



Final Report of the
Georgia Municipal Association's
**EQUITY AND INCLUSION
COMMISSION**

Our Journey Together Continues

January 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
FOREWORDS FROM LEADERS.....	5
EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION MEMBERS.....	7
THE FORMATION OF GMA’S EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION.....	8
MEETING OVERVIEWS.....	11
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	14
OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GMA	
OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIES	
WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS	
MUNICIPAL EQUITY & INCLUSION CERTIFICATION PROGRAM.....	39
EXCELLENCE IN POLICING PROGRAM.....	40
GEORGIA CITY SOLUTIONS EQUITY & INCLUSION INITIATIVES.....	41
APPENDICES.....	43



INTRODUCTION

“It’s time for a new covenant between cities and their residents, one rooted in mutuality and a commitment to the ideals of our democracy. I’m confident that if we commit ourselves to being open to the experiences of others and to the principles of justice, equality and fairness, we can make each of our cities a place all would be proud to call home.”

—
VINCE WILLIAMS, GEORGIA MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION
2020-2021 PRESIDENT AND UNION CITY MAYOR



This document embodies the work of GMA's 26-member Equity and Inclusion Commission, co-chaired by Augusta Mayor Hardie Davis and LaGrange Mayor Jim Thornton and created by the GMA Officers in June 2020. The summer of 2020 was a turbulent time for our nation. The public health and economic fallout from COVID-19 highlighted disparities in our most vulnerable populations, including deeply rooted systemic barriers that existed long before the pandemic. A concurrent pandemic of racial injustice and prejudice caused further anger and despair across the nation.

The disparities in opportunities across Georgia are due to complex factors, including intergenerational and persistent poverty, healthcare access, educational attainment, and affordable housing, among others, that overlap and influence each other. No single solution can address the equity and inclusion challenges Georgia communities face. Yet, there are local actions that cities can take and encourage that can begin to address these challenges.

GMA's leadership recognized that as an organization, we must lead, and we must lead with action. As the architects of the future of our cities, it is incumbent upon local leaders to convey the message that there is no place for racism, inequity and exclusion in our cities. GMA's officers understood that the association is uniquely positioned to be a

catalyst for lasting change. To that end, they created the GMA Equity and Inclusion Commission to address these issues and develop a long-term plan of action.

The work of this Commission represents the first step of a long-term journey. With the Commission's foundational work now complete, we expect its efforts to be carried forward and become integral to GMA's ongoing mission for many years to come.

There is no better place than in our cities to begin healing the wounds our democracy and culture have sustained. These efforts, both through GMA and those undertaken locally, will require humility, sacrifice, and an understanding that "inclusion" is a much different and more worthy goal than mere "tolerance."

We urge city leaders to use this report as a guidebook in your ongoing efforts to eradicate systemic inequities where they exist in your communities. The recommendations are grouped according to topic area to help in viewing your city's policies and services through the lens of equity, inclusion, and diversity. By adopting the recommendations in this report, GMA's goal is to help city leaders identify and eliminate obstacles that block participation and achievement for every community member. The report also includes recommendations for steps GMA should take to address these issues in all cities.

Members of GMA's Equity & Inclusion Commission join GMA staff for a "Valuing Differences" exercise.



FOREWORDS

“OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER CONTINUES”



JIM THORNTON,
CO-CHAIRMAN



HARDIE DAVIS,
CO-CHAIRMAN

In January of 2020, none of us could imagine that the world would forever change in front of multiple generations of people across the globe. As mayors and city leaders, we did not know that each of us would be confronted with the harsh reality of lurking societal inequities. We did know that every day our society looks for leadership, guidance, direction, and a word of hope and encouragement when life gets tough.

It is said that there is sometimes a season of convergence when things seem to come together. This convergence in America, in Georgia, and in every one of our cities occurred when the COVID-19 pandemic struck friends and family members, the pandemic of racial injustice stood front and center in Minnesota but also here in Georgia, and an overburdened and under-resourced healthcare system stood on the verge of collapse, revealing inequities that had long been masked under the cloak of insured status.

These difficult moments reminded us of the brokenness of the world and of our nation's most urgent challenges, but they also inspired many to act and to do our part to make things better for all.

GMA, on behalf of all 537 cities in Georgia and their residents, decided to take action. As “Cities United,” we agreed to listen intently and dialogue constructively with one another to develop a blueprint for a more equitable and inclusive Georgia. These recommendations begin with the fundamental belief that we will achieve our greatest success as a state and as human beings by learning to value and accept our differences with the understanding that embracing diversity, equity and inclusion makes us stronger and more successful.

We have been honored to lead this effort as co-chairs of the Equity and Inclusion Commission. Over the ensuing eighteen months, the Commission has developed a series of specific action items and achievable

goals for Georgia to reflect our state's motto of “Wisdom, Justice, Moderation” toward all citizens—to be truly one Georgia.

As noted in the introduction, this report of the Equity and Inclusion Commission certainly doesn't complete our journey, but it is a first step. We believe it is a significant first step, because many of the action items developed by the Commission are already underway, and because many of the goals and aspirations set forth in the report are realistic and possible in the near term.

We know that this journey will continue. We have witnessed the passion of city leaders across Georgia, including those on the Commission, and of the GMA staff who have made this work part of their vocation and their mission. We have also witnessed the desire in the hearts of Georgians to displace past divisions with the loving embrace of each other. For all these reasons, we are confident that things will continue to get better in our cities and throughout the state.

This has been a journey that we have undertaken together, and it will continue for many years to come. As we turn the page on this chapter of our work, the words of Georgia's native son, the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ring loud in our hearts as we remind one another: “Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy.”

The fact that the journey takes time should not concern us; rather, it should inspire us. It should inspire us to take that next step together and to continue our journey. And together we shall.

GMA Equity & Inclusion Commission Co Chairs

Jim Thornton, GMA President and Mayor of LaGrange

Hardie Davis, GMA Board Member and Mayor of Augusta

FOREWORDS



LARRY H. HANSON
GMA Executive Director

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. so eloquently and powerfully stated, “the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.” Since 1933, GMA’s mission has been to anticipate and influence the forces shaping Georgia’s cities and to provide leadership, tools and services that assist municipal governments in becoming more innovative, effective and responsive. This also means standing up at times that demand strong resolve with a commitment to bring city leaders together to address critical issues and through collaboration, to make a difference in our state and our local communities.

The events of 2020 required a strong statement and commitment to action to show that GMA stands in solidarity in opposition to racism, violence, and acts of injustice, inequity and intolerance. The global COVID pandemic only intensified and made more visible disparities that have existed for many years for vulnerable populations. Once seen, these inequities cannot be ignored and as a membership-driven organization, we accepted the responsibility to develop a call to action. In 2020, GMA’s leadership made a pledge to commit the resources needed to make a difference in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion. Over the course of the last 18 months, the GMA Equity and Inclusion Commission set aside space and time to focus, **to listen deeply, unite widely, and act boldly.**

The ultimate goal of the Commission’s work is to make the lives of Georgians better: How do we move people from where they are to where they should be? The Commission has spent eighteen months examining organizational systems—visible and invisible—for opportunities

to increase fairness, equity and inclusion and by modeling what’s right, not what’s easy. Throughout this process, the Commission demonstrated a commitment to justice by practicing acts of awareness, kindness, love and understanding through thoughtful listening and constructive dialogue. This report is a distillation of the Commission’s work and includes specific recommendations that will help local leaders create communities that are more welcoming, inclusive, and equitable. This is a beginning, not an end. On this journey together, we will work to implement a sustainable program that will make a difference in this state and in our cities. This work requires a long-term commitment, one that we are committed to and ready to demonstrate by our actions, efforts and resources. GMA will adhere to the values in our mission and GMA’s staff, at every level, will be here to assist every member city in this critical effort to promote justice, equity, and inclusiveness. As Cities United, we will make a difference, and with a commitment to openness, transparency, and compassion, we will make our cities and our state a better place for everyone. We are confident the action items in this report will foster sustainable changes in human minds and human hearts and empower us to embrace our differences and see the value in each other.

We sincerely ask today that you join us in this important effort and look forward to continuing on this important journey together.

Larry Hanson

EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMISSION MEMBERS



Jim Thornton,
Mayor, LaGrange (co-chairman)



Kelly Girtz,
Mayor, Athens-Clarke County



Liz Ordiales,
Mayor, Hiawassee



Hardie Davis,
Mayor, Augusta (co-chairman)



Tyree Goodlett,
Councilmember, Dalton



John Reid,
Mayor, Eatonton



Linda Blechinger,
Mayor, Auburn



Cornell Harvey,
Mayor, Brunswick



Matt Seale,
Mayor, Ocilla



Michelle Cooper Kelly,
Councilmember, Marietta



Lisa Clarke Hill,
Councilmember, Moultrie



Julie Smith,
Mayor, Tifton



Carmen Chubb,
Mayor's Chief of Staff, Atlanta



Doug Hollberg,
Mayor, Griffin



Al Thurman,
Mayor, Powder Springs



Amir R. Farokhi,
Councilmember, Atlanta



Isaiah Hugley,
City Manager, Columbus



Keith Turman,
Mayor, Royston



Anthony Ford,
Mayor, Stockbridge



Michael-Angelo James,
Mayor, Waycross



Dr. Clemontine Washington,
Mayor Pro Tem, Midway



Patti Garrett,
Mayor, Decatur



Cam Jordan,
Deputy Administrator, Fitzgerald



Mike Young,
Mayor, McRae-Helena



Andrea Gibby,
Mayor, Young Harris



Bianca Motley Broom,
Mayor, College Park

THE FORMATION OF GMA'S EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMISSION

