



# equity report 2024



**City of Boulder**

# equity report 2024

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# A Word from the Office of Equity & Belonging

The City of Boulder has long held a commitment to improving the lived experience of all community members, especially those who have historically been excluded from or negatively impacted by government decisions, programs and services.

We seek a future with equitable access to health, prosperity and fulfillment that is not limited based on a person's race, ethnicity, age, gender, ability, religion, sexuality or socioeconomic status.

Every person who lives, works, studies and visits our city has the right to live authentically as themselves, free from harassment, discrimination or exclusion. Hate has no place here.

The City of Boulder will always work to become a community that is welcoming for all. We honor diversity of all kinds, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, religion, age, language, ability, neurodiversity, physical differences, and immigration status, because it enriches us socially, economically and culturally. Our humanity is made up of many lived experiences, and we are better for it.

Advancing this work is not without challenges, but it is an honor to support and move towards collective action. Looking ahead, the Office of Equity and Belonging will build on our progress and invest in creating more robust accountability mechanisms.

## Setting a Strong Foundation

The city's [Racial Equity Plan](#) was unanimously adopted by City Council in 2021. The plan describes goals and strategies to advance racial equity. The plan also identifies roles for City Council, boards and commissions, city staff and the broader community. It serves as a living roadmap that guides the city through the process of prioritizing goals, specifying details, and assigning resources to achieve meaningful change.

Since the adoption of the plan, the Office of Equity and Belonging has coordinated across the city to take action on racial equity goals and to support city staff in advancing racial equity. The foundation for this effort has three components: first, normalizing conversations on race through training and connection; second, developing infrastructure to advance equity within the organization, including the creation of templates and guides; and third, operationalizing race and equity principles into daily work, focusing on reducing and eliminating disparities for the community and for city staff.



### **GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON RACE AND EQUITY (GARE)**

GARE is a national network of local and regional government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. GARE is a project of Race Forward, the largest racial Justice nonprofit organization in the U.S.

The city began its equity journey in 2018 when it entered a partnership with GARE.



john a. powell—who writes his name in lowercase to reflect our place within the universe—is the Director of the Othering & Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley and an internationally recognized expert on civil rights, structural racism, housing, poverty, and democracy.



# Progress at a Glance

The city is using the [logic model](#) within the Racial Equity Plan to maintain accountability and measure the impact of our efforts. This report tracks progress toward the 2025 mid-term outcomes.



## EMERGING

Little or no work is evident on this area's goals.



## DEVELOPING

Work is evident on this area's goals but tangible results are still lacking.



## MODERATE PROGRESS

Progress is beginning to show in several of this area's goals.



## SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS

Half or more of the indicators in this area are in motion or completed.



## SUCCESSFUL

Most or all of this area's indicators are in motion or complete.

Activity	2025 Mid-Term Outcome	Status
Conduct Equity Trainings	City staff retain knowledge from training; increasingly utilize training to change institutional habits, processes and decisions.	
Create, modify, use equity tools, instruments, assessments	City staff utilize racial equity assessment tools in all budget and planning processes. Council, Boards, Committees, Commissions increasingly understand and utilize assessment tools.	
Collect and analyze meaningful data	City staff consolidate data, increase the use of analysis tools to more deeply identify racial equity trends and communicate data publicly in an easy-to-understand manner.	
Use resolutions and declarations to prioritize, elevate and evaluate racial equity	City Council and staff utilize resolutions and declarations to establish and reinforce racial equity accountability. Resolutions and declarations are designed with early input from community members.	
Implement departmental and citywide equity policies	Departmental Equity and Belonging (DEB) Teams complete departmental equity assessments to inform specific department equity plans. Plans are implemented, communicated citywide, and include community engagement as needed.	
Engage in GARE Network and other professional groups committed to advancing equity	Expand and deepen participation in GARE. Evaluate and identify additional partnerships/learning opportunities within GARE.	
Collaborate with institutional partners	Improve integration and collaboration with partners in a more formalized manner including increased/clearly defined leadership to advance racial equity efforts and better serve other excluded communities through shared outcomes.	
Prioritize inclusive community engagement	Expand and systematize our co-design of inclusive engagement opportunities. Increase the inclusivity of entire engagement processes from beginning to end.	
Infuse equity in city investments	Increase use of Racial Equity Instrument and Rapid Response Equity Assessment. Develop citywide process to routinely evaluate and track racial equity impacts from investment programs. Increased equitable funding and contracting.	
Prioritize a diverse and inclusive workforce	Establish and implement recruitment and retention strategies.	

# Detailed Progress

## Goal 1: Everybody Gets It

### Strategy 1.1 Develop Equity-Focused Leadership at All Levels Moderate Progress

#### Racial Equity Guiding Coalition

To ensure leadership support at the highest levels of the organization, the city implemented a Racial Equity Guiding Coalition made up of City Council members and key city department directors. After two years of successful collaboration, the city phased out the Racial Equity Guiding Coalition in 2023 because the city moved into the operationalize phase of the work, including implementation of the Racial Equity Plan.

### Strategy 1.2 Develop Workplace-Based Equity Teams Significant Progress

#### DEB Teams

One of the first actions to come out of the Racial Equity Plan was to create departmental equity and belonging (DEB) teams. This has been a significant effort since 2022 and will remain an important work area in the future.

The intention of departmental teams is to ensure equity frameworks, tools and practices can be embedded into each department's operations. As extensions of the Office of Equity and Belonging, these teams assist with communication about equity work to all departmental colleagues, host special events relevant to individual departments and facilitate departmental team assessments, review policy and assist with the development of departmental equity plans. The departmental Equity Action plans will influence which projects, programs or policies the department will focus on for the next three years.

#### Creation of Team Toolkit

In 2023, the city created a toolkit to assist departments in establishing their first departmental equity teams and ensure cohesion across the teams.

#### Departmental Equity & Belonging Teams at a Glance

- 98% of departments have a team. By mid-2025 100% of departments will have a DEB Team.
- 15 departments completed their workgroup and

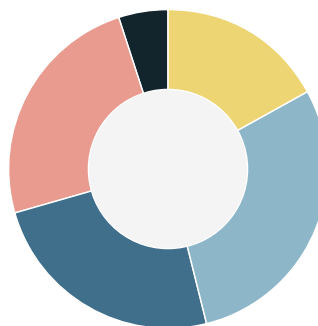
individual assessments.

- Two departments created Equity Action Plans ahead of the timeline
- By the end of 2025, all departments will have developed equity action plans in line with a department's operations.

### Strategy 1.3 Provide Racial Equity Trainings Significant Progress

#### Equity Ambassador Participation

The city has created a train-the-trainer model to facilitate its three core equity training courses. City staff self-select to participate as Equity Ambassadors in addition to their designated responsibilities. With the support of their direct supervisors, ambassadors become key equity facilitators and leaders who connect other employees to larger organizational efforts. In addition to expanding their facilitation skills, ambassadors advocate, monitor and intervene when witnessing harmful behaviors. Ambassadors become mentors and role models for teams within their departments.



#### Equity Ambassadors Representation

- Leadership: 5 ambassadors
- Management: 14 ambassadors
- Professional: 13 ambassadors
- Operations: 12 ambassadors
- Admin Support: 4 ambassadors

For details by Department see Appendix A - Racial Equity Ambassador Participation by Department.

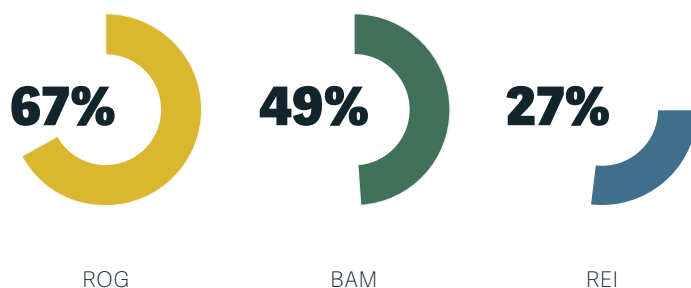
### Core Racial Equity Trainings

Normalizing equity practices is critical in creating foundational awareness, terminology and understanding in the city's approach towards centering equity.

