PREPARING TENNESSEE CITIES TO SERVE CHANGING COMMUNITIES

A RESEARCH PRESENTATION FOR MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE

PRESENTED BY: CANDACE WARNER, RESEARCHER
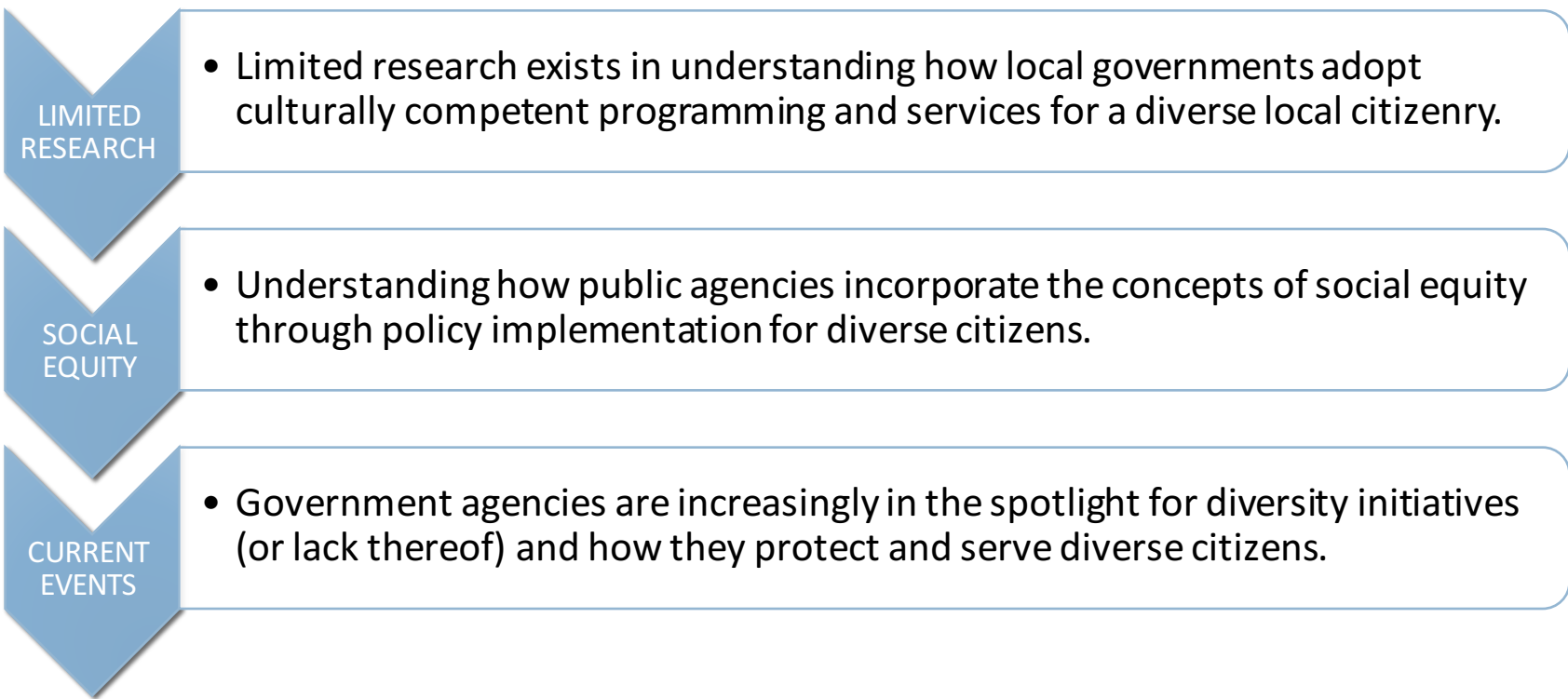
Research Goals

In what ways can Tennessee municipalities better prepare to serve an increasingly diverse public?

1) Identify current diversity initiatives (e.g. training programs, resources, and programming) within Tennessee municipalities that prepare local government employees to serve diverse populations.
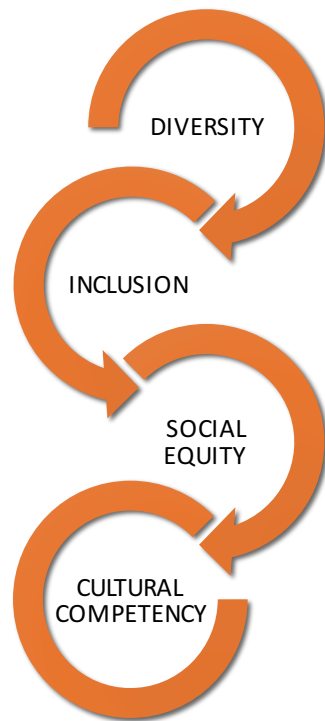
2) Identify existing service delivery initiatives that serve diverse local constituents in Tennessee municipalities (e.g. language materials, etc.).

3) Identify future diversity-related training and resources most beneficial to the municipality in serving diverse constituents.

Research Relevance

LIMITED RESEARCH
- Limited research exists in understanding how local governments adopt culturally competent programming and services for a diverse local citizenry.

SOCIAL EQUITY
- Understanding how public agencies incorporate the concepts of social equity through policy implementation for diverse citizens.

CURRENT EVENTS
- Government agencies are increasingly in the spotlight for diversity initiatives (or lack thereof) and how they protect and serve diverse citizens.

A Clarification of Terms

DIVERSITY

INCLUSION

SOCIAL EQUITY

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

- Diversity
  - Demographics of the population; group differences

- Inclusion
  - Involvement, engagement, valuing of different groups within an environment

- Social equity
  - Philosophical concepts of equality

- Cultural competency
  - A tool for using the knowledge of diversity to ensure social equity

Valuing Diversity Helps Local Governments

Improve public service and satisfaction

Improve outreach and connection with constituencies

Enhance the organization's credibility within the community

Decrease misunderstandings

Give employees a denser perception, which in turn leads to greater innovation and creativity and ensures more accurate predictions

Attract talent from a diverse pool

http://icma.org/en/icma/newsroom/highlights/Article/106337/Moving_Diversity_Forward_by_Walking_Boldly_Toward_Our_Biases

Diversity Defined (in this research)

Age	**National origin**
• EEOC & Literature review	• EEOC & Literature review
Disability	**Race**
• EEOC & Literature review	• EEOC & Literature review
Economic/income status	**Religion**
• Literature review	• EEOC & Literature review
Education level	**Sex/gender**
• Literature review	• EEOC & Literature review
Language	**Sexual orientation***
• Literature review	• Literature review

Social Equity as a Theme

According to ICMA's 2010 Sustainability Survey (a national survey completed by 2,176 local governments with populations over 2,500), approximately 38% of those surveyed considered "social justice" to be a priority.

How can administrators best serve a changing and increasingly diverse public?

How are public administrators ultimately prepared (or not prepared) to serve this public in the most efficient, effective, and equitable ways?
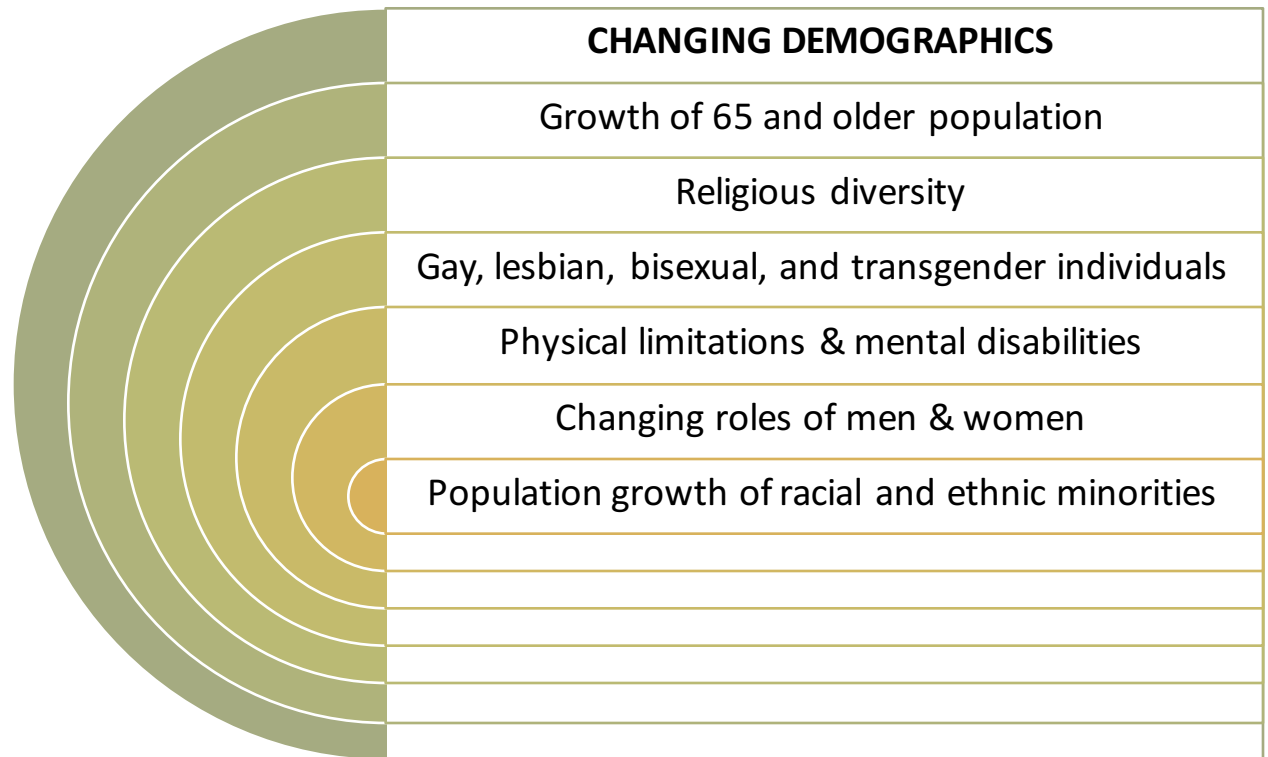
How can the development of diversity-related resources, training, and programming help public administrators serve diverse constituent groups?

