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International Association of Fire Chiefs

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Study of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Fire and EMS

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Working for a fire-safe America

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Executive Summary: Study of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Fire and EMS

Introduction

The following executive summary presents findings from a comprehensive study on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the fire service and emergency medical services industries. This study aimed to identify strategies to promote greater diversity and inclusion in predominantly male-dominated fields. The research utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from an electronic participant feedback form and qualitative insights from in-person focus groups conducted across diverse settings. Quantitative data is information that can be measured and displayed numerically, with specific units of measurement. Qualitative data is information that is not numerical and is displayed as a written narrative.

Methodology

The study engaged 1,890 participants through a structured electronic feedback form designed collaboratively by a stakeholder group of fire service leaders and International Association of Fire Chiefs staff, guided by a DEI subject matter expert (SME). The questionnaire focused on understanding perceptions of DEI terminology, initiatives, and organizational commitments. This electronic form provided primarily quantitative data. Additionally, qualitative data was gathered from three distinct focus groups: one in an urban area, one exclusively comprising women in the fire service, and one from a rural area. These focus groups provided nuanced insights into DEI challenges and opportunities across various audiences within the fire service.

Key Findings

Perceptions and understanding of DEI:

- Participants expressed varying levels of familiarity with existing DEI terminology, initiatives and department commitment.
- Urban and rural respondents showed differing levels of awareness and implementation of DEI practices.
- Women in the fire service highlighted unique challenges and opportunities related to gender equity and inclusion.

Barriers to DEI:

- Varying interpretations of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) definitions may contribute to a lack of clarity regarding how DEI initiatives can improve the fire service.
- DEI training within the fire service is often inconsistent, ineffective, lacking credibility, and is generally not mandatory.
- Common barriers identified included entrenched cultural norms within the fire service, lack of diversity in leadership, and perceived resistance to change.

Recommendations

- Policy and Procedural Changes: Develop and implement robust and consistent DEI terminology, definitions and policies that are reflective of community demographics and state regulations.
- Training and Education: Develop and provide ongoing DEI training at all levels of the fire service to enhance understanding and foster inclusive practices. Utilize members of the fire service to develop DEI training that is by the fire service, for the fire service.
- Leadership Commitment: Foster a sustained, top-down commitment to DEI through visible leadership, accountability measures, and resource allocation.

Conclusion

The findings from this study underscore the importance of advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the fire service to better align with the communities served. By addressing identified barriers and leveraging key drivers, fire service organizations can enhance their effectiveness and relevance in increasingly diverse environments. The recommendations provided aim to guide strategic actions that promote a more inclusive culture and workforce, ensuring the fire service remains responsive and reflective of community needs.

Introduction

The issue of DEI is currently a pressing concern within the Fire and Emergency Medical Services across the United States. Many local departments are grappling with challenges related to recruitment and retention, exacerbated by instances of workplace discrimination, harassment, and bullying. These issues not only strain staffing levels but also impact service quality and community relations. To address these challenges, the United States Fire Administration (USFA) tasked the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) to assess the DEI posture across the country. Leveraging its extensive expertise and partnerships, IAFC spearheaded a comprehensive national study on DEI in Fire and EMS. This initiative aimed to identify critical issues and propose solutions through collaborative efforts with major fire and emergency service organizations, federal agencies, and other stakeholders. The study will utilize workshops, focus groups, and quantitative feedback processes to inform a detailed report, fostering inclusive practices and enhancing operational effectiveness across departments nationwide.

Methodology – Mixed Methods Research

Mixed methods research has emerged as a robust approach to inquiry that integrates the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, providing researchers with a more comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), mixed methods research involves "collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies" (p. 5). This methodological approach enables researchers to triangulate findings from diverse data sources, thereby enhancing the validity and breadth of their research outcomes (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

By combining qualitative insights with quantitative measurements, researchers can delve more deeply into research questions, capturing both the statistical patterns and the contextual meanings that underpin phenomena (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This integrated approach is particularly advantageous in fields such as education, health sciences, and social sciences, where understanding human behavior and societal dynamics requires a nuanced and multifaceted perspective (Fetters et al., 2013).

In applied fields, mixed methods research is particularly valuable for informing policy and practice. By combining qualitative exploration with quantitative evidence, researchers can provide actionable insights that bridge the gap between theory and application (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Consequently, mixed methods research continues to evolve as a cornerstone of methodology that enriches scholarly inquiry and policy development across diverse disciplines. It offers

nuanced insights that singular approaches cannot fully achieve, thereby advancing our understanding of complex issues in meaningful ways.

Human Resources & DEI

With respect to the role of Human Resources vis-à-vis DEI, Human Resources (HR) in the fire service involves various functions, including recruitment, training, employee relations, and performance management, all shaped by the high-stress, physically demanding nature of the job and the importance of teamwork. Recruitment and selection are notably competitive, relying on traditional methods like written exams, physical tests, and interviews to evaluate candidates' technical skills and psychological resilience. Recent literature highlights the need for more comprehensive assessment tools to better align candidates with job demands (Santos et al., 2020). Training and development are critical, with an emphasis on continuous professional growth and both technical and leadership skills (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Retention and job satisfaction are influenced by factors such as job stress, work-life balance, and career development opportunities, with strategies focusing on support systems, mental health resources, and a positive work environment (Wright & Smith, 2019).

Effective recruitment strategies are essential for attracting qualified candidates. These include community outreach to engage diverse pools of candidates (Clark, 2022), using diverse recruitment channels like social media and job fairs to increase applicant diversity (Jones et al., 2023), and employing innovative selection processes such as simulation-based assessments (Williams & Lee, 2021). The integration of DEI in recruitment has become increasingly important in addressing historical underrepresentation and promoting a more inclusive environment. DEI initiatives in recruitment focus on targeting underrepresented groups through tailored outreach efforts and reducing barriers that may impede diverse candidates' entry into the fire service. This includes rethinking traditional selection criteria and methods to ensure they do not disproportionately disadvantage certain groups. Additionally, DEI strategies aim to create a welcoming and supportive recruitment experience that encourages a diverse range of candidates to apply and succeed. The focus on DEI is not just about increasing diversity but also about fostering an environment where all recruits feel valued and supported, thus contributing to a more inclusive and effective workforce (Taylor & Martinez, 2022; Garcia & Lee, 2023).

Overall, the literature underscores that effective HR management, innovative recruitment strategies, and a strong DEI focus are crucial for building a capable, diverse fire service workforce. Continued research and policy development in these areas are essential for enhancing the effectiveness and inclusivity of fire service organizations.

DEI Training

Effective DEI training is crucial for creating a more inclusive and equitable environment in the fire service. Although there is no universally mandated standard or approved curriculum for DEI training, several best practices and sources are recognized in the field. Recommended types of DEI training include cultural competency training, which enhances understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives; bias and sensitivity training, which helps individuals identify and address unconscious biases; anti-discrimination training, which covers legal and organizational policies on discrimination; leadership and inclusion training, which develops leaders' skills in fostering an inclusive workplace; and conflict resolution training, which equips personnel with strategies to handle diversity-related conflicts. Sources for DEI training include professional organizations like the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), accredited providers such as the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) and the National Diversity Council (NDC), universities offering specialized courses, online platforms like Coursera and LinkedIn Learning, and customized in-house training programs tailored to specific departmental needs. Best practices for DEI training involve making it a regular and ongoing part of professional development, incorporating interactive and practical content, and continuously evaluating and improving training programs based on feedback. These approaches collectively help fire departments build a more inclusive and effective workforce.

Quantitative Data

A feedback form used in this study was developed collaboratively with a stakeholder group comprising leaders and experts from various fire service organizations committed to advancing DEI within the field. These stakeholders were selected with the assistance of IAFC staff, who are actively engaged in cultivating partnerships and designing programs with multiple agencies. Furthermore, input from a SME specializing in DEI, specifically recommended for this project, further enriched the stakeholder composition. This inclusive approach ensured that the feedback form comprehensively captured valuable insights and perspectives essential for promoting DEI initiatives within the fire service sector.

Particular attention was given to designing the feedback form to mitigate response fatigue among participants. The form consisted of a total of 25 questions, strategically crafted to gather comprehensive insights into DEI perceptions within the fire service. To further alleviate any potential burden on respondents, 15 follow-up questions were included only if participants chose to provide additional feedback, ensuring that the data collection process remained

respectful of their time and engagement levels. This approach aimed to maximize the quality and depth of responses while maintaining respondent comfort and participation.

All responses gathered for this study were completely anonymous. Participants were not required to disclose any personal identification information, and the data collected did not include any details that could identify individuals or organizations.

Geographic Areas

The feedback form was disseminated to both career and volunteer organizations within the ten geographic regions established by the FEMA. Respondents represented 46 states and Washington, D.C., covering all 10 FEMA Regions.

FEMA Region	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8	Region 9	Region 10
States Represented by Feedback Form Responses	Massachusetts	New Jersey	Delaware	Alabama	Indiana	Arkansas	Iowa	Colorado	Arizona	Alaska
	Rhode Island	New York	District of Columbia	Florida	Illinois	Louisiana	Kansas	Montana	California	Idaho
	Connecticut		Maryland	Georgia	Michigan	New Mexico	Missouri	North Dakota	Nevada	Oregon
	Maine		Pennsylvania	Kentucky	Minnesota	Oklahoma	Nebraska	South Dakota		Washington
	New Hampshire		Virginia	North Carolina	Ohio	Texas		Utah		
				South Carolina	Wisconsin			Wyoming		
				Tennessee						

Figure 1: States represented by feedback form respondents, as well as Washington, D.C.

Of the 1,890 respondents who completed the form, only 1,889 were included in the analysis due to one respondent being identified in a state that does not align with their designated FEMA region. As their response deviated in their geographic location – stating they work in a state that is not included in the FEMA Region they had chosen – the entire response was left out of further analysis. This participant stated they were a career member, from North Carolina, Region 10, and identified as Male, African American, affiliated with the Fire Department, serving in an Urban area, holding the rank of Captain as a Company Officer.

See all 50 states, and Washington, D.C., listed by FEMA Region below.

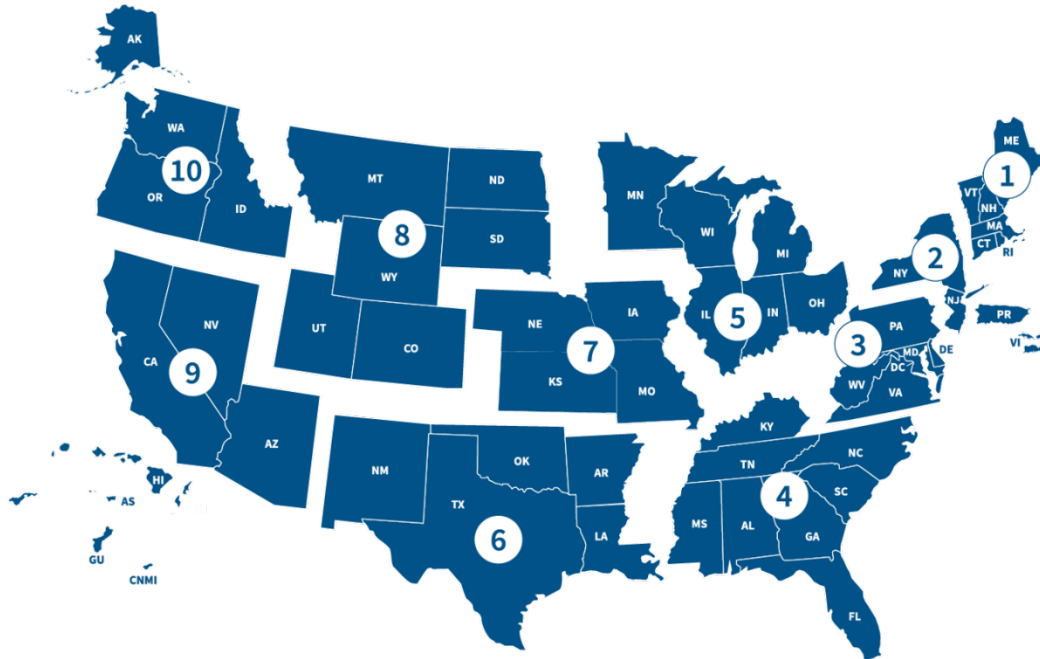


Figure 2: States identified by FEMA Region

Primary Agency Type

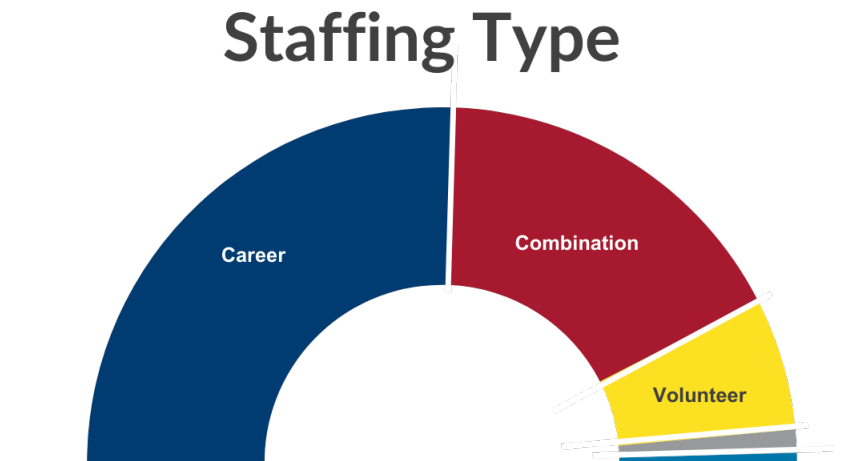
Out of the 1,889 responses received, the breakdown by affiliation is as follows: 1,774 individuals (94.02%) were affiliated with the Fire Service, 80 (4.24%) were associated with Emergency Medical Services (EMS), 12 (0.64%) were involved in Emergency Management, 3 (0.16%) worked in Emergency Communications, and 18 (0.95%) fell into other categories within the fire industry.