Core training has been fundamental in increasing historical awareness of institutional and systemic oppression so that the responsibility is shared across city staff to address current and future practices that could continue impacting our most vulnerable communities. The numbers reflected above show the number of city staff trained at the time the report was created. This chart does not reflect the numbers of ambassadors who have taken training and are no longer with the city organization

To date, City of Boulder racial equity ambassadors have trained more than 2,500 city employees across three classes: Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government (ROG), Bias & Microaggression (BAM), and Racial Equity Instrument (REI). Full details can be found in Appendix B - Racial Equity Training Completion by Department.

Citywide Racial Equity Training Completion Rates by Session



### Supplemental Trainings

The city has expanded its training portfolio to include other mission-aligned opportunities in partnership with community organizations. Since 2022, Office of Equity and Belonging-sponsored trainings included:

- Four **Right Use of Power Workshops** that focus on the ethical use of power and furthering leadership skills to navigate complex social relationships.
- Three **Simplify Language Trainings** which focus on making written and spoken communication easier to understand across audiences.



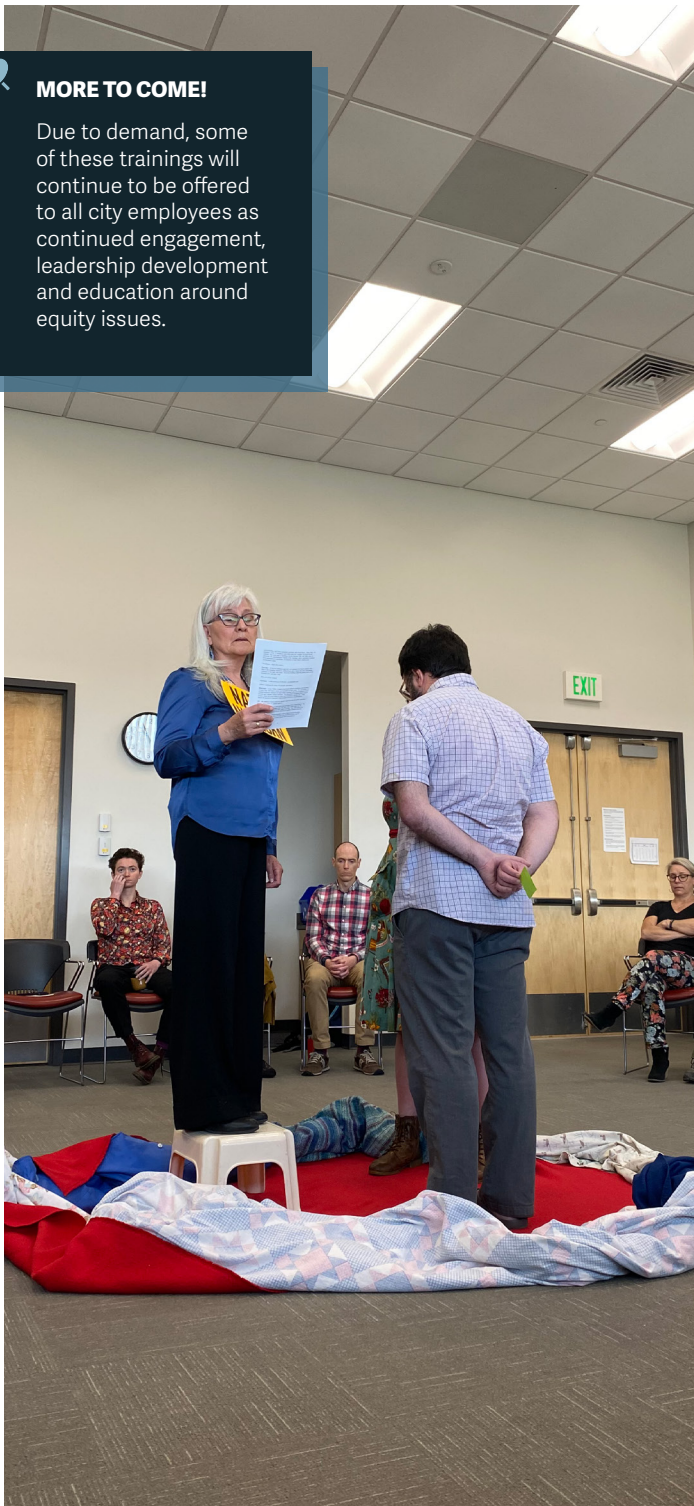
City staff coming together as Equity Ambassadors for summer training in 2021.





### MORE TO COME!

Due to demand, some of these trainings will continue to be offered to all city employees as continued engagement, leadership development and education around equity issues.



City staff attend training *Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples* facilitated by Jerilyn DeCoteau (Turtle Mountain Chippewa) and Paula Palmer. It is an experiential workshop that walks attendees through the history of colonization, its impacts on Native Peoples and how to support ongoing awareness to be in right relationship with Indigenous communities.

- One **Combatting Human Trafficking Workshop** which explores root causes, vulnerabilities, social and systemic inequalities and equips staff to recognize and report on possible issues.
- One **Antisemitism Training** focused on understanding how it manifests and how to work together to address it.
- One **Working with Muslim Americans Training**, designed to increase community awareness and build trusting relationships between law enforcement, government officials and Muslim American communities.
- Three **Disability Etiquette 101 Trainings** to equip staff with knowledge and tools to foster inclusivity, develop deeper understanding of disability laws & etiquette, and ways to create a more accessible and welcoming environment. This includes tailored training for public safety teams.
- Three **Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples** workshops designed to create deeper awareness on the history and legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery, its impacts on Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous lands and European colonizers since 1492, while stimulating reflection, discussion and appropriate actions towards justice and healing among all peoples.
- One **Gender Equity 101 Class** by Rocky Mountain Equality focused on enhancing organizational LGBTQ+ cultural competency and equipping the institution to better serve LGBTQ+ clients and staff.
- Six **Our Community Listens Classes** which explore behavioral tendencies, strengthen interpersonal communication styles and develop effective ways to navigate confrontations.
- One lunch and learn session focused on **"How to Talk to Your Kids About Race,"** inviting parents to further their skills to have open and honest conversations about race at home.

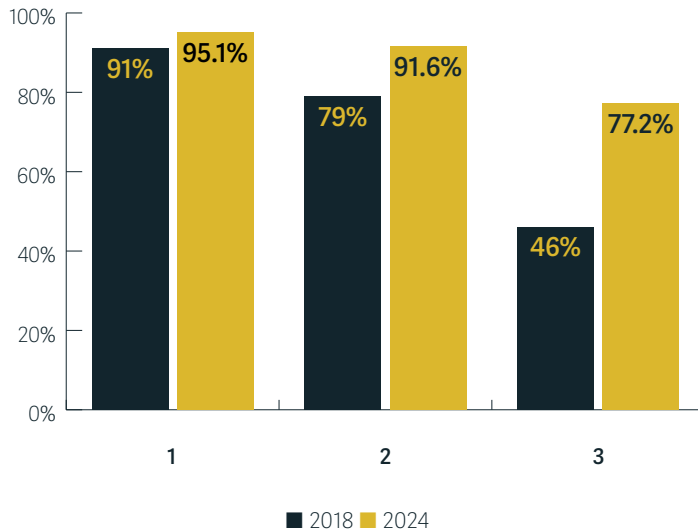
### Evaluating Impact: Employee Pulse Survey

In 2023, the Office of Equity and Belonging conducted an Equity Training Impact Analysis to better understand whether training has improved staff understanding and behavior in advancing equity. Additionally, the city's 2024 employee pulse survey examined, in part, how city staff have progressed in their understanding of institutional racism and the levels of support offered by leadership. These questions were compared to similar questions asked in a citywide employee engagement survey in 2018.

The Employee Pulse Survey showed that most respondents have a basic understanding of racial equity concepts and feel confident in identifying institutional racism.

- 95.1% of respondents understand the basic concepts, up from 91% in 2018.
- 91.6% of respondents could identify examples of institutional racism, up from 79% in 2018.
- 77.2% of respondents believe that their department has worked to increase equity, up from 46% in 2018.