Culturally Competent Service Delivery

"Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or professional and enable that system, agency or professional to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (Norman-Major & Gooden, 2012, p. 8).

Projected Demographic Changes in Tennessee

Changing U.S. Demographics

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

Growth of 65 and older population

Religious diversity

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals

Physical limitations & mental disabilities

Changing roles of men & women

Population growth of racial and ethnic minorities

DEMOGRAPHIC (2014 Estimates)	TENNESSEE	USA
POPULATION (2010)	6,346,105 (% change from 2010-2014=3.2%)	308,745,538 (% change from 2010-2014=3.3%
AGE		
Persons under 5 years, percent, 2013	6.2%	6.3%
Persons under 18 years, percent, 2013	23.0%	23.3%
Persons 65 years and over, percent, 2013	14.7%	14.1%
GENDER		
Female persons, percent, 2013	51.2%	50.8%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND INCOME		
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2009-2013	84.4%	86.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2009-2013	23.8%	28.8%
Veterans, 2009-2013	484,901	21,263,779
Median household income, 2009-2013	$44,298	$53,046
Persons below poverty level, percent, 2009-2013	17.6%	15.4%

| DEMOGRAPHIC (2014 Estimates)	TENNESSEE	USA
RACE & ETHNICITY		
White alone, percent, 2013 (a)	79.1%	77.7%
Black or African American alone, percent, 2013 (a)	17.0%	13.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, 2013 (a)	0.4%	1.2%
Asian alone, percent, 2013 (a)	1.6%	5.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, 2013 (a)	0.1%	0.2%
Two or More Races, percent, 2013	1.7%	2.4%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2013 (b)	4.9%	17.1%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2013	74.9%	62.6%
FOREIGN BORN		
Foreign born persons, percent, 2009-2013	4.6%	12.9%
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2009-2013	6.6%	20.7%

Age

Tennessee's population of persons 65 and older was close to the national rate of 13.9% in 2009-2013 estimates.

Tennessee's older population grew at a much higher rate--21.3% between 2000 and 2010.

One-fourth of counties in Tennessee have an elderly population of 17-26%

Those aged 45-64 in Tennessee constitute 26.9% of the population in 2009-2013 estimates.

Tennessee Projections for 65+ Population

21.8%
by 2050

22.5%
by 2040

21.7%
by 2030
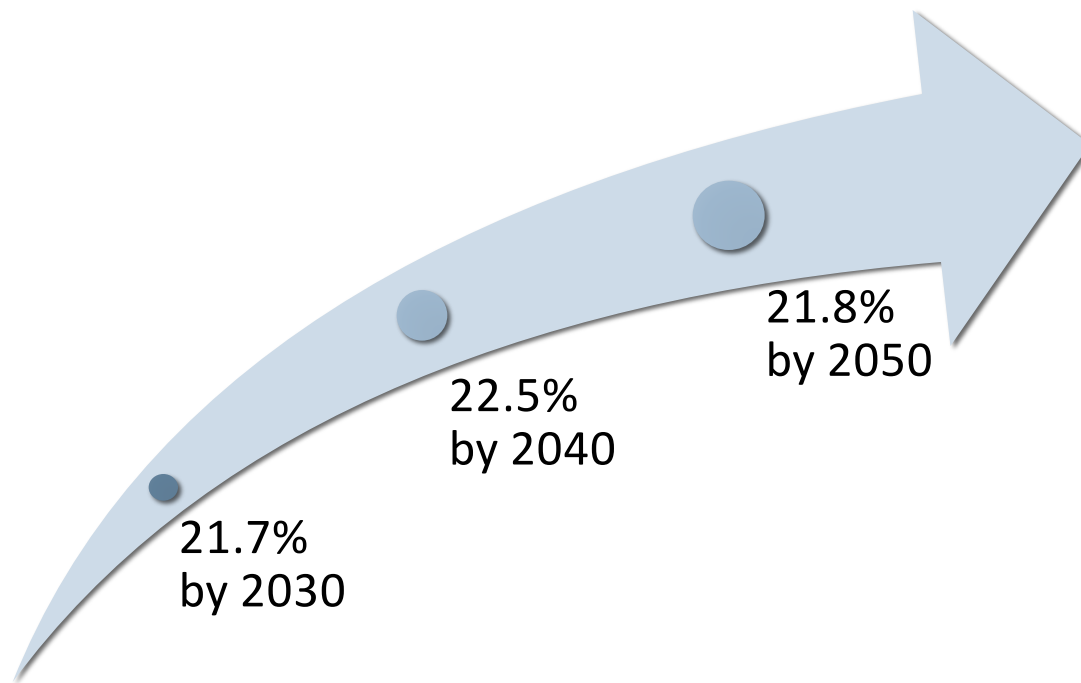
Disability

- 15.3% of Tennessee's population is disabled, a higher percentage than the 12.2% for the United States.

- Over 30% of disabled Tennesseans live below the poverty line, and 41% of those 65 and over reported a disability.

Gender, Transgender, & Sexual Orientation

UNITED STATES

Gender
◦ Female = 50.8%
◦ Transgender = 0.3%
◦ Gay or Lesbian= 1.7%* (4.4 million)
  ◦ *estimates range to 5.6%

Same-Sex Households
◦ 594,000

TENNESSEE

Gender
◦ Female = 51.3%

Same Sex Households in Tennessee (2013)
◦ 10,898 with 54% being female
◦ One in five have children under 18 in the home
◦ The median household income of same-sex households with children is half that of heterosexual married couples ($32,584 and $69,705 respectively.

Education and Economic Status

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In higher educational attainment, the state of Tennessee ranks 43rd in the nation.

31.7% of Tennesseans hold a college degree.