Responses by Primary Agency Type		
Primary Agency Type	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Fire Service	1,774	94.02%
Emergency Medical Services	80	4.24%
Emergency Management	12	0.64%
Emergency Communications	3	0.16%
Other	18	0.95%
Total	1,889	100.00%

Figure 3: Responses by Primary Agency Type

Primary Staffing Type

The distribution of respondents by fire service affiliation revealed a predominant presence of career fire service personnel. Specifically, 1,428 individuals, constituting 75.6% of the sample, identified themselves as career firefighters. A notable proportion, comprising 319 respondents (16.89%), reported being affiliated with both career and volunteer firefighting services. Volunteer firefighters accounted for 114 participants, making up 6.03% of the total sample. A smaller contingent, comprising 20 individuals (1.06%), indicated their affiliation with private firefighting services, while eight respondents (0.42%) fell into the "other" category. These findings underscore the diverse composition of the firefighting workforce, highlighting the significant representation of career firefighters alongside contributions from volunteers and private sector personnel.



Breakdown of feedback form respondents by their organization's staffing type.

Figure 4: Responses by staffing type - graph

Responses by Staffing Type		
Primary Staffing Type	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Career	1,428	75.60%
Combination	319	16.89%
Volunteer	114	6.03%
Private	20	1.06%
Other	8	0.42%
Total	1,889	100.00%

Figure 5: Responses by Primary Staffing Type - table

Government Type

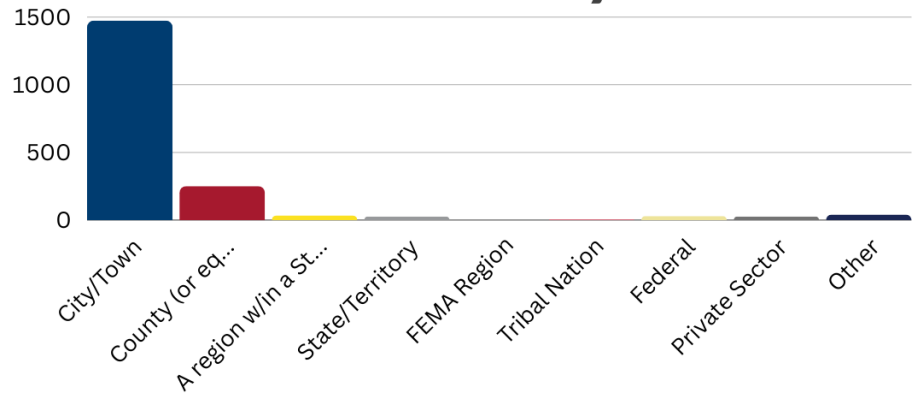
Among the 1,889 participants who responded to the feedback form, the majority, comprising 1,474 individuals or 77.99% of the total sample, resided in urban or town settings. A significant proportion, consisting of 252 respondents (13.33%), indicated their residence in a county or equivalent administrative area. A smaller number of participants, totaling 40 individuals (2.12%), identified with other unspecified locations. Furthermore, 35 respondents (1.85%) hailed from

specific regional areas within states or territories, while 29 individuals (1.53%) were affiliated with federal areas. Additionally, 27 participants (1.43%) were associated with the private sector, and a minority of six respondents (0.32%) reported their residence within a tribal nation.

These findings illustrate

the geographic diversity of the study's participants, reflecting a wide distribution across various administrative and jurisdictional levels.

Level of Government/Type of Entity



Breakdown of feedback form respondents by type of government.

Figure 6: Responses by Type of Government – Bar Graph

Responses by Level of Government/Type of Entity Represented		
Type of Government	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
City/Town	1,474	77.99%
County (or equivalent)	251	13.33%
A Region Within a State or Territory	35	1.85%
State/Territory	27	1.43%
FEMA Region	0	0%
Tribal Nation	6	0.32%
Federal	29	1.53%
Private Sector	27	1.43%
Other	40	2.12%
Total	1,889	100.00%

Figure 7: Responses by Type of Government - Table

Response Areas

Among the 1,889 participants, the distribution across different geographic settings was as follows: 1,051 individuals, constituting 55.66% of the sample, resided in urban areas. A significant proportion, comprising 612 respondents (32.38%), identified themselves as residing in suburban areas. Furthermore, 208 participants (11.01%) indicated their residence in rural areas. A smaller group of 18 individuals (0.95%) reported being from industrial areas.

Primary Response Area

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural
- Industrial

Breakdown of feedback form respondents by response area.

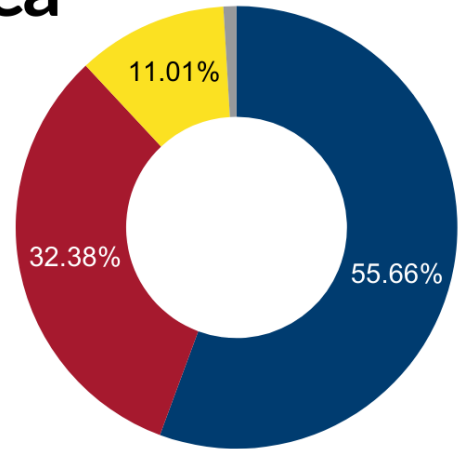


Figure 8: Responses by Primary Response Area – Donut Graph

These findings highlight the varied geographic representation within the participant cohort, reflecting diverse residential backgrounds across urban, suburban, rural, and industrial settings.

Responses by Primary Response Area		
Response Area	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Urban	1,051	55.66%
Suburban	612	32.38%
Rural	208	11.01%
Industrial	18	0.95%
Total	1,889	100.00%

Figure 9: Responses by Primary Response Area - Table

Rank

A breakdown of participant distribution by rank revealed that 275 individuals, comprising 14.55% of the sample, held the position of chief. Assistant chiefs accounted for 95 respondents (5.03%), while deputy chiefs represented 115 participants (6.08%). Battalion chiefs constituted 132 individuals (6.98%), and lieutenants comprised 191 participants (10.11%). Captains made up a

Rank

Breakdown of feedback form respondents by their rank.

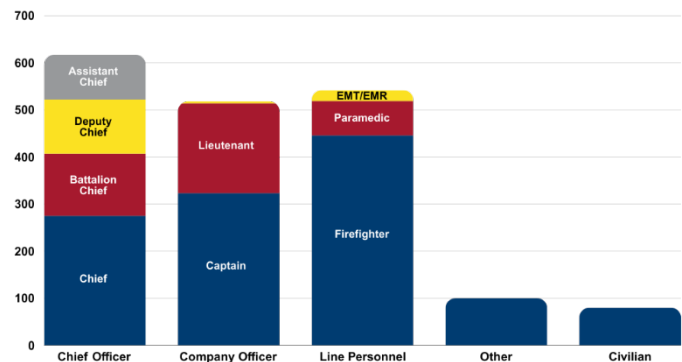


Figure 10: Responses by Rank - bar graph

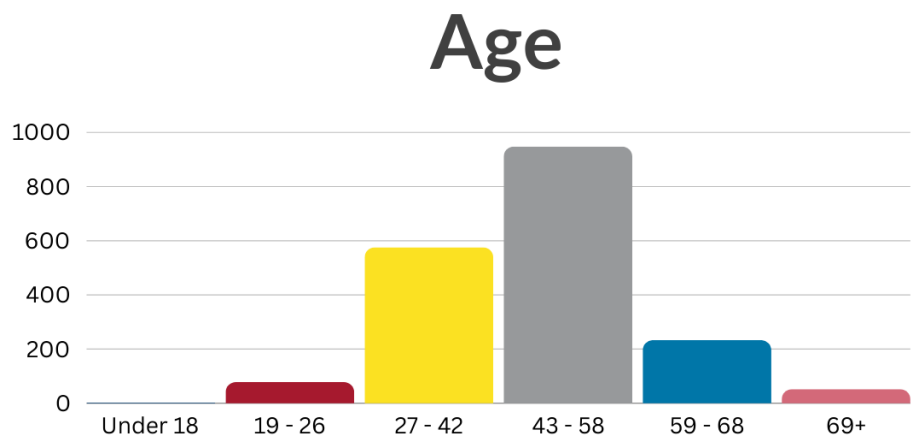
significant portion with 323 respondents (17.14%), while firefighters constituted the largest group at 446 individuals (24.66%). Paramedics and EMS personnel accounted for 73 (3.86%) and 23 participants (1.22%), respectively. Additionally, 100 respondents (5.29%) identified with other roles, and 80 participants (4.23%) reported civilian status. This comprehensive distribution highlights the diverse occupational roles within the fire service represented in the study.

Responses by Rank		
Rank	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Firefighter	466	24.66%
Captain	323	17.14%
Chief	275	14.55%
Lieutenant	191	10.11%
Battalion Chief	132	6.98%
Deputy Chief	115	6.08%
Other	100	5.29%
Assistant Chief	95	5.03%
Civilian/Nonsworn Employee	80	4.23%
Paramedic	73	3.86%
EMT	23	1.22%
Total	1,889	100.00%

Figure 11: Responses by Rank – Table

Age

Of the 1,889 participants who responded to the feedback form, age distribution revealed distinct patterns across various age groups. The largest cohort, comprising 948 individuals or 50.21% of the sample, fell within the 43-to-58-year age range. Participants aged 27 to 42 years constituted 576 individuals, accounting for 30.48% of the total. A smaller proportion, totaling 233 respondents (12.33%), belonged to the 59-to-68-year age group. Younger participants, aged 19 to 26 years, numbered 78 individuals (4.13%), while those aged 69 years represented 52 participants (2.75%). A minimal number of respondents, totaling two individuals (0.11%), were under the age of 18. These findings underscore the diverse age demographics captured within the participant sample, reflecting a broad spectrum of ages across the fire service community.



Breakdown of feedback form respondents by age.

Figure 12: Responses by Age – Bar Graph

Race

When respondents were queried about their racial identity, the results demonstrated a predominant demographic composition within the specified categories. A substantial majority, accounting for 76.21% of participants, identified as Caucasian. This group was followed by 18.86% who identified as Black or African American. Additionally, smaller proportions of the respondents identified as American Indian and Alaskan Native (1.22%), Asian (0.95%), and Hawaiian Native and Pacific Islander (0.22%). These classifications align with the U.S. Census racial categories, highlighting the distribution of racial identities among the participating population.

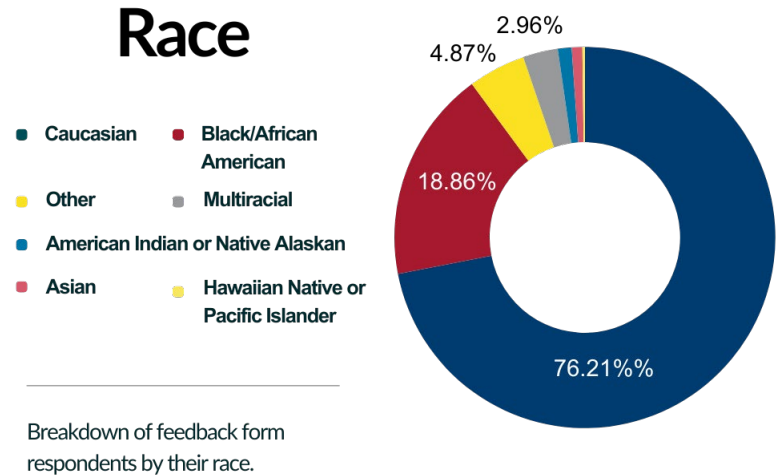


Figure 13: Responses by race – donut graph

It is essential to acknowledge that the feedback form incorporated racial categories beyond those specified in the U.S. Census, notably encompassing multi-racial and other identities. Among the respondents, 2.96% identified as multi-racial, indicating a diversity of heritage and backgrounds not captured by traditional census classifications. Additionally, 4.87% of respondents identified under the category of "other," reflecting further nuances and complexities in racial self-identification. These findings underscore the importance of inclusive data collection methods that respect and accommodate the diverse racial identities present within the responding population, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of demographic dynamics.

Responses by Race – Total population source: Population Estimates 7/1/22 (V2022) – Census QF				
Race	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses	US Population 2022	% of US Population 2022
American Indian and Alaska Native	22	1.22%	3,725,166	1.50%
Asian	17	0.95%	17,924,164	7.23%
Black/African American	339	18.86%	29,099,010	11.74%
Caucasian	1,359	75.63%	188,892,347	76.21%
Hawaiian Native and Pacific Islander	4	0.22%	504,406	0.20%
Multi-Racial/Two or More Races	56	3.12%	7,707,890	3.11%
Other	92	4.87%	-	-
Total	1,889	100.00%	247,852,983	100%

Figure 14: Responses by race – table

To assess the racial composition of respondents on the feedback form relative to the corresponding populations within each FEMA region, 2022 U.S. Census Quick Facts data were utilized. This involved aggregating state populations by region and calculating the racial breakdown percentages for each region. A graphical representation was then generated to compare the racial makeup of respondents with the regional demographic profiles. The analysis revealed that overall, the respondents aligned closely with the regional population demographics for most racial categories. However, notable discrepancies were observed specifically in the representation of Asian and Black/African American populations. The proportion of Asians among the respondents was lower than their representation in each respective region, suggesting potential underrepresentation in the respondents. Conversely, the percentage of respondents identifying as Black/African American exceeded their population percentages in some regions, indicating a higher level of engagement among this demographic group in the feedback process.

The other category constitutes over 150 designations associated with Asian, Native American, Black, Pacific Islander, etc. That category was omitted from Census data above as there is not a way to draw direct comparisons.

Ethnicity

A comparative analysis was also undertaken for the sole ethnicity reported in 2022 Census Quick Facts, Hispanic or Latino. Among the participants in the feedback form, 107 individuals, constituting 5.66% of respondents, identified as Hispanic or Latino. This figure was juxtaposed against the respective percentages derived from the total population by FEMA region, which averaged 26.57%. This disparity highlights a significant underrepresentation of Hispanic or Latino individuals among respondents relative to their prevalence in the general population within each region.

