



Diversity Equity and Inclusion

Using data from the Organizational Priorities and Practices Inventory (OPPI)

Although our field is founded in principles of human rights, organizations in our field struggle to adopt practices and structures that are truly equitable, inclusionary, and supportive of people with multiple and intersecting identities. People with disabilities who use services and the disability sector workforce are diverse and bring a rich variety of cultures, experiences, and identities to organizations. Agencies that embrace diversity and promote inclusion at every level are more attuned to the needs of their customers and employees. This research brief explores the field trends of organizational practices related to principles of **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**. The brief presents data of the OPPI from 820 professionals in disability service organizations nationwide.

The fundamental practices of **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** from the OPPI in this report are: *Workforce Diversity, Valued Diversity, DEI Policies & Practices, DEI Professional Training and Development, Anti-Discrimination Policy, DEI Evaluation, and Equitable Staff Development and Promotion*. Scholars, and practitioners have previously discussed the relevance of these practices to improve organizational performance, and ultimately enhance service quality. This brief identifies areas of improvement and provides strategies on how to strengthen each practice.

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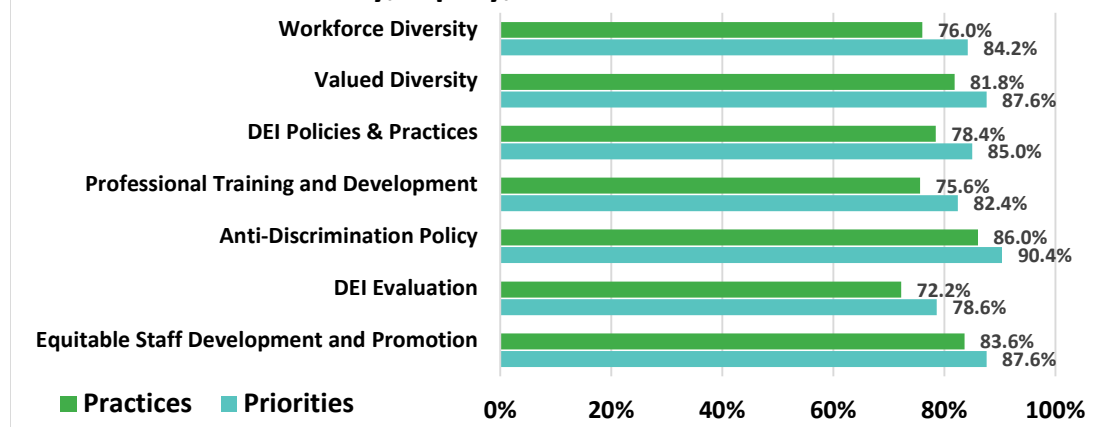
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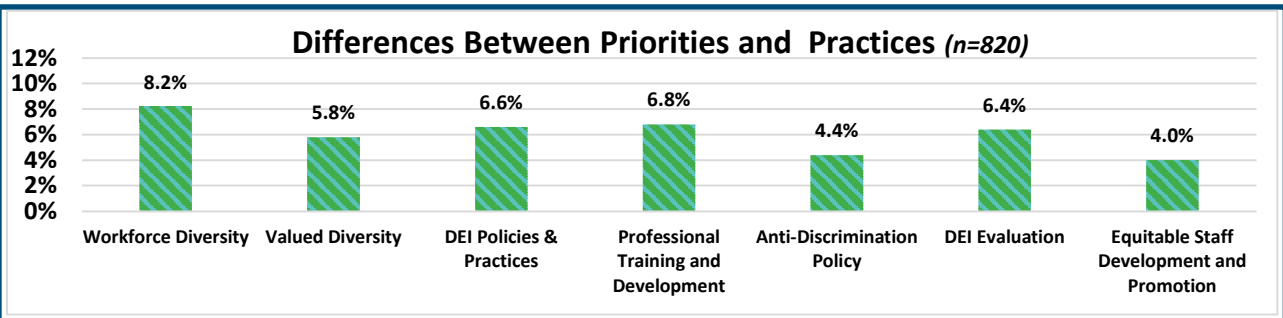
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Contact Cory Gilden at cgilden@natleadership.org with questions related to our research.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (n=820)