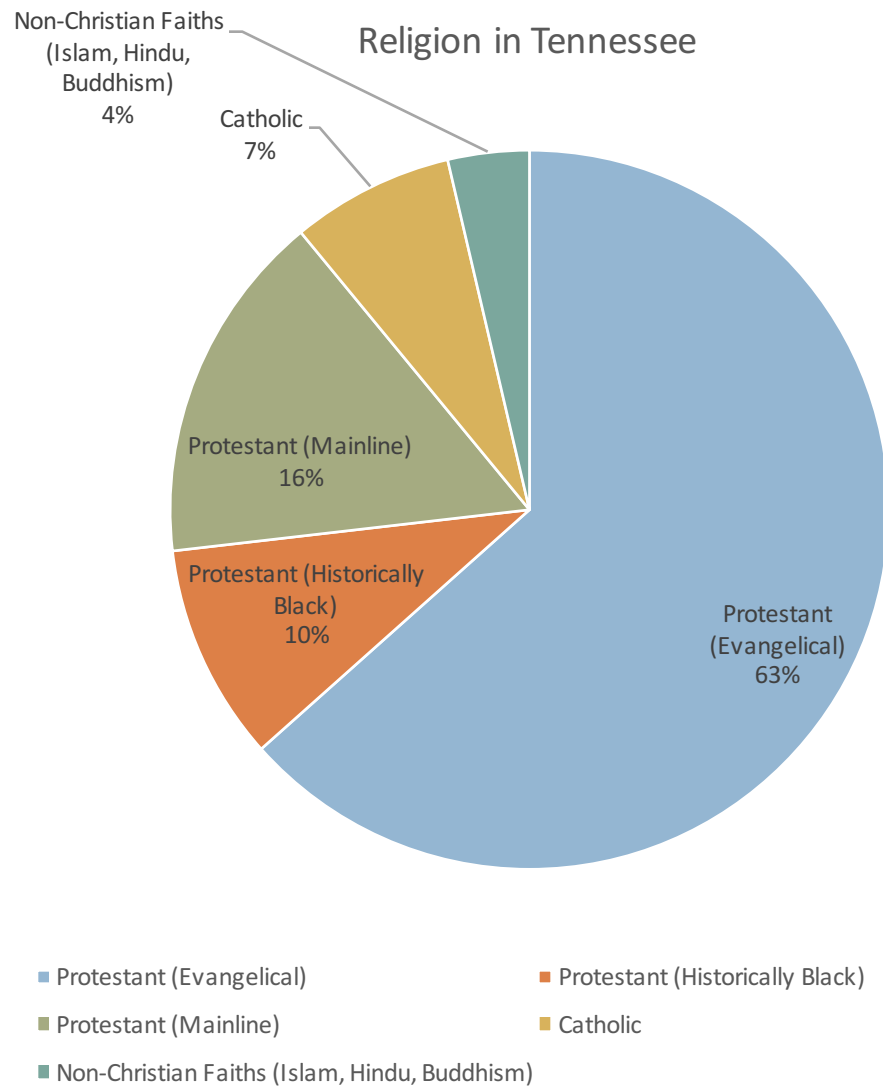24% hold a Bachelor's degree or higher

ECONOMIC STATUS

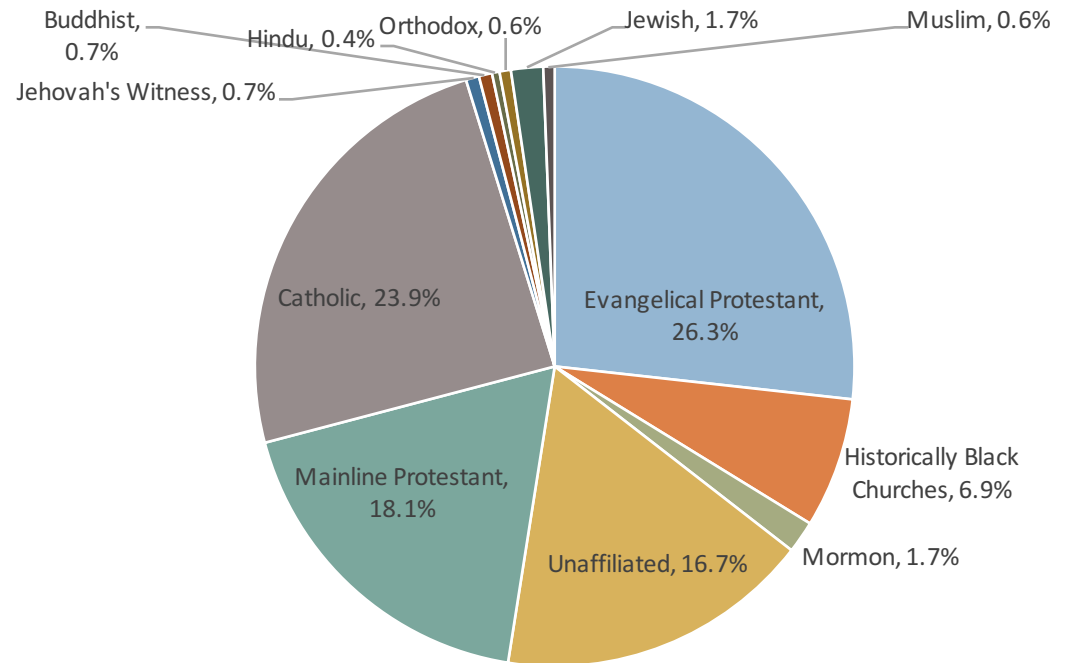Five year average poverty rate (2009-2013) was 17.6%.

25% of children under 18 were living below the poverty line

35% of female-headed households are classified as living in poverty in the state

Religion in Tennessee

Religion in Tennessee

Non-Christian Faiths (Islam, Hindu, Buddhism) 4%

Catholic 7%

Protestant (Mainline) 16%

Protestant (Historically Black) 10%

Protestant (Evangelical) 63%

- Protestant (Evangelical)
- Protestant (Historically Black)
- Protestant (Mainline)
- Catholic
- Non-Christian Faiths (Islam, Hindu, Buddhism)

Religion
in the U.S.

Buddhist, 0.7%
Hindu, 0.4%
Orthodox, 0.6%
Jewish, 1.7%
Muslim, 0.6%
Jehovah's Witness, 0.7%
Catholic, 23.9%
Evangelical Protestant, 26.3%
Mainline Protestant, 18.1%
Unaffiliated, 16.7%
Mormon, 1.7%
Historically Black Churches, 6.9%

- Evangelical Protestant
- Historically Black Churches
- Mormon
- Unaffiliated
- Mainline Protestant
- Catholic
- Jehovah's Witness
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Orthodox
- Jewish
- Muslim

Distribution of U.S. Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2010 and 2050
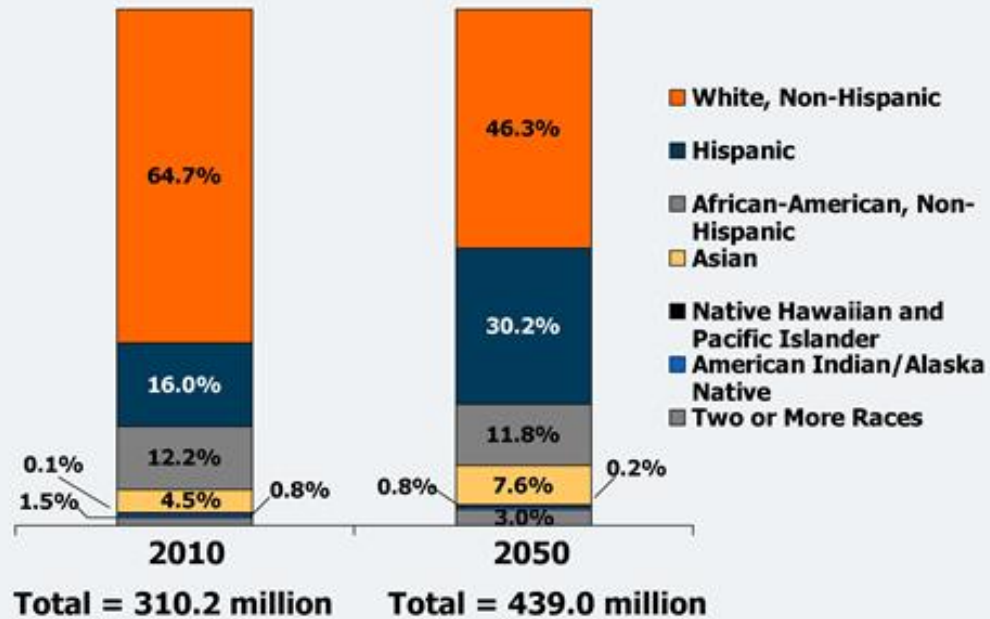
Percentage of Population by Race/Ethnicity in Tennessee (2014)

Legend:
- White (non-Hispanic)
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black/African American
- Asian
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Some Other Race
- Two or More Races

Values shown: 74.7%, 5%, 17.1%, 1.7%, 0.4%, 0.1%, 6.2%, 1.7%
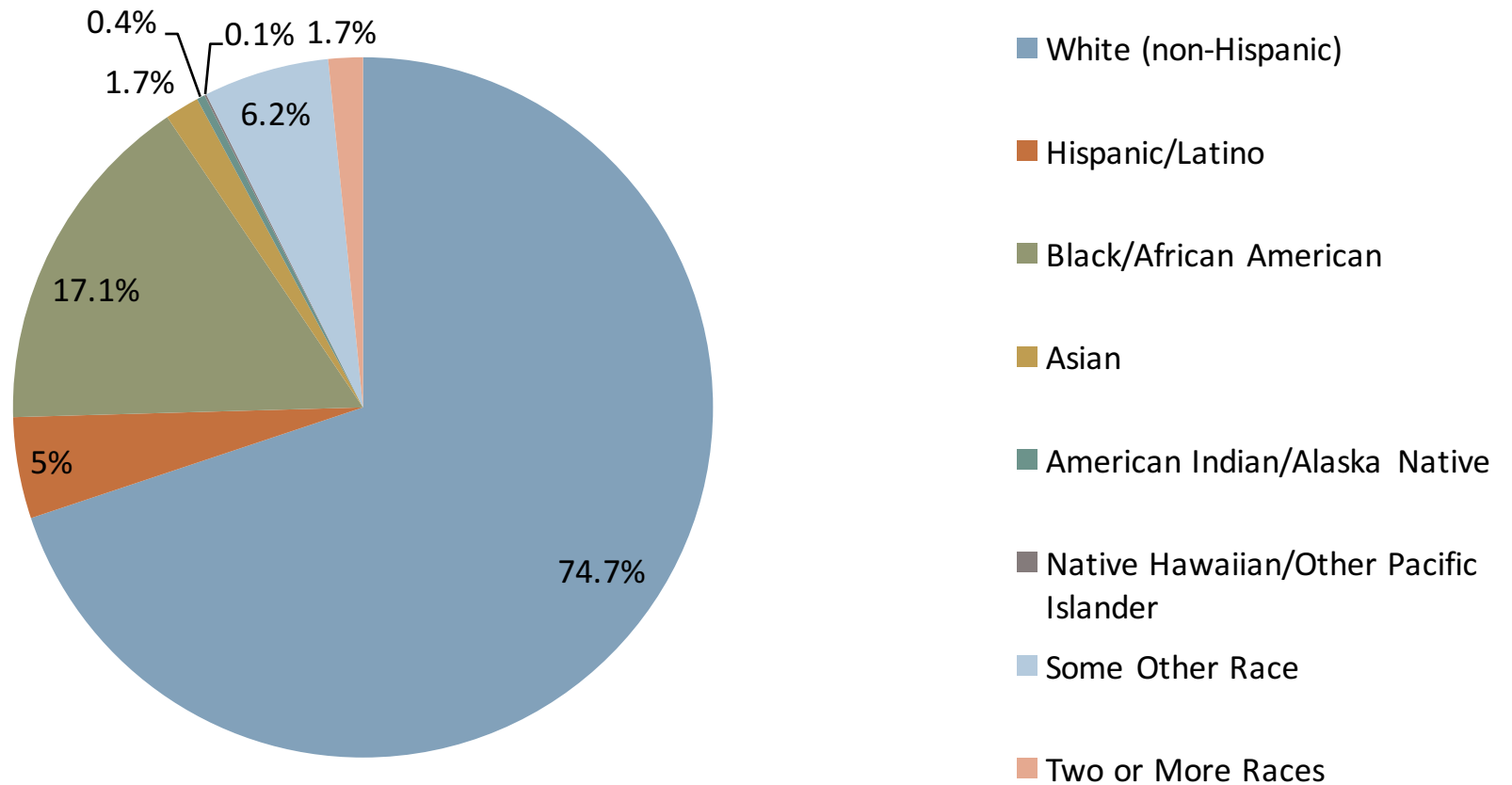
Demographic Profiles of Tennessee