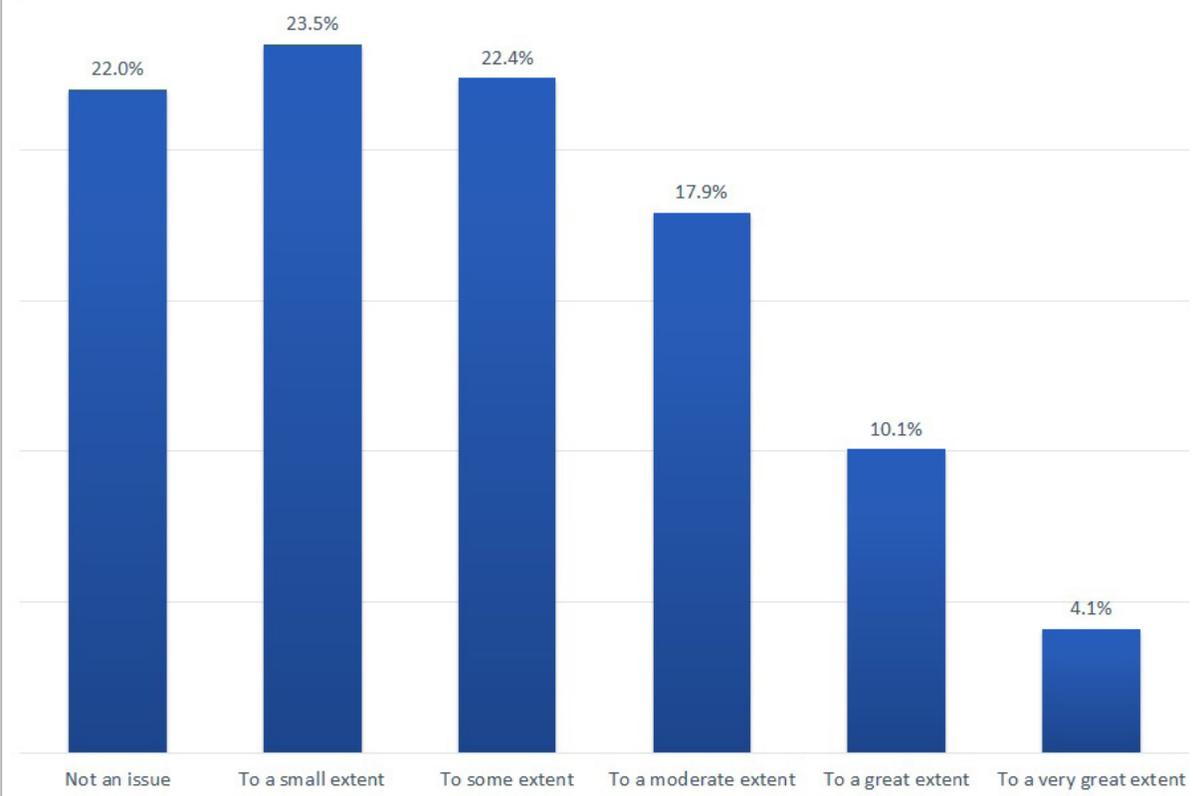
2020 was a turbulent year across the globe in communities of all sizes and regions. In addition to the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic, people of color nationwide experienced racial injustice and police brutality, including here in Georgia. These actions led to a wave of civil unrest and protests in opposition to systemic racism toward communities of color.

GMA's leadership recognized that as an organization, cities must lead with action. As the architects of the future of our cities, it is incumbent upon local leaders to convey the message that there is no place for racism, inequity and exclusion in our cities. GMA's officers understood that the association is uniquely positioned to serve as a catalyst for lasting change. To that end, in early June 2020, GMA's officers, led by Dublin Mayor Phil Best (GMA Immediate Past President) and Union City Mayor Vince Williams (GMA President), sent a statement to the membership that expressed the association's strong opposition to racism, violence and acts of injustice, inequity and inequality that were occurring across the nation. Leaders also created the GMA Equity and Inclusion Commission to address these issues and develop a long-term plan of action.

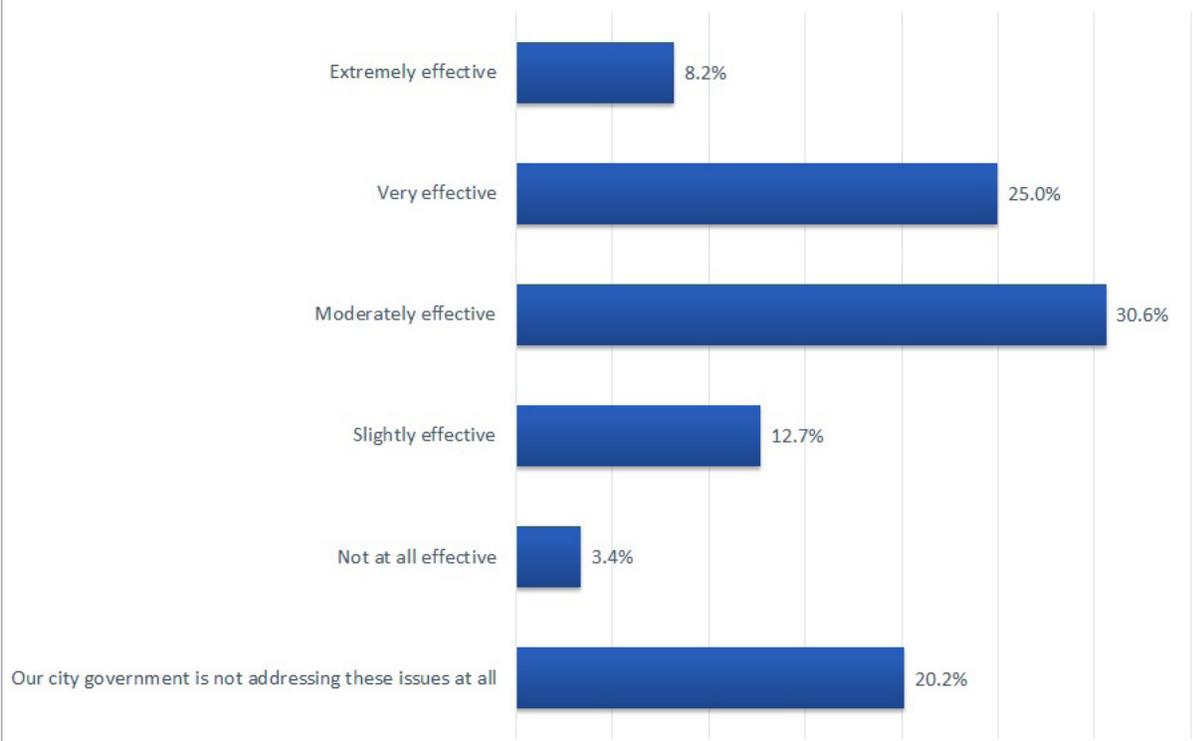
In July, GMA created its first Equity and Inclusion Commission. The role of the 26-member Equity and Inclusion Commission is to recommend actions that bear witness to the principles of justice, equality and fairness, develop a long-term plan of action to address institutional and systemic racism, and equip city leaders to listen thoughtfully and dialogue constructively with the residents they serve. GMA officers and leadership named LaGrange Mayor Jim Thornton and Augusta Mayor Hardie Davis as the co-chairs of the commission.

In late July, GMA conducted an email survey of municipal elected officials throughout the state. GMA received 268 responses for an 8.7% response rate. The graphs below provide key feedback GMA received from survey responses on select questions. The graphs on the following pages provide key feedback GMA received from survey responses on select questions.

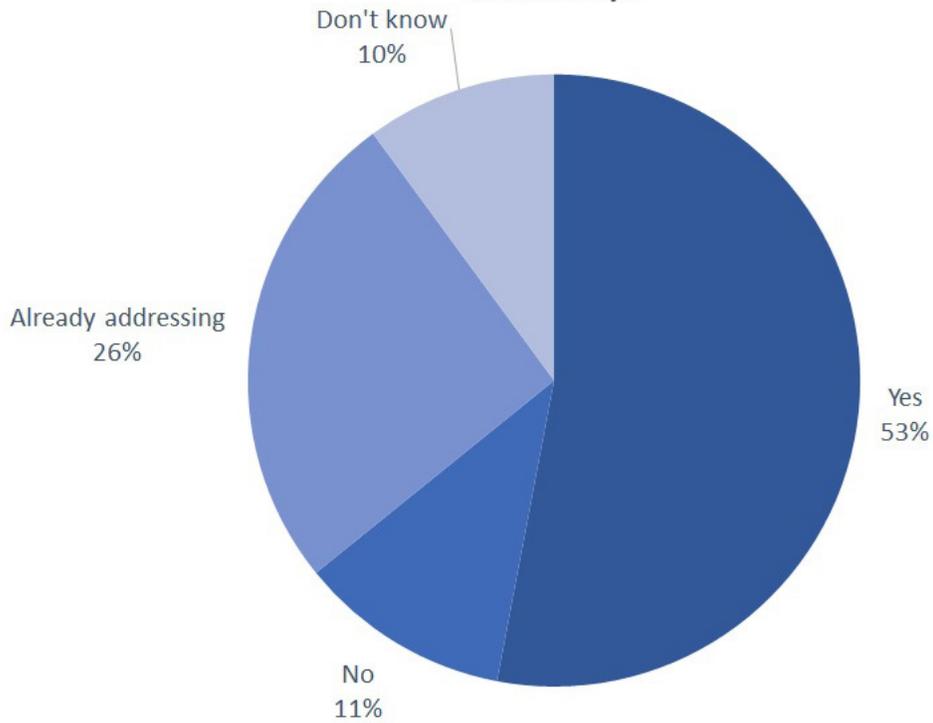
As a city official, to what extent do you feel that racism is an issue in your city?