Responses by Ethnicity – Total population source: Population Estimates 7/1/22 (V2022) – Census QF				
Ethnicity	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses	US Population 2022	% of US Population 2022
Hispanic or Latino	106	5.66%	51,976,157	26.57%
Non-Hispanic or Non-Latino	1,782	94.34%	143,640,983	73.43%
Total	1,889	100.00%	195,617,140	100%

Figure 15: Responses by ethnicity – table

Gender

The feedback form asked the participants from various segments of the fire service how they identified. The distribution of gender identity revealed significant trends. A substantial majority, comprising 1,543 individuals or 81.68% of the sample, identified as male. In contrast, 290 participants (15.34%) identified as female, highlighting a notable gender disparity within the profession. Additionally, 43 respondents (2.28%) opted not to disclose their gender. A smaller yet significant proportion, consisting of 8 participants (0.42%), identified as "other" in terms of their gender identity, while 5 individuals (0.26%) identified as nonbinary.

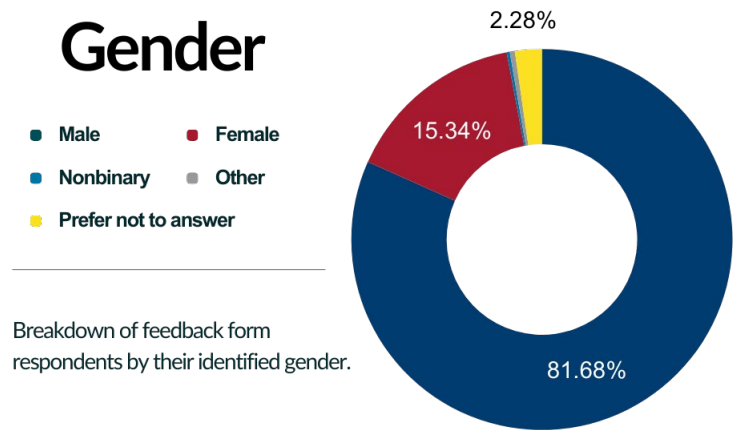


Figure 16: Responses by gender – donut graph

The 2022 U.S. Census Quick Facts comparative analysis was conducted to examine the gender distribution of participants relative to the total population within each FEMA region. The findings revealed notable variances: male respondents accounted for 84.18% of participants compared to 61.80% of the male population, indicating a significant overrepresentation of males. Conversely, female respondents constituted 15.82% of participants compared to 38.20% of the female population, highlighting a substantial underrepresentation of females. These disparities underscore a gender imbalance within the fire service.

Responses by Gender – Total population source: 2022 US Census Quick Facts				
Gender	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses	US Population 2022	% of US Population 2022
Male	1,543	84.18%	201,765,941	61.80%
Female	290	15.82%	124,705,998	38.20%
Total	1,833	100.00%	326,471,939	100%

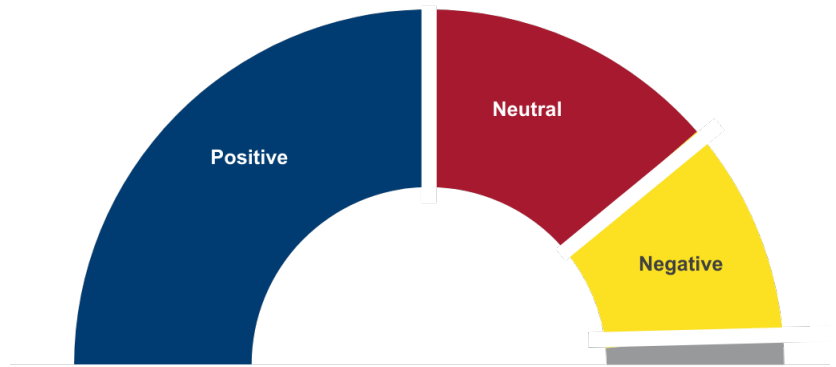
Figure 17: Responses by Gender, Male and Female – table

Feelings About DEI

When queried about their sentiments concerning DEI within the fire service, respondents provided diverse perspectives. Nearly half of the participants, totaling 49.31%, expressed positive feelings toward DEI initiatives. In contrast, a significant portion, accounting for 27.88%, adopted a neutral stance, reflecting varying degrees of uncertainty or ambivalence. Meanwhile, 21.27% of respondents conveyed negative sentiments regarding DEI efforts in the fire service. A small fraction, representing 1.53% of respondents, opted not to disclose their feelings on this

matter. These findings underscore a spectrum of attitudes within the fire service community regarding DEI, highlighting both areas of support and areas requiring attention or improvement in fostering inclusive environments, commensurate with the goals of the study.

Personal Feelings on DEI



Breakdown of feedback form respondents by their personal feelings on DEI in the fire and emergency medical services.

Figure 18: Responses by feelings about DEI - graph

Responses by Personal Feelings on DEI		
Response	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Positive	932	49.31%
Neutral	526	27.88%
Negative	402	21.27%
I do not know what DEI means	29	1.53%
Total	1,889	100%

Figure 19: Responses by feelings about DEI - table

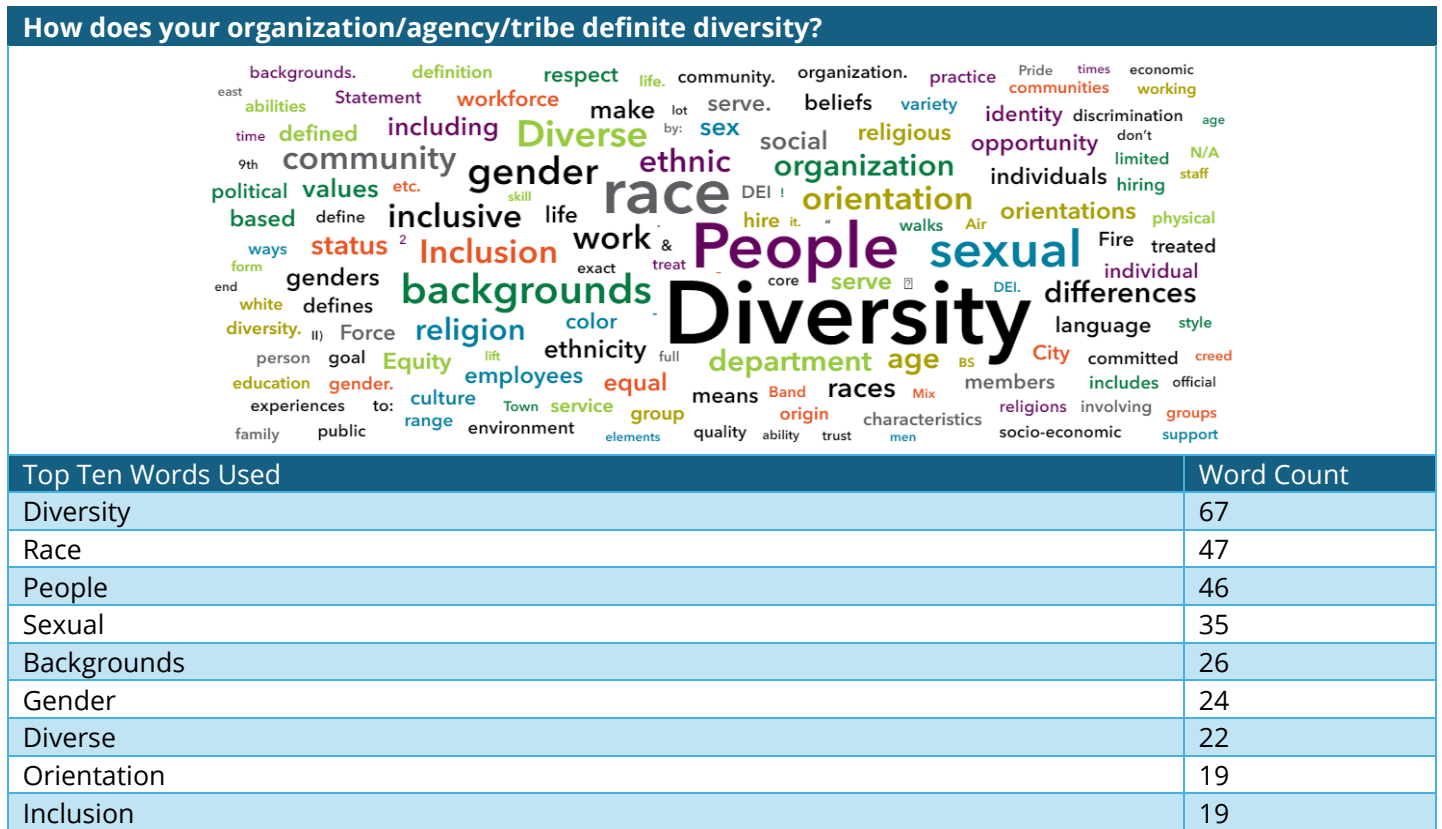
DEI Definitions

The responses regarding respondents' feelings toward DEI in the fire service may be closely tied to the presence of official definitions and statements within their respective organizations. A notable proportion, comprising 29.05% of participants, indicated that their organizations lacked official definitions pertaining to DEI. In contrast, 28.04% affirmed the existence of such definitions, suggesting a structured approach to DEI initiatives within those organizations. Additionally, 22.59% reported that their organizations relied on definitions provided by jurisdictional authorities, highlighting variability in governance frameworks influencing DEI practices. Significantly, 20.32% of respondents expressed uncertainty regarding the presence of official DEI definitions within their organizations. These findings underscore the potential correlation between organizational clarity on DEI principles and the varying attitudes expressed by respondents toward DEI efforts in the fire service. Clear and explicit DEI frameworks may play a pivotal role in shaping organizational culture and fostering positive perceptions and practices related to diversity and inclusion.

Responses by Organizational DEI Definitions		
Response	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
No	549	29.05%
Yes	530	28.04%
My organization relies on our jurisdiction's definitions	426	22.59%
I don't know	384	20.32%
Total	1,889	100%

Figure 20: Responses by the presence of organization definitions of DEI - table

When respondents were prompted to define the terms diversity, equity, and inclusion in their organizations through free-form responses, an analysis of their submissions revealed notable trends. The majority of responses either reiterated the terms themselves without providing additional elaboration or used the terms interchangeably, suggesting a conflated understanding of their distinct meanings. This finding was underscored by a word cloud analysis, which visually depicted the frequency of these terms in respondents' descriptions. Such observations indicate a potential gap in the clarity and specificity with which these concepts are understood and operationalized within organizational contexts, particularly within the fire service. Effective DEI initiatives rely on a precise understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion as distinct yet interrelated components of organizational culture and practice. Addressing these nuances is essential for fostering meaningful dialogue and implementing targeted strategies to promote inclusivity and equity within diverse work environments.



Inclusive	19
Work	19

Figure 21: Word cloud created from organization/agency/tribe definitions of diversity and table of the top ten words used.

Addressing these nuances is essential for fostering meaningful dialogue and implementing targeted strategies to promote inclusivity and equity within diverse work environments. Top of Form

It should be noted 249 of the 1,889 respondents chose to provide their organization, agency, or tribe’s definition of diversity.

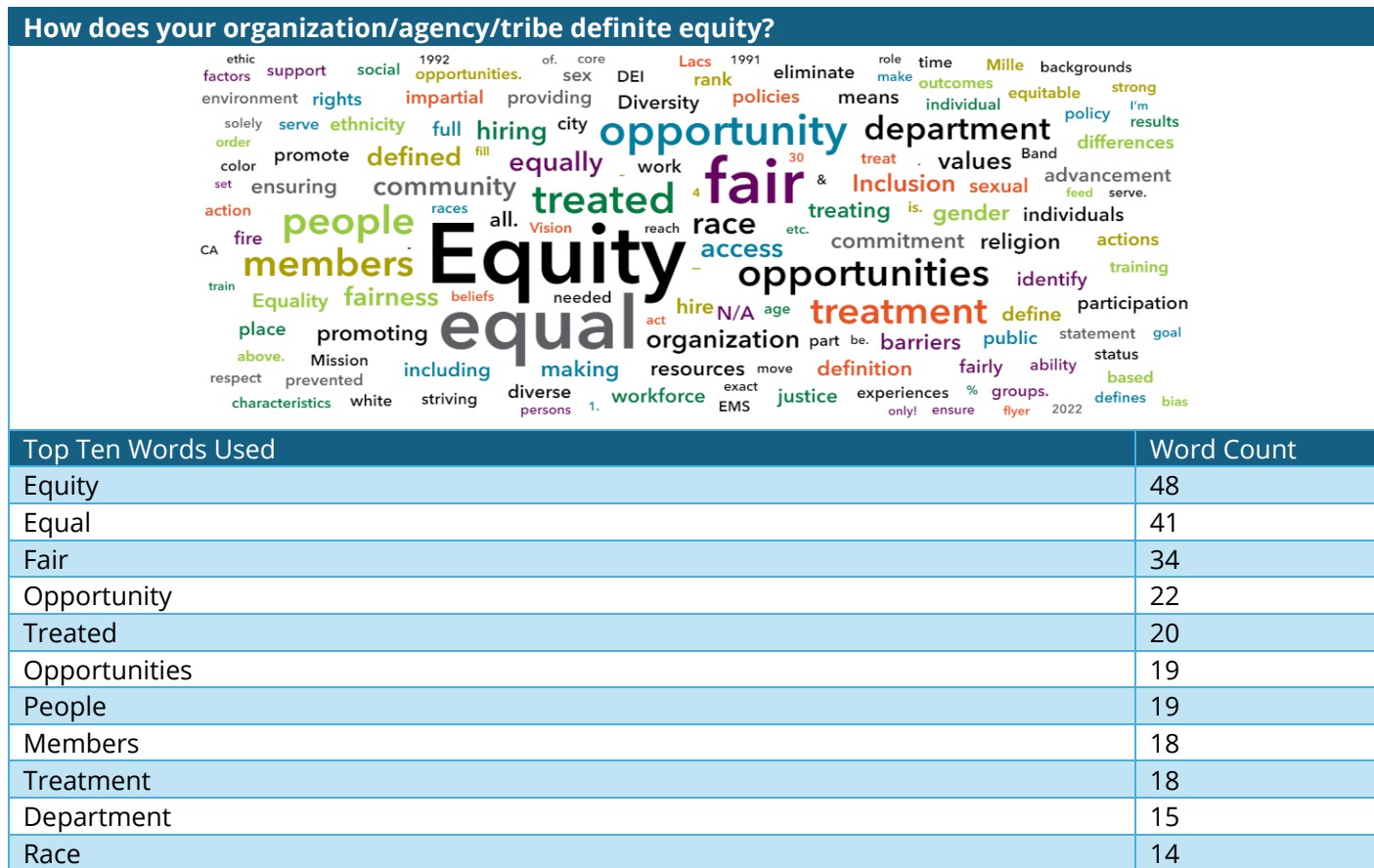


Figure 22: Word cloud created from organization/agency/tribe definitions of equity and table of the top ten words used.