**Pulse Survey Results: Positive Response Rates by Year**



1. Understanding of Basic Racial Equity Concepts
2. Ability to Identify Examples of Institutional Racism
3. Perception of Efforts to Reduce Racial Inequity at the Department Level

- Though these results suggest improvement in overall understanding, only 73.9% of respondents understand how their role with the city can be used to reduce racial inequity.
- Bias and Microaggression training had a notable impact on participants' understanding of key equity concepts.
  - » Trainees were more than five times more likely to agree that they understood what microaggressions are.
  - » Trainees were 2.8 times more likely to agree that they understood what systemic racism is.
- Role of Government participants were more likely to perceive the impacts of systemic racism.
  - » Trainees were 3.7 times more likely to agree that systemic racism is a problem in both the Boulder community and our own organization.
  - » Trainees were also more aware of a lack of diversity in city management when compared to the overall workforce.
  - » Trainees were also nearly 3 times more likely to pursue additional education about equity.



### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Overall, city staff understand the importance of addressing institutional inequities and are keenly aware of opportunities to do so within the role and responsibilities assigned to them. This inevitably impacts the community at large.

The Office of Equity and Belonging is committed to assisting staff in understanding the tools and resources that help go beyond understanding and move towards accountability.





## Goal 2: Just Do It

### Strategy 2.1 Achieve Commitment at the Department Level Significant Progress

#### Departmental Equity Assessments

All city departments are tasked with conducting a Departmental Equity Assessment. The assessment enables departments to determine their role within the larger context of citywide equity efforts. Department Equity and Belonging (DEB) team members facilitate workgroup and individual equity assessments. Assessment feedback serves as guidance for departments to outline actions that support department-focused and equity-related goals. Assessment results are the foundation of creating Departmental Equity Action Plans.

To date, 83% of departments have completed their Departmental Assessments and are moving towards the creation of their Departmental Equity Action Plans.

### Strategy 2.2 Operationalize the Racial Equity Instrument Developing

#### Racial Equity Instrument and Rapid Response Equity Assessment

The Racial Equity Instrument (REI) is a tool to help staff improve city operations by viewing and planning projects using a racial equity focus. The six-step process includes a set of questions that guide the development, implementation and evaluation of City of Boulder policies, programs, practices, procedures and budget decisions to advance equity. In most cases, it is recommended that staff utilize the REI, however when time is limited, city staff can utilize a Rapid Response Equity Assessment (RREA), which offers a streamlined option. This tool can be used to identify immediate, disproportionate impacts on historically excluded communities to prevent unintended negative impacts.

#### Racial Equity Index Map and Data Hub

To assist staff with integrating data into the use of the REI and RREA, the city developed a Racial Equity Index and a Racial Equity Data Hub. The Index combines data from the city and the U.S. Census Bureau to show, spatially, where socioeconomic disparities within the city may be more severe, and is intended to guide



#### SUSTAINABILITY, EQUITY AND RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

The city's work is guided by a unifying document called the Sustainability, Equity and Resilience Framework (SER). The SER organizes the city's work into seven focus areas: safe; livable; healthy and socially thriving; accessible and connected; responsibly governed; environmentally sustainable; and economically vital.

The framework provides the strategic planning foundation for the policies, programs and projects of the City of Boulder. It also serves as the organizing tool for the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, annual budget, and organizational planning processes by providing consistent goals and objectives necessary to achieve Boulder's vision of service excellence for an inspired future.

This includes meeting community expectations for our core service delivery and ensuring that the root causes of inequities are eliminated through city policies, practices, programs and financial decisions.

deeper investigation into how equity concerns differ geographically when appropriate. The Data Hub is a living document that serves as a directory to additional data sets and tools that are highly relevant to most discussions of equity within the city.

#### Tracking Impact: REI Usage in Projects

In 2024, the city began tracking use of the Racial Equity Instrument citywide. According to this data, there have been at least 38 projects that relied on the REI or the Racial Equity Rapid Response Analysis for analysis of equity. High-profile examples include: Accessory Dwelling Unit Regulations Update, Occupancy Reform and Zoning for Affordable Housing, Revision to Abatement of Public Nuisances



Ordinance, and Xcel Energy Streetlight Acquisition and LED Conversion project. Given the decentralized nature of racial equity work, this data does not reflect every use of the REI; however, it provides a useful benchmark for tracking use in future years.

### **Strategy 2.3** **Integrate Racial Equity into** **“Master” and Strategic Plans** Moderate Progress

#### **Building Equity into the SER Framework**

In 2022, the city’s strategic planning framework was updated to include equity, becoming the Sustainability, Equity and Resilience (SER) Framework.

#### **Citywide Strategic Plan**

In 2024, the city established the first Citywide Strategic Plan, which names strategies and priority actions organized by the SER Framework and in alignment with the Racial Equity Plan.

#### **Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan**

In collaboration with Boulder County, the City of Boulder is updating the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan. This plan lays out a 20-year community vision and includes key policies that guide how the city changes over time. City and county staff, policymakers and community members use the plan to shape programs, projects, development decisions, and how resources are allocated. The policies cover topics such as land use, transportation, food systems, wellness and more. The team leading the update has centered equity in the community engagement process, policy analysis and its recommendations.

### **Strategy 2.4** **Focus on Racial Equity in Stewarding** **Public Funds, Racial Equity Programming** **and City Financial Processes** Moderate Progress

#### **Budgeting for Resilience and Equity**

Since the last update, the city has been working to implement outcome-based budgeting, also known as Budgeting for Resilience and Equity. This approach enables the city to perform enhanced data-driven

decision-making to understand the impact of our funding choices and the allocation of resources in support of community and citywide goals.

#### **Procurement**

Procurement is a major vehicle for advancing equity, and for ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and result in quality work. Inclusive procurement increases economic opportunities and promotes economic mobility for businesses that have been historically excluded from the process. It is a vital strategy to increase the strength and resilience of communities and contributes to a healthy and sustainable local economy that works for all.

#### **Disparity Study**

To learn about the local marketplace and identify whether there is a level playing field for small and diverse businesses in city contracts, the city partnered with Boulder County to complete a disparity study. This research compares the availability of small, minority- and women-owned businesses in the marketplace and the contracts awarded through the procurement process.

This helps identify current disparities. The study revealed substantial gaps between availability and utilization of women and minority-owned businesses in Boulder’s purchasing. These results are similar to those found in many other government settings, including Boulder County and the State of Colorado.



#### **THE WORK CONTINUES:** **BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY**

To address the disparity in city procurement, the city plans to create Business Opportunity Program. The program will implement recommendations from the disparity study and aim to increase economic opportunities for minority and woman-owned businesses.

##### **Program Elements**

- Creating an equitable purchasing policy
- Setting aspirational goals and tracking progress
- Increasing opportunities for subcontracting on large projects in construction and professional services
- Expanding outreach and support to small and diverse businesses interested and ready to do business with the city

## Goal 3: Community Commitment



Community Connectors-in-Residence team members attend a monthly dinner gathering with council member Nicole Speer. City leaders and staff are invited to join these gatherings to build relationships and share their “why” behind serving in government.

**“Whether it is workshop/event planning, giving feedback on projects, being present at city events, getting to know resources and other city departments, or surfacing community ideas/concerns, these have all led to community members feeling more acknowledged and empowered.”**

—Adela Aguirre (CCinR)

### Strategy 3.1 Partner with Community Significant Progress

#### Community Connectors

Since 2022, the [Community Connector model](#) continues to be strengthened and embraced across the organization, moving Boulder closer to its goal of more inclusive and meaningful engagement in city decision-making processes. The priority of the Community Connector model remains elevating the voices of historically excluded communities across our city.

Community Connectors hold many identities, including: Black/African American, African, Afro-Latino, Latine/a/os, Nepali, immigrant, LGBTQ+, multi-lingual, multi-generational household, older adult, person experiencing disabilities, young adult, college student, micro business owner and entrepreneur, parent, single-family income earner, individual who is economically disadvantaged, renter, affordable housing renter and resident of manufactured home communities.

