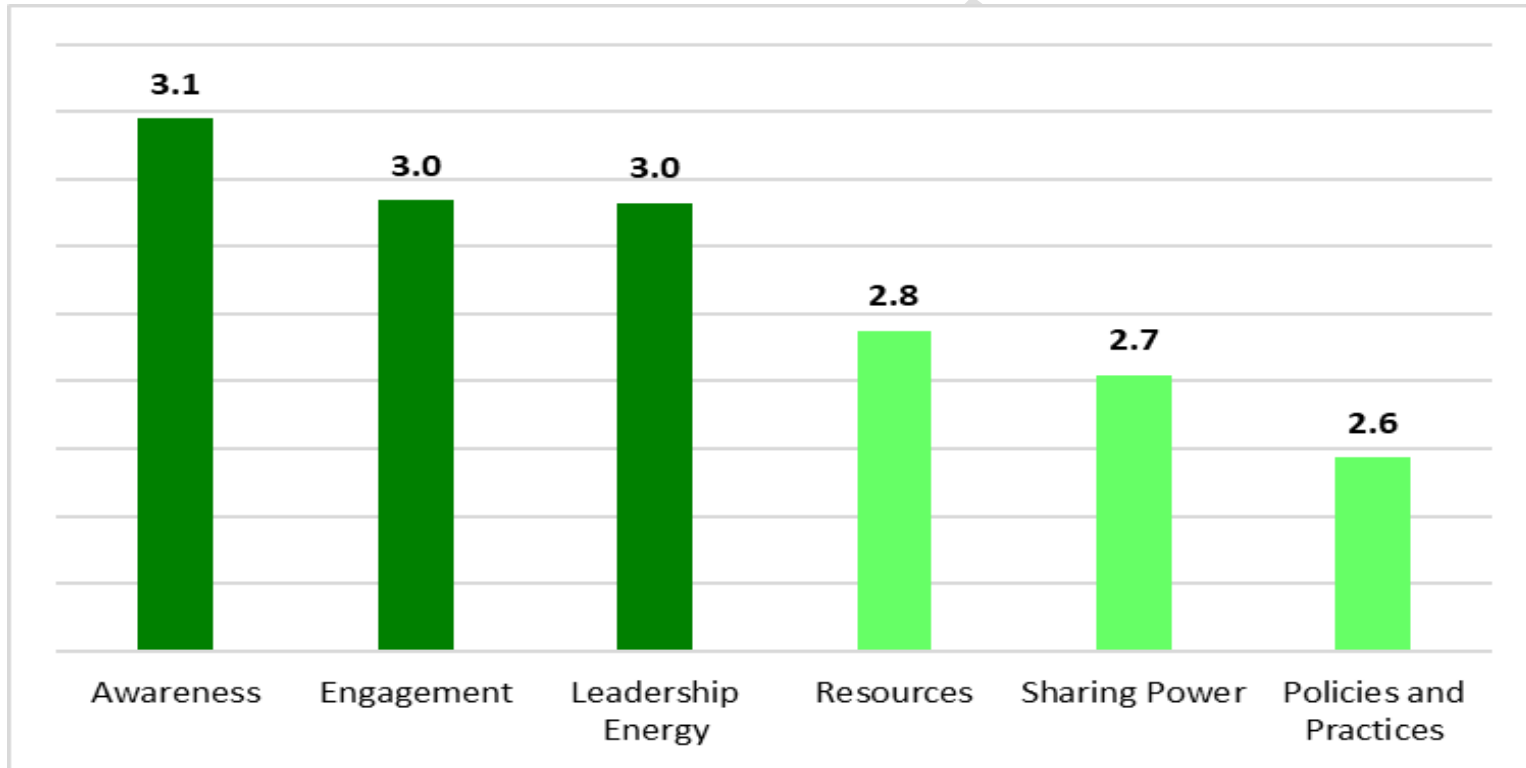
4. What action steps should be taken to foster a more welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls within this sector?

- How do we get the word out for positive events Public events
- Often event held outside feel more welcome to all
- Sponsor artist from the business venture music art
- Find a way to link in churches to promote businesses which can be hard as there are so many and no connections between them
- Grew up in Fergus and then left and now moved back for outdoor life. Like to dress up sometimes but also go pretty casual notice how they get treated differently in Jewelry stores.
- Is work being done to support BiPOC businesses if so lets celebrate it.
- Identifying different groups, chamber greater fERGUS Falls city and what they should be focused on. Some overlap each group working in each other's lane. Find ways for each to focus
- Used to be a group Forward fergus falls that kind of helped move some things together.
- Need an occasional gathering of businesses and organizations so everyone knows what others are working on
- So many on businesses are not open on sundays
- Portion of population that does not own a lake cabin that are around on weekends
- Need storefronts to clean up their act on a few places that are unused. Cover windows in Art
- Light up the Dam and the river. More community events make it more welcoming.
- Someone needs to take that big step and move forward and progress. There’s hardly any “they are not willing to draw that line and say that - I am all inclusive.” Education and clear communication is necessary to make that happen. My salon is listed under the “trans-friendly, gender-affirming” category and I have kids come from Morris and other regions. For me to become an educator, it is slightly difficult especially with “education-licensing” and there’s a need to be contracted with a company which limits an ability to outreach. There are some

businesses and merchants that welcome posters created by this participant, which gives information about this salon. A little bit more of the sign needs to be around.