City and County Demographic Profiles (2014 U.S. Census Data):

◦ http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/47000.html

◦ http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/maps/tennessee_map.html

Tennessee State Data Center

◦ http://tndata.utk.edu

◦ http://tndata.utk.edu/sdcdashboards.htm

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Limitations

Email distribution and population

Non-independence of responses

Validity of knowledge from respondents

Lack of specific municipality and zip code
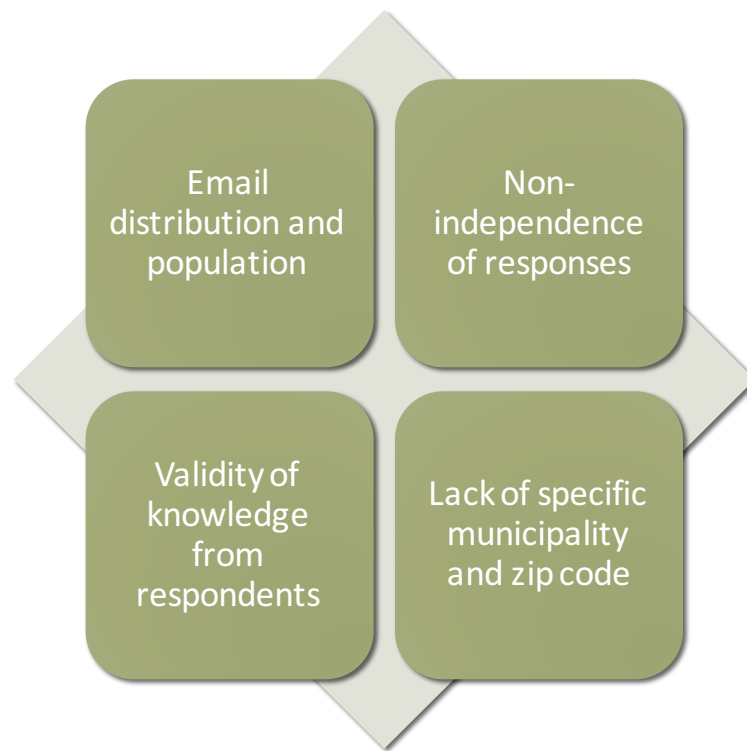
Survey Distribution

41,839 municipal employees work within 365 cities in Tennessee

MTAS provided the researcher with a list of 3,419 Tennessee municipal government, administrators, and staff; however, only 1,966 contained valid emails.

The researcher gathered an additional 461 email addresses, for a total of 2,427 emails in the initial survey distribution.

Email Distribution	Date	Number of Emails Sent	Number of Emails Received
1	March 26, 2015	2,427	2,078
2	April 8, 2015	2,118	2,032
3	April 28, 2015	2,089	2,002
4	May 7, 2015	2,035	1,997
Average number of emails received from all four mailings			2,027

Sample of Respondents

Mayors, vice-mayors, directors (e.g. public works, library, parks, sanitation, engineering, finance, parks and recreation, etc.), police and fire chiefs, county clerks, city court clerks, city recorders, city attorneys, city judges, and human resource professionals.

Most survey leavers on questions 1 and 2 were from municipal population sizes of 2,000-7,999, as well as 15,000-99,999. Respondents from the East Tennessee region were more likely to leave the survey on these first two questions than respondents in West or Middle Tennessee.

526
- Respondents started the survey

138 Leavers
- 45 did not answer any questions
- 78 only answered demographic questions
- 15 dropped out before question 2

N=388
- 19% response rate
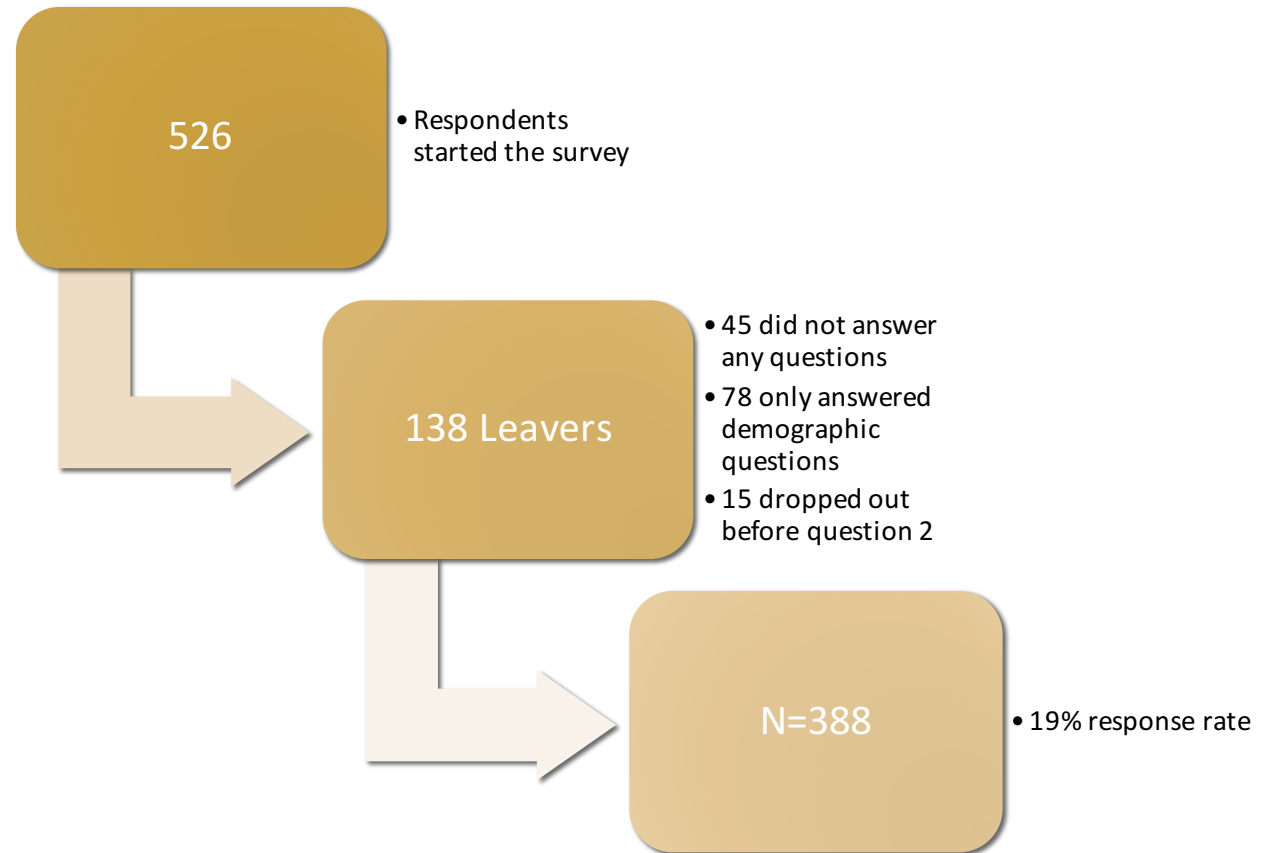
Statistical Analysis Methods

FREQUENCIES — Descriptive statistics

RELATIONSHIPS — Chi-Square Tests of Significance

RELATIONSHIPS — Cross-Tabulation

GROUP DIFFERENCES — One-Way Anova

PREDICTORS — Binomial Logistic Regression

PREDICTORS — Ordinal Logistic Regression

PREDICTORS — Multinomial Logistic Regression

SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
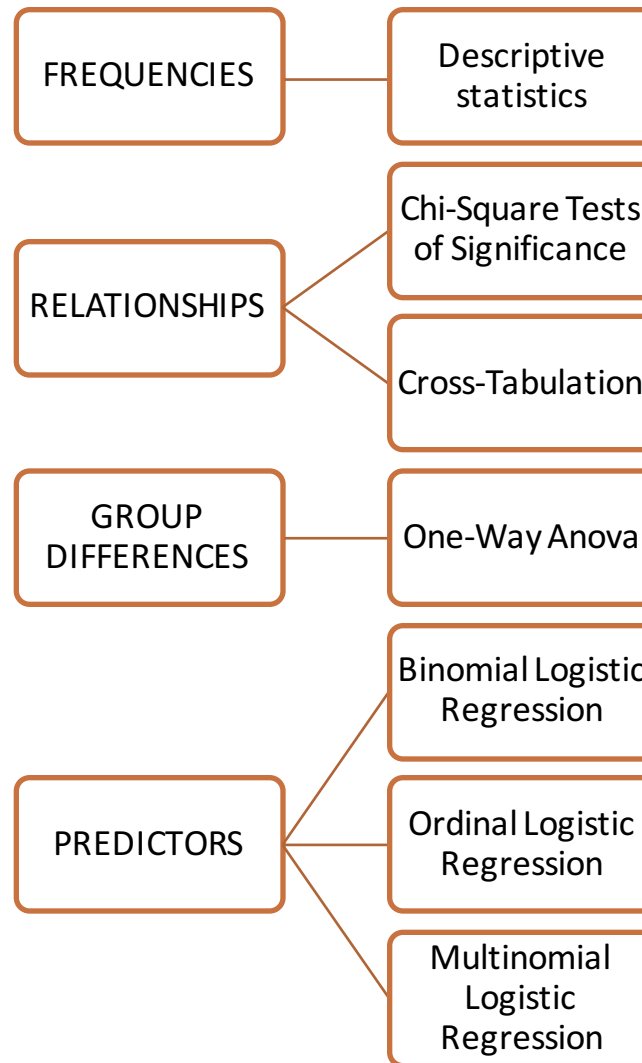
AGE (N=285)