Community Connectors have elevated community concerns around increasing costs and limited affordable housing options; ensuring educational programming accurately depicts Indigenous knowledge, history and their connection to this land; reflecting the desire for a youth center in the city; continual identification of racial equity being a key priority.

Accomplishments 2022 to 2025:

- 45 program participants (21 active)
- 38 projects received direct feedback from CCinRs, including Vision Zero Action Plan; Body Worn Camera Policy; Snow and Ice Response Review; E-Bike Incentive Program; Occupancy Reform and Zoning for Affordable Housing; and Civic Area Phase 2
- 1,000 households reached (estimated) to help mitigate disaster response impacts of the COVID 19-pandemic and Marshall Fire & Winds; support disaster preparedness, response and recovery.
- Six national conference presentations of the Community Connector Model, introducing the city’s approach and sharing implementation steps.

### Strategy 3.2

#### Build Community Organizational Capacity

Significant Progress

#### COMMUNITY CONNECTOR MODEL PROGRAMS

Community Connectors empower the City of Boulder to make better decisions by elevating the experiences and voices of historically excluded communities.

Community Connectors build trust in city government by partnering to co-design culturally proficient community engagement that strengthens a thriving community and a responsibly governed city.

Community Connectors play a crucial role in bridging the gap between community members and city government, sharing resources, facilitating two-way dialogue and surfacing arising issues or community concerns.

##### Community Connectors in Residence (CCinR)

Build power by reducing barriers to community engagement and advancing racial equity.

##### Project Connectors (PC)

Co-design materials and engagement sessions, and support outreach of engagement that will help shape the direction of the project.

##### Outreach Connectors (OCC)

Share important information and resources with their networks of connections.

##### Emergency Response Connectors (ERC)

Program ended in 2024.

Build trust, share public health and resilience updates, engagement outreach and navigation of basic needs and services.

Recognizing injustices exist across government agencies and other organizations, it has been important to continually partner with other organizations who advance this work. We are part of a larger network of jurisdictions focusing on ensuring equal dignity and fair access for our community. As such, the city, through the Office of Equity and Belonging actively partners with the following organizations to advance our work.

- We partner with and attend monthly meetings with the Colorado Equity Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Network, a group of local jurisdictions working to advance equity.
- Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) – as active members, the Equity and Belonging Officer has served on the GARE Steering committee since 2020. Steering committee members provide input to staff on membership needs and advise on GARE teamwork priorities. As the term of participation on the steering committee is ending, the Office of Equity and Belonging will continue to engage in the network, through local and national convenings, jurisdictional evaluation learning exchanges, leadership summits and presentations to others in the network. In June of 2025, the OEB hosted a local GARE Convening composed of government leaders and equity practitioners across the state with the goal of sharing special initiatives some departments have implemented that can be duplicated in other jurisdictions and build stronger connections of leaders doing this work across jurisdictions.
- The city's OEB staff offers support to other local jurisdictions who have expressed interest in developing and embedding their own basic training program that activates awareness and normalizes shared language to advance equity. Leaders in other local jurisdictions are offered a spot to attend one of our core trainings, Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government. This fosters cross jurisdictional support, strengthens the connections between our work and promotes true collaboration across institutions.
- International City County Manager's Association (ICMA) Equity Officers Cohort, which assists in hosting an annual Equity Summit designed for equity practitioners and city and county administrators.
- OEB staff meet quarterly with Boulder County Office of Equity, University of Colorado -Boulder Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor, Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) Office of Family Partnerships to stay connected, share updates, community trends and explore ways to collaborate with each other.



- We seek expertise and partnership with trusted local nonprofits, recognizing their vital role in supporting our most vulnerable communities. By building strong, reciprocal relationships, we better understand the needs, address gaps and create opportunities to uplift and celebrate our community together.

In Fall of 2023 and through 2024, Office of Equity and Belonging staff partnered with CU Law School's Immigration Clinic Director, Professor and Associate Dean, Violeta Chapin to host [three informational sessions surrounding immigration law around specific topics](#), meeting a critical need in the community.

Through these recorded sessions, the city hopes to make information accessible to new and established immigrants in our community, and to other jurisdictions across the states. Understanding the importance of supporting immigrants as valued members of and contributors to Boulder's community, culture, economy and its overall well-being.

- The Equity Policy Advisor and team Senior Data Analyst have co-facilitated three sessions, two at national conferences and one for a local network working with youth, to share best practices for data collection while balancing the storing and use of such data in a way that is ethical and responsible.

### Strategy 3.3 Seek Opportunities to Support and Promote the Value of Diversity and Multiculturalism Moderate Progress

#### Declarations

Since 2022, City Council has adopted 43 declarations lifting various communities and organizations and the positive impacts they have had on the community and the world. Some of the declarations include:

- National Day of Racial Healing
- International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- Black History Month
- National Women's History Month
- Ramadan
- Cesar Chavez Day
- Celebrate Diversity Month
- Nepal Day



#### SUCCESS STORY: JUNETEENTH

In 2022, the city declared Juneteenth as a formal employee paid holiday in line with the Federal and State government declarations. More than a day off for city staff, the holiday has provided the opportunity for the Office of Equity and Belonging to host an annual flag raising celebration in partnership with community.

The annual celebration is free to the community and in addition to the raising of the flag by city leaders, provides an opportunity for fun, celebration, food and music. The 2024 celebration was part of a weeklong series of events hosted across Boulder County.

- Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
- Jewish American Heritage Month
- Remembering Los Seis
- Immigrant Heritage Month
- Pride Month
- Juneteenth
- World Refugee Day
- Disability Voting Rights Week
- Hispanic Heritage Month
- Diwali
- Indigenous Peoples' Day

#### Cultural Grants for Community Groups

The city, through its Housing and Human Services Department and Office of Arts and Culture,

annually awards \$40,000 in sponsorship for Indigenous Peoples' Day, Juneteenth, Colorado Immigration Heritage Month and Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The events welcome hundreds of community members annually.

In alignment with the [Los Seis](#) declaration and the 50th Anniversary of Los Seis de Boulder, the city made a \$1,500 contribution to the University of Colorado Boulder BUENO Center for Multicultural Education [Los Seis Memorial Scholarship](#). This scholarship exists in honor and memory of those lost in the bombings. The funding supports any student whose background would bring economic, racial or ethnic parity representation to the student body at CU Boulder.

In 2024, the city made a \$1,000 donation to the [Annual Cumbre Compañeras Women's Summit XVIII & Annual Cumbre Juvenil](#) that promotes a space to celebrate, inspire and learn ideas to live healthy, just, and thriving lives for Spanish-speaking and Latine/Chicane/Hispanic women and youth.

### Strategy 3.4 Recognize History of Institutional Racism Within the City of Boulder Moderate Progress

#### Tribal Consultation

Sovereignty for Native peoples has existed since time immemorial, predating the U.S. Constitution. Federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Nations are sovereign governments, and their special relationship with the United States is recognized under the Constitution of the United States, treaties, statutes,





The City of Boulder extends its gratitude to Tribal Representatives for nominating the city for an American Cultural Resources Association (ACRA) award for its consultation and engagement efforts with American Indian Tribal Nations, which it received at the association's annual conference in September 2024. The award honors organizations that have "demonstrated accomplishments and commitments above and beyond those required to meet laws and regulations pertaining to cultural resource management." The city thanked Tribal Representatives who signed a nomination letter co-developed by the Keystone Policy Center and Living Heritage, and others who wrote their own letters of support that helped the city win the award. Read a city press release to learn more about the ACRA award.

Executive Orders and court decisions. The special legal status of Tribal Governments requires official relations with federal agencies to be conducted on a government-to-government basis.

City staff recognize the importance of honoring Tribal sovereignty and self-determination and conducting government-to-government consultations with Tribal Representatives appointed by federally recognized Tribal Nations. The last formal consultation with Tribal representatives was hosted in September 2022. Staff have continued working with Tribal representatives in finalizing the most recent Memorandum of Understanding, which is an agreement of activities that will continue in the coming years.

