



Staff Report

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Date: 7/22/2024
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TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Keith Stahley, City Manager
FROM: Scott Archer, Deputy City Manager

SUBJECT:

Community belonging survey results are presented by the Human Rights Commission.

Ward(s): All Wards
Councilor(s): All Councilors
Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods
Result Area(s): Safe and Healthy Community; Welcoming and Livable Community.

SUMMARY:

Students at Western Oregon University collaborated with Salem’s Human Rights Commission for the annual Community Belonging Survey. Key data points and the student report are presented to City Council.

ISSUE:

Information only.

RECOMMENDATION:

Information only.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

To assist the Human Rights Commission understand community belonging and discrimination, Western Oregon University students conducted a survey. The survey provides a non-probability judgement sample. While responses were gathered from diverse people, the aggregate data does not represent the City of Salem overall. The objectives were to:

- Learn about discrimination witnessed by Salem residents,

- Learn about people's personal experience with discrimination,
- Understand comfortability reporting bias crime to the Salem Police Department,
- Understand the level of awareness in the community about the Human Rights Commission,
- Understand the feeling of community belonging experienced by the community.

Major Facts and Findings:

- 25.1% of all respondents shared that they either somewhat or strongly disagree with the statement "I feel like I belong in the Salem community." 60.7% of folks experiencing houselessness reported that they felt like they did not belong in the Salem community.

- 37.5% of all respondents said that they had personally experienced discrimination in Salem in the last year. That figure rocketed to 90% among unhoused respondents.

- These respondents who reported experiencing discrimination were asked to identify the nature of the discrimination. The three most common types of discrimination reported were race/color/national origin (32.1%); age (28%); and gender (28.9%). 88% of respondents experiencing houselessness ascribed their experiences of discrimination to their housing status. Respondents also included where they experienced discrimination. These will be included in the HRC's presentation to Council.

- "If you were the target of a bias crime," respondents were asked, "how comfortable would you be in reporting it to the Salem Police Department?" 42.3% of all respondents-independently of whether they themselves had recently experienced discrimination-shared that they felt either somewhat or very uncomfortable reporting bias to the police.

The survey was available in the community online and through in-person engagements from April 23 - May 15, 2024. 979 people began the survey; 821 responses were finished. The survey was available in English, Spanish, Chuukese and Marshallese.

Online, the City of Salem distributed the survey link through social media channels and email. In-person events were held at ARCHES, Church @ the Park, the Family Prayer and Worship Center, and the Chemeketa Community College Food Pantry. Numerous community partners distributed the survey, reaching thousands of persons.

BACKGROUND:

This is the sixth survey completed; past surveys were held in 2017 in partnership with Willamette University and annually 2020-2023 in partnership with Western Oregon University. The Commission utilizes the information along with other resources to consider recommendations concerning solutions to specific problems of prejudice or discrimination, in accordance with Salem Revised Code Sec. 8.030. The Commission and University are considering changes to next year's survey. The Salem Police Department provides a liaison to the Human Rights Commission.

Gretchen Bennett

Human Rights Manager

Attachments:

1. WOU Student Presentation
2. WOU Final Report