24 & under	0
25-34	.02
35-44	13.6
45-54	35.7
55-64	38.5
65-74	.10
75 & over	**0**

GENDER (N=281)

Male	53.7
Female	46.2

EDUCATION (N=286)

Some High School	0
High school graduate or equivalency	13.2
Some college, no degree	26.9
Associate's degree, occupational	.03
Associate's degree, academic	.04
Bachelor's degree	30.7
Master's degree	18
Doctoral Degree/J.D./M.D.	.03

RACE (N=282)

White/Caucasian	94.3
Black or African-American	.04
American Indian or Alaska Native	0
Asian	0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0
Some other race	0
Two or more races	0

HISPANIC ORIGIN (N=285)

Not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin	98.5
Of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin	.01

URBAN PROXMITY

Rural	38.5
Mixed Rural/Suburban	30.5
Suburban	10.7
Mixed Suburban/Urban	11.2
Urban	9.1

POPULATION

More than 100,000 people	17.4
15,000-99,999 people	12.4
8,000-14,999 people	19.9
4,000-7,999 people	15.3
2,000-3,999 people	28.0
Less than 2,000 people	7.0

MUNICIPAL STAFF SIZE

0-9 employees	16.3
10-29 employees	17.6
30-49 employees	7.0
50-99 employees	14.5
100-299 employees	22.3
300-499 employees	10.9
500-999 employees	5.4
1,000 or more employees	6.0

TN GRAND REGION

West Tennessee	23.1
Middle Tennessee	44.8
East Tennessee	32.1

FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Weak-Mayor	17.7
Strong-Mayor	28.9
Council/Manager	33.6
Council/Administrator	13.8
Metropolitan	2.9

GOVERNMENT ROLE

Mayor	4.7
City Manager/Administrator	19.7
Director/Department Head/ Other Manager	55.1
Council Member	1.8
Other Elected Official	1.6
Human Resources Professional	4.2
Non-Managerial Staff	13.0

Independent Variables

Number of Municipal Staff	Population Size	Tennessee Grand Region	Municipal Government Form
• 0-29 employees • 30-99 employees • 100-299 employees • 300-1,000+ employees	• Less than 3,999 people • 4,000-14,999 people • 15,000-99,999 people • More than 100,000 people	• West • Middle • East	• Weak-Mayor • Strong-Mayor • Council/Manager • Council/Administrator • Metropolitan

SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Responsible for Diversity-Related Programming or Services

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Only 99 respondents indicated diversity staff responsible for diversity-related programming or services.

Significant Predictors:
◦ Number of municipal staff
◦ Tennessee grand region

OTHER PATTERNS

Population size
◦ Higher population groups

Tennessee grand region
◦ Middle and East

Number of municipal staff
◦ Higher numbers of government staff
◦ 300 or more employees

Municipal government form:
◦ Not statistically significant but results still indicate Council/Manager and Metropolitan government forms are more likely to report diversity staff designations.

Departments or Agencies Providing Diversity-Related Training or Resources

PROVIDER	RESPONDENTS INDICATING	PERCENTAGE (N=388)
Internal Human Resources	132	34%
Other Internal Employees	37	9.5%
Outside Agency	76	19.6%
MTAS	126	32.5%
More than one provider*	**252**	**64.9%**

*If respondents selected more than one of the diversity training providers.

Diversity Training Provided to Municipalities

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Predictors:
- Population size
- Number of municipal staff

Employee Levels:
- Top-level municipal officials and administrators more likely to report voluntary training
- Directors/department heads/other managers more likely to report mandatory diversity training
- Non-managerial staff more likely to report 'no diversity training'