DRAFT

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS (55 completed assessments)



Additional Comments from Survey

Part 1 - Awareness

- My experience is limited to only a couple of non profits in the area and they are limited in what they teach in regards to what type of non profit they are. For example an animal rescue won't be teaching about LGBTQ+ information.
- I work for a community foundation and see the collaborations with other nonprofits, businesses, government entities and know that inclusivity is of highest priority.
- Our mission is to bring people from all over the world to our community.
- Sunrise Rotary supports Afghan refugee to come to Fergus Falls
- I have been part of A Place To Belong & a supporter of SAGA Youth during my time here..
- Many have been proactive in removing barriers, but there is still work to be done! There are still barriers which "we" are not aware of.
- The public in general likely doesn't know the extent to which some non-profits go in order to include members of diverse sub-communities in hiring and developing those people. Non-profits could do a better job of sharing this.
- They don't always make places accessible. (Handicap/wheelchair accessible)
- I suppose it depends on the non-profit. I would say that for the most part non-profits enhance this work
- What I have seen is a greater focus on getting all involved - however I don't know that it comes across.
- Certainly want to be inclusive
- Most local nonprofits have a basic understanding of inclusion, but few understand intersectional issues. I frequently find that where I'm included for disability issues, I'm still excluded for LGBTQ+ issues and where I'm included for LGBTQ+ issues, I'm still excluded for disability issues. Moreover, I am still somewhat bitter about an experience with A Place to Belong where one of the workers spent an exorbitant amount of time trying to convince me , a traumatized person, that the bigots that hate me have the right to hate me for existing and express it rather than spending that time helping me. They clearly had their priorities mixed up and lacked an understanding of the paradox of tolerance.
Working with Transem has been really helpful for me and they worked with my mental health provider to understand why I struggle so bad
- We are too aware and too loud about groups that feel they need special inclusive rights
- diverse backgrounds - arts, socio-economic, race - are all recognized and valued
- Many organizations offer these in major cities but not rurally.

Part 2 - Engagement

- I am happy to see some area nonprofits advertising via social Media as well as word of mouth or via print.
- Provides information to the community on ways to get involved through social media and other channels.

- We need to learn how to communicate beyond the dominant cultural norm
- Nonprofits strive to include marginalized populations in opportunities from services to employing so all have access to the same things
- Lots of language barriers
- We need to continue to explore communication strategies
- There may be more information avenues that I am not exposed to
- I'm still upset that LRAC has few or no programs for disabled and LGBTQ+ people.
- Sadly the Salvation Army remains decidedly anti-lgbtq as part of its national identity
- I can't speak for all NPOs, just the small number I'm involved with, but that's not what you're asking (in all these surveys). That being said, the ones I know of are generally White and male and older and are not concerned about diversity and inclusion but their own missions.
- Community - people need to open their minds to become involved.

Part 3 - Resources

- Operational budgets are tight so more funding is needed. Many programs include an awareness around inclusion.
- Finding ways to disburse funding, yet holding people accountable, while working to be more inclusive is challenging. Cultural norms of the dominant sector are perceived as "common sense" rather than a norm which could be creating barriers.
- More funding is always helpful but many non-profits prioritize diversity and inclusion
- Lots of misappropriation of funds
- I am part of a small group that does host inclusion events for LGBT+ youth but even that feels inclusive on a limited basis.
- Some do, most do not (in regards to 2nd statement)
- Not a great priority
- I know that several local nonprofits use state and local money to fund programs, and that Someplace Safe put an inclusion plan in place for LGBTQ+ people. However, I'm upset that there's no self-defense programs for LGBTQ+ people through any of the local nonprofits when LGBTQ+ people experience higher rates of victimization than the general population. Part of the reason for this is because the police officers who provide most of these programs can't be trusted to be kind to anyone in LGBTQ+ community. I'd also be interested to see self-defense programs for the disability community.
- Stop forcing inclusion down our throats!

Part 4 - Leadership Energy

- It is still difficult to recruit diverse members from a smaller pool within the community.
- The leadership at the nonprofit I work has been asked repeatedly to include persons from diverse groups to serve on the board of directors, recruit volunteers . Zero has been done
- It is difficult to recruit diverse volunteer leadership when one's social capital is not diverse

- Some nonprofits affiliated with child care, anti-poverty initiatives, and health care devote much time to the three listed areas above and provide follow-up evaluation to ensure their compliance.
- At least in the organization where I work
- Some leaders expressed interest in the feedback I provided even though I wasn't a member of their organization. There's still no LGBTQ+ or disabled leaders in most organizations and very few if any BIPOC people. There are quite a few women leaders though.
- I'm reflecting on the public library
- They know where their resources come from and utilize them.