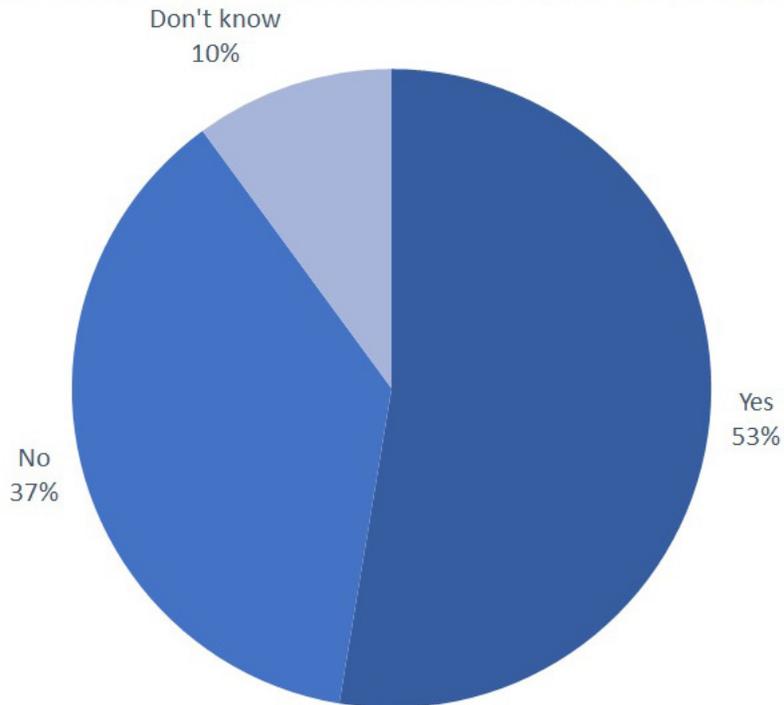
How effective do you feel your city government's response has been to handling issues of race and equity community wide?



Do you feel that your city government should be involved in assessing and responding to issues of race, equity, and diversity in your community?



Do you believe your city should review policies, practices, and procedures with a lens on race, equity, and diversity?



MEETING OVERVIEWS

EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION IN ACTION

Virtual Meetings:

August 20, 2020: Kickoff Meeting

September 24, 2020: Part 1: Impediments to Equity and Inclusion (E&I) - Housing, Healthcare and Education

October 22, 2020: Part 2: Impediments to E&I - Housing, Healthcare and Education

November 19, 2020: Public Safety & Restorative Justice ; Discussion of Historic Monuments

December 17, 2020: Training & Education

January 28, 2021: Community and Economic Development

February 25, 2021: Workforce Development and Employment

March 25, 2021: Open Discussion: Where Are We Now?

April 22, 2021: City Policies

May 27, 2021: Community Dialogue/ Stakeholder Engagement; Diversity in Leadership

In-Person Meetings:

June 24, 2021: Georgia City Solutions E&I Initiatives; E&I Municipal Certification Review

August 6-10, 2021: GMA Annual Convention Sessions

November 18, 2021: Review and adoption of proposed recommendations

January 12, 2022:

Adoption of Final Report by the Commission

Meeting Overview

August 2020: On Thursday, Aug. 20, GMA hosted the first meeting of its Equity & Inclusion Commission. Ambassador Andrew Young delivered a virtual keynote address to the group. GMA Executive Director Larry Hanson reminded commission members of the importance of listening deeply, uniting widely and acting boldly in order to bring justice to the complex systems that shape and influence today's society.



September 2020: During the commission's September meeting, members focused on impediments to Equity and Inclusion as they relate to housing. Leon Andrews, then Director of the National League of Cities' Race, Equity and Leadership (REAL) initiative, urged the Commission to create an intentional space to discuss matters of racial inequity; to work to normalize consideration of equity and justice; and to commit to changing all systems and policies. In addition, NLC staff provided an overview of the housing landscape in the U.S. prior to COVID-19 and noted that homelessness disproportionately impacts Black individuals, who make up 13% of the U.S. population but 40% of the homeless population.

October 2020: October was dedicated to education, health and well-being. Expert presenters stressed that while city officials often don't have direct involvement in schools, city leaders have the power to convene, build partnerships, and use their bully pulpit to stand up for policies and programs that bring equity to education. With regard to health, presenters stressed the need to consider heightened issues of inequity during the COVID crisis and discussed how local leaders can take part in efforts to address the determinants of health with a focus on housing, city planning and design and economic opportunity.

November 2020: In November, the Commission took a deep dive into impediments to equity and inclusion as they relate to public safety and the criminal justice system. Mike Ayers, executive director of the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (POST), provided an overview of the mission and activities of the agency, and Sarah Karaga with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) offered support through the organization's free training programs for law enforcement agencies. Former Governor Nathan Deal served as the meeting's keynote and discussed the impact of criminal justice reform policies implemented during his administration.



Also in November, members of the Commission discussed historic monuments and determined that while the ultimate goal should be legislative change to provide more flexibility for local governments to make decisions about removal and relocation, the first approach should be for GMA to develop a playbook that provides cities with a good understanding of all aspects of the issues around historic monuments to support local officials.

December 2020: The central focus of the Commission's December meeting was training and education. Commission members received an overview and perspective on these topics from experts from the City of San Antonio, Texas, and Young Harris College, as well as a report from Decatur Mayor Patti Garrett about the city's Better Together initiative. Members engaged in facilitated breakout groups to discuss challenges and opportunities for equity and inclusion in training and education in their communities. The meeting also included an update on the proposed Municipal Equity and Inclusion Certification Program and GMA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training program.

January 2021: The Commission kicked off the first meeting of 2021 with a focus on Community and Economic Development. Speakers included Chris Clark, President & CEO of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, who shared an update on the chamber's efforts to examine the benefits of diversity and inclusion to the state of Georgia. Commission members also heard from Chef Josh Lee, Co-Founder of the Soulful Company Restaurant Group in Atlanta, who spoke about challenges and barriers to African-American entrepreneurs and small business owners, and how city leaders can help. Ray Pennie, President of Business Development for Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs (ACE), also shared information about how their organization provides support to women- and minority-owned businesses. Representatives from Partnership for Southern Equity spoke about historic land use and financial policies that set the stage for problems we are seeing today with creating a level playing field for all communities. The meeting concluded with an opportunity for members to engage in breakout roundtable discussions with three of Georgia's mayors to discuss how diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) needs are being addressed to promote community and economic development.

February 2021: February's focus was on Workforce Development and Employment. The agenda focused primarily on an interactive roundtable panel discussion with city leaders on perspectives of diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace. Johnny Knatt with HR Workplace also served on the panel and roundtable discussions and shared an in-depth training on emotional intelligence and bias later in the program. Finally, Commission members heard a presentation on recruitment and retention, including information on GMA's "It Starts with Me" campaign.

March 2021: In March, the Commission shifted focus away from presentation-heavy agendas to allow space for all Commission members to have a meaningful and honest conversation around how Commission members are doing personally, how they are contributing to the DEI conversation, where they need support contributing to the conversation, what challenges they have encountered, what has changed since last summer and more.

April 2021: The topic for April's meeting was City Policies. The first speakers on the agenda were from the Office of Sustainability in Tempe, Arizona, who talked about the "Equity in Action Equitable Engagement Framework" the city uses. Braden Kay and Jonae Harrison with the city also participated in breakout sessions with Commission members to get "in the weeds" on Tempe's program and learn from what the city is doing and how those lessons could be applied in Georgia's cities. Commission members also heard from leaders in Augusta, Decatur, and Stockbridge about these cities' policies for procurement and contracting and how they actively work to make these processes more equitable and inclusive. Another round of breakout conversations allowed Commission members to delve more deeply into the experiences of these cities.

May 2021: The May meeting focused on Diversity in Leadership. The meeting opened with an announcement of GMA's Excellence in Policing initiative, an overview of plans to engage GMA's membership in DEI at the Annual Convention and at fall district meetings and farewell words from Leon Andrews, then director of the NLC Race, Equity and Leadership program. Facilitated breakout groups allowed Commission members to discuss ICMA's Equity and Inclusion Resources, GMA Data Tools and Employee Demographics, and engage in roundtable discussions with city leaders on community dialogue and stakeholder engagement.

June 2021: GMA was pleased to host the first in-person meeting of the Commission at GMA's new headquarters in Atlanta. Topics included an update on Georgia City Solutions and potential DEI initiatives; the discussion of an idea to create a GMA Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council and an update on the Municipal Equity and Inclusion Certification Program. Freddie Broome, GMA's Director of Equity and Inclusion, also described upcoming engagement opportunities for the GMA membership. Members also heard an update on the Excellence in Policing Initiative. Broome led a facilitated discussion with the Commission on DEI and where the Commission should go from here.

July 2021: Members engaged in Work Team Meetings.

August 2021: GMA members were offered several engagement opportunities at the in-person GMA Annual Convention August 6-10 in Savannah, including two options to attend a DEI forum. Each forum closed with time to share any DEI efforts in cities or offer closing remarks. GMA also held a DEI Rapid Fire Session for small cities and one for larger cities. The purpose of the sessions was to showcase programs that can be scaled and replicated in other cities. And finally, during the convention, GMA offered a DEI Training course "Making Cultural Diversity Work."

September and October 2021: Each of GMA's 12 fall district in-person meetings included a focus on Equity and Inclusion, with the first segment of each meeting devoted to a brief training by Freddie Broome and an interactive DEI exercise and friendly inter-district competition with attendees doing "the wave." In addition, work teams continued to meet to finalize their respective recommendations.

November 2021: The Commission met in person in Atlanta to review and adopt the Commission's recommendations for inclusion in the Final Report that will be presented to GMA's Board of Directors in January 2022.

December 2021: The Commission postponed its December meeting due to the holidays and reconvened in January for review and adoption of the final report.

January 2022: The Commission met to adopt its Final Report.