As an outcome of Tribal Consultation, City of Boulder staff have been working with an external consultant in interviewing Tribal partners in telling their history of the area, recognizing the interpretation and educational information describing its history is dominated by American European perspectives and fails to include Indigenous perspectives. This report is informed by



#### GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

In 2024, the American Cultural Resources Association recognized the city's Tribal Consultation efforts for "demonstrating accomplishments and commitments above and beyond those required to meet laws and regulations pertaining to cultural resource management."

in-person interviews with Tribal Representative and is intended to:

- Support Tribal Nations in facilitating, sharing and annotating their enduring cultural, spiritual and historical connections to the Boulder Valley.
- Develop education and interpretation materials that provide accurate, truthful Indigenous Peoples' stories – both past and present.
- Help city staff learn more about special areas or types of places of importance to Tribal Nations and help guide future conversations with Tribal Nations.
- Help fulfill the Indigenous Peoples Day Resolution, which requires the city to correct omissions of the Native American presence in public places, resources and cultural programming.

City staff have received permission from Tribal Representatives to release a final report, after approval by Tribal Representatives, in early 2026.

#### Los Seis de Boulder

May 2024 marked 50 years since the Los Seis bombing tragedy. The city commemorated this history with a public art dedication of a new sculpture created by University of Colorado Boulder (CU) alumna and artist Jasmine Baetz. Funding for the installation was in part provided by the city, through the Boulder Arts Commission, and the sculpture is now part of the city's Public Art Collection.

Baetz's work commemorates "Los Seis," six CU students, alumni, and students from other campuses who were active in the Chicano Student Movement that were killed in two separate car bombings in 1974. The first bomb went off in Chautauqua Park on May 27. Then, on May 29, a second bomb exploded in a parking lot at 28th Street and Canyon Boulevard. Una Jaakola, Reyes Martínez, Neva Romero, Francisco Dougherty, Heriberto Terán and Florencio Granado tragically lost their lives.

At the time of the bombings, students in UMAS (United Mexican American Students) were occupying Temporary Building 1 on the CU Boulder campus to demand continued financial aid and Educational Opportunity Programs for Mexican American and Chicano/a students.



## **CLOSER LOOK: INCLUSIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY IN OPEN SPACE**

### **Bilingual Activities**

Open Space and Mountain Parks routinely host bilingual activities to connect with Spanish-speaking visitors. These activities are planned in collaboration with many community partners.

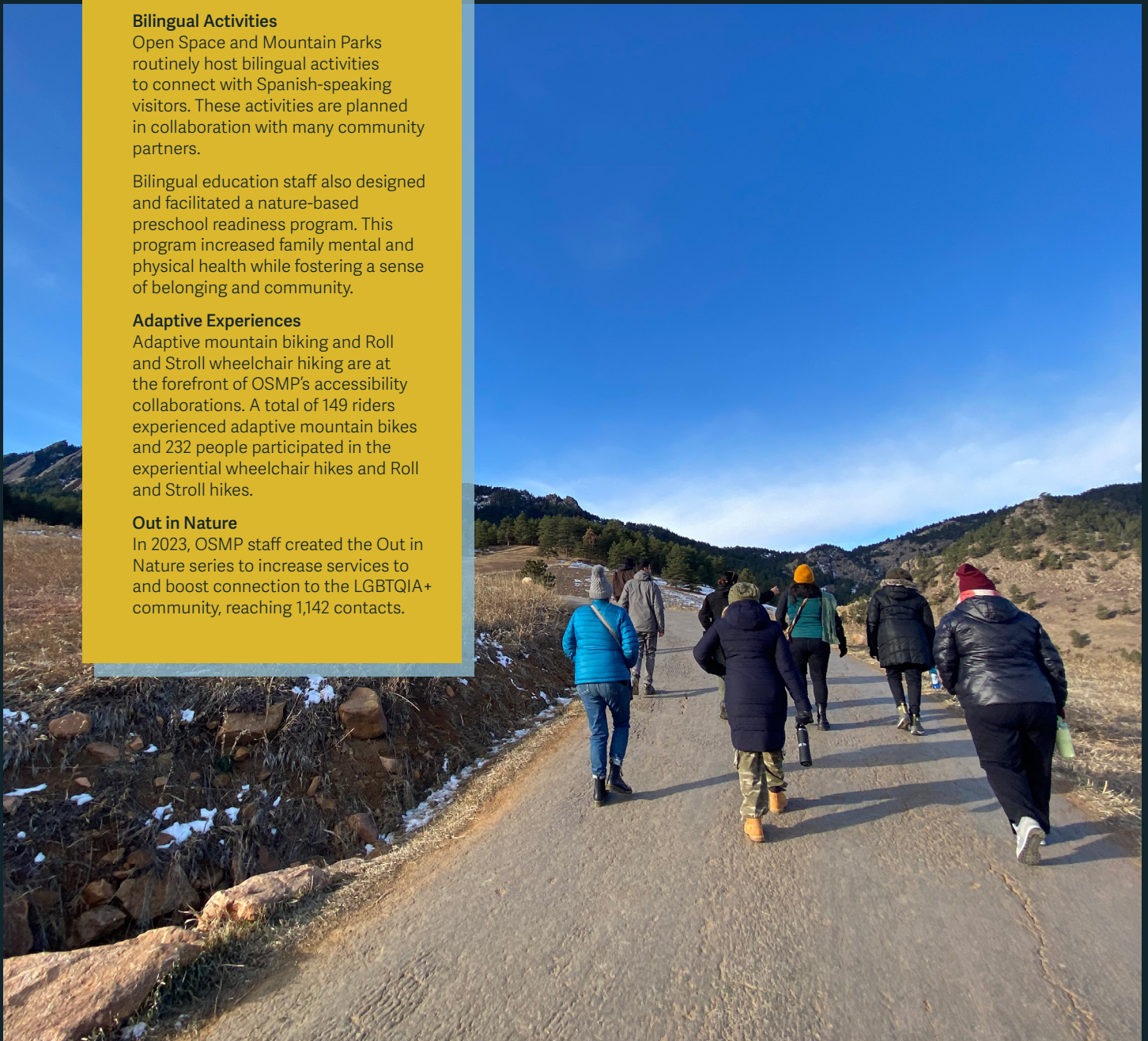
Bilingual education staff also designed and facilitated a nature-based preschool readiness program. This program increased family mental and physical health while fostering a sense of belonging and community.

### **Adaptive Experiences**

Adaptive mountain biking and Roll and Stroll wheelchair hiking are at the forefront of OSMP's accessibility collaborations. A total of 149 riders experienced adaptive mountain bikes and 232 people participated in the experiential wheelchair hikes and Roll and Stroll hikes.

### **Out in Nature**

In 2023, OSMP staff created the Out in Nature series to increase services to and boost connection to the LGBTQIA+ community, reaching 1,142 contacts.



GARE staff visiting Boulder through an immersing Chautauqua trail hike which OSMP staff led that brings awareness on the establishment of the famous park and the footprint of African American/Black residents that shaped its beginnings in the late 1800s.

### Civic Area Historic District Conversations

In 2023, city staff researched the Civic Area's history after three community groups proposed it as a historic district. Drawing on the film *This Is [Not] Who We Are*, produced by Blackat Video Productions and Landlocked Films, this research challenged long-standing narratives and uncovered evidence of a once-thriving neighborhood, home to Black and white residents since the 1880s. Their findings revealed a history of systemic erasure and racial discrimination, including the displacement of Black residents in the early 20th century.

Engaging with the Community Connectors-in-Residence, staff sought feedback on racial equity strategies. This collaboration led to the development of a walking tour and a broader effort to present a fuller, more inclusive historical narrative. While the historic district application was not approved, the process underscored widespread interest in learning about and addressing Boulder's history of discrimination.

Since then, city staff have continued researching and sharing their findings through public presentations, walking tours, an [interactive StoryMap](#) and a Museum of Boulder exhibit. At a 2025 conference, they presented "Challenging the Dominant Narrative: A Case Study in Asking New Questions," highlighting the importance of re-examining history to correct omissions that occur by only applying a white, Euro-centric perspective.