It should be noted 236 of the 1,889 respondents chose to provide their organization, agency, or tribe’s definition of equity.

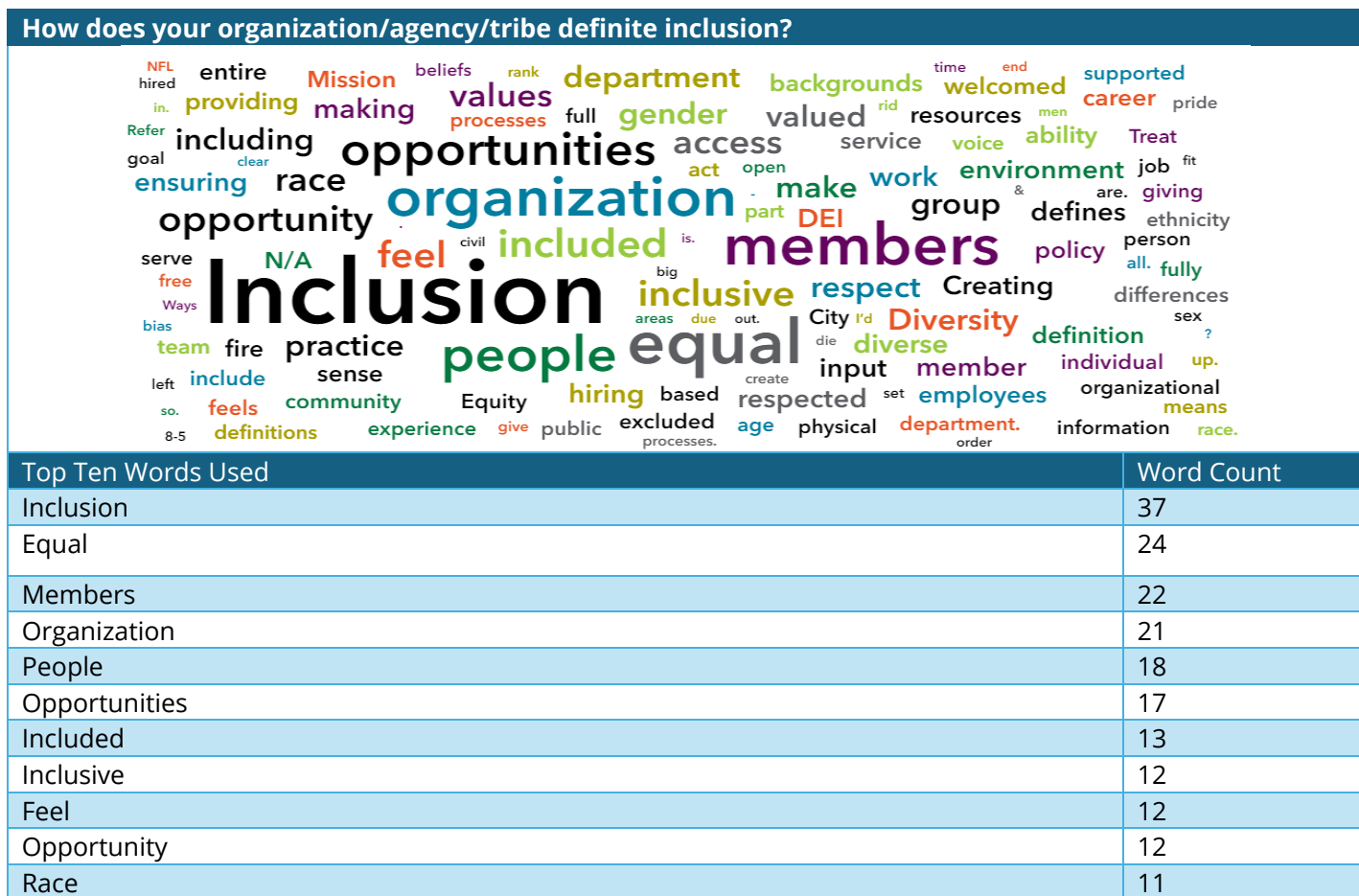


Figure 23: Word cloud created from organization/agency/tribe definitions of inclusion and table of the top ten words used.

It should be noted 227 of the 1,889 respondents chose to provide their organization, agency, or tribe’s definition of equity.

Harassment & Bullying

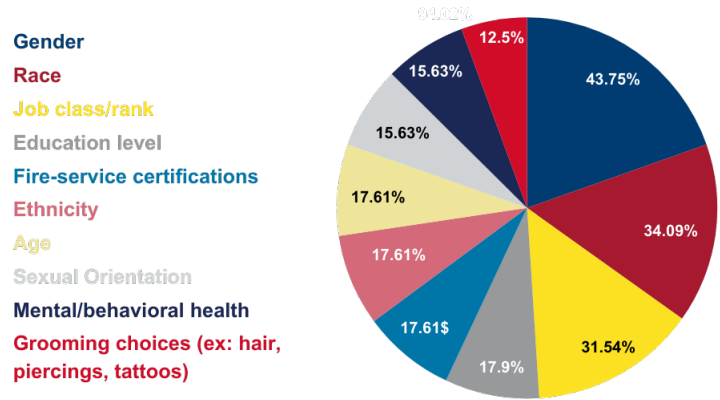
Among the 1,889 participants who responded, a nominal proportion, comprising 18.62%, reported having experienced harassment or bullying within the fire service over the past five years.

Responses by Experience as the Victim of Bullying or Harassment		
Response	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
No	1,538	81.38%
Yes	352	18.62%
Total	1,889	100%

Figure 24: Responses by experience as a victim of bullying or harassment within the last five years – table

The 352 respondents who indicated they had been the victim of bullying or harassment within the last five years were then asked to indicate the focus of the bullying or harassment. It should be noted respondents were able to choose more than one topic as the focus of the bullying or harassment they had been the victim of, so the number of responses to that question will not total 352.

Reasons Respondents Were Bullied or Harassed



Breakdown of reasons behind bullying and harassment respondents experienced.

Figure 25: Responses by focus of bullying or harassment for respondents who had experienced it – pie graph

Nearly half of the respondents (43.75%) indicated they had been bullied or harassed within the last five years due to their gender. 34.09% said they had been bullied or harassed due to their race and 31.5% of respondents said they had been bullied or harassed over their job class/rank.

Responses by Focus of Bullying or Harassment for Respondents		
Response	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Gender	154	43.75%
Race	120	34.09%
Job class/rank	111	31.54%
Education level	63	17.90%
Fire-service certifications	62	17.61%
Ethnicity	61	17.61%
Age	61	17.61%
Sexual orientation	55	15.63%
Mental/behavioral health	55	15.63%
Other	50	14.20%
Grooming choices (ex: hair, piercings, tattoos)	44	12.50%
Family status	37	10.51%
Religion	28	7.95%
Socioeconomic status	27	7.67%
Clothing choices	25	7.10%
Disability	20	5.68%
Citizenship (non-native to USA)	8	2.27%
Total	-	100%

Figure 26: Responses by focus of bullying or harassment for respondents who had experienced it - table

Of concern, 80.97% of respondents who experienced harassment or bullying indicated that no one intervened on their behalf. Of the 352 who admitted to experiencing bullying or harassment while at work, only 67 indicated that a coworker or coworkers had intervened on their behalf.

Moreover, interventions from fire service staff were noted to be inconsistent across different ranks, without a specific pattern favoring intervention from lower- or higher-ranking personnel.

Responses by Coworker or Coworkers Intervening on Respondents' Behalf		
Response	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
No	285	80.97%
Yes	67	19.03%
Total	1,889	100%

Figure 27: Responses by whether or not a coworker intervened on their behalf

These findings help underscore systemic challenges within the fire service related to workplace culture and support mechanisms, highlighting the need for robust policies and practices to address and prevent harassment and bullying behaviors effectively. Efforts to promote a supportive and inclusive environment where all individuals feel respected and protected from such misconduct and empowered to intervene when they witness this misconduct occurring are imperative for enhancing organizational morale and performance.

67 respondents of the 352 who indicated they had been the victim of bullying or harassment within the last five years said that a coworker or coworkers intervened on their behalf. Those 67 respondents were then asked the rank of the coworker or coworkers who intervened.

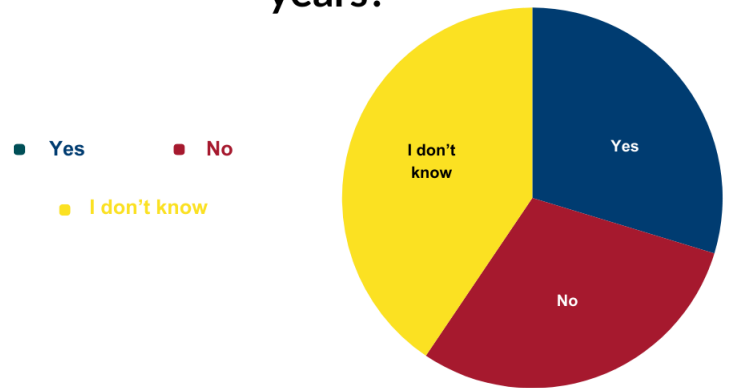
Responses by Rank of the Coworker/Coworkers Who Intervened		
Response	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Captain	17	25.37%
Lieutenant	10	14.93%
Assistant Chief	8	11.94%
Firefighter	8	11.94%
Battalion Chief	7	10.45%
Chief	5	7.46%
Deputy Chief	5	7.46%
Civilian/Nonsworn employee	3	4.48%
Other	3	4.48%
Paramedic	1	1.49%
EMT	0	0%
EMR	0	0%
A-EMT	0	0%
Total	-	100%

Figure 28: Responses by rank of coworker/coworkers who intervened on behalf of respondents who had experienced bullying or harassment - table

Documented DEI Incidents & Organizational Response

Conversely, when participants were queried regarding documented incidents of DEI within their organizations, findings revealed a spectrum of awareness. Out of 1,889 respondents, a significant proportion, totaling 40.58%, indicated uncertainty about the existence of any documented DEI incidents. Additionally, 29.78% reported that no such incidents were documented within their organizations, while a nearly identical percentage of 29.68% acknowledged the presence of documented DEI incidents. Among those who reported incidents, comprising 561 respondents, a noteworthy 53.38% expressed dissatisfaction with the organizational response to these occurrences. These results underscore a dual challenge: first, in achieving clarity and transparency around DEI incidents within the fire service, and second, in addressing concerns about the adequacy of organizational responses. Such findings highlight the importance of robust DEI policies and practices that not only document incidents comprehensively but also ensure an effective and satisfactory resolution to foster a supportive and inclusive workplace environment.

Has your organization had a documented incident regarding DEI in the last five years?



Breakdown of whether their organization has experienced a documented DEI incident within the last five years.

Figure 29: Responses by whether or not an organization has experienced a documented incident regarding DEI within the last five years - pie graph

Responses by Department Experiencing a Documented DEI Incident Within the Last Five Years		
Response	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
I do not know	766	40.58%
No	562	29.74%
Yes	561	29.68%
Total	1,889	100%

Figure 30: Responses by whether or not an organization has experienced a documented incident regarding DEI within the last five years - table

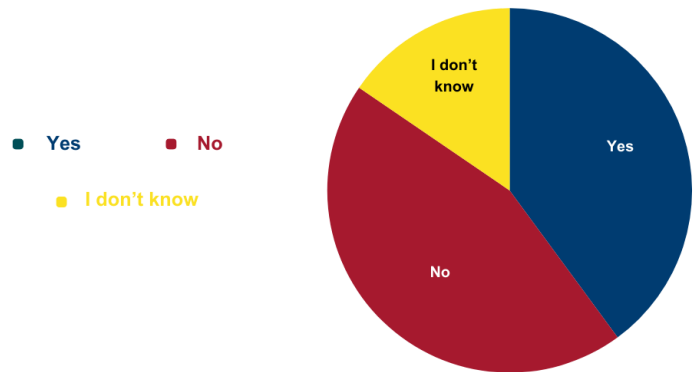
The 561 respondents who indicated their organization had experienced a documented incident regarding diversity, equity, or inclusion were then asked if they were satisfied with their organization's response. 261 respondents, or 46.52%, said that they were satisfied with their organization's response to the incident. This underscores that there is significant room for improvement in how fire departments and other emergency response organizations or agencies respond to DEI incidents that occur within their organization, even when they are officially documented.

DEI Training

The data gathered from the feedback form provides valuable insights into the prevalence and perceived effectiveness of DEI training within organizations.

Among the respondents, 843 respondents (44.6%) indicated that their organizations did not conduct regular DEI training for all levels of staff. Additionally, 15.45% of participants reported uncertainty regarding the availability of such training in their organizations. 754 respondents (39.95%) affirmed the presence of regular DEI training across all organizational levels. This did not provide data to support a significant correlation between the presence of regular DEI training and ongoing incidents of bullying or harassment.