GMA EQUITY AND INCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GMA & CITIES

The Commission's recommendations are divided into two categories – one identifies actions GMA should undertake to assist city leaders in their efforts to implement sustainable equity and inclusion initiatives within city governments and communities at-large and the other outlines policies and practices the association's 537 member cities should pursue.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GMA & CITIES:

The Commission recommends that GMA:

- Establish a Municipal Equity and Inclusion Certification Program to be administered by GMA in partnership with Georgia City Solutions. (See page 39 for a description of the program.)
- Develop resources and a list of experts, facilitators and speakers that city officials can use to discuss and educate their community about the importance of workforce housing.
- Develop a Historic Monument Playbook that provides cities with a thorough understanding of all aspects of state law, case studies from other communities, and resources to support local conversations that are constructive, inclusive and productive.
- Add a course on “Health in All Policies” to the association’s training program. “Health in All Policies” is a collaborative approach that integrates and articulates health considerations into policymaking across sectors to improve the health of all communities and people.
- Conduct an annual survey of the association’s member cities to learn how elected officials are coping, managing and addressing issues of equity and inclusion in communities around the state.

• Create a standing Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council.

- The work of the Equity and Inclusion Commission represents the beginning, not the end, of GMA’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. The creation of an Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council will provide a body to oversee the implementation of the Commission’s recommendations as well as to recommend additional initiatives, programs and policies.

The role of the Advisory Council should be to:

- Oversee the implementation of the Equity and Inclusion Commission’s recommendations.
- Recommend additional programs, training, research and other initiatives that can be undertaken by GMA and/or Georgia City Solutions (GCS) to assist city officials in their efforts to promote equity and inclusion within their municipal government and community.
- Provide a forum for city officials to explore opportunities for collaboration between GMA, GCS, agencies and organizations whose mission focuses on equity and inclusion.
- Foster the exchange of ideas and information on programs and initiatives that have a proven positive impact on equity and inclusion.
- Propose legislative policies, as necessary, to the appropriate GMA policy committees that would help cities address equity and inclusion issues.
- The Advisory Council should be chaired by a municipal official appointed by the GMA president. The chair should serve a two-year term and be eligible to be reappointed to serve one additional term.
- Approximately 25 municipal elected officials and staff should be appointed to the Advisory Council.
- Consistent with other GMA advisory councils, appointments should be made by the executive director in consultation with the president.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GMA & CITIES:

- Each of the association's twelve districts should be represented by at least one member. Terms should be for one year, but members should be eligible to be reappointed.
- The Advisory Council should meet no less than two times per year.

The Commission recommends that all cities:

- Seek completion of the Municipal Equity & Inclusion Certification Program referenced in the above section. As noted in the program summary on page 39, cities may achieve certification for addressing equity and inclusion in seven categories.
- Adopt and implement personnel policies that address equity and inclusion and are gender-neutral.
- Require and provide annual DEI training for employees.
- Require and provide annual DEI training for elected officials.
- GMA recommends municipalities consider adoption of the policies on this report's section on Excellence in Policing to improve the quality of policing and ensure safer, more equitable communities in Georgia.

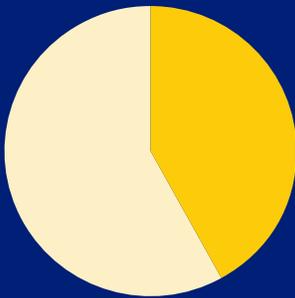
WORKGROUP-FOCUSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIES:

The Commission recommends that all cities carefully review and consider implementing the standards and policies outlined in the Municipal Equity and Inclusion Certification Program regardless of whether certification status is sought. These standards and policies are listed below by areas of focus of the Commission's workgroups.

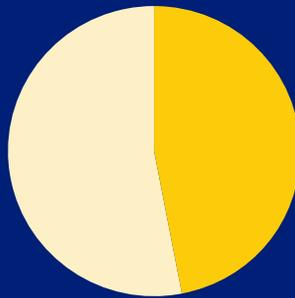


HOUSING

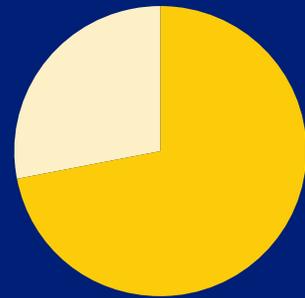
The “American Dream” of owning a home?
It’s a reality for only 42% of Black and 47% of Hispanic households, compared to nearly 72% for Whites.



42% OF BLACK HOUSEHOLDS



47% OF HISPANIC HOUSEHOLDS



72% OF WHITE HOUSEHOLDS

WORKGROUP-FOCUSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIES: HOUSING

Housing instability is a significant factor impacting economic mobility for many Americans. Research shows that housing stability, affordability, quality, and safety all impact school and health outcomes. When sustainable housing is available to serve residents of all income levels and generations, opportunities for economic prosperity develop community wide. Local governments have a role to play by making good housing decisions that create positive outcomes for residents and communities.

GMA's Equity and Inclusion Commission recommends that cities should:

- Complete a community housing assessment to determine whether the current housing stock meets the needs of current residents based on income levels within the community.
- Undertake actions to increase workforce housing, such as establishing inclusionary policies, including inclusionary zoning and land use policies, as well as addressing needs identified in a community housing assessment.
- Cultivate partnerships with housing development and advocacy organizations and the business community.
- Develop a housing affordability action plan.
- Offer, either directly or through partnerships, homeowner “readiness” courses or workshops on financial literacy, credit counseling and other topics related to purchasing and maintaining a home.
- Use municipal financial resources, such as CHIP, CDBG and tax credits, to support the development of affordable housing.
- Organize community days of service.
- Develop a workforce housing action plan.
- Offer or support community education efforts that explain what workforce housing is and the importance of having enough workforce housing available in a community.



EDUCATION



For each enrolled student, the average **non-White** school district receives about \$2,200 less than a **White** school district.



White students outperform **Black** students by: 12% in reading, 16% in math, and 27% in science and **Hispanic** students by: 8% in reading, 11% in math, and 19% in science.



79% of **Black** and 81% of **Hispanic** students graduate from high school on time compared to 89% of **White** students.



40% of **Whites** age 25 and older have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 26% of **Blacks** and 19% of **Hispanics**.



Blacks and **Hispanics** are 36% of the college-age population, but only 19% enroll at public colleges.



White students are 54% of the college-age population, but 64% enroll at public colleges.

WORKGROUP-FOCUSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIES: EDUCATION

Education is a key component of creating a diverse and equitable community and a high-quality education system is one of the most important drivers of economic growth and an indicator of a city's overall health. Yet statistics point to alarming disparities and tell a story of mismatched needs. While cities in Georgia typically do not play a direct role in providing education, city leaders can play a vital partnership role by exerting meaningful influence and recommending policies that improve student outcomes, strengthen schools, and ensure that their cities actively address education challenges.

To meet these challenges, GMA's Equity and Inclusion Commission recommends that cities should:

- Host meetings between members of the city's governing body and staff with members of the school board and staff with the goal of cultivating and strengthening relationships between the two entities.
- Provide opportunities for principals, teachers, parents and students at schools located in the city to share how the city and city officials can support local educational efforts.
- Implement or support actions to enhance/improve support for underperforming schools in the community.
- Support programs that encourage students to stay in school and receive their high school diploma/GED.
- Organize or support child literacy programs in the community.
- Organize or support adult literacy programs in the community.
- Assist in or support strengthening relationships between the business community and school system to address the workforce needs of the future.
- Organize or support aftercare programs.
- Establish and maintain city internships to provide basic job skills training.
- Provide equity and inclusion educational awareness programs in the community.
- Establish or maintain a city youth council or participate in an area youth council.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING



16% of **Hispanics** and 11% of **Blacks** are uninsured compared with 6% of **Whites**.



Black and **Hispanic** people are at least 1.2 times more likely to be overweight than **Whites**, at least 1.6 times more likely to suffer from diabetes and half as likely to receive mental health services.



Black mothers were 2.3 times and **Hispanic** mothers were 1.7 times as likely to receive late or no prenatal care compared to **White** mothers.



14% of **Blacks**, 10% of **Hispanics**, and 8% of **Whites** self-report as having poor health.



For some measures, public health is a “black and white” issue...

The death rate for **Blacks** is generally higher than **Whites** for heart diseases, stroke, cancer, asthma, influenza and pneumonia, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and homicide.

Blacks have the highest mortality rate for all cancers compared with any other racial and ethnic group.

There are 11 infant deaths per 1,000 live births among **Black** children, more than twice the rate of **White** children.

Life expectancy for **Blacks** is 75 years – four years shorter than for **Whites**.

WORKGROUP-FOCUSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIES: HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Health disparities in Georgia communities lead to excess medical costs, lost productivity and a lower quality of life. These disparities include lack of access to providers and hospitals; missing appointments for routine care due to lack of transportation; negative maternal health and birth outcomes; and the high cost of medical care and prescriptions, among others. While cities are not direct providers of health care, municipal leaders play an important role in understanding the needs of all members of the community and advancing policies and initiatives that address issues of inequity in residents' physical and mental health.

To ensure that the social determinants of health adequately address local diversity, equity and inclusion challenges, GMA's Equity and Inclusion Commission recommends that cities should:

- Conduct an assessment of current community health and wellbeing outcomes and determine if certain communities or census tracts have healthier outcomes than others and why.
- Convene community meetings to 1) discuss/assess how the city currently addresses health and wellbeing in the community, 2) provide an understanding of the social determinants of health (social, physical and economic environments), and 3) assess where the gaps are to determine how to effect positive outcomes.
- Undertake actions to address identified health and wellbeing issues in the areas of a city with significant health and wellbeing challenges.
- Promote and support programs to address food insecurity.
- Address municipal employee healthcare needs.
- Provide or promote city-wide health and wellbeing initiatives, including programs that address mental health, homelessness, and substance abuse.
- Encourage and support other local health and wellbeing initiatives, such as efforts to improve high school graduation rates, increase financial literacy, support early childhood education, organize community days of service for home repairs, cultivate the city's tree canopy, increase walkability and so on.



PUBLIC SAFETY & RESTORATIVE JUSTICE



People of color are more likely than Whites to be imprisoned...