OTHER PATTERNS

Population size
- Middle and higher population groups

Tennessee grand region
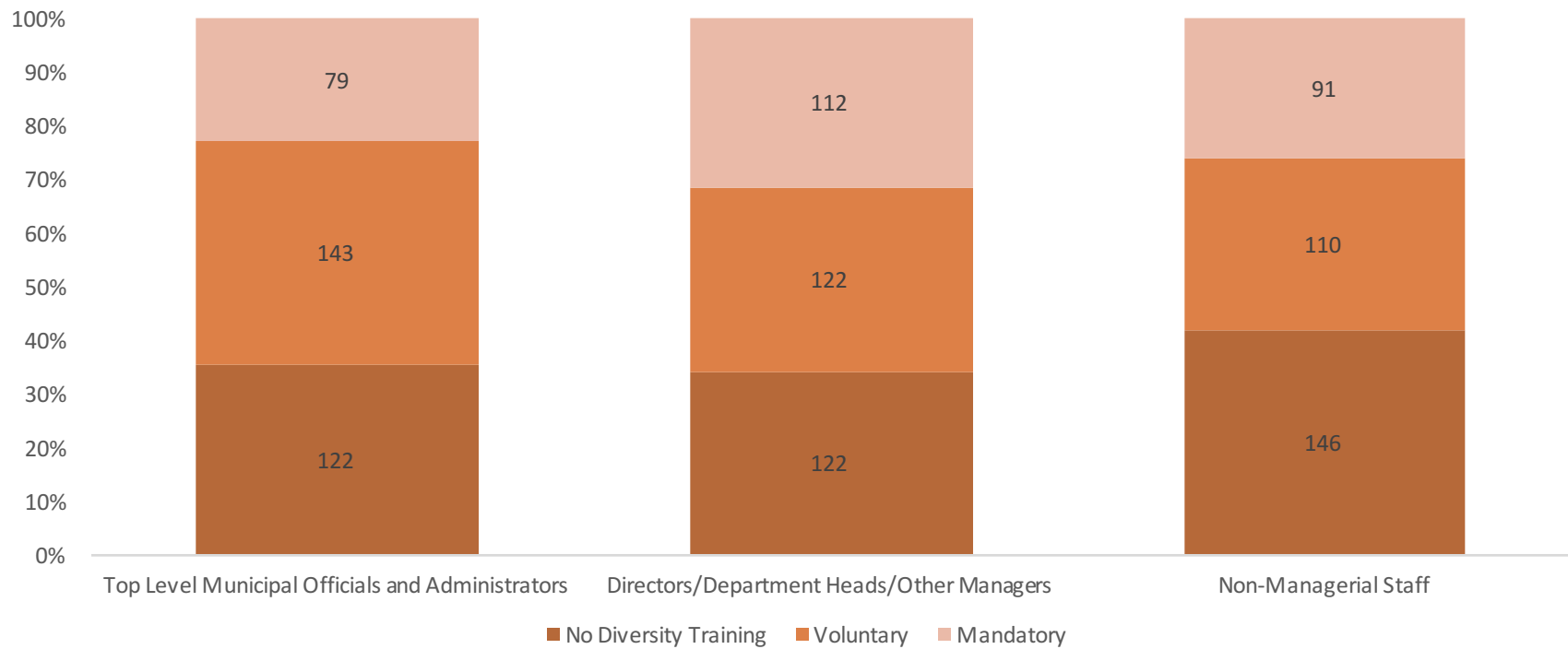- Middle and East

Number of municipal staff
- Higher numbers of government staff
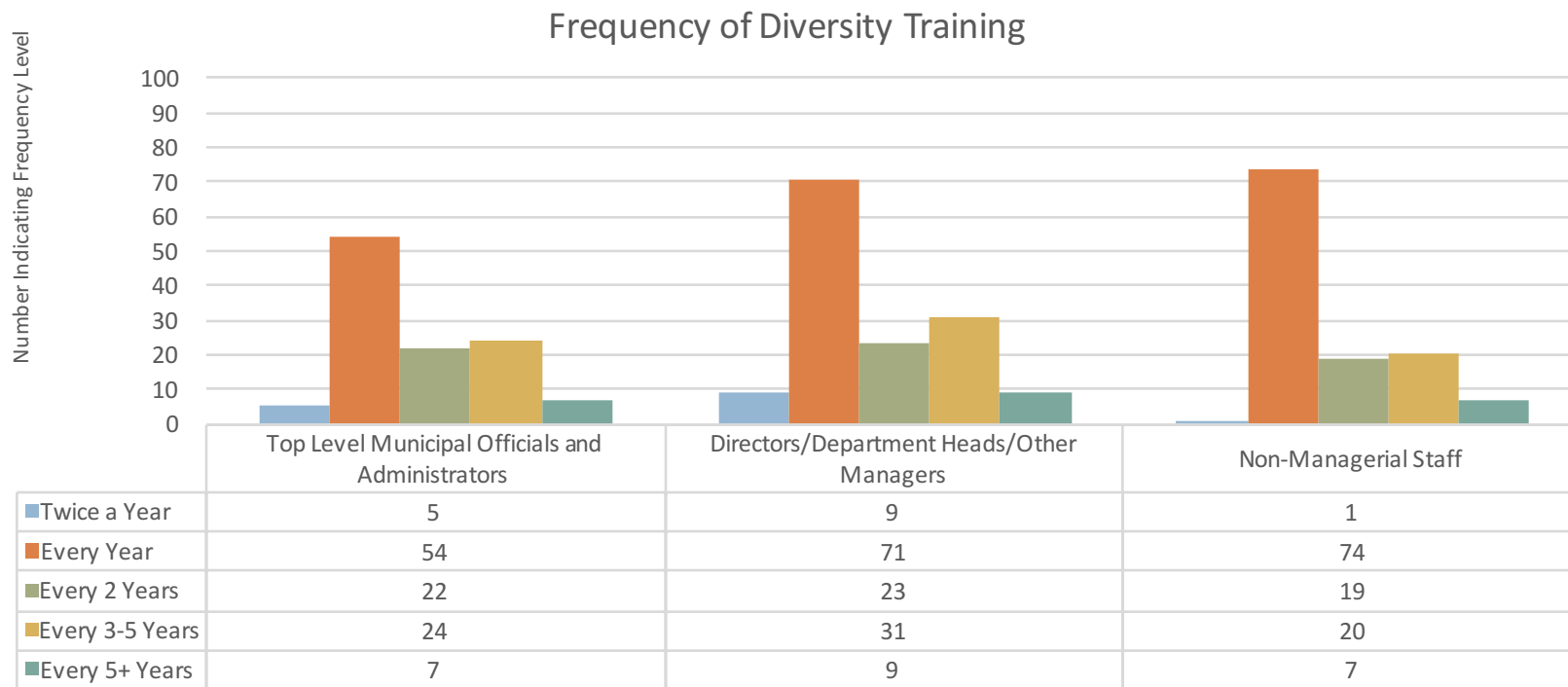- 300 or more employees

Municipal government form:
- Not statistically significant; weak-mayor forms less likely to report diversity training is provided.

Diversity Training Among Municipal Employee Levels

Frequency of Diversity Training Across Employee Levels

Frequency of Diversity Training

	Top Level Municipal Officials and Administrators	Directors/Department Heads/Other Managers	Non-Managerial Staff
Twice a Year	5	9	1
Every Year	54	71	74
Every 2 Years	22	23	19
Every 3-5 Years	24	31	20
Every 5+ Years	7	9	7

Current Diversity Training Categories

SIGNIFICANT PREDICTORS

POPULATION
- ◦ Age
- ◦ Disability
- ◦ National origin (only in 100,000+)
- ◦ Race
- ◦ Sex/Gender
- ◦ Sexual orientation (only in 100,000+)

REGION
- ◦ Language
- ◦ National origin
- ◦ Race
- ◦ Religion

PATTERNS

POPULATION
- ◦ Higher population groups more likely to offer:
  - ◦ *age, disability, education, language, national origin, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion*
- ◦ Population group one (less than 3,999 people) indicated a greater likelihood of offering economic/income status as a training category.
- ◦ Populations over 100,000 more likely to offer sexual orientation and national origin training categories.

REGION
- ◦ Middle Tennessee was more likely to offer *age, disability, national origin, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, and language*.
- ◦ West Tennessee is more likely to offer *economic/income status* and *education* as training categories.

Current Diversity Training Categories

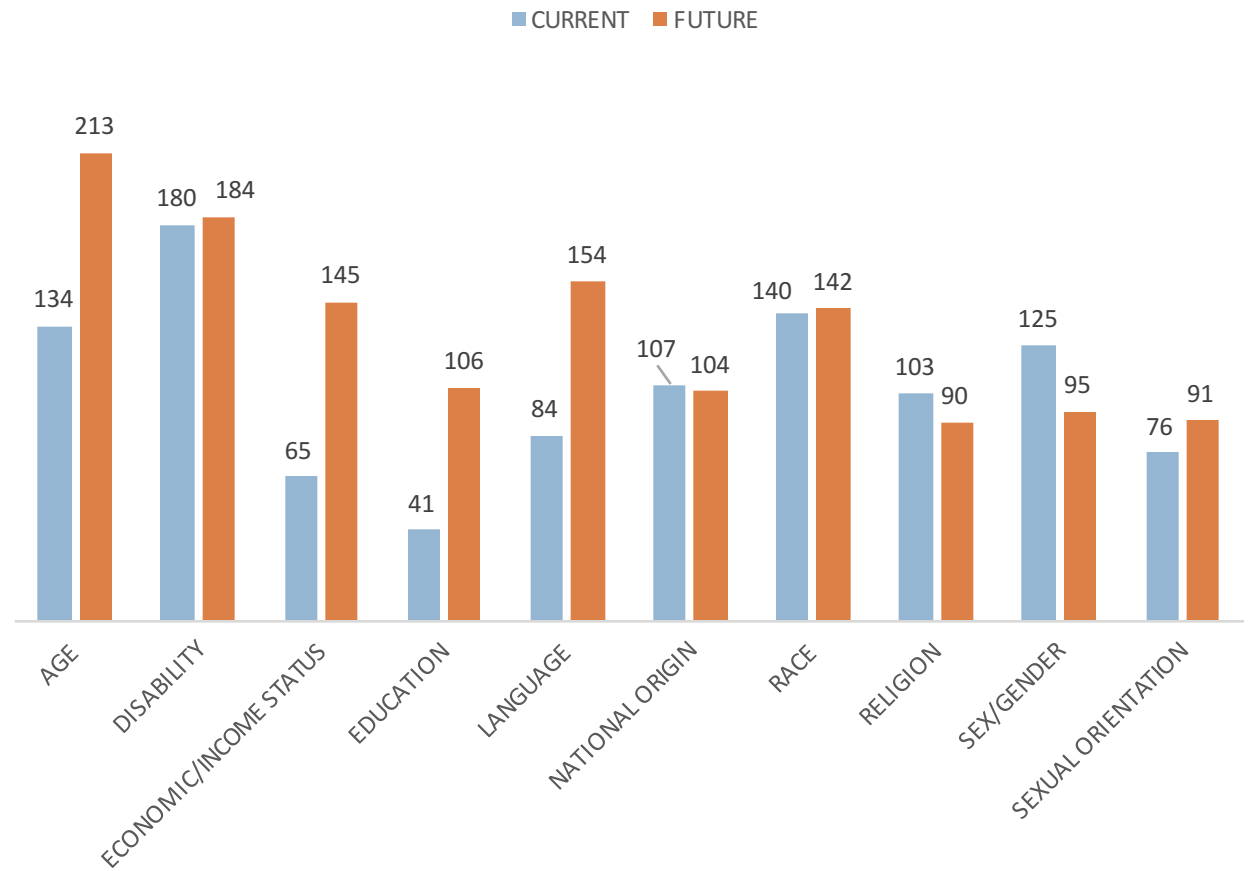*If diversity training is offered in Tennessee municipality

Rank	Category	Frequency	Percent indicating category is offered (*n*=180)	Population (Statistical Significance)	TN Grand Region (Statistical Significance)	Patterns
1	Race	140	77.8	✓	✓	• Population groups 3 & 4 more likely to offer. • Middle Tennessee more likely to offer.
2	Disability	135	75.0	✓	No	• Population group 4 more likely to offer. No difference across region.
3	Age	134	74.4	✓	No	• Population groups 3 & 4 more likely to offer. • No difference across region.
4	Sex/gender	125	69.4	✓	No	• Significant across all population groups. • No difference across region.
5	National Origin	107	59.4	✓	✓	• Population group 4 more likely to offer. • Middle and West Tennessee more likely to offer.
6	Religion	103	57.2	No	✓	• Middle and West Tennessee more likely to offer, particularly Middle.
7	Language	84	46.7	No	✓	• Middle and West Tennessee more likely to offer, particularly Middle.
8	Sexual Orientation	76	42.2	✓	No	• Only population group 4 was more likely to offer.
9	Economic/ Income Status	65	36.1	No	No	• No difference or significance across region or population. • Frequency distributions indicate offered less across all population groups and regions.
10	Education Level	41	22.8	No	No	• No difference or significance across region or population. • Frequency distributions indicate offered less across all population groups and regions.

Preferred Future Diversity Training Categories

Rank	Category	Frequency	Percent indicating preference (n=290)	Population (Statistical Significance)	TN Grand Region (Statistical Significance)	Patterns
1	Age	213	73.4	No	No	• No difference across population or Tennessee grand region. • High preference for these categories across all population groups and regions.
2	Disability	184	63.4	No	No	• No difference across population or Tennessee grand region. • High preference for these categories across all population groups and regions.
3	Language	154	53.1	✓	No	Population group 4 more likely to prefer.
4	Economic/ Income Status	145	50.0	✓	No	Population group 4 more likely to prefer.
5	Race	142	49.0	✓	No	Population groups 3 and 4 more likely to prefer.
6	Education Level	106	36.6	✓	No	Population group 4 more likely to prefer.
7	National Origin	104	35.9	✓	No	Population group 4 more likely to prefer.
8	Sex/gender	95	32.8	✓	No	Population group 3 & 4 more likely to prefer.
9	Sexual Orientation	91	31.4	✓	No	Population group 4 more likely to prefer.
10	Religion	90	31.0	✓	No	Population group 4 more likely to prefer.