Does your organization have regular DEI training for all levels of the organization?



Breakdown of whether their organization provides regular DEI training for all members of the organization.

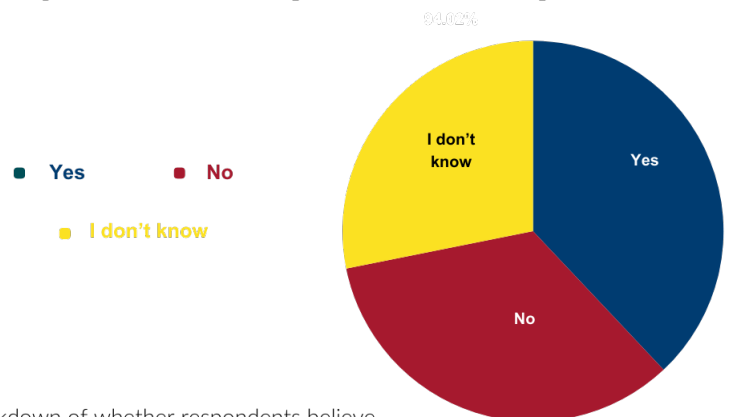
Figure 31: Responses by whether or the organization provides regular DEI training – pie graph

Responses by whether or not the department provides regular DEI training		
Response	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
No	843	44.6%
Yes	754	39.95%
I do not know	292	15.45%
Total	1,889	100%

Figure 32: Responses by whether or the organization provides regular DEI training – table

Of those who received training, 37.88% reported that it had a positive impact on attitudes towards DEI, indicating effectiveness. However, a notable 62.11% of respondents either found the training ineffective (33.77%) or were unsure of its impact (28.34%). As respondents do not believe the ongoing training is effective, it is not surprising that there is no significant correlation between the presence of ongoing training and the occurrence of ongoing incidents of bullying and harassment.

Was DEI training effective/have you seen a positive impact?



Breakdown of whether respondents believe DEI training is effective for their organization.

Figure 33: Responses by whether or not DEI training has been effective/had a positive impact – pie

These findings underscore the varying degrees of implementation and perceived efficacy of DEI training initiatives within the fire service, suggesting opportunities for refining training programs to enhance their impact and alignment with organizational DEI goals. Developing DEI training that is specifically designed for the fire and emergency medical services is believed to have a more substantial impact on DEI within this industry, as was discussed in each of the three in-person focus groups. The very nature of fire and emergency medical services poses both unique challenges in regard to DEI and unique opportunities to address those challenges.

Responses by whether or not the training has been effect/had a positive impact		
Response	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Yes	286	37.88%
No	255	33.77%
I do not know	212	28.34%
Total	754	100%

Figure 34: Responses by whether or not DEI training has been effective/had a positive impact – table

Whether or not respondents indicated their organization currently provides regular DEI training, they were asked if they thought their organization would benefit from regular DEI training. 1,135 respondents chose to answer that question and 689 of them (60.70%) expressed a belief in the beneficial impact of such training. This underscores recognition among participants within the fire and emergency medical services of the value and importance of ongoing DEI education.

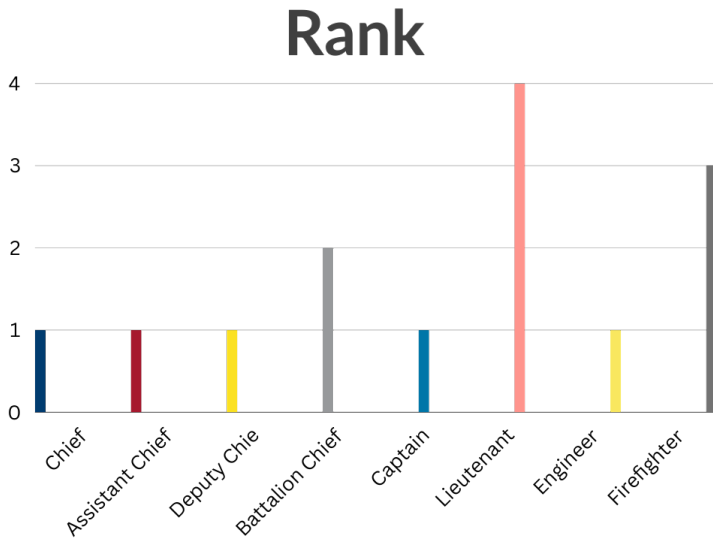
Qualitative Data

The quantitative data obtained from the feedback forms provided significant insights into the perceptions of DEI within the fire service. However, it also revealed inconsistencies in how respondents perceive and understand DEI initiatives. To gain deeper awareness and formulate effective strategies for advancing DEI, focus groups were conducted in diverse settings: urban/metropolitan Milwaukee, Wisconsin; the “Women in Fire” attending the Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) International in Indianapolis, Indiana; and in rural Bozeman, Montana. This mixed-method approach aims to supplement the quantitative findings with qualitative data, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how to foster greater awareness and implementation of DEI principles within the fire service.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

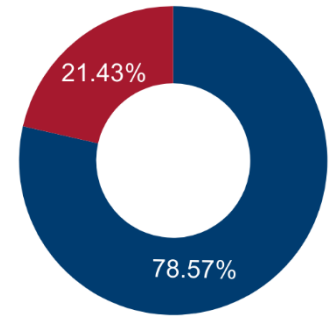
In a focus group hosted by the Milwaukee Fire Service involving 14 participants from the Milwaukee Fire Department, the demographic breakdown showed a predominance of males

with eleven men and three women. Racially, the group was evenly split between Black and White members, with two individuals identifying as mixed race. The ranks varied widely, reflecting the department's hierarchy: from Chief positions down to Firefighters, each playing a crucial role in their respective capacities. Notably, eight participants had been part of the Cadet program, aimed at diversifying the department by actively recruiting women and people of color. Experience in the fire service ranged from rookies to seasoned veterans, with some members boasting over two decades of service, underscoring their dedication and expertise in firefighting and leadership roles.



Gender

- Male
- Female



Race

- Black
- White
- Multiracial

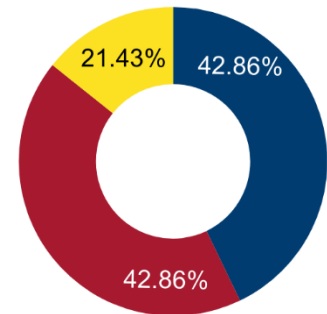


Figure 35: Participants by rank (left), gender (top right), and race (bottom right)

To start, five individuals shared their perspectives on understanding DEI during the focus group. A Black Captain noted that civil unrest during COVID prompted new DEI initiatives in previously homogeneous spaces. The Assistant Chief emphasized ongoing activities, such as recruitment and educational efforts, to create an inclusive culture and address community diversity. A participant highlighted programming's role in determining who participates in decision-making processes. Another participant viewed DEI both strategically and personally, advocating for inclusive practices and supporting all employees. A third participant stressed intentional inclusion of diverse backgrounds to reflect community diversity. However, a fourth participant criticized current DEI implementation, describing it as divisive and ineffective in fostering genuine connection and inclusion within the fire service.

A white, male chief officer with 27 years in the fire service shared:

At a human level, this is what we should all be doing. [But] the version that has been hijacked and widely presented/implemented does more damage than good, it's putting out into our atmosphere people with degrees but with minimal life and fire service experience to preach at and ultimately demean a different group of people ... the straight, white men. It's counterproductive and prevents connection and inclusion within our

ranks. ... The people who are teaching this are demonstrating active and violent exclusion themselves.

Seven individuals expressed their belief in DEI during the discussion, with two additional participants joining later without formally indicating their agreement. A participant emphasized the need to diversify the department to better reflect and connect with the community they serve. Another reflected on past experiences with affirmative action, cautioning that DEI efforts must be handled delicately to avoid backlash. A member of the organization's leadership team shared personal experiences of navigating early DEI initiatives and highlighted the lifelong impact of inclusion efforts. Another leader discussed the transformative opportunities DEI discussions provide, especially for non-white males in the fire service, aiming to enhance community impact. A participant expressed deep belief in DEI principles but criticized its flawed execution, advocating for fairness and accountability across all demographics. A member of the focus group stressed the strength in diversity, although acknowledging personal reservations about forced diversity measures. A mid-level leader underscored the importance of DEI in expanding career opportunities historically unavailable to minorities, aiming to dismantle racial barriers in firefighting.

Two participants expressed skepticism towards DEI initiatives during the focus group discussion. A member of the group, drawing from military experience, criticized current DEI implementation for focusing too much on differences rather than fostering unity. He emphasized the importance of professionalism, objectives, and job performance as criteria for trust and cooperation, advocating for meritocracy in hiring practices. A second participant praised the Cadet program for diversifying the fire department and providing opportunities to minorities but stressed the importance of maintaining standards and ongoing training for all personnel, regardless of background or gender. Both participants emphasized the need for competence and commitment in job roles, suggesting that merit and skills should outweigh demographic considerations in recruitment and advancement within the department.

A white, male chief officer with 25 years in the fire service shared:

There's strength in diversity, it makes the crew stronger to be diverse. Sometimes I take offense to [DEI initiatives] because for 25 years I have been walking through doors to crews who aren't obviously diverse and who do provide phenomenal service to both people who do and don't look or think like them. You can put forth a good product without obvious diversity.

One participant expressed neutrality towards DEI during the discussion. A participant acknowledged the importance of diversity but cautioned against DEI initiatives that create barriers or emphasize superficial diversity over understanding and cohesion within teams. They highlighted the diversity within cultures and stressed the significance of genuine understanding among crew members. A member of the leadership team echoed a similar sentiment,

suggesting that while DEI aims to promote inclusivity, its implementation can sometimes lead to perceptions of forced diversity and unqualified appointments, which could undermine the credibility of minority groups. Both participants advocated for meritocracy and genuine understanding over tokenism or forced diversity measures, positioning themselves as neutral on the spectrum of DEI discussions within the fire service.

A black, male engineer with 23 years in the fire service shared:

If given the choice I would much rather be at the kitchen table with a diverse crew getting to know each other and being exposed to DEI that way than in a classroom.

Three participants indicated they believed their entry into the fire service was influenced by DEI programs. A participant acknowledged benefiting from the cadet program aimed at minorities, though feeling pressured to continually prove themselves due to perceptions of tokenism and imposter syndrome. A member of the leadership team affirmed the cadet programs' purpose to enhance departmental diversity, reflecting on historical racial legacies in Milwaukee and advocating for uncomfortable conversations to address systemic disparities. Another leader recounted being challenged by accusations of being a diversity hire, despite achieving his position through rigorous testing and dedication. He emphasized the importance of merit-based hiring and inclusivity in ensuring all firefighters meet high performance standards, sharing a personal story of bridging divides through mutual interests rather than racial differences.

Several DEI issues were highlighted by participants in the department. A participant pointed out grooming policies that disproportionately affect certain groups, citing examples of hair regulations that may not accommodate diverse textures and raising concerns about perceived biases. Another participant discussed the challenges of balancing diversity goals with maintaining high standards of performance, noting potential pitfalls in recruiting efforts that prioritize quotas over qualifications. A Firefighter expressed frustration with stereotyping and heightened scrutiny faced by female and minority firefighters compared to their white male counterparts. Another group member emphasized the need to shift from divisive narratives to recognizing all firefighters as capable professionals, regardless of demographic background. A leader acknowledged perceptions of self-inflicted divisions and lingering skepticism towards diverse leadership. Another member of the leadership team recounted past discrimination issues and the ongoing impact of historical lawsuits on departmental dynamics. A third leader underscored the complexity of managing diversity within teams and the importance of nurturing diverse perspectives and talents. Despite challenges, a participant highlighted a positive aspect of the department in recognizing and respecting the hard work of all members, irrespective of their identity characteristics.

A black, male engineer with 23 years in the fire service shared:

We put things down the middle – [you're a] good firefighter or [a] bad firefighter. As females or minorities, you start as a bad firefighter and have to prove you're good, but a white man starts as a good firefighter and has to prove he's bad.

A black, female lieutenant with four years in the fire service shared:

What sometimes happens is you see [the other] females on the job, and you get grouped in with them. Or [we have a] group [of] all black guys or [a group of] all the white guys. But when someone messes up in the female firefighter group or the black firefighter group, people are then more critical of ALL female firefighters or ALL black firefighters, and we don't do that with the white, male firefighters.

Participants unanimously reported participating in DEI training, with mixed views on its effectiveness. A manager found it effective in dispelling initial skepticism and fostering comfort with DEI concepts, while another leader emphasized the daily interactions in the firehouse as more impactful than formal training. Another principal criticized DEI training for sometimes demonizing white men, leading to divisive and counterproductive outcomes. A group member highlighted successful diversity training experiences outside the fire service context that focused on practical engagement rather than lecture. Another group member dismissed traditional diversity training as ineffective compared to real-life interactions, emphasizing the importance of genuine investment and shared experiences. A participant echoed the sentiment that practical, experiential learning within the firehouse was more effective than classroom sessions. A contributor expressed frustration with poorly designed DEI training that could exacerbate divisions and diminish individual achievements. Another contributor highlighted positive experiences with facilitated conversations that encouraged uncomfortable yet constructive dialogue, advocating for genuine, deep discussions to effect meaningful change within the fire service.

A black, male chief officer with 25 years in the fire service shared:

It's hard to manage a conversation about this topic that will end productively and harder to manage a truly diverse team – and I include age, background and life experience prior to the fire service, family dynamic, etc. in that diversity. Our company officers aren't trained or equipped to dig into the [outside] interests and talents of their groups to encourage diverse perspectives and manage those interactions. Also, we as a department struggle with the fact we have 2.5 distinct generations in our department with differing perspectives of the workforce, professionalism, etc. None of those perspectives are better or worse, they're just different.