Black and Hispanic Americans make up almost **60%** of the **prison population**, **more than twice** their share of the adult population.

Whites account for **30%** of prisoners, **about half** of their share of the adult population. The **Black imprisonment rate is nearly twice the rate of Hispanics** and **more than five times the rate among Whites.**



People of color are more likely to enter the prison system at an earlier age...

Black men ages 18 to 19 were almost **13 times** as likely to be imprisoned as White men of the same ages

Hispanic men ages 18 to 19 were more than **3 times** as likely as White men of the same ages to be imprisoned.

...and receive longer sentences than Whites for the same crimes

19% longer for **Black** men and

about **5% longer** for **Hispanic** men



PUBLIC SAFETY & RESTORATIVE JUSTICE



When it comes to police encounters...

Black adults are about **five times** as likely as Whites to say they have been **unfairly stopped** by police.

Nearly **half** of **Black** Americans do not believe the police in their community treat people with different skin colors the same (compared to 20% of Hispanics and 12% of Whites).

When police initiate contact, **Blacks** and **Hispanics** are more than **twice as likely** to experience the threat or use of **physical force** than Whites.

Black men are about **2.5 times** and **Hispanic** men are about **1.4 times more likely to be killed** by police than are White men.

WORKGROUP-FOCUSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIES: PUBLIC SAFETY & RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Local government leaders face disruptive public safety challenges every day. Leadership and transparency with the public are crucial to reform efforts. Having more transparency and accountability in public safety directly impacts the community-public safety relationship and can help mitigate criminal activity and reduce recidivism. Equity, inclusion, and diversity are essential to ensuring protections and resolving justice for all are achieved and are required for productive public safety agencies and communities.

To ensure accountability and transparency in public safety and restorative justice, GMA's Equity and Inclusion Commission recommends that cities should:

- Provide citizen engagement programs, such as Citizen Police Academy, Citizen Fire Academy, Citizen Emergency Response Team.
- Adopt a model use of force policy.
- Provide training in use of force alternatives for police, fire, and/or EMS personnel, as applicable.
- Provide anti-bias training for police, fire, and/or EMS personnel, as applicable.
- Implement a public safety strategic plan.
- Develop hiring and retention policies aimed at reflecting community demographics.
- Adopt policies for and provide training in mental health response and crisis intervention for police, fire, and/or EMS personnel, as applicable.
- Review/update disciplinary standards and policies to ensure appropriate action for misconduct.
- Attain/maintain State Certification (Police).
- Attain/maintain Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) Accreditation.
- Attain/maintain GMA Excellence in Policing Certification .
- Attain/maintain Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) Certification.
- Create and maintain a Citizen Advisory/Engagement Committee to address public safety issues.
- Implement a community-based approach to violence prevention (violence interrupters), e.g., Cure Violence Global.
- Provide for equity in Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings among various areas of the city.
- Implement mental health programs/training to support officer resilience.
- Assist with expungement of records/amnesty program as permitted by law.

WORKGROUP-FOCUSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIES: PUBLIC SAFETY & RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- In cooperation with area nonprofits and other governmental entities, provide and/or partner to provide re-entry programs for individuals leaving prison.
- Establish public safety priorities that limit arrests for low-level misdemeanor offenses, limit ticketing for certain traffic offenses, and ticket (rather than arrest) using misdemeanor ticketing form when possible and appropriate.



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



In America, White households...

...have 10 times more wealth than Black and 8 times more wealth than Hispanic households

White - \$171,000

Hispanic - \$20,700

Black - \$17,200

...are less than half as likely to live in poverty than Black or Hispanic families

White - 9%

Hispanic - 19%

Black - 22%

and earn 70% more than Black and 40% more than Hispanic households per year

White - \$71,000

Hispanic - \$51,000

Black - \$42,000



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



There are more economic disparities...

In November 2020, the unemployment rate was about 42% higher for Blacks (11%) and Hispanics (10%) than for Whites (6%)

Blacks and Hispanics only own about 17% of all businesses, yet are about 29% of the U.S. population

The “American Dream” of owning a home?
It’s a reality for only 42% of Black and 47% of Hispanic households, compared to nearly 72% for Whites

WORKGROUP-FOCUSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIES: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

For families and communities to thrive, it is vital to address the differing needs of community members and ensure they have access to both employment opportunities that pay a living wage and the support services needed to effectively address barriers to employment and entrepreneurship. Homelessness, low educational attainment, lack of access to high-quality childcare, the absence of investment capital, the ongoing need for training for small business owners and criminal history all contribute to the challenge of obtaining and maintaining long-term employment.

To increase diversity, equity and inclusion opportunities for economic and community development, GMA's Equity and Inclusion Commission recommends that cities should:

- Convene meetings with community stakeholders to discuss community, economic and business needs and challenges.
- Create liaisons with other economic and community development partners, e.g., local chamber, economic development authority, downtown development authority, etc.
- Address city-imposed challenges of starting a business.
- Assist individuals with business and social networking resources and opportunities.
- Develop and partner with other agencies to create a "Starting A Business" guide and website page.
- Provide training opportunities for new business owners.
- Increase diversity in city leadership and internship programs.
- Develop policies to ensure access to participation in city projects/contracts and to advance racial equity in government contracting and procurement.
- Review development and redevelopment strategies to ensure they are inclusionary and make amendments if necessary.
- Review zoning process to ensure it encourages opportunities for housing affordability and make amendments if necessary.
- Establish and use tools to help people attain home ownership.
- Advocate for requiring the inclusion of an Equity and Inclusion component as part of the state-mandated comprehensive planning process for local governments.



COMMUNITY DIALOGUE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



Georgia Civic Health Rankings At-a-Glance

Georgia is below the national average in:

Percent who attend a public meeting (34th)

Voting (37th)

Voter registration (37th)

Contacted or visited a public official (49th)



Just 8.3% of Georgia residents reported contacting a public official in 2017, a decline from the 2011 rate of 12% and less than the national rate of 11.4%. Georgia ranked 49th in contacting public officials.

Rural residents were more likely to contact their public officials than suburban or urban residents.

The likelihood of contacting a public official increased with age, more education, and higher income levels.

Men were more likely to contact public officials than women, 9.4% vs. 7.4%.

White Georgians were more likely to contact public officials at 10.3%, compared to Black Georgians (5.9%) or Hispanic Georgians (2.7%).

WORKGROUP-FOCUSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Democracy works best when there is broad-based participation by the community, be it a nation, state or city, and when policies are enacted by elected officials that do not benefit one group over another. Civic engagement is essential to the democratic process, yet recent research indicates civic engagement in Georgia has declined in recent years. According to the 2019 Family Connection Partnership's Georgia Civic Health Index, civic health is linked to economic resilience; workforce development; youth development and public health outcomes; access to opportunity; community vitality; lower violent crime rates and youth delinquency; and reduced mortality. Local leaders have a duty to recognize that work responsibilities, childcare needs, disabilities, language barriers, criminal history, and health issues are among the barriers that can prevent equitable access to the democratic process.

To ensure that community members feel welcome, valued and included, GMA's Equity and Inclusion Commission recommends that cities should:

- Seek out stakeholder groups to represent all segments of the community to listen, help identify barriers to engagement, seek input and develop solutions.
- Offer options and have a transparent process for citizens to receive information, participate in professionally facilitated discussions, and provide feedback/input on strategic priorities, budget and resources allocation.
- Provide balanced, objective and user-friendly information to the community through various channels.
- Adopt a city-wide public information communication plan detailing methods and types of communication to the public.
- Review imagery and content in all forms of city media and communications for message clarity and consistency and to ensure it is representative of the community.
- Explore opportunities to achieve certifications and/or other designations to demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Provide ongoing training and cross training (at least annually) for staff and volunteers to ensure clarity and consistency of messaging when engaging with the community as well as sustainability of established processes as new staff and volunteers are onboarded.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT



People of color make up about 38% of the workforce ages 25-64, and nearly half of the population under 25.



White workers are 50% more likely than workers of color to hold good jobs.



Median wages are higher for White workers with a high school diploma and no college than for Black workers with an associate degree.



Almost one-quarter of Georgians without a high school diploma live in poverty.



According to the “Jobs with Purpose” Phase I needs assessment conducted in 2021 by the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government for GMA:

Over 85% of responding municipalities reported that it is difficult to attract applicants with the skills their municipal government needs

About half of municipal governments have skill shortages currently or anticipate them in the next 12-24 months

Turnover rates in municipal government are lower than the economy as a whole
Workers in municipal government are slightly older than the US average



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT



A November 2021 Atlanta Journal Constitution article indicated:

The number of public safety officers that retired so far in 2021 peaked at 1,105 over the last six years.

In 2020, 3280 officer certifications lapsed or were removed, the highest number in five years. What's more, new certifications hit a new low of 1,852, and it is expected to drop further this year.

WORKGROUP-FOCUSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIES: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Employers across the country must identify steps to center the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusiveness for in their businesses and organizations. While cities cannot address workplace inequity in all of society, cities play an important role in setting the standards for recruiting and hiring. Across the state, employers including city governments are struggling to attract and retain skilled workers. For cities, this presents a significant challenge to providing high-quality services and completing critical infrastructure projects. Local leaders have a responsibility to face this challenge by establishing standards and policies to recruit, hire, and retain workers who not only fill a slot, but are the best fit for the city.

To facilitate equity and inclusion in workforce development and employment, GMA's Equity and Inclusion Commission recommends that cities should:

- Develop municipal workforce development goals.
- Implement recruitment policies and practices that ensure a diverse applicant pool.
- Include anti-discrimination language in city human resource policies and procedures.
- Review terminology in all employment policies to ensure they are inclusive.
- Include DEI training in the employee onboarding/orientation process.
- Provide internship or other program(s) to serve as a municipal workforce pipeline.
- Create community learning programs about city government to serve as a municipal workforce pipeline.
- Provide a regular facilitated forum for employees to voluntarily participate in group discussions on DEI topics.
- Partner and collaborate with the local school system to participate in career days, job fairs or other activities to provide a pathway to local government jobs.
- Demonstrate inclusive processes and procedures in recruiting, appointing and selecting internal employee workgroups, boards and committees.