Comparison of
Current and Future
Diversity Training
Categories

Comparison of Current and Future Diversity Training Categories

■ CURRENT   ■ FUTURE

Category	Current	Future
AGE	134	213
DISABILITY	180	184
ECONOMIC/INCOME STATUS	65	145
EDUCATION	41	106
LANGUAGE	84	154
NATIONAL ORIGIN	107	104
RACE	140	142
RELIGION	103	90
SEX/GENDER	125	95
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	76	91

Format Preferences for Future Diversity Training

MORE BENEFICIAL

In-person group training for employees by an outside diversity trainer/consultant

Annual professional development day addressing diversity topics

Small group coaching with municipal leaders and employees

PATTERNS

In general, population, Tennessee grand region, number of municipal staff are not predictors of training format preferences.

Region is not significant across format preferences.

Number of municipal staff displays some significance.

Population group one (less than 3,999 people) were less likely to view any of the 'top three' as more beneficial for their municipalities.

Format Preferences for Future Diversity Training

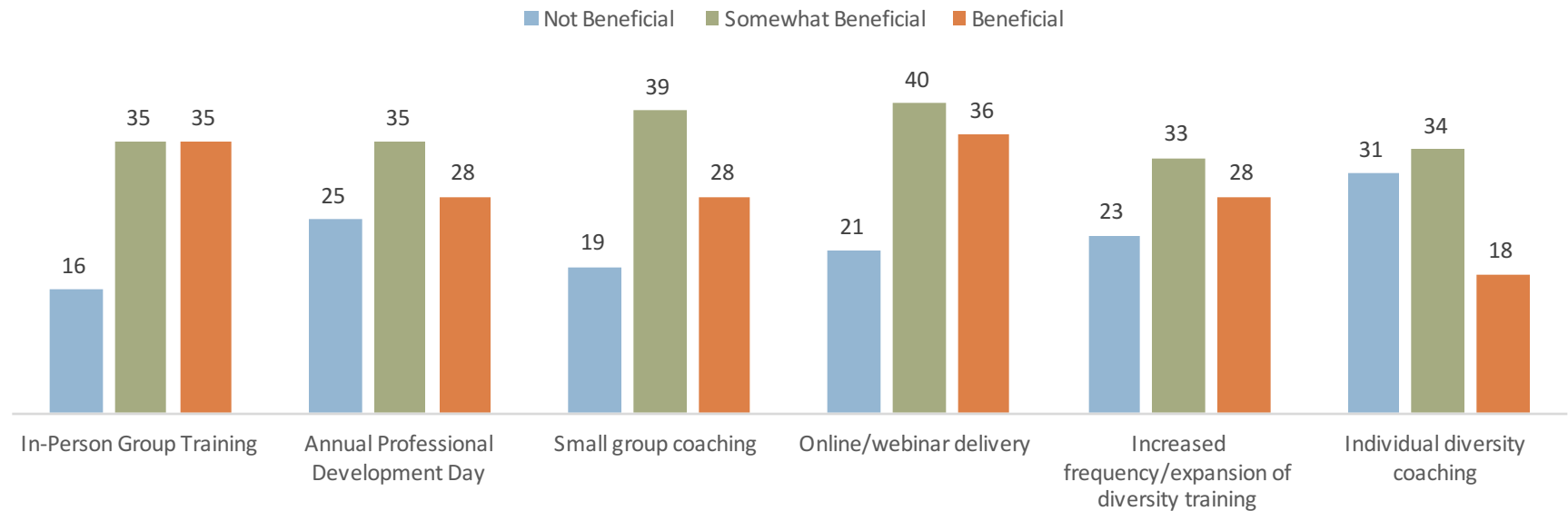| RANK*	TRAINING FORMAT	Not Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Beneficial**	% Beneficial**	Means***
1	In-person group training for employees by an outside diversity trainer/consultant (n=287)	29	95	163	89.9%	2.47
2	Annual professional development day addressing diversity topics (n=286)	58	109	119	79.7%	2.21
3	Small group coaching with municipal leaders and employees (n=283)	47	129	107	83.4%	2.21
4	Online/webinar delivery of diversity related content and training to prepare employees for diverse resident interaction (n=288)	45	141	102	84.4%	2.20
5	Increased frequency and/or expansion of diversity training (n=280)	62	114	104	77.8%	2.15
6	Individual diversity coaching with municipal leaders and employees (n=281)	83	123	75	70.5%	1.97

*Rank based on highest ranking of 'Beneficial' in frequency and means
**Combined percentage of 'Somewhat Beneficial' and 'Beneficial'
***Closer to 3 indicates higher preference toward 'Beneficial'

Format Preferences for Future Diversity Training (among population group less than 3,999)

Training Format Preferences for Municipal Populations (less than 3,999)

■ Not Beneficial ■ Somewhat Beneficial ■ Beneficial

	Not Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Beneficial
In-Person Group Training	16	35	35
Annual Professional Development Day	25	35	28
Small group coaching	19	39	28
Online/webinar delivery	21	40	36
Increased frequency/expansion of diversity training	23	33	28
Individual diversity coaching	31	34	18

Preferences for Diversity-Related Resources

MORE BENEFICIAL

Handbook or resource manual outlining diversity best practices

Materials that address specific diversity topics relevant to the municipality

Demographic population profile of municipality

PATTERNS

In general, population, Tennessee grand region, number of municipal staff are not predictors of training format preferences.

Region is not significant across format preferences.

Number of municipal staff displays some significance.

Population group one (less than 3,999 people) were less likely to view any of the resources as more beneficial than other groups.

Preferences for Diversity-Related Resources

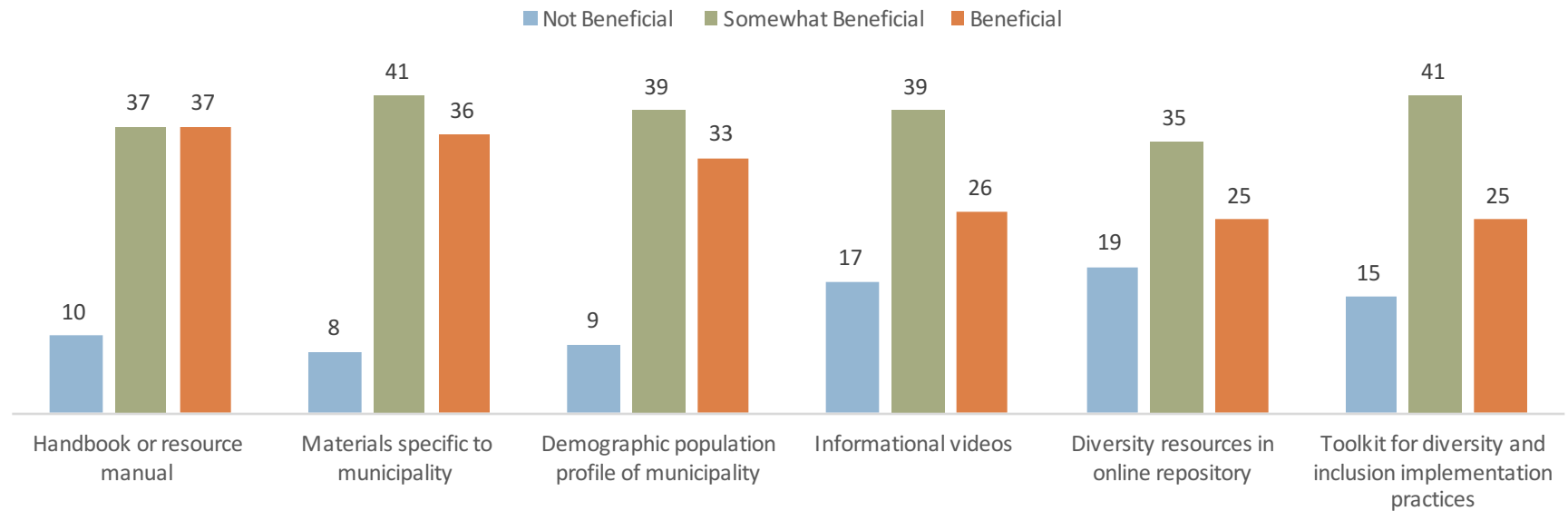| RANK*	RESOURCES	Not Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Beneficial**	% Beneficial**	Means***
1	Handbook or resource manual outlining diversity best practices (n=276)	23	99	154	91.7%	2.47
2	Materials that address specific diversity topics relevant to the municipality (n=279)	28	115	136	89.9%	2.39
3	Demographic population profile of municipality (n=270)	27	113	130	90%	2.38
4	Informational videos outlining diversity best practices (n=269)	35	115	119	87%	2.31
5	Diversity resources available through a central online repository (n=267)	37	116	114	86.1%	2.29
6	Toolkit for diversity and inclusion implementation practices (n=266)	33	125	108	87.6%	2.28
7	Designated committee or task force to assist municipalities with diversity education and initiatives (n=262)	67	110	85	74.4%	2.07