- Priorities were rated statistically higher than Practices for all indicators
- Organizations mostly prioritize and implement practices related to fostering a discrimination free workplace for all employees since the Practices and Priorities related to **Anti-Discrimination Policy** showed the highest rates
- Organizations should prioritize **DEI Evaluation** since it scored the lowest of all the Priorities and Practices



- The average difference between Priorities and Practices is approximately 6.0% scale points.
- The differences between Priorities and Practices are statistically significant for all indicators.
- The smallest gap between Priorities and Practices in **Equitable Staff Development and Promotion** is how organizations ensure that opportunities for promotion and growth are equitable to all employees and non-discriminatory based on race, ethnicity, language, disability, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other cultural identities.
- On average, organizations loosely prioritize and implement practices to intentionally attract, recruit, support, and retain a diverse workforce at all levels. The area of **Workforce Diversity** has the largest gap between priorities and practices.

Workforce Diversity: Organizations should develop recruitment strategies that target diverse candidate pools, such as partnerships with other organizations serving underrepresented populations. Diverse and inclusive workplaces make everyone, regardless of their self-identity and their position within the organization, equally supported and involved in all areas of the workplace (Hunt, et al., 2015).

Valued Diversity: Equitable and inclusive employers outperform their competitors by respecting the unique needs, perspectives, and potential of all members of their team (Janes & Harvey, 2022). As a result, diverse and inclusive workplaces gain deeper trust and engagement from their employees.

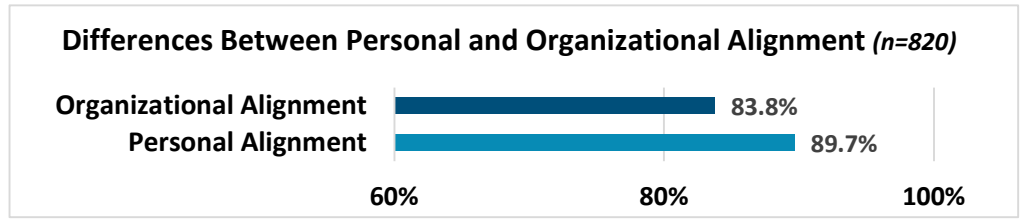
DEI Policies & Practices: Organizations committing to equitable practices, policies, and structures that support people’s diverse identities, including gender, ethnicity, race, age, sexuality, and disability are likely to attract, hire, and retain people who bring competitive advantages (Hunt, et al., 2015).

DEI Professional Training and Development: Organizations committed to diversity, by offering training and education opportunities for staff, report higher employee satisfaction and more effective decision-making, leading to increased sustainability, quality, and customer satisfaction (Hunt, et al., 2015).

Anti-Discrimination Policy: Organizations that do not tolerate discrimination, oppression, or marginalization of any form and address any form of discrimination, outperform competitors by respecting the unique needs, perspectives, and potential of all team members (Janes & Harvey, 2022).

DEI Evaluation: According to *The State of Diversity & Inclusion 2020 Report* (www.hr.com, 2020), a crucial step in enacting needed changes is to conduct continuous evaluations and refine the diversity and inclusion case within the organization.

Equitable Staff Development and Promotion: When organizations commit to equitable practices, including hiring and promoting people with diverse identities into leadership roles, they are also likely to attract, hire, and retain people who bring competitive advantages (Hunt, et al., 2015).



Personal alignment is rated higher than organizational alignment by a statistically significant difference of 5.9% scale points. This means that employees perceive a gap between their personal alignment with practices related to **Diversity Equity and Inclusion**, and the organization’s approach; such gap is detrimental for employee engagement and retention.

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