WORKGROUP-FOCUSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIES: TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Understanding and embracing differences is imperative to ensure that city leaders treat all situations in a fair and just manner. This, however, requires sustained effort to understand, appreciate and integrate the principles of equity and inclusion into the work culture of a city and into the broader community. The realization that people and institutions are complex requires ongoing effort to educate those involved on what these complexities are and to develop the skills and knowledge to address them.

To increase diversity, equity and inclusion, GMA's Equity and Inclusion Commission recommends that cities should:

- Encourage their elected officials and staff to participate in GMA's "Embrace" learning series.
- Encourage their elected officials and managers/administrators to attend the "Making Cultural Diversity Work" training offered through the Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute.
- Provide diversity leadership training for all members of the leadership team.
- Incorporate DEI training into the city's annual sexual harassment training.
- Participate in a needs survey developed by GMA or another professional organization to determine what training is applicable to address diversity, equity and inclusion concerns.
- Provide Emotional Intelligence training for all public safety employees.
- Encourage their elected officials to take GMA's health and wellbeing training course once approved and developed.
- Require newly elected officials and administrators receive a minimum of three hours of DEI Training within their first year.

WORKGROUP-FOCUSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITIES: CITY POLICIES

City leaders have an important duty and opportunity to advance equity and inclusion through structural changes to local government. By applying a DEI lens to functions of local government, including budgeting, land use planning, ordinance development, and other high-level decisions, local leaders can improve outcomes for all the community.

To increase diversity, equity and inclusion, GMA's Equity and Inclusion Commission recommends that cities should:

- Analyze and address equity and inclusion in procurement policy (Equity and Inclusion for Contracting and Procurement).
- Analyze and address equity and inclusion in resource allocation (Equity and Inclusion for Operational and Capital Resource Allocation).
- Make DEI part of the comprehensive planning process.
- Require staff, elected officials and appointees of the city (boards and commissions) to complete six hours of DEI training per year. For new employees and appointees, this DEI training should be conducted within the first three months of hiring or appointment.
- Require and provide DEI training for city boards and commissions.
- Analyze and address equity and inclusion in personnel policies.

MUNICIPAL EQUITY & INCLUSION CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

During an early meeting of the Equity and Inclusion Commission, commission members expressed interest in creating a certification program to recognize cities which adopt policies and practices that promote equity and inclusion within their municipal government and community at large. The concept was likened to the GMA Certified Cities of Ethics Program, through which a city that meets the stated criteria receives recognition for being a city of ethics. To that end, the Commission recommends that GMA, in partnership with Georgia City Solutions, implement a Municipal Equity and Inclusion Certification Program. The following is a brief description of the program.

Cities may achieve certification for addressing equity and inclusion in the following seven categories:

- Workforce Housing
- Education
- Health and Wellbeing
- Public Safety and Restorative Justice
- Community and Economic Development
- Municipal Workforce Development and Employment
- Community Dialogue/Stakeholder Engagement (required for initial and continued certification)

Acknowledging that different cities have different equity and inclusion challenges and different levels of resources, as well as the broad array of categories, four tiers of certification may be achieved based on the number of categories a city chooses to address. The tiers are as follows:

- **Bronze:** 2 categories; must include Community dialogue/Stakeholder engagement
- **Silver:** 3-4 categories
- **Gold:** 5-6 categories
- **Platinum:** 7 categories

Prior to applying for certification, cities will be required to meet certain pre-application thresholds. These pre-application requirements relate to:

holding meetings with community and business stakeholders; adopting a resolution declaring the city's intent to apply for certification in selected categories; training for the city's equity and inclusion point person, elected officials, members of city boards and commissions and city employees; and updating city policies to address equity and inclusion in personnel policies, the hiring process, procurement and resource allocation. Additionally, a city must apply for certification in at least two categories to receive initial certification, with community dialogue/stakeholder engagement being one of those initial categories.

Cities may apply online during a rolling application period. Applicants will receive feedback on their applications from the reviewing committee. As long as a city continues to work on its application, it will stay in the system until the city achieves certification. Draft information about action items required or suggested for certification within each individual category are in the appendix to this report.

To maintain certification, a city will be required to adopt a resolution every year affirming its commitment to equity and inclusion and hold at least two community stakeholder meetings each year to discuss gaps in equity and inclusion as well as progress. Additionally, elected officials, members of city boards and commissions and senior staff will be expected to participate in annual equity and inclusion training. The city's equity and inclusion point person will also be expected to participate in annual equity and inclusion training.

A city must apply for recertification every three years. To receive recertification, a city must demonstrate that it continues to work towards equity and inclusion in the categories in which it is certified. Additionally, it must demonstrate substantial completion of its employee training plan and continued adherence to the policies required for initial certification. Finally, as a condition of recertification, a majority of a city's sitting elected officials (members of the governing authority) must complete the Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute's six-hour "Making Cultural Diversity Work" course within the previous five years for the city to retain certification.

EXCELLENCE IN POLICING

Excellence in Policing Program Report:

In Spring 2021 GMA began an Excellence in Policing Initiative, co-chaired by College Park Mayor Bianca Motley Broom and LaGrange Police Chief Lou Dekmar. The committee is comprised of 16 members ranging from mayors, police chiefs, lawyers, a community activist and a mental health expert.

The group was tasked with developing an affordable, achievable, scalable, and measurable set of best practices and guidelines for public safety agencies to utilize as part of Municipal Equity and Inclusion Certification Program.

The intent is to provide model policies, training modules, and best practices for law enforcement agencies in Georgia. The resources are intended to support agencies in their efforts to implement professional policies and practices in a manner that is cost effective and efficient and meets standards in line with ones existing in other certification programs.

The group's work focused on four subcategories – personnel policies, critical task policies, role of technology in policing and criminal justice reform.

With those guiding principles, GMA recommends municipalities consider adoption of the following policies to improve the quality of policing and ensure safer, more equitable communities in Georgia.

Excellence In Policing Required Policies & Criteria –

Law enforcement departments shall have:

- Equal Opportunity Employment Plan (written directive governing all personnel policies, etc.)
- Written directive for all rules of conduct for employees/officers
- A policy governing identification, collection, packaging, storage, and disposal of evidence/property

- A written directive requiring all officers to receive vehicle operations policy and legal update training on vehicle pursuits annually and defensive driving at least every three years
- A policy governing search and seizure, both with and without a warrant
- A 'Use of Force' or 'Response to Aggression' policies
- A policy governing the arrest of individuals
- A policy governing employees' off-duty and extra-duty employment
- A policy outlining equipment required for use by officers while on-duty and when equipment is required (i.e., ballistic vests)
- A policy governing officers' response to and interactions with persons who may be experiencing a mental health issue and persons with diminished capacity
- A policy governing body and car camera usage

Additional Recommended Focus Areas:

- Body and car cameras issued to each officer / vehicle
- Public Safety Information Officer
- Decriminalization of misdemeanor offenses and bail reform
- GMA Affirmation Form for municipal court judges

GEORGIA CITY SOLUTIONS EQUITY & INCLUSION INITIATIVES

Making sure everyone is included, that every voice is welcomed, respected and accounted for, is an active, continuous process requiring a sustained commitment from local leaders. Applying an equity and inclusion lens to municipal operations means identifying opportunities throughout local governance where cities can and must account for the needs of all citizens. It means integrating principles of equity and inclusion into key components of a city's administration—its legal and organizational infrastructure, for example, its staff training and processes such as budgeting, planning and data collection and analysis.

When effectively implemented, equity and inclusion foster creativity and innovation, as a diversity of ideas and experiences strengthens problem-solving and decision-making capabilities.

The Equity and Inclusion Commission endorses the following Georgia City Solutions initiatives:

- **Diversity and Inclusion Training:** This course offers a basic overview of diversity and inclusion, emphasizing the importance of working together to understand and appreciate one another's differences and strengths and the capacity of each individual to effect lasting change in this regard. It is a three- or six-hour course, customizable to a city's needs.
- **Having Difficult Conversations:** This customizable, three-hour course empowers participants to lead and engage in honest, at times difficult, conversations around conscious and unconscious biases that affect how individuals interact within their communities.
- **Technical Assistance:** In support of cities' DEI efforts, technical assistance and resources are available including but not limited to: videos and a municipal guide to equity and inclusion; an online forum for ongoing discussion; a train-the-trainer program for local government equity and inclusion officers; review of city policies and procedures; facilitation of community conversations; the development of a community conversation toolkit; and GCS representation on hiring interview panels.



Georgia City Solutions, Inc. (GCS) is a non-profit subsidiary of the Georgia Municipal Association created to establish and support new and innovative programs, solutions and research to build vibrant, economically prosperous and well-managed cities, and improve the quality of life of municipal residents. With the overarching goal of addressing intergenerational poverty, the GCS Board of Directors has identified equity and inclusion as one of its three core program areas, along with youth leadership development and engagement and municipal workforce development. The goals and priorities of GCS' equity and inclusion initiatives, branded as EMBRACE, include:

- Equip cities with tools and resources to combat institutional and systemic racism, violence, acts of injustice, inequity and intolerance
- Foster healthy lines of communication that yield sustainable change
- Deliver training and technical assistance to cities
- Execute the GMA Equity and Inclusion Commission's recommendations

GEORGIA CITY SOLUTIONS EQUITY & INCLUSION INITIATIVES

- Municipal Government Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Certificate Program for individuals:** Offered under the EMBRACE suite of programs, this program is designed to equip municipal leaders with tools and resources to combat institutional and systematic racism, injustice and inequity by grasping the essence of valuing differences, fostering relationships and creating an environment of belongingness for the betterment of all. The framework of the program includes seven modules where participants will explore concepts of inclusive leadership, emotional intelligence, financial management, public safety, community and economic development and workforce development, all from an equity and inclusion perspective.
- Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Learning Lab:** GCS's DEI Learning Lab will offer hands-on opportunities for city officials to learn to use DEI assessment/impact tools and address DEI issues by developing policies and pilot projects that “test” potential outcomes. Whether virtual, in person at GMA's Atlanta offices, or on-site at a field location in Georgia, the Learning Lab will be a multiple-day summit where community stakeholders can come together to test DEI policies with guidance from experienced practitioners.
- Development of Municipal Equity Assessment Tool (EAT):** An equity assessment tool (EAT) analyzes and measures the extent to which a proposed action or decision will affect people who differ in race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or education level. EATs help mitigate unanticipated adverse consequences in a variety of situations, including the analysis of proposed policies, institutional practices, programs, initiatives, strategies and budgetary decisions. An equity assessment tool is a critical device that can help cities prevent institutional discrimination and racism and identify opportunities to address long-standing inequities.