*Rank based on highest ranking of 'Beneficial' in frequency and means
**Combined percentage of 'Somewhat Beneficial' and 'Beneficial'
***Closer to 3 indicates higher preference toward 'Beneficial'

Format Preferences for Diversity Related Resources (among population group less than 3,999)

Diversity-Related Resource Preferences for Municipal Populations (less than 3,999)

■ Not Beneficial ■ Somewhat Beneficial ■ Beneficial

	Not Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Beneficial
Handbook or resource manual	10	37	37
Materials specific to municipality	8	41	36
Demographic population profile of municipality	9	39	33
Informational videos	17	39	26
Diversity resources in online repository	19	35	25
Toolkit for diversity and inclusion implementation practices	15	41	25

Service Delivery for Diverse Constituents

RANK*	SERVICE DELIVERY EFFORT	MEANS***	Percent Indicating Agree or Strongly Agree	Significant variable
1	Prompt action is taken when negative feedback is received from diverse population groups (*n*=278)	3.86	78.1%	Number of municipal staff
2	Public relations efforts are made to reach minorities and diverse populations (*n*=274)	3.35	50.4%	Population
3	Activities to recognize diverse heritages are promoted in the municipality (*n*=271)	3.13	36.5%	Population
4	The municipality actively plans appropriate service delivery for current and projected diverse groups in the service/geographic area (*n*=261)	3.12	34.5%	No significant intervening variable
5	Changes to municipal services are routinely implemented to better meet the needs and expectations of diverse residents (*n*=269)	3.01	32.4%	Number of municipal staff
6	Resident information materials are available in languages, other than English, that are spoken by significant numbers of community residents (*n*=268)	2.92	38.8%	Number of municipal staff
7	Information on diversity-related needs of the municipality is routinely gathered (*n*=258)	2.93	29.4%	Population

*Rank based on mean; higher the mean, the greater chance respondent answered closer to Strongly Agree.
**Likert Scale using 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4=Agree, 5, Strongly Agree

Service Delivery Efforts

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Prompt action is taken when negative feedback is received from diverse population groups was ranked highest of all service delivery items.

The municipality actively plans appropriate service delivery for current and projected diverse groups in the service/geographic area was not significant based on region, population, or number of municipal staff.

PREDICTORS

NUMBER OF MUNICIPAL STAFF
◦ Prompt action to negative feedback
◦ Materials available in languages other than English (more than 100 employees)
◦ Changes to municipal services are routinely implemented to better meet the needs and expectations of diverse residents (more than 300 employees)

POPULATION
◦ Public relations efforts are made to reach minorities and diverse populations (significant across all groups).
◦ Activities to recognize diverse heritages are promoted in the municipality.
◦ Information on diversity-related needs of the municipality is routinely gathered.

Summary of Findings

Training

- Diversity designated staff and training are strongly correlated with higher numbers of municipal staff and population
- Top Level Administrators and Directors are more likely to receive training and more often

Preferences for Future Training and Resources

- Fairly consistent across most groups, except lower population groups are less likely to view most forms as beneficial
- In-person training is a preference, less frequent/one day are strong patterns

Diversity Training Categories

- Reflect regional and population differences

Service Delivery

- Primarily reactionary and public relations focused
- Expanded research may better inform current issues and other programming

Researcher Observations

Rural vs. Urban Response Rates

- Responses were heavily weighted toward rural respondents which contradicted expectations

Diversity Designated Staff and Training Among Higher Population Groups and Staff Numbers

- Diversity initiatives and training are heavily correlated with higher population and staff numbers

Tennessee Grand Region as Less of a Factor

- Expectation that Middle Tennessee would offer more initiatives

Future Diversity-Training Categories: Some Surprises

- Age and Disability
- Economic/Income Status
- Sexual Orientation, Gender, Language, National Origin

Training

- In-person training is preferred and would be beneficial
- Although respondents indicated a handbook preference, there are concerns this is not the best medium for fostering initiatives

Service Delivery Research Needs to be Expanded

- Due to the adaptation of a previous instrument, there were limited service delivery items on the survey for respondents to evaluate

Best Practices & Recommendations

Best Practices for Implementing Diversity-Related Initiatives
Literature Review

RESOURCES

- Time more so than funding

SPECIFIC PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- Outline program specifics
- Personnel designations
- Requirements and accountability

RATIONALE/IMPACT

- Initiatives should be connected to organizational outcomes (service delivery)

COMMUNICATION

- Input from front-line staff as well as administrators
- Should not be one actor's agenda and voice to prevent backlash
- Credibility

LEADERSHIP

- Top-down approach
- Buy-in from leaders

Best Practices for Implementing Diversity-Related Initiatives
ICMA, Literature, Researcher

TRAINING

- Increased diversity and cultural competency training & avoiding implicit bias
- Long-term training seminars

ORGANIZATIONAL BUY-IN

- Linking diversity strategies to organizational performance
- Accountability through measurement
- Strategic planning that incorporates diversity
- Employee recruitment efforts

LEADERSHIP

- Decentralized efforts through a centralized governing body
- Leadership commitment

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

- Focus groups
- Cultural tours

Recommendations for MTAS

FOCUS GROUPS

- Coordinate focus groups of small, medium, and large municipality representatives to continue this research and inform additional recommendations for assisting municipalities in diversity initiatives. Gaining additional feedback from cities will also encourage buy-in for future diversity initiatives.

ORGANIZE TASK FORCE GROUPS

- Spearhead the organization of small, medium, and large municipality task force groups charged with coordinating and supporting efforts to expand diversity initiatives and cultural competency efforts among Tennessee cities.

TRAINING INITIATIVES

- Sponsor training initiatives where city leaders and staff may attend half day or all-day diversity or cultural competency training. Training sessions may be coordinated in geographically central municipalities throughout the West, Middle, and East Tennessee grand regions.

ONLINE RESOURCE DASHBOARD

- Although municipalities indicate a preference for the development of a handbook of diversity-related practices that can be utilized by small, medium, and large municipalities, the researcher has concerns that this would not be the most effective tool to foster diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- A resource 'dashboard' on the MTAS website that includes 1) municipal demographic information and data links, 2) recommendations for municipalities in the implementation of diversity-related initiatives, 3) upcoming diversity-related training dates and opportunities, as well as 4) other links and resources for diversity and inclusion best practices, may be more useful and serve as a dynamic and continuous resource for municipalities.

Recommendations for TN Municipalities

Expand Research Efforts to Understand Community Needs

- Identify community demographics and ensure all staff is aware of the municipality's 'demographic snapshot.'
- Organize constituent focus groups (in geographically accessible areas) to assess community needs.

Constituent Engagement

- Locate community leaders who can communicate and provide consultation on diverse constituent needs (i.e. cultural informant).
- Identify local cultural experts who may assist with culturally relevant programming and other initiatives.
- Recruit community members through various neighborhood associations or groups representing various disadvantaged population segments to serve on a community advisory council or task force to advise on service delivery efforts within the municipality.

Recommendations for TN Municipalities

Municipal Employee Training

- Ensure training is provided to non-managerial front-line service delivery staff at least once a year, particularly in the areas of cultural competency in working with diverse and disadvantaged groups.
- Provide more expansive and frequent training for managers and city leaders that may span multiple sessions and through various training formats.
- Expand any current and future diversity and cultural competency training to reflect municipal specific demographics.
- Encourage partnerships among smaller municipalities to sponsor and coordinate in-person group training efforts.
- Ensure cultural competency training among municipal first responders—police, fire, emergency, public works personnel—that is occupationally relevant.

Training Content

- Expand diversity and cultural competency training categories related to sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, and language. Even though cities did not necessarily indicate these categories as future training preferences, the demographic projections indicate that public administrators will need to expand their knowledge of these groups.
- Expand training on working with the elderly and disabled population.

Recommendations for TN Municipalities

Inter-Organizational Policies

- Solicit input from community members, non-managerial staff, volunteers and interns in developing diversity-related programming.
- If the municipality has the resources, designate a department or credible staff member to work with city leadership in coordinating diversity-related efforts within the municipality.

Strategic Planning

- Strategic planning efforts may already be incorporated for medium and large municipalities. If not, incorporating diversity initiatives (such as programming, hiring, or training) through the municipality's strategic plan is considered a major first step in organizational change.
- Ensure that any strategic planning diversity-related goals have clear and consistent guidelines for implementation and accountability.

Recommendations for TN Municipalities

Leadership

- City leadership actively promotes diversity and inclusion within the municipality, not only through internal municipal government hiring and inclusion efforts, but within the community as well. The leadership also presents a clear sense of diversity-related goals connecting effective service delivery, public service equity, and enhancing community trust vs. ensuring legal protections.
- Appoint an internal staff member (if not already designated) or credible and knowledgeable community volunteer to help increase cultural competency awareness within municipal government and work with the leadership in coordinating efforts.

Service Delivery Enhancement

- Review current service delivery and evaluate whether programming or initiative is relevant to all groups or could be adapted in key ways to reflect cultural or economic differences, or simply differences in experiences.
- Utilize the cultural competence expertise of health care and education consultants in developing and informing service delivery or other programming for the public agency.
- Coordinate outreach and marketing to diverse groups to ensure participation in programming and services.
- Explore options for translation and ESL services for service delivery and/or materials.
- Utilize technology and social media to foster communication on existing service delivery and programming to diverse constituency groups.