Part 5 - Sharing Power

- Depending on the non-profit, many traits of leadership roles have been created by the dominant cultural, making it harder to bring in diverse leaders
- Head Start is one of the emerging non-profits, NGOs to require inclusion of their targeted population on their boards
- The issue lies in the demographics - with such a large caucasian population the groups become skewed to that thought process
- Re: "...too bad..." = NP groups usually just follow established systems of selecting leaders = from active volunteers, do ___ of the organization, whatever vs actively recruiting from an external group or population. Familiarity is the likely watchword rather than exclusion
- Would likely welcome any capable diverse individual to leadership
- This community is mostly straight, white, able-bodied/minded, and cisgender so the leadership reflects that demographic. However, this demographic only exists because no minority in their right mind is willing to move here. It's not welcoming because there are so many bigots. I only live here because I lack the means to leave.
- Nonprofits bring in people to our community that just live off the system. I don't care who you are, but if you have the ability to be a useful member of society, great! If not, stay in you current home
- Majorly in metro areas, not often in rural areas.
- Use radio to reach community

Part 6 - Policies and Practices

- The local party units of The Otter Tail County DFL, a group (not a non-profit) is the only group to which I am affiliated that ensures inclusive actions on the part of members and leaders. Not all members, of course, feel as committed to the topic of DEI
- Some work needs to be done on data collection and measuring impact
- It's a matter of opportunity, I think it's not necessarily a conscious priority
- I don't know the actual policies involved, only the results of those policies.
- Unfortunately, non-profit groups who accept government subsidies and grants are enslaved to government rules. They are not free to manage their organizations according to actual need and common sense. Of course, they have to be open to inclusion and diversity, whether or not it is

beneficial to their organization. Priorities must focus on goals, not statistics, and character, not color. This survey is rather superficial, is it not? No critical thinking is allowed.

- If we move diverse groups into our community just for the sake of inclusion, what will be the plan for integration, especially if they are refugees from third world countries? Education (learning the language), social (accepting our culture as well), hygiene (vetting for bedbugs and cockroaches, using public bathrooms, protecting rental housing. Who pays for this? Fergus Falls residents are already stressed.
- Creating educational programs or partnering with organizations that support people to adjust to the social norms such as infrastructure use, etc.
- I would be surprised if any of the items in this survey happen at all.
- Continue current policies

Notes from Small Group Discussion: In-Person Session (11/14/23)

1. What words or phrases caught your attention as you completed your assessment? For this question go around the circle and ask everyone to respond.

- Diverse groups. Equity and equality. Supporting inclusion efforts. Awareness. Sharing power. Different lived experiences. Inclusion. Inclusion. Leadership responsive.
- Inclusion. Power and the importance of inclusion. Budget. Measuring. Non-profit. Leadership. Understand or awareness. Inclusion.

2. What intrigued or surprised you about how you responded?

- How many times did you circle “don’t know.”
- Lack of knowledge.
- Increased awareness of what I can do in the non-profit sector. Difference in groups when there are lots of nonprofits - Giving one answer for each question doesn’t work well for the broad category of non-profits.
- We live in a community that doesn’t have a lot of diversity - difficult to recruit diversity.
- It’s uncomfortable for BiPOC to feel welcome if there isn’t already representation.
- Not structured for all. For Example shift workers or other socioeconomic status. If things aren’t set up to get certain groups it’s hard to get them there.
- Board of directors isn’t diverse. Which is reflective of social circles. We have to look for diverse people. We look for lawyers or accountants not diversity.
- Grants require diversity and there is inability to recruit diverse people, so grants are unattainable. Real lack of diversity in community
- Normative of whiteness, so assumptions are made. Example: someone said “we all came over on the same boat.” It was an exclusionary remark only noticed by one person of color.
- Couldn’t respond to the whole city, only the ones they work with. Couldn’t generalize. Leadership - follow established systems of recruiting leaders. Recruit the same people all the time. How to create ways to recruit diversity?

3. What insights do you have about how welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls is within this sector?

- Divide between intent which is well meaning and ability to bring diversity in.
- Is our own social circle varied enough? Disconnect between the idea or intent and how to make it happen. Small pool of people who are from marginalized populations.
- The Nonprofit sector is more inclusive and aware. Often because of having to follow the money rules or guidelines. Leadership and employees often have different awareness.

4. What action steps should be taken to foster a more welcoming and inclusive Fergus Falls within this sector?

- Applying grants that require diversity, equity and inclusion cause organizations to look for people from diverse cultures. Call Pelican Rapids which is a diverse culture. Learn from each other. Gather around food. Sharing food sharing space, so people know what opportunities there are. Here are opportunities one can choose from.
- Nonprofits missions are to seek out inclusivity. What more can they do? They are also proactive. The Challenge is that leadership isn't very diverse. Boards need to be intentional about recruitment and those they serve. The way we have always done and being open to new ways or cultural norms. Seeking people out for information about services needed and not wait for people to come to them. Nonprofits will help with conditions expected in return, especially non-profits that are attached to churches. Don't have the businesses to keep our community going.