GMA & GCS PROGRESS SINCE JANUARY 2021

CATEGORY	SESSIONS	ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE
DEI Training delivered to city elected officials, city, and partner organizations	59	1127
DEI Training at Conferences	8	584
Presentations (Mayor/Council, Boards, Committees, District Meetings, etc.)	26	888
Opening Session/Keynote Speaker Engagements	3	220
Technical Services (Interview panels, Fire Department Evaluations, EI Assessments)	12	44
EMBRACE 1-hour Webinar	6	203
EMBRACE Workshop	3	33
TOTAL (AS OF 12/17/2021)	117	3099

APPENDIX A

GMA EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMISSION FINAL WORK SCHEDULE 2020-2021

September 2020

Speaker: Leon Andrews, Director, NLC Race, Equity and Leadership (REAL) Program

Impediments to Equity and Inclusion – Part 1

- Housing
- Healthcare
 - Mental health resources
 - Medicaid expansion
 - Hospital stability
 - Telemedicine – broadband access
- Education (broadband access, condition of schools, diversity of schools, allocation of teachers, programs at schools)

October 2020

Impediments to Equity and Inclusion – Part 2

- Housing
- Healthcare
 - Mental health resources
 - Medicaid expansion
 - Hospital stability
 - Telemedicine – broadband access
- Education (broadband access, condition of schools, diversity of schools, allocation of teachers, programs at schools)

Discussion of Potential State Legislation

- Monument Removal
- Housing, Healthcare and Education

November 2020

Public Safety Reform

- Racial profiling
- Training (funding and mandatory improvement)
- Hiring practices (psychological testing, racial and implicit bias testing, recruiting female officers, pre-employment polygraph)

- Mandatory Use of Force policies
- Mandatory Vehicle Pursuit policies
- Citizen's Arrest Law
- Police advisory committees
- Community Oriented Policing (training and best practices)
- Arrest procedures (minimize interactions with police)
- Use of in-car and body cameras

Criminal Justice Reform

- Decriminalization and sentencing
- Municipal criminal justice reform (bonds, bail, expunging records)

Discussion of Potential State Legislation

- Public Safety
- Criminal Justice

December 2020

Training & Education

- Municipal Training Institute course
- Newly Elected Officials Training – new module
- Knox Municipal Leadership Institute
- Community and civic engagement training (race, equity and diversity)

Municipal Equity and Inclusion Certification/Recognition Program (status report from subcommittee)

- Adoption of Mid-Year Report

January 2021

Community and Economic Development

- Business Creation – Access to Capital
- Developments (use of enterprise zones, new market tax credits, incentives, opportunity zones)
- Public transportation
- Job tax credits to incentivize business location

APPENDIX A

GMA EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMISSION FINAL WORK SCHEDULE 2020-2021

February 2021

Workforce Development and Employment

- Job training
- Education requirements
- Use of criminal records for exclusion
- Wage policies
- Expansion of HOPE scholarship for trades (welding, technology, general repairs, auto mechanics, CDL licenses and others)

March 2021

Open Discussion: "Commission Connection: Where Are We Now?"

- Facilitated Discussion Among Commission Members
 - How are you doing personally?
 - How are you contributing to the diversity, equity, and inclusion conversation?
 - Where do you need support contributing to this conversation?
 - What challenges have you encountered with addressing equity and inclusion in your communities?
 - What has changed in your communities since the civil unrest of last May/June?
 - What have we learned to date?
 - What can we do better as a commission?
 - What issues still need more attention?
 - What do you hope the Commission's work will accomplish?
 - How can we best engage the GMA membership at the Annual Convention, in the fall and at other points?

April 2021

Commission Meeting

- City Policies

May 2021

Commission Meeting

- Community Dialogue/Stakeholder Engagement

- Diversity in Leadership

June 2021 (in-person meeting at GMA; virtual option provided)

Commission Meeting

- Georgia City Solutions – Potential E&I Initiatives
- Discussion of Idea to Create a GMA E&I Advisory Council
- Municipal Equity and Inclusion Certification Program Update

July 2021

Work Team Meetings (if necessary)

August 6-10, 2021

GMA Annual Convention

- Update/Feedback Session(s) for the GMA Membership

September 2021

- Town Hall Meetings with the GMA Membership

October 2021

Work Team Meetings

- Adoption of Recommendations for Consideration by the Full Commission

November 2021

Review and Adoption of Recommendations

December 2021

Preparation of Final Report

January 2022

Final Report Presented to GMA Board of Directors at the Cities United Summit

APPENDIX B

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Seven Categories

- Workforce Housing
- Education
- Health and Wellbeing
- Public Safety and Restorative Justice
- Community and Economic Development
- Municipal Workforce Development and Employment
- Community Dialogue/ Stakeholder Engagement
(required for initial certification and continued certification)

Four Tiers

- Bronze: 2 categories
- Silver: 3-4 categories
- Gold: 5-6 categories
- Platinum: 7 categories

Pre-application requirements

- City holds meetings with community and business stakeholders
- Identify certification categories city will pursue
- Adopt GMA model resolution declaring intent to apply for certification in selected categories
- Designate E&I point person at city
 - o 6 hours of E&I training specific to local governments; 3 must be through GMA or GCS
- Elected officials (majority of mayor and council) and members of city boards and commissions: 3 hours of basic E&I training; doesn't have to be specific to local governments
- Employees in senior staff/ management team positions: 3 hours of E&I training
- Create plan for training all other employees in E&I over a 5-year period
- Demonstrate city has analyzed and addressed equity and inclusion in personnel policies, particularly ensuring policies are gender neutral
- Demonstrate city has addressed equity and inclusion in its hiring

process, with the goal of ensuring the hiring process is conducted in a fair, inclusive and equitable manner

- Demonstrate city has analyzed and addressed equity and inclusion in its contracting and procurement policies
- Demonstrate city has analyzed and addressed equity and inclusion in its operational and capital resource allocation

Application

- On-line application form
- Rolling application period
- Will get feedback on any issues from reviewing committee; if don't respond to or correct concerns within 2 months application will be denied; if keep working on application it will stay in the system

After Certification

- Adopt E&I resolution every year
- At least 1 community stakeholder meeting each year to have dialogues around E&I
- Annual training
 - o 3-hour "booster" for EOs (majority of mayor and council), members of city boards and commissions, and senior staff/management team
 - o 9 hours of annual training for E&I point person

Recertification

- Apply for recertification every 3 years
- Submit application for renewal
- Site visit by GMA staff or member of certification committee
- Majority of sitting EOs must have taken the Harold Holtz 6-hour E&I course within the previous 5 years
- Demonstrate substantial completion of employee training plan
- Demonstrate continued adherence to policies and assessments required for initial certification

APPENDIX B

MUNICIPAL EQUITY & INCLUSION CERTIFICATE PROGRAM MEASURES

POINTS	POINTS APPLIED FOR BY CITY	WORKFORCE HOUSING - POINTS REQUIRED TBD	REQUIRED OR OPTIONAL
TBD		A. Community housing assessment completed (includes meetings with community stakeholders; could include participation in Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH); involves assessment of current housing stock in city, considers whether current housing stock is affordable to and meets needs of current residents based on the income levels within the community, impact of zoning on housing. The assessment should suggest action items that will help improve access to or enhance workforce housing).	TBD
TBD		B. Actions taken to increase workforce housing (e.g., inclusionary zoning policies; actions taken to address needs identified in A).	TBD
TBD		C. Cultivate partnerships with development organizations and business organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce).	TBD
TBD		D. Develop a Housing Affordability Action Plan.	TBD
TBD		E. Offer Homeowner "Readiness" Courses or Workshops (e.g., financial literacy course, credit counseling).	TBD
TBD		F. Use City Financial Resources (Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), tax credits) to support development.	TBD
TBD		G. Organize Community Days of Service.	TBD
TBD		H. Develop a Workforce Housing Action Plan (may fall under B).	TBD
TBD		I. Training for city elected officials (members of the governing authority) and senior staff related to workforce housing.	TBD
TBD		J. Development of city policies related to workforce housing.	TBD
TBD		K. Offer or support community education relating to workforce housing (educational programs offered to community, business leaders, realtors, school boards, etc. to explain what workforce housing is and importance of having enough workforce housing); this measure is partnered with a request that GMA provide or identify entities that can provide this type of community training and/or list of resources to assist cities with this type of training.	TBD
TBD		L. Other.	TBD
0	0	TOTAL WORKFORCE HOUSING MEASURE POINTS	