We are grateful to the producers of the film for their generous gesture giving access to our Office of Equity & Belonging to host internal screenings open to all city staff. This opportunity supports our continued efforts to foster relational dialogue, deepen historical awareness, and critically reflect on the role government has played in perpetuating inequities. By engaging in this powerful storytelling, we aim to create space for learning, connection and collective responsibility. As of June 2025, the screening has been hosted by ten teams across different departments and one event, reaching around 370 employees.





## Goal 4: Power to All the People

### Strategy 4.1 Improve Access to Decision-Makers Moderate Progress

#### Community Connectors in Residence Dinners

In Summer 2024, the CCinR team began hosting dinner gatherings once per month and invite city leaders to share their stories on why they have chosen public service as a career, to better understand the way they lead their departments and offer insights for how their communities experience the services provided by city departments/teams. The goal with these dinners is to build stronger connections and familiarity for a more united and thriving community. Guests have included City Manager Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, Council Member Nicole Speer, and Chief of Police Stephen Redfearn.

#### Chats with Council

Members of City Council support the Chats with Council engagement series in partnership with the City Manager's Office and the Communication & Engagement Department. The purpose of Chats with Council is to give a more diverse set of community members a convenient, drop-in opportunity to engage with their elected officials. These engagement opportunities are designed to promote short, two-way conversations about issues that matter most to residents and others in the city. Between 2022 and March 2025, there were 16 chats and walks/strolls/rolls.

#### Police Oversight Panel Meetings with Police Chief

The Police Oversight Panel was created by City Council to increase community involvement in police oversight and to ensure that historically excluded communities have a voice in police oversight. The role of the panel is to review completed internal complaint investigations, make recommendations on disposition and discipline for those complaints, and to make policy and training recommendations to the department.

One important strategy for the panel is regular meetings with Police Department leadership. The panel meets with the police chief four times per year and the regular in-person meetings have improved relations between the panel and the police force. Topics for discussion usually arise from the panel's review of cases, including officers' domestic violence training,

officers' disciplinary history and its relationship to promotions or salary increases, access to more data on stops, arrests and use of force. The meetings are open to the public to observe.

#### Presentations to Council on CCinR Working Priorities

Since 2022, the CCinR team has provided mid-year and end-of-year updates to council as a quick recap on the impact being done through this team, elevate community concerns, celebrate the strengths that community brings and identify priorities for the coming months.

### Strategy 4.2 Support City-Community Relationships Through Staffing Moderate Progress

#### Engagement Team

While improving trust between community and government is a responsibility of the entire city organization, much of this work is centered in the Communication and Engagement Department. The Community Engagement team fosters inclusive and meaningful public participation and relationship-building between the Boulder community and local government. The team supports departments in creating and implementing transparent and inspiring opportunities for the public to provide input; seeks to build trust, increase civic confidence and co-create effective engagement strategies with historically excluded populations; champions innovation, equity and language access; and promotes productive dialogue and participation that leads to informed decision-making.

The city's engagement team members implement best practices of inclusive community engagement to inform decision-making. They also cultivate positive working relationships with community members and partners to expand the city's engagement commitment to include the development and nurturing of trust, equity and meaningful two-way dialogue.

#### Engagement Coordination Committee

The Engagement Coordination Committee (ECC) was created to support the city in implementing its



African-American and Black Community Police Liaisons: Officer Harris, Officer Hamilton and Officer Hawkins with CU Boulder Regent Wanda James at a celebration for Black History Month hosted by the Center for African and African-American Studies (CAAS).

Engagement Strategic Framework, strengthening community relationships, and ensuring a clear and consistent approach to engagement across all departments. The ECC also fosters innovative, coordinated, and supported engagement efforts that are culturally responsive, linguistically accessible and aligned with the city's vision of an engaged community.

Currently, 32 active members represent most public-facing departments. Together, the ECC is building an internal community that is supportive, committed to learning and accountable to the community and one another, in addressing the challenges faced in engagement spaces throughout the city.

### **Boulder Police Department Community Liaisons**

The Boulder Police Department is committed to building meaningful relationships with all members of our community with the goal of providing improved services and safety. One strategy to connect with community is the newly established [Liaison Officer Program](#). Liaison Officers (LOs), who volunteer for the program, strive to foster open communication, improve representation and build trust between law enforcement and the people they serve. There are currently six liaison teams,

with five LOs to the Black/African American community, three LOs to the LGBTQ+ community, four LOs to Latine/x community, two LOs to the Islamic community, one LO to the Jewish community, and two LOs to the community of people living with disabilities. Most of the officers share the same identity as the communities they liaise with.

### **Strategy 4.3**

#### **Focus on High-Quality Community Engagement Significant Progress**

### **Continuing to Build Boulder's Engagement Culture**

As stewards of democracy, our staff understand we will make better decisions when all voices in the community are heard and valued. The Communication and Engagement Department has worked hard to create resources to enable staff to reach this goal. City employee guidance has been published for inclusive engagement including information about the Community Connector model and programs as well as descriptions of partnership opportunities. In 2024, the Office of Equity and Belonging staff collaborated with members of the city's engagement





Selasee and the Fafa Family band with guest artist Miguel Soldevila from Soldevila Music Project, performing for a community event hosted by Community Connectors-in-Residence to bring together communities of color and celebrate their richness and diversity.

team and Community Connectors to create a manual for Community Connectors to use as they familiarize themselves with their roles. The manual was created in English with a Spanish version available for Spanish-speaking connectors.

The Open Space and Mountain Parks Department also created an Engaging Latino Families Guide which helps staff in involving Latino families in environmental education.

### Building Power & Raising Voices Sessions

The Community Connector in Residence team has facilitated 13 **Building Power & Raising Voices** Presentations to the community since April 2022. The CCinR team members co-designed and co-facilitated sessions to the Boulder community which aims to increase a sense of trust in city government, increase understanding on how local government is structured, build power and skills to historically excluded communities to share their voices with highest levels of leadership and during public meetings, and shape decisions about their community with the aim of lifting aspirations or issues facing their community.

Of these sessions held in 2024, 89.9% of attendees self-identified as Black or African American, Asian American, Hispanic, American Indian, or two or more races, and 56.6% are in households who make less than \$50,000/year. 85% of participants in these sessions reported an increase in one or more of the following:

- I feel like I belong as a member of the Boulder community and that my voice/perspective matters to city government.
- I know the various services that the city offers.
- I know at least one way in which I can participate to offer my opinion during a decision-making process at the city.

### Strategy 4.4 Address Language, Cultural and Engagement Access Barriers Moderate Progress

#### Language Access

While English is the dominant language in the Boulder area, more than 40,000 people in Boulder County speak other languages and it's important that government meets their needs. In Boulder, Spanish is the second-most spoken language, with more than 1,700 Spanish speakers also identifying as Limited English Proficient, a term that refers to a person's ability to speak, read, write and/or understand the English language at a level that allows them to interact effectively with the City of Boulder.

In 2022, the City of Boulder published its first Language Access Plan, which includes procedures to help the city meet its legal requirements and aspirations to make government programs and services available in other languages. It provides guidelines, recommendations, and processes to ensure that individuals with Limited

English Proficiency have meaningful access to information, services, programs, activities and decision-making processes at the City of Boulder.

Since 2022, many of the plan's recommendations are already making a difference.

### Access to Interpretation

Since 2022, the city has made great progress in improving access to interpretation. The city provides this service when needed, free of charge to recipients. In partnership with many local interpretation professionals, many city meetings and engagement events are now accessible to people who don't speak English. Due to city efforts, the Human Relations Commission currently provides simultaneous interpretation to a primarily Spanish speaking commission member. Employee teams now offer the option of providing simultaneous interpretation in key meetings, ensuring staff with limited English proficiency can fully engage in discussion when needed.



#### BREAKING BARRIERS

The City of Boulder has 20 boards and commissions that help shape projects and policy on issues. Thanks to the city's efforts to expand language access, the Human Relations Commission now has a member that primarily speaks Spanish, a first in the city's boards and commissions. With the help of simultaneous interpreters, language is no longer a barrier to participation.

### Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan: Engagement Focus on Historically Excluded Communities

The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan is the largest planning effort in the Boulder Valley. The plan has a significant impact on how the city evolves through policy, land use guidance and standards for urban services. Community members truly shape the future of the Boulder Valley by participating in this planning process. However, not all voices in our Boulder community have been heard equally, or at all, in the past. Partnerships with expert local organizations

have led to rich dialogues while using the power of the arts as a medium to communicate. Today, the field of city planning has evolved to be much more participatory, recognizing the voices and ideas of those who are impacted by the plans made. The city and county now have a greater understanding of community disparities as well as many more equity tools, community engagement resources and collaborative partnerships available than in previous updates. The city's goal for the 2025 major update process is to be more inclusive than ever before.

### Interpretation and Translation During Emergencies

The Boulder Office of Disaster Management launched a text alert system for emergencies. These text alerts are available, via automatic machine translation, in over 100 languages, and the city is working with the ODM to continuously improve the accuracy of the automated translations.

### Retooled Neighborhood Connection Grants

The City of Boulder's Neighborhood Connection grants support neighborhood-led initiatives, social gatherings, and activities. The program fosters collaboration, creativity, resilience and builds community spirit.

In 2024, the city added equity and inclusion to the list of criteria for applicants and created Spanish applications available to the public. Now, neighborhoods that wish to receive grant funding for their neighborhood are more likely to access funds when they demonstrate that their project engages a broad segment of the community, including marginalized or underrepresented groups. Thirty percent of the program's budget is now earmarked for manufactured home communities.





## Goal 5: Representation Matters

### Strategy 5.1 Address Boards, Commissions and Working Groups Significant Progress

#### Boards and Commission Project

In 2022, the City of Boulder initiated a comprehensive review of its boards and commissions. One aspect of this analysis revealed significant representation gaps between board and commission members and the community they represent. In general, board and commission members were more likely to be white, between the ages of 45 and 64, hold a master's degree and have a household income greater than \$100,000. Renters, people of color, people younger than 34 years old and those with less education were underrepresented by boards and commissions.

In response to this analysis, the city began implementing changes to its board and commission recruitment, selection and experience to achieve more equitable representation among members. These measures include simplifying the application process, focusing on balancing subject matter expertise with lived experience and representation, and recruiting more proactively.

In 2023, the city's Office of Equity and Belonging tailored the **Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government** training to all Boards & Commissions, Committees and Advisory groups to build awareness on the city's approach for advancing equity and the important role members play in addressing inequities in the decision-making process. In 2025, staff hosted an in-person open house to be available to answer questions, provide information and assist with online applications as needed.

### Strategy 5.2 Develop City of Boulder's Workforce Significant Progress

#### Employee Affinity Groups

In 2023, a team of city staff worked to create the city's first Affinity Group/Employee Resource Groups Policy and associated guidelines. Employee Affinity Groups are employee-led groups that create a space for employees who share a common identity (such as gender, race,



Q+ affinity group participants on a morning hike before work.

sexual orientation or ability). They support learning and leadership development opportunities and help build stronger connections among employees, advance leadership skills and support the retention of diverse talent across the organization. Six groups have been created to date, including:

- Latinx Group
- Q+ Group
- People Experiencing Disabilities
- Parents of Children with Disabilities
- Trans, Nonbinary and Gender Expansive Group
- Working Mom's Group

Employees value affinity spaces as places to share challenges, celebrate identities, and connect across departments in ways that might not happen otherwise. These groups also highlight how the city can improve as an employer by providing feedback on benefits and resources. For example, staff helped organize a financial planning session in Spanish, expanding access for first- and second-generation individuals to receive guidance in their primary language.



Latine affinity group members at the Juntos Colorado conference, a chapter of the Local Government Hispanic Network.

Bilingual Staff Recruitment, Retention and Evaluation

Job Posting and Employee Recruitment

In order to support reduced barriers to entry into city employment, the city human resources team has created equivalency information for education and experience. Most commonly, equivalencies allow for real-life experience to qualify in place of education requirements. This developed framework is incorporated into job descriptions and job profiles.

Skills Evaluation

In 2024, the city piloted a program to assess Spanish proficiency for staff in the Communication and Engagement Department who use the language regularly. The pilot created a framework for testing, measuring, and compensating bilingual skills. Supervisors of bilingual positions were also surveyed to understand usage levels. Based on results, Human Resources is developing job description indicators and recommendations for fair compensation tied to bilingual skill needs.

Other Efforts

Other efforts to recruit and retain bilingual staff include an informal Spanish language group to connect bilingual staff with peer colleagues who wish to expand their language skills. On-site limited therapy sessions in Spanish can also be accessed by employees. Additional bilingual supports have been added to employee benefit enrollment materials and meetings, both in person and online. Human Resources has also improved access to education by shifting from a reimbursement model to pre-funding employee education, removing barriers for employees who wish to expand their education and add value to their roles. Union contract summaries have also been produced in Spanish.

Staff Census

The American Community Survey (2023) estimated that the population of Boulder is comprised of 77.7% white, non-Hispanic residents. In 2023, nine departments had disproportionately higher representation of white, non-Hispanic staff. This has dropped to five departments in 2024. Overall, nine departments have become more racially diverse (see Figure 1).

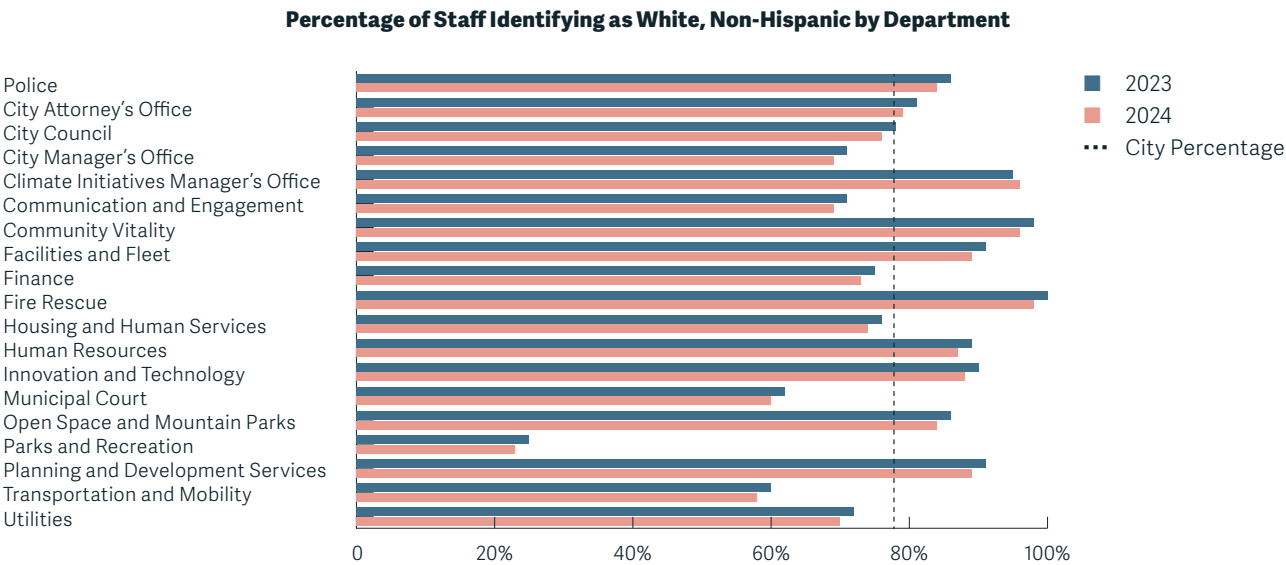


Figure 1. Percentage of staff identifying as White and non-Hispanic by Department in 2023 and 2024 vs the estimated percentage for the Boulder population in the 2023 5-year American Community Survey.

From 2023 to 2024, the city’s full and part-time workforce decreased by 17.6%. When disaggregated by race, the attrition rate was highest for multi-racial and Asian staff. Staff who are Hispanic or Latino were the only racial or ethnic group to see a net increase over the past year (see Figure 2).