Participants discussed the possibility of mandating DEI training in the fire service. A contributor pointed out that while the department mandates various trainings, including DEI, simply making it mandatory doesn't guarantee effectiveness. A participant noted the influence of officers in shaping compliance and attitudes towards training. Another participant emphasized the need

for DEI training to be more than a checkbox exercise, suggesting that cultural change requires personal investment and genuine belief rather than just compliance. Another contributor highlighted the importance of acknowledging historical barriers in celebrating diverse achievements, contrasting with another participant’s concern that emphasis on race and gender could overshadow individual merit.

Indianapolis, Indiana

A focus group was hosted at FDIC, with participants being invited by Women in Fire to attend the focus group in Indianapolis, Indiana. In the group of 16 participants, all were female. Racially, there were six Black participants, nine White participants, and one participant of mixed or multiple races. The ranks included one Sergeant, four Captains, two Engineers, one Paramedic, and eight Firefighters. Years of service ranged from six to 29 years, with notable experience including a Black Sergeant with 10 years, a Black Captain with 29 years, and a White firefighter/medic with 27 years.

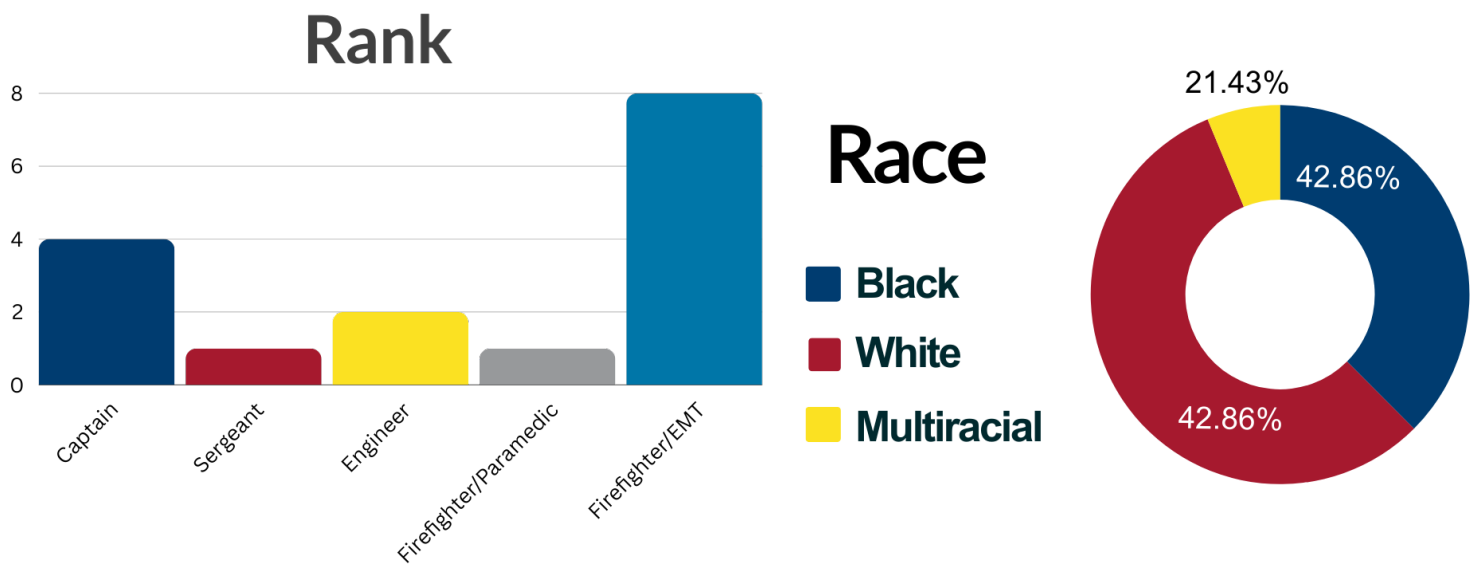


Figure 36: Participants by rank (left) and race (right)

Most participants indicated they understand DEI as looking like the community served, treating people fairly, being inclusive, and ensuring equal opportunities for all. They emphasized that inclusion is crucial, highlighting the need to recognize and accommodate diverse needs and provide appropriate support.

A black, female captain with 29 years in the fire service shared:

I stayed in this career because they all said I can't do it [because I'm a woman]. In 1995 I was in the first class that hired women. ... Now I can turn it around and say, 'we can [do it], and we can do it better.'

Many believe in DEI because they see themselves as part of it, noting the historically male-dominated nature of their field and the evolving rules as more opportunities arise. They acknowledged DEI discussions are contentious in some places, with resistance to DEI committees and misconceptions that DEI aimed to exclude rather than include. There was recognition that both men and women face challenges, with women sometimes perceived negatively when assertive, and efforts to adapt geared to accommodate diverse needs highlighted as crucial for success in training programs like FDIC.

A white, female captain with 27 years in the fire service shared:

Today was the first time I've had a female instructor in a HOT class. Last time, the instructor told me I just couldn't do it when I struggled with the way he was teaching, but I can do it. I just can't do it the way he moves. Another female firefighter in the class helped me adapt how I move, and I can do it just fine.

A black, female engineer with seven years in the fire service shared:

[Redacted] had a crew who would [talk down on] her because she didn't throw the ladder the way they did, but it still got done. Several men just wanted to see her fail and told her that she had to do it the exact way they did because they knew she couldn't.

About two-thirds of respondents believe DEI initiatives played a role in their entry into the fire service, stating historic mandates to hire women and ongoing efforts nationwide. They emphasize the importance of earning their place based on merit rather than quotas, suggesting leadership should promote DEI benefits like inclusive policies for pregnancy and fertility care to attract women and minorities. Despite challenges, their commitment to the job remains strong, driven by a sense of calling and a desire to prove doubters wrong. They've spearheaded initiatives like a women's fire prep academy and a program for young girls, aiming to empower future firefighters early on. Challenges persist, such as departments limiting certain roles for women, yet efforts to empower and inspire continue to reinforce their dedication to the profession.

A white, female firefighter/paramedic with seven years in fire and EMS shared:

In my large department, we got a new mayor and a new chief at the same time. They came out and told the press 'we're looking to hire women.' After that statement was issued any female hired from that point on was seen as hired only because she's a woman, even if she proved she strong and capable, even if she was testing well and outworking men. There's a fine line with society and the male members seeing this as lowering the standards to meet DEI [initiatives].

Critical workplace issues related to DEI identified by participants include unequal treatment in authorized leave compared to male counterparts, illegal pregnancy policies, and challenges

navigating HR concerns and accommodations. They highlight performative support from leadership without substantive follow-through, exacerbated by a lack of protective policies despite health risks like birth defects potentially linked to the job. Participants also noted ongoing gender discrimination issues reflected in a lawsuit over promotional discrimination and cultural barriers within departments that resist inclusivity. They emphasized the need for a cultural shift to challenge tradition and ensure equitable facilities and support for all firefighters, urging male colleagues to actively support and advocate for women. Additionally, they stressed the importance of leadership accountability, addressing issues of silence and fear of retaliation among women, and differing career expectations and challenges for men and women in promotions.

A black, female firefighter with eight years in the fire service shared:

The issue we don't talk about enough is that I have what I would say is an amazing crew. The men on my crew support me and encourage me, but we don't hold them to a high enough standard. If you truly support me then you need to speak up on my behalf. The naysayers aren't going to listen to me, so back me up. Back me up with leadership and with the men who talk down on me, especially when I'm not there. If you respect me, show me what you're willing to put on the line for me. ... Do you speak on our behalf in rooms we're not in? We can keep saying the men we work with are great but how much do they really support us? We need to recognize the men who are willing to say, "this ain't right" to their fellow men.

To enhance the effectiveness of DEI training, participants emphasized the need for organizational support, highlighting instances where departments hindered participation or removed training requirements due to pushback. They underscored the importance of confronting issues directly with all members, particularly white men, to foster understanding and empathy for the challenges faced by women and minorities. Participants mentioned the limited implementation of mandatory DEI training across departments, indicating a broader need for consistent and compulsory education to promote inclusivity effectively.

According to the group, mandatory and effective DEI training could significantly impact recruitment and retention in the fire service. Participants noted it would foster understanding of diverse needs such as black women's hair care and accommodations for pregnancy. They emphasized the importance of creating a supportive environment through comprehensive policies and facilities that cater to diverse needs, which could attract more women to join. Participants also highlighted the role of existing female firefighters in mentoring and preparing new recruits, sharing strategies and policies that have worked elsewhere. However, they expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of such training when not attended or embraced by those who most need it, cautioning against tokenistic approaches and emphasizing the need for engaging, culture-specific training sessions.

To improve DEI in the fire service, participants suggested several actions: appointing committed leaders to enforce DEI initiatives, issuing mandates or statements from organizations like the United States Fire Administration (USFA) or IAFC with clear consequences for non-compliance, and educating about federal labor laws to ensure accountability. They highlighted the importance of challenging misinformation and ensuring accurate information from leadership. Participants also proposed integrating DEI principles subtly into firefighter training, such as through daily communications from battalion chiefs, avoiding direct labeling of DEI to normalize understanding of diverse needs. They stressed the need for women to support each other and addressed the challenges of assertiveness and understanding differing needs within the department.

A white, female firefighter/paramedic with seven years in fire and EMS shared:

We just always make it work. And we are our own worst enemies in the firehouse - because we [the women] always make it work, they don't think anything needs to change.

To enhance DEI in the fire service, participants emphasized the need for leadership training across all ranks to promote understanding of diverse backgrounds and emotional intelligence. They suggested implementing a confidential hotline similar to a legal or case worker resource for firefighters to seek advice anonymously. Participants advocated for personalizing the message of marginalized experiences to resonate with white men, such as asking them to imagine their wives or daughters facing similar treatment. They stressed the importance of fostering genuine curiosity about each other's backgrounds and struggles, advocating for equal representation in decision-making committees, improving facilities for women, and empowering members to drive change within the fire service. They acknowledged a generational shift where future recruits prioritize workplaces that respect diversity, spurred on by personal commitments to improve conditions for the next generation, including their own daughters.

A white, female lieutenant with seven years in the fire service shared:

I will continue to be outspoken, so my daughter doesn't have to deal with this same [stuff].

Bozeman, Montana

In a focus group hosted by the Bozeman Fire Service involving 12 participants, there was one white woman in an administrative role with 1.5 years of service, alongside 11 white men spanning various roles ranging from chief positions to firefighters and tenures spanning from 2.5 to 23 years of service.

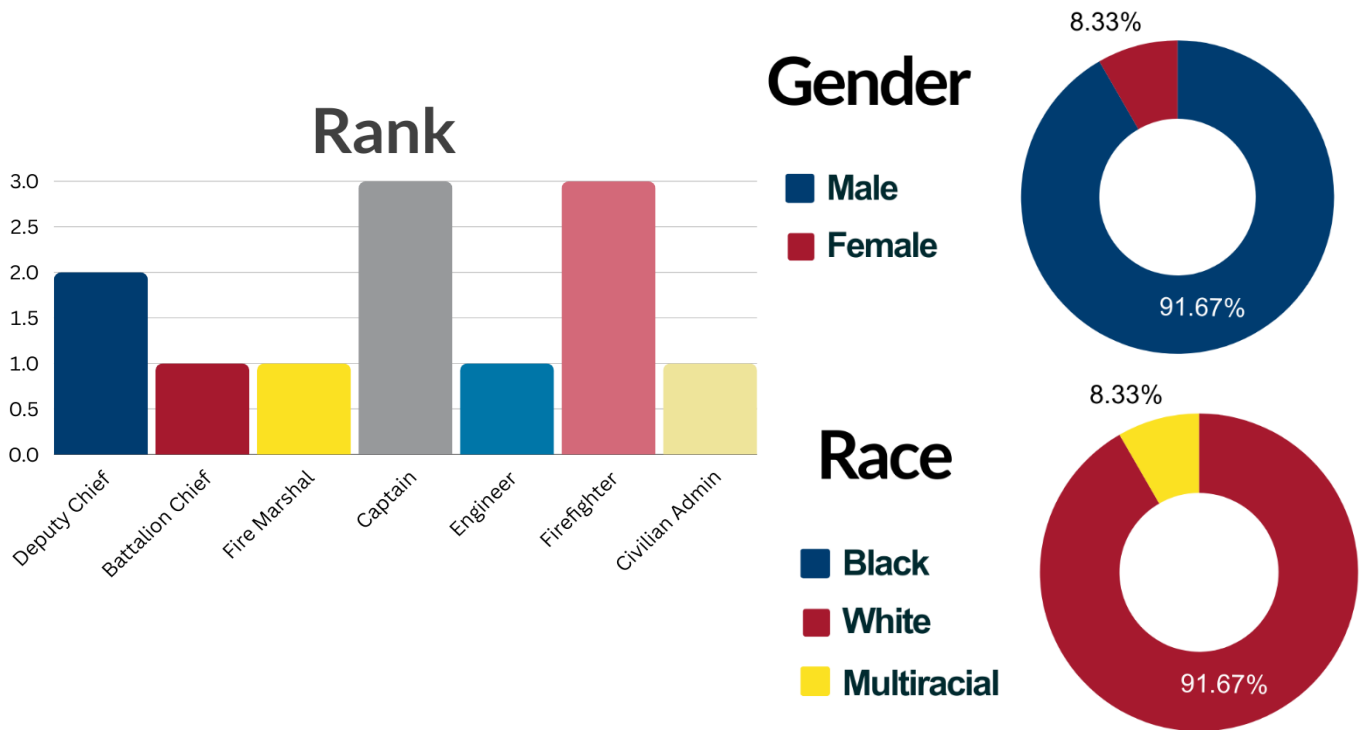


Figure 37: Participants by rank (left), gender (top right), and race (bottom right)

When questioned about their understanding of DEI, they responded DEI encompasses diversity across various backgrounds, beliefs, religion, race, experiences, and socioeconomic status.