APPENDIX B

MUNICIPAL EQUITY & INCLUSION CERTIFICATE PROGRAM MEASURES

POINTS	POINTS APPLIED FOR BY CITY	EDUCATION - POINTS REQUIRED TBD	REQUIRED OR OPTIONAL
TBD		A. Develop/Strengthen Relationship between City Council and School Board, as well as administration of higher educational institutions.	TBD
TBD		B. Meet with principals, teachers, parents, students of schools in the city to discuss challenges	TBD
TBD		C. Actions (based on A & B) taken to enhance/improve support for underperforming schools in the community.	TBD
TBD		D. Support programs that ensure kids stay in school & get HS diploma/GED.	TBD
TBD		E. Organize/support child literacy program(s) in the community.	TBD
TBD		F. Organize/support adult literacy program(s) in the community.	TBD
TBD		G. Create a Workforce Advisory Committee/Council to strengthen relationships with business community and school system to address the workforce needs of the future.	TBD
TBD		H. Establish, Operate or Support Aftercare Program	TBD
TBD		I. Establish and maintain city internships to provide basic job skill training (select interns through E&I lens).	TBD
TBD		J. Provide E&I educational awareness programs in the community.	TBD
TBD		K. Establish, maintain or support city youth council (middle and high school).	TBD
TBD		L. Training for city elected officials (members of the governing authority) and senior staff related to education.	TBD
TBD		M. Development of city policies related to education.	TBD
TBD		N. Other.	TBD
0	0	TOTAL EDUCATION MEASURE POINTS	

APPENDIX B

MUNICIPAL EQUITY & INCLUSION CERTIFICATE PROGRAM MEASURES

POINTS	POINTS APPLIED FOR BY CITY	HEALTH AND WELLBEING - POINTS REQUIRED TBD	REQUIRED OR OPTIONAL
TBD		A. Convene community meetings to discuss/assess current recreational facilities uses, programs, and accessibility; determine metrics.	TBD
TBD		B. Actions to address issues raised in community stakeholder meetings (could include actions taken to enhance/increase availability and accessibility of recreational facilities and programs in the community).	TBD
TBD		C. Promotion and support of programs to address food insecurity.	TBD
TBD		D. Address employee healthcare needs (e.g, availability of wellness center or wellness initiatives for employees, vaccine clinics, other health clinics, pay living wage in light of area cost of living, provide basic health benefits at reasonable cost to employees).	TBD
TBD		E. Provide or promote city-wide health/wellbeing initiatives (including programs that address mental health and substance abuse).	TBD
TBD		F. Majority of Elected officials take GMA Health Care Training Course (assuming GMA Training Board approves it as a training course).	TBD
TBD		G. Training for city elected officials (members of the governing authority) and senior staff related to health and well being.	TBD
TBD		H. Development of city policies related to health and well being.	TBD
TBD		I. Other: initiatives to improve HS graduation rates, financial literacy programs, support early childhood education, organize community days of service for home repairs.	TBD
0	0	TOTAL HEALTHCARE/WELLNESS MEASURE POINTS	

APPENDIX B

MUNICIPAL EQUITY & INCLUSION CERTIFICATE PROGRAM MEASURES

POINTS	POINTS APPLIED FOR BY CITY	PUBLIC SAFETY AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE (INCLUDES POLICE, FIRE, EMS) - POINTS REQUIRED TBD	REQUIRED OR OPTIONAL
TBD		A. Provide citizen engagement programs: Citizen Police Academy, Citizen Fire Academy, Citizen Emergency Response Team.	TBD
TBD		B. Adopt a model Use of Force Policy.	TBD
TBD		C. Provide training in use of force alternatives for police, fire, EMS personnel, as applicable.	TBD
TBD		D. Provide anti-bias training for police, fire, EMS personnel, as applicable.	TBD
TBD		E. Implement a Public Safety Strategic Plan	TBD
TBD		F. Develop hiring and retention policies aimed at reflecting community demographics.	TBD
TBD		G. Adopt policy for and provide training in mental health response and crisis intervention for police, fire, EMS personnel.	TBD
TBD		H. Review/update disciplinary standards & policies to ensure appropriate action for misconduct.	TBD
TBD		I. Attain/Maintain State Certification (Police).	TBD
TBD		J. Attain/Maintain CALEA Certification.	TBD
TBD		K. Attain/Maintain GMA Excellence in Policing Certification.	TBD
TBD		L. Attain/Maintain CPSE Certification.	TBD
TBD		M. Create and maintain a Citizen Advisory/Engagement Committee to address public safety issues.	TBD
TBD		N. Implement community-based approach to violence prevention (violence interrupters), e.g., Cure Violence Global.	TBD
TBD		O. Equity in ISO Ratings among various areas of the city.	TBD
TBD		P. Implement Mental Health Programs/Training to Support Officer Resilience.	TBD
TBD		Q. Expungement of records/amnesty program.	TBD
TBD		R. Provide and/or partner to provide re-entry programs. Consider working with area nonprofits, others on re-entry programs for individuals leaving prison .	TBD
TBD		S. Establish Public Safety priorities that limit arrests for low-level misdemeanor offenses, limit ticketing for certain traffic offenses, and ticket (rather than arrest) using misdemeanor ticketing form when possible and appropriate.	TBD
TBD		T. Training for city elected officials (members of the governing authority) and appropriate city staff related to public safety.	TBD
TBD		U. Development of additional policies related to public safety that are not specific to public safety departments.	TBD

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

APPENDIX B

MUNICIPAL EQUITY & INCLUSION CERTIFICATE PROGRAM MEASURES

POINTS	POINTS APPLIED FOR BY CITY	PUBLIC SAFETY AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE (INCLUDES POLICE, FIRE, EMS) - POINTS REQUIRED TBD	REQUIRED OR OPTIONAL
TBD		V. Other: See Resource Guide for Examples; Additionally, if a city has achieved certification through CALEA, State Certification, Excellence in Policing or CPSE but has gone beyond CALEA standards in measures that overlap with certification requirements may apply for additional points towards certification in this category.	TBD
0	0	TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MEASURE POINTS	

APPENDIX B

MUNICIPAL EQUITY & INCLUSION CERTIFICATE PROGRAM MEASURES

POINTS	POINTS APPLIED FOR BY CITY	COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - POINTS REQUIRED TBD	REQUIRED OR OPTIONAL
TBD		A. Convene meetings with community stakeholders to discuss community, economic and business needs and challenges.	TBD
TBD		B. Assist individuals with business and social networking resources and opportunities.	TBD
TBD		C. Increase diversity in leadership and internship programs.	TBD
TBD		D. Address city-imposed challenges of starting a business.	TBD
TBD		E. Develop policies to ensure access to participation in city projects/contracts and to advance racial equity in government contracting and procurement.	TBD
TBD		F. Actions to ensure development/redevelopment strategies are inclusionary.	TBD
TBD		G. Actions to ensure zoning encourages opportunities for housing affordability.	TBD
TBD		H. Establish and use tools to help people attain home ownership.	TBD
TBD		I. Develop a "Starting A Business" Guide and Training for new business owners.	TBD
TBD		J. Develop a "Starting A Business" Website page.	TBD
TBD		K. Training for city elected officials (members of the governing authority) and senior staff related to economic and community development.	TBD
TBD		L. Development of city policies related to economic and community development.	TBD
TBD		M. Other.	TBD
0	0	TOTAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MEASURE POINTS	

APPENDIX B

MUNICIPAL EQUITY & INCLUSION CERTIFICATE PROGRAM MEASURES

POINTS	POINTS APPLIED FOR BY CITY	MUNICIPAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYMENT - POINTS REQUIRED TBD	REQUIRED OR OPTIONAL
TBD		A. Develop Municipal Workforce Development Goals ("Starts with Me" as resource)	TBD
TBD		B. Implement recruitment policies and practices that ensure a diverse applicant pool.	TBD
TBD		C. Include anti-discrimination language in HR policies and procedures.	TBD
TBD		D. Review terminology in employment policies to ensure documents are inclusive.	TBD
TBD		E. Include E&I training in City's employee onboarding/orientation process.	TBD
TBD		F. Provide internship or other program(s) to serve as municipal workforce pipeline.	TBD
TBD		G. Create community learning programs about city government to serve as municipal workforce pipeline.	TBD
TBD		H. Provide a regular forum for employees to voluntarily participate in group discussions on E&I topics.	TBD
TBD		I. Partner and collaborate with local school system to participate in career days, job fairs or other activities to promote local government jobs.	TBD
TBD		J. Demonstrate inclusive processes and procedures in recruiting, appointing, and/or selecting internal employee workgroups, boards, committees, volunteers, etc.	TBD
TBD		K. Training for city elected officials (members of the governing authority) and senior staff related to municipal workforce development and employment.	TBD
TBD		L. Development of city policies related to municipal workforce development and employment.	TBD
TBD		M. Other.	TBD
0	0	TOTAL MUNICIPAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT MEASURE POINTS	

APPENDIX B

MUNICIPAL EQUITY & INCLUSION CERTIFICATE PROGRAM MEASURES

POINTS	POINTS APPLIED FOR BY CITY	COMMUNITY DIALOGUE/STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT - POINTS REQUIRED TBD	REQUIRED OR OPTIONAL
TBD		A. Seek out stakeholder groups to represent all segments of the community to listen, help identify barriers to engagement, seek input, and develop solutions.	TBD
TBD		B. Offer options and have a transparent process for citizens to receive information, participate in discussions, and provide feedback/input on strategic priorities, budget and resources allocation.	TBD
TBD		C. Provide balanced, objective and user-friendly information through various channels.	TBD
TBD		D. Develop a city-wide public information communication plan.	TBD
TBD		E. Achieve certification(s) demonstrating a commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion (Example: Welcoming America)	TBD
TBD		F. Provide ongoing training and cross training (at least annually) for staff and volunteers to ensure clarity and consistency of messaging when engaging with the community as well as sustainability of established processes as new staff and volunteers are onboarded.	TBD
TBD		G. Develop city policies related to community dialogue and stakeholder engagement	TBD
TBD		H. Other.	TBD
0	0	TOTAL COMMUNITY DIALOGUE/STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MEASURE POINTS	



GEORGIA
MUNICIPAL
ASSOCIATION

www.gacities.com

201 Pryor St SW,
Atlanta, GA 30303