When we examine race and ethnicity by management level, White, non-Hispanic/Latino staff are still disproportionately represented across all classifications other than “Individual Contributor,” (see Figure 3).

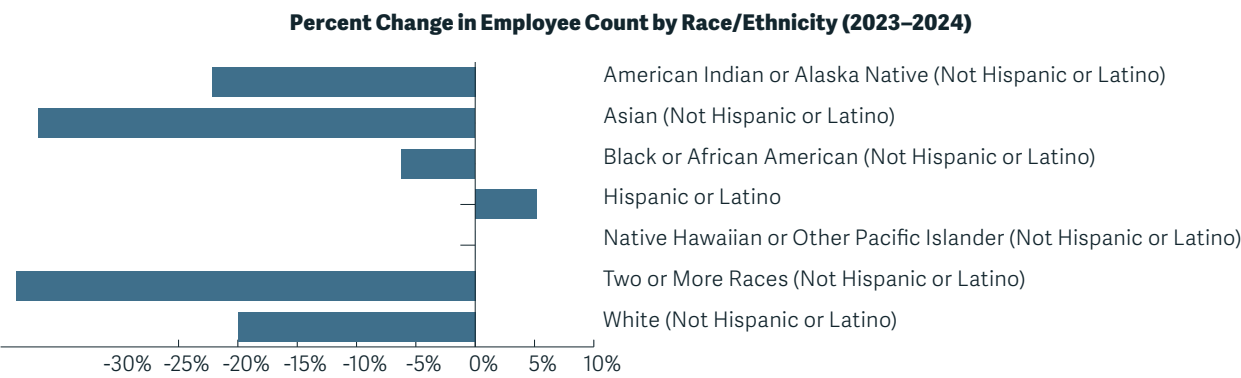


Figure 2. Percent Change in City Staff by Race/Ethnicity from April 2023 to December 2024.

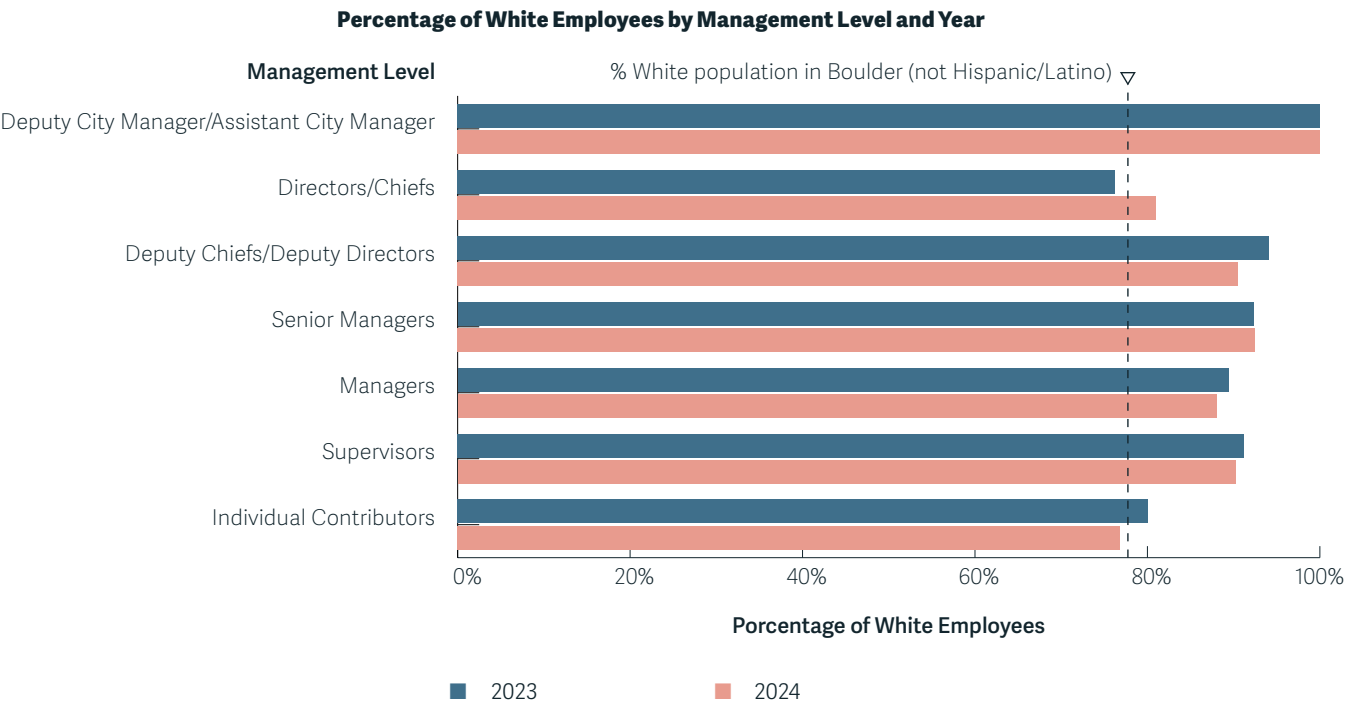


Figure 3. Percentage of employees that are White and Non-Hispanic or Latino by management level and year compared to the Boulder population.



# Caveats and Considerations

While the city has been working diligently to embed equity practices that lead to meaningful outcomes for city staff and community, data collection and impact measurement have both been challenging. The actions and impact collected for this report have been difficult to obtain as the organization is operationalizing equity work across the system and there is not a systematic way of documenting impacts our collective work is having. However, through the exercise of creating this report, now more than ever we are committed to learning and growing in the evaluation space and creating meaningful key performance indicators that reflect the impact of our work.

The Office of Equity and Belonging will continue to rely on ALL city staff to lean into this work as we move forward in implementing the mid-term and long-term outcomes in the Racial Equity Plan with Logic Model.

## Special Gratitude

As Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu once said, “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”, we are grateful for the people in our community, partner organizations, city staff and leadership and council members who have taken those initial steps and continue to embrace the advancement of this work. While there is still much to address within our institution, we know it’s not possible without the collective efforts of all who are committed in shaping a future that centers the dignity of every person in our community, and who celebrate the unique talents and attributes we all bring in building a stronger, more compassionate and thriving community.



# Appendix A

RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING COMPLETION BY DEPARTMENT			
Department	Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government (ROG)	Bias & Microaggression Training (BAM)	Racial Equity Instrument: Intro and Best Practices (REI)
Police	86%	38%	1%
City Attorney's Office	81%	81%	81%
City Council	78%	11%	0%
City Manager's Office	71%	75%	100%
Climate Initiatives	95%	90%	80%
Communication & Engagement	71%	79%	68%
Community Vitality	98%	93%	24%
Facilities & Fleet	91%	82%	38%
Finance	75%	62%	48%
Fire-Rescue	100%	27%	3%
Housing & Human Services	76%	58%	33%
Human Resources	89%	78%	74%
Innovation & Technology	90%	85%	87%
Municipal Court	62%	54%	15%
Open Space & Mountain Parks	86%	81%	45%
Planning & Development Services	91%	79%	33%
Parks & Recreation	25%	19%	17%
Transportation & Mobility	60%	52%	34%
Utilities	72%	67%	26%
Total	67%	49%	27%

# Appendix B

RACIAL EQUITY AMBASSADOR PARTICIPATION BY DEPARTMENT		
Department	# of Staff Involved 2022–2025	Employment Position Level
Police	2	Leadership, Administrative Support
City Attorney's Office	9	Professional, Management
Climate Initiatives	3	Operations, Professional
City Manager's Office	4	Management, Professional
Communication & Engagement	4	Professional, Management
Community Vitality	1	Professional
Facilities & Fleet	1	Operations
Finance	3	Leadership, Management
Fire-Rescue	1	Operations
Housing & Human Services	4	Leadership, Operations
Human Resources	0	
Innovation & Technology	0	
Library (before separation)	2	Leadership, Operations
Municipal Court	1	Leadership
Open Space & Mountain Parks	9	Management, Operations, Administrative Support
Planning & Development Services	1	Professional
Parks & Recreation	3	Management, Operations
Transportation & Mobility	0	
Utilities	6	Management, Operations
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	

# equity report 2024



**City of Boulder**