Participants expressed varying perspectives on DEI. Some believe in its value for enhancing team dynamics by bringing diverse backgrounds and perspectives to problem-solving. Others highlighted the importance of strong moral character and questioned where diversity might not be beneficial, such as in physical fitness standards. The group generally lacked familiarity with specific DEI programs in the fire service but acknowledged the potential benefits of such initiatives in hiring practices and how teams interact during emergency calls.

A white, male firefighter with 14 years in the fire service shared:

[The benefit of diversity] depends on context. Within a fire department, you're talking about [a certain] mindset and character, and the character we want isn't diverse. We want a certain type of person with a strong moral character. I'm just trying to say it depends what context we're talking about.

Participants identified critical workplace issues related to DEI in the fire service, reflecting on gender diversity, racial representation, and cultural inclusivity. The group acknowledged the predominance of males in their department and recognized the importance of representation for their daughters and diverse community members. Discussions also touched on the need for recruits to fit well within the team dynamics and the potential challenges of accommodating religious practices like prayer times. There was a consensus on the importance of fairness and equity in departmental policies and practices, though specific DEI programs and policies were not widely familiar among the participants.

A white, male battalion chief with 15 years in the fire service shared:

It's partially how the community sees us - when I was interested in the fire service, I saw plenty of people who looked like me and could see my future, but I wonder if my daughters see a place for them?

Participants discussed the potential impact of DEI training in addressing differences within the department, noting that their department had not yet implemented such training. One firefighter expressed that increased awareness and knowledge from DEI training could be beneficial. They emphasized their current approach of hiring based on qualifications, prioritizing merit over factors like race or ethnicity. Participants acknowledged that Bozeman, Montana, while not particularly diverse, faces challenges in recruitment due to high costs of living in surrounding areas.

A white, male engineer with seven years in the fire service shared:

Collectively I think we're doing well but more knowledge doesn't hurt, and we don't want to be complacent. ... We hire the right person whether they're black, female, Asian. We hire the most qualified person, every time. I don't know how many female applicants we had this last round, but we hired 3 women because they're the right people and we all know they're going to do a great job.

Effective DEI training for the participants would involve tailored content specific to the fire service, addressing real-life scenarios like cultural sensitivity in patient care and the implementation of inclusive policies such as those for pregnancy and breastfeeding breaks. It should be delivered annually, ensuring ongoing engagement and understanding. Incorporating case studies from other cities would provide practical insights into avoiding pitfalls and promoting equitable treatment. In their closely-knit department, where personal dynamics and inclusivity are crucial, open dialogues would be invaluable, fostering understanding and cohesion among team members. As volunteers committed to improving our community, they recognize the importance of addressing these issues proactively to ensure a supportive and respectful environment for everyone.

A white, male captain with 16 years in the fire service shared:

We need to [be able to] mix ideas from the city with the [needs of the] fire service. We need to be able to explain why we can or can't do certain things included in the "packaged" [DEI] training or programs – we live together, we have significant physical job demands, we experience trauma, etc. We can't just implement certain training or force certain hiring practices. But equity is just treating everyone fairly and that's much easier to do across the board.

When asked if Bozeman Fire Service was a perfect place to work, a respondent noted that it reflects Bozeman's generally accepting community, which contrasts favorably with other parts of Montana. He hasn't faced the same issues or negativity seen in previous departments, crediting the high moral character of the people hired. Overall, he views the workplace as excellent.

A veteran member suggested addressing those who may not want to be at the department by nurturing initial awareness and spreading understanding. They emphasized the need for mandatory training due to varying levels of DEI awareness among members. Starting with foundational definitions and city-wide DEI forums for public engagement were mentioned, noting that some attendees were initially resistant. The DEI initiative in Bozeman was spurred by the 2020 Black Lives Matter movement.

To enhance diversity in the fire service, the participants proposed leveraging social media to showcase the department's current diversity (gender) and promote inclusivity. They emphasized the importance of a diversity clause in their collective bargaining agreement to demonstrate commitment. Proactive outreach strategies were highlighted, such as participating in job fairs and targeting specific communities like college athletics. They stressed the value of cultural competency, suggesting initiatives like offering Spanish classes and understanding Native American experiences to better serve diverse populations. They mentioned their crew's financial incentive initiative to learn Spanish to communicate effectively with a growing Spanish-speaking community in their area, reflecting proactive engagement with local demographics.

A white, female admin with one and a half years in the fire service shared:

We have one neighborhood in particular that is predominantly Spanish speaking so I've always felt we should be more strategic about staffing the station serving that neighborhood; our proficient speakers should be working in that district. ... Also, Native competency and awareness of their generational trauma is huge. I've done that training and it was mind blowing to learn more and be able to serve them better. Vulnerable populations are more willing to accept help from someone they can identify with.

When the participants were probed regarding DEI needs, they noted clarifying definitions and increasing awareness. They noted a lack of focused consideration from chiefs regarding diversity in hiring practices. Recruitment efforts are primarily social media-based due to adequate applicant numbers and limited legacy hiring. Recently, they hired a public safety social media manager to enhance outreach. Addressing the perception of the fire service as a boys' club was

highlighted as a crucial goal. They referenced an example from West Metro, CO, where a female firefighter's positive experience on a ride-along dispelled her initial doubts about firefighting as a career option, emphasizing the importance of raising awareness among women. They emphasized that gender should not influence hiring decisions; instead, merit should determine selection to ensure the best candidates are chosen.

Regarding women in their organization, the respondents mentioned that one woman has a generational connection to emergency services, while the other two were drawn to the profession through exposure. Economic challenges, particularly the high cost of living in the area, pose barriers to attracting diverse backgrounds. During interviews, candidates are asked about their familiarity with local housing costs. Extra points are awarded to local residents to mitigate the impact of living expenses on recruitment.

Emerging Trends

The quantitative data gathered from 1,890 participants consisted of 1,776 from fire services and only 80 from EMS. Additionally, the focus group composition included only three EMS members from the "Women in Fire" group. Due to this disparity between quantitative and qualitative data representation, no meaningful conclusions can be drawn regarding EMS and their relationship with DEI initiatives.

The majority of respondents in the study were career firefighters, with 1,428 out of 1,889 participants falling into this category. This predominance of career firefighters makes it challenging to extrapolate findings that are applicable to volunteer, private, and other agency type firefighters.

To analyze trends in feelings toward DEI, combining negative and neutral sentiments is necessary. Neutral feelings towards DEI indicate a hesitancy or lack of commitment, potentially affecting the adoption and enforcement of DEI policies.

Most respondents who were Chiefs across all age groups generally expressed more positive feelings toward DEI than negative or neutral, indicating their familiarity with the terms and their recognition of their importance. This suggests that Chiefs, as leaders within the fire service, have a good understanding of DEI inclusion principles and their significance in organizational effectiveness and community relations. The level of authority having the propensity for change in the fire service is at the chief level based upon the chief responses of the study.

Addressing the ranks of Assistant Chiefs, Battalion Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, Captains, and Lieutenants is crucial due to their significant percentages of neutral and negative feelings toward DEI. These sentiments may indicate a reluctance or lack of readiness for change within these

leadership roles. Addressing these concerns is essential to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment within the fire service. This is particularly critical because when reviewing firefighters' feelings regarding DEI, both the 27 to 42 and 43 to 58 age groups show significant levels of negative and neutral sentiments. The 27 to 42 age group reported 24% negative and 27% neutral feelings, totaling 51%, while the 43 to 58 age group reported 24% negative and 34% neutral feelings, totaling 58%. These figures highlight the need for firefighters to be exposed to positive DEI instruction and initiatives. Enhancing education and engagement around DEI can help shift these perceptions towards more positive attitudes, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment within the fire service.

In rural areas, specific findings regarding feelings toward DEI among different ranks and age groups are noteworthy: Assistant Chiefs ages 27 to 42 and 59 to 68 showed 100% negative feelings respectively. Among Captains, ages 27 to 42, 72% expressed negative (29%) or neutral (43%) feelings. Ages 43 to 58 Captains totaled 75%, with 42% negative and 33% neutral feelings. Ages 59 to 68 Captains totaled 75%, with 50% negative and 25% neutral feelings. Deputy Chiefs in rural areas, ages 27 to 42, totaled 40% (20% negative, 20% neutral). Ages 59 to 68 Deputy Chiefs showed 100% negative feelings. Rural Lieutenants ages 27 to 42 totaled 75%, with 14% negative and 71% neutral feelings toward DEI. These percentages highlight significant levels of negative and neutral attitudes towards DEI initiatives within these demographics.

In industrial, rural, and suburban areas, respondents' attitudes towards DEI vary among different ranks and age groups within the fire service leadership. Among Assistant Chiefs ages 59 to 68, 50% expressed feelings towards DEI, with 17% negative and 33% neutral. Battalion Chiefs ages 43 to 58 totaled 51%, with 24% negative and 27% neutral feelings, while ages 59 to 68 totaled 50%, with 33% negative and 17% neutral feelings. Captains ages 27 to 42 expressed 67% feelings towards DEI, with 31% negative and 36% neutral, ages 43 to 58 totaled 57%, with 30% negative and 27% neutral, and ages 59 to 68 expressed 73%, with 50% negative and 23% neutral feelings. Deputy Chiefs ages 27 to 42 totaled 50%, with 20% negative and 30% neutral, while ages 59 to 68 expressed 54%, with 23% negative and 31% neutral feelings. Lieutenants ages 27 to 42 expressed 60%, with 23% negative and 37% neutral, and ages 43 to 58 totaled 54%, with 20% negative and 34% neutral feelings towards DEI. These findings underscore the diverse range of attitudes towards DEI initiatives within different leadership ranks and age demographics across various types of areas.

Despite the assumption that they would benefit from DEI initiatives, female Battalion Chiefs (50% negative, 25% neutral), Captains (43% neutral), and lieutenants (33% neutral) aged 27 to 42 expressed a combination of negative and neutral feelings towards DEI initiatives, according to the feedback form. One chief with the age category 19 to 26 did not know the meaning of DEI. It is critical that chiefs and chief officers are educated on the subject to ensure knowledge regarding DEI can be effectively communicated through the rest of their organization. The female demographic group constituted a significant minority within the pool of respondents, both in terms of quantitative numbers and qualitative contributions. This underscores the need for

more inclusive outreach efforts to ensure a broader representation of women's perspectives within initiatives related to DEI in the fire service. Addressing this disparity is crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics and improving inclusivity within the field.

Similar to female respondents, Black/African American individuals in the ranks of Captain, Deputy Chief, and Lieutenant across various age groups (27 to 42, 43 to 58, and 59 to 68) expressed negative or neutral feelings about DEI initiatives. For instance, Black Captains aged 27 to 42 totaled 50% (25% negative, 25% neutral), while those aged 59 to 68 showed 67% negative feelings. Deputy Chiefs aged 59 to 68 expressed 42% (14% negative, 28% neutral) feelings towards DEI. These responses highlight the need for targeted efforts to address DEI issues within these specific demographic groups in the fire service. This group represented the largest racial minority group of this study.

The qualitative data gathered from focus groups corroborate several findings mentioned earlier, revealing that some female and Black respondents remained quiet or discussed feeling pressured to prove themselves, perceiving themselves as targeted recruits, or believing there was a perception that they were recruited to “meet a quota.” These statements reinforce the quantitative data indicating negative or neutral sentiments towards DEI initiatives among these demographic groups.

Quantitatively, firefighters across all age groups expressed significant levels of negative and neutral feelings about DEI, suggesting a need for more comprehensive or effective education on the subject.

According to feedback from both qualitative and quantitative respondents, efforts to recruit more women and racial minorities into the fire service include existing programs like the Cadet program, social media campaigns, and various initiatives. However, there is a consensus that additional programs and initiatives are necessary to further increase representation among these groups.

The quantitative data regarding bullying and harassment in the fire service was insufficient to provide clarity on how to effectively mitigate these issues. This lack of clarity was primarily due to respondents not recognizing the correlation between DEI initiatives and incidents of bullying or harassment. Moreover, the qualitative data did not sufficiently address bullying and harassment, even when participants were specifically asked about it. To address this gap, there is a clear need for a dedicated study focused solely on bullying and harassment within the fire service. Such a study would help illuminate the specific dynamics at play and provide actionable insights until consistent definitions of DEI are established within the fire service, along with clear pathways to implement and operationalize these concepts effectively.

Both the quantitative and qualitative data collected did not extensively explore the experiences of firefighters who identify as LGBTQIA+.

In the Study of DEI in Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS), which analyzed data from 1,889 quantitative responses from a feedback form and qualitative insights from three focus groups, there was minimal mention of the role of Human Resources (HR) in relation to DEI within the fire service. The quantitative feedback form did not address HR or its intersections with recruitment and DEI. Specifically, the feedback form did not reflect any discussion of HR correlated to its involvement in DEI initiatives.

In the qualitative focus group results, HR was only mentioned in the context of responses from the Milwaukee, Wisconsin focus group when discussing the feasibility of making DEI training a mandatory requirement. In this instance, participants indicated that there might be resistance to mandatory DEI training due to potential constraints imposed by their HR department, as well as other related factors.

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In the qualitative focus group results, HR was only mentioned in the context of responses from the Milwaukee, Wisconsin focus group when discussing the feasibility of making DEI training a mandatory requirement. In this instance, participants indicated that there might be resistance to mandatory DEI training due to potential constraints imposed by their HR department, as well as other related factors.

Effective DEI training was identified as a constant gap both in the quantitative and qualitative data results. Allocating funds earmarked for DEI training to a Fire Service-certified DEI training program led by certified trainers can significantly enhance the effectiveness and relevance of such initiatives. By investing in a specialized program with trainers who are experts in both DEI principles and the unique context of the fire service, departments can ensure that training is not only current but also directly applicable to their operational environment. Quantitative feedback results and focus group discussions have highlighted a clear need for a training program specifically tailored to fire service organizations. These evaluations underscore that specialized instruction, which aligns with the distinct challenges and dynamics of the fire service, is crucial for achieving meaningful and sustained improvements in DEI. Therefore, reallocating funds to a certified and structured DEI training program ensures continuity, relevance, and efficacy in fostering an inclusive and effective fire service workforce.

Conclusion

Research consistently highlights the underrepresentation of women, racial minorities, and LGBTQIA+ individuals in fire and emergency medical service departments based on discrepancies between the population sizes of women, racial minorities, and LGBTQIA+ within the country compared to the population sizes of women, racial minorities, and LGBTQIA+ within fire and emergency medical services, reflecting broader societal inequities and posing challenges for achieving diverse and inclusive workplaces (Smith & Phillips, 2017). Studies identify barriers hindering diverse individuals from entering and advancing within the fire service, including physical fitness standards and unwelcoming workplace cultures (Gould & Wilson, 2020).

Effective DEI initiatives positively impact organizational culture, morale, and job satisfaction through training on cultural competency and bias awareness (Griffin, 2019). Legal discussions emphasize compliance with anti-discrimination laws and equitable hiring practices (Johnson & O'Connor, 2018). DEI efforts enhance community engagement and trust by aligning fire department demographics with community diversity (Harris & Brown, 2021). Ongoing DEI training for personnel promotes awareness and cultural sensitivity, critical for effective service provision in diverse communities (Wilkins & Williams, 2020). Academic sources underscore DEI's importance for equity, organizational effectiveness, community relations, and firefighter well-being.

This study's results mirror the scholarship stated above. The integration of qualitative insights from three focus groups enriched the quantitative data obtained from feedback forms, offering a nuanced understanding of DEI within the fire service. Participants articulated diverse perspectives on DEI, highlighting its multifaceted interpretations and implications for addressing gender disparities and racial inequalities. These insights underscored the complexities involved in implementing effective DEI strategies tailored to the unique challenges of the fire service environment. By exploring participants' perceptions and experiences, the qualitative findings provided valuable context to the quantitative data, revealing key areas of concern and potential pathways towards fostering greater inclusivity and equity within fire departments.

Recommendations

These recommendations – along with a top-down commitment to DEI through visible leadership, accountability measures, and resource allocation – will enhance recruitment efforts in the fire service, demonstrating a strong commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion for a workplace that is inviting to all, irrespective of difference.

Recommendation 1: Consistent Definitions

Based on the data collected, there is a clear imperative to establish a centralized digital repository that consolidates developed definitions of DEI, making them accessible to all fire and EMS organizations. This repository should include new, operationalizable definitions, including existing and current regulations concerning DEI by state and local jurisdictions. The data highlighted diverse interpretations of DEI, underscoring the critical need for standardized definitions to ensure consistent engagement and implementation of DEI initiatives within the fire service. Such a repository would provide clarity and uniformity in understanding DEI across jurisdictions, promoting equitable practices and fostering inclusive environments within fire departments nationwide. This approach aims to support organizations in effectively addressing DEI challenges and advancing cultural competence throughout their operations. This repository would be very useful for organizations wishing to have impactful and published DEI mission and vision statements.

The centralized repository should undergo annual updates to ensure that all levels of fire service organizations have access to current and relevant information regarding DEI. This periodic update will guarantee that the definitions, and there any regulations or best practices developed from them, related to diversity, equity, and inclusion reflect the latest legislative and societal developments. By maintaining currency in its content, the repository will effectively support fire departments in implementing equitable practices and fostering inclusive environments that align with evolving DEI standards and expectations.

Recommendation 2: Develop Fire-Service-Specific DEI Training

Once the definitions of DEI terms are established and published, the next step is to develop a flexible training series that can be regularly updated. Tailored specifically to the fire service context, the training modules should include relevant examples and scenarios from within the fire service to demonstrate the practical application and significance of DEI principles. This approach ensures that DEI trainers can effectively illustrate how DEI initiatives directly impact and benefit fire service operations, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment within fire departments nationwide. It is imperative members of the fire service are heavily involved in the development of this training from the beginning, as it was a reoccurring theme in both the quantitative and qualitative data that standard DEI training developed for different industries are not sufficient for the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the fire service.

It is likely this training series will be less formal than several of the existing DEI trainings in this country. Across all three focus groups it was clear members of the fire and emergency medical services believe this topic will be most successfully addressed “around the kitchen table” or in similar, conversational settings. Therefore, a goal for the development of this training should be

empowering company officers to facilitate conversations surrounding DEI topics within their shift or equivalent.

This training series should be customizable to accommodate various types of fire service organizations – a one-size-fits-all approach is not likely to be successful for both large, career departments operating in metro areas and small, volunteer departments operating in rural areas.

The DEI training series should incorporate a comprehensive assessment mechanism to evaluate participants' understanding of the material. This assessment is crucial for ensuring that firefighters grasp DEI principles effectively and can apply them in their daily roles. By measuring comprehension through structured evaluations, fire departments can identify areas needing reinforcement and tailor future training sessions accordingly. This approach promotes accountability and enhances the effectiveness of DEI initiatives within the fire service, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and equitable organizational culture.

It is recommended that DEI training be made mandatory, similar to other essential fire service training, to underscore its importance in fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace culture. Addressing DEI as a health and safety issue may encourage departments to adopt an annual training approach that aims to enhance awareness, sensitivity, and collaboration among fire service personnel, ultimately strengthening organizational effectiveness and community relations.

Recommendation 3: Establish a DEI Train-the-Trainer

The qualitative data strongly indicated that poorly delivered DEI training resulted in negative perceptions towards DEI initiatives. It was a reoccurring theme that existing DEI training programs or methods were presented in an accusatory manner, creating an environment where several members of the agency or organization felt attacked. This is directly contributed to the vilification of DEI in this space.

To address this, establishing a Fire Service DEI Trainer program that aligns with the DEI training developed by and for members of the fire and emergency medical services is crucial. DEI trainers who wish to present this new training in fire service organizations should be certified in this newly created training program. This certification ensures that trainers can effectively and consistently demonstrate how DEI initiatives directly impact and benefit fire service operations in a way that does not come across as attacking, vilifying, or diminishing the majority populations, thereby promoting a more inclusive and supportive environment within fire departments nationwide.

This would ensure that DEI instructors are well-equipped to deliver training with expertise and effectiveness. Training instructors rigorously, paired with a well-designed training series tailored to the fire service context, will increase the understanding and acceptance of DEI principles among fire and emergency medical service personnel. This initiative aims to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment within fire departments, promoting equitable practices and enhancing organizational culture nationwide.

Recommendation 4: Establish Parameters to Update Fire-Service Specific Training

Customized DEI training specifically designed for the fire service should be reviewed on an annual or biannual basis. As understanding of the topic and the lived experiences of both minority and majority groups evolve, it is likely the training will need to be adapted to continue addressing the most pressing topics that are likely to cause division and breed feelings of discontent, anger, and fear. Further, as the fire service evolves the training will need to grow to stay relevant to the specific challenges and opportunities presented by the fire service.

An annual or biannual review of definitions included, scenarios presented, and suggested actions across all ranks will ensure the training stays relevant and departments will continue to see value in implementing it.

This recurring schedule will also ensure consistent and standardized delivery of DEI instruction across fire departments, promoting a unified understanding of DEI principles and initiatives.

Recommendation 5: Develop Organization Assessment Tools

Fire Service DEI SMEs, working with fire service organizational leaders and staff, should collaboratively develop organizational assessment tools similar to a climate survey that is tailored to pinpoint DEI-related challenges and successes. These tools would then be deployed annually or biannually by departments or agencies to gather and track comprehensive data across their organization, facilitating targeted issue resolution and highlighting achievements in DEI practices.

Performing a climate survey or equivalent would not only support ongoing improvement efforts, but also create a longitudinal record of DEI progress within each organization. Tracking DEI progress and setbacks is essential for transparent reporting and continuous enhancement of inclusivity and equity standards in the fire service.

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Appendix B: Acronym List

CDI – Center for Diversity and Inclusion

DEI – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

EMS – Emergency Medical Services

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Association

HR – Human Resources

IAFC – International Association of Fire Chiefs

IAFF – International Association of Firefighters

LGBTQIA+ – lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual

NDC – National Diversity Council

NFPA – National Fire Protection Association

SME – Subject Matter Expert

USFA – United States Fire Administration

Appendix C: Existing Fire and Emergency Medical Services Resources, Programs, and Initiatives

As part of this project an assortment of existing resources, programs, and initiatives for fire and emergency medical services were identified. The identified resources, programs, and initiatives are listed below, organized by their host organization, agency, or department. This is not an exhaustive list, particularly as it refers to specific department programs or initiatives.

The Center for Firefighter Injury Research & Safety Trends (FIRST Center)

- [DEI in the Fire and Rescue Service](#)
 - The FIRST Center's goal is to help fire departments and fire service organizations assess their climate for inclusion and their readiness for change regarding DEI issues. They have several tools in development as part of a DEI FIRE Toolkit.
- [DEI Dictionary](#)
- [LGBTQ Resource Guide for EMS](#)

International Association of Fire Chiefs

- [Guide for Developing a Diverse and Inclusive Department](#)
 - A usable, practical tool on how to create a diverse and inclusive culture in your department.
- [Climate Survey Toolkit for Individual Departments](#)
 - How to conduct a climate survey in your department to improve inclusiveness.
- [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the U.S. Volunteer and Combination Fire Rescue Service](#)
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion study report THAT identifies areas of improvement and recommends actions departments can take to help with R&R.
- [Outreach for Inclusion: How to Engage Diverse Communities](#)
 - Outreach tips to engage everyone in your community.
- [Connecting with Your Local Underrepresented Communities](#)
 - How you can connect with your local underrepresented communities to strengthen volunteer membership.

National Fire Protection Association

- [Diversity and the Fire Service](#)
 - Recording of a podcast with Chief Kwame Cooper, FDNY's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

National Volunteer Fire Council

- [Bridging the Divide - A Diversity & Inclusion Training](#)
 - An online course on the NVFC virtual classroom on identifying how to embrace differences amongst people.

National Volunteer Fire Council and Women in Fire

- [Discrimination & Harassment Toolkit](#)
 - A toolkit specifically designed to educate members of the fire service on what constitutes harassment and discrimination, who is protected by federal law, and how to address harassment and discrimination in your department.

Individual Department Efforts

- [Analysis of Effective Strategies for Improving Diversity in the North Charleston Fire Department](#)
 - A paper from North Charleston (SC) Fire Department.
- [Inclusivity and Equity Action Plan](#)
 - A report from the Orlando (FL) Fire Department.
- [Racial Equity Action Plan](#)
 - A report from the San Francisco (CA) Fire Department

Other

- [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce](#)
 - Executive Order 86 FR 34593
- [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the United States Emergency Medical Services Workforce: A Scoping Review](#)
 - A literature review featuring inclusion/exclusion criteria from 1960 to present (2022) of peer reviewed articles looking into gender and racial disparities in EMS.
- [Disparities in Emergency Medical Services Care Delivery in the United States: A Scoping Review](#)
 - A literature review that aimed to summarize the existing literature on disparities in prehospital care delivery for patients identifying as members of an underrepresented race, ethnicity, sex, gender, or sexual orientation group.
 - Conclusion: Existing research highlights health disparities in EMS care delivery throughout multiple health outcomes and phases of EMS care.
- [Race, Policing, and History — Remembering the Freedom House Ambulance Service](#)
 - An article providing a history of the successful transfer of funds from police to health services, Pittsburgh's Freedom House Enterprises Ambulance Service.
- [Retooling the fire service hiring process to achieve diversity among the ranks](#)

- An article about the use of random selection in promotional processes to achieve more diversity.
- [The Benefits and Importance of Diversity in the Fire Service](#)
 - An article published by Columbia Southern University.
- [Building Organizational Capacity for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Fire and Rescue Service](#)
 - A report prepared by the National Academy of Public Administration for the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service.
- [What it means to really commit to a diverse and inclusive fire department](#)
 - An article published by FireRescue1.
- [Women in the Fire Service: A Diverse Culture Leads to a Successful Culture](#)
 - An article published by Fire Engineering.
- [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Fire Service](#)
 - An article published by Fire Engineering.
- [Trends in demographic and employment characteristics of US emergency medical technicians and paramedics, 2011-2019](#)
 - An article reviewing the diversity of EMTs and paramedics within the country over an eight-year period.

Appendix D: Work Group Roster

Title	First Name	Last Name	Home Agency	Representative Organization
	Kenneth	Adams		International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters (IABPFF)
Chief Executive Officer	Preet	Bassi	Center for Public Safety Excellence	Center for Public Safety Excellence
Vice President, Emergency Management, EC, & Safety	Scott	Cormier	Medxcel	International Association of EMS Chiefs
Chief	Joe	Dixon	Gainesville Fire Rescue	Black Chief Officers Committee (BCOC)
Battalion Chief	Cerisa	Speight		Black Chief Officers Committee (BCOC)
	Otto	Drozd	NFPA	National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
Chief	Carrie	Edwards-Clemons		International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters (IABPFF)
Chief	David	Emanuel	Durham Fire Department	IAFC's Bullying Behavior Prevention Task Force
Chief	Manny	Fonseca		National Association of Hispanic Firefighters (NAHFF)
Assistant Chief	Stephanie	Harpring	City of Thornton Fire Department	IAFC's Diversity Executive Leadership Program (iDELP)
Deputy Director and CFO	Shawna	Jorgensen		County of Santa Barbara Fire Department
Deputy Director	Laura	Silver	IAFF	International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)
Director Emeritis	Larry	Tan	New Castle County Department of Public Safety	International Association of EMS Chiefs
Doctor	Jennifer	Taylor	Drexel University	Drexel University
President/CEO	Laurie	VandeSchoot	Satya Consulting	IAFC's Human Relations Committee (HRC)
Chief	Josh	Waldo	Bozeman Fire Department	IAFC Board of Directors
Chief	Toni	Washington	Decatur Fire Department	Women in Fire

Chief	Jim	Yates	Lawrence Road Fire Company	IAFC Board of Directors
	Addington	Stewart		Carl Holmes Executive Development Institute