WTS Puget Sound
Glass Ceiling Baseline Report

February 2024

Acknowledgements

> "The 'glass ceiling'—a term introduced more than 40 years ago—refers to an invisible, systemic barrier that prevents women from rising to senior leadership."

Lean In, Women in the Workplace 2019

(https://leanin.org/women-in-the-workplace/2019/glass-ceiling-and-the-broken-rung)

> "I feel the effects of working in a predominantly cis-het male dominated field in my everyday interactions with colleagues and clients."

–Anonymous employee survey respondent

> "I believe women bring leadership qualities of empathy, collaboration, and careful consideration. I try to lead [my city] with compassionate accountability and give [citizens] space to explore new ideas."

–Veronica O. Davis, Director of Transportation & Drainage Operations at City of Houston and author of Inclusive Transportation, Subtext Issue 1, February 2022

WTS Advancing women
Advancing transportation
› Puget Sound/Seattle

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Executive Summary

As part of its mission to strengthen the transportation industry through the advancement of women and nonbinary leaders, the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) Puget Sound/Seattle Chapter (Chapter) is committed to addressing barriers that women and nonbinary people face in public and private workplaces throughout the industry. In the 2021-2022 WTS board year, the Chapter formed its first Glass Ceiling Committee (Committee) to research and conduct a baseline survey to determine whether women or nonbinary-identifying transportation professionals face a glass ceiling limiting their career advancement.

This report is the Committee's inaugural assessment to inform the Chapter's advocacy efforts with the region's public and private employers and will act as a baseline for subsequent reports. This report is based on the efforts of other WTS chapters, including the San Francisco Bay Area and Greater New York chapters, who have been reporting on glass ceilings in their regions since 2012 and 2017 respectively. As part of this inaugural assessment, the Committee conducted:

- **A literature review:** The Committee researched and reviewed over 20 news articles, journal articles, and reports related to the career advancement and unique challenges of women. In addition, the Committee reviewed articles that highlighted the challenges that women faced during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **A baseline employer survey:** The Committee administered the first employer survey in Spring 2023 to establish a benchmark of the status of women and nonbinary people in the Puget Sound transportation industry. Of the 71 employers contacted in the central Puget Sound region (Snohomish, King, and Pierce counties), 42% of surveys were completed.

- **A baseline employee survey:** The Committee administered the first anonymous employee survey in Fall 2023 to establish a benchmark of how women and nonbinary people in the Puget Sound transportation industry view themselves in the workplace. The employee survey was distributed to the WTS Puget Sound/ Seattle community in two newsletters, and Chapter board members were also asked to share the survey within their workplaces. Approximately 190 women and nonbinary transportation professionals answered the survey.

" *Other countries have social safety nets. The U.S. has women.* "

— Key Takeaways

The results of our surveys indicate that a glass ceiling does exist in the transportation industry in the Puget Sound. While employers are making progress in supporting and advancing women into leadership positions, there is still progress to be made for White women, and even greater progress needed for women of color and nonbinary transportation professionals.

—— Flexible Work

As employers continue efforts to dismantle the glass ceiling, both the literature review and employee survey results called out the importance of flexible work, including remote work, flexible work hours, and a supportive work culture. These are important takeaways for employers to understand as the employee survey results do not completely align with the topics most commonly brought up in employer exit interviews. Employees frequently mentioned the importance of flexible work in regard to childcare and the importance of family leave, while employers marked those topics as "rarely" or "never" mentioned in exit interviews. Some key themes from the employee survey include a need to balance childcare, elder care, and general home workload.

Transportation professional tamika l. butler said it well when she commented that:

> *"Other countries have social safety nets. The U.S. has women. I think in transportation, like in many aspects of this country, women are used and expected to fill the gaps, catch the flaws, and do the job of ensuring that we hold each other accountable to do good work. This is extra labor. That labor increases for women living at the intersections of multiple underrepresented identities, and something I feel acutely as a genderqueer woman of color."* [1]

—— Work Culture

Work culture was ranked as the most important policy or program in the employee survey, and ranked as the third most common barrier in employer exit interviews. Employees noted a desire for a workplace that competitively and equitably compensates women and nonbinary professionals with both pay, and adequate paid time off (PTO) and sick time benefits. Employees similarly noted a lack of promotional opportunities related to the real or perceived lack of positions open to women, lack of transparency of the promotion process, restrictive job descriptions, and the need to go above-and-beyond to get a promotion as compared to cisgender men.

Employees also highlighted the need for a workplace that provides mentorship or professional development opportunities. Professional development and mentorship were highlighted as more challenging for women and nonbinary people of color, for whom barriers include lack of access to senior leadership, experiencing microaggressions by coworkers, and being overly scrutinized by colleagues. It is also important to note that only 30% of employers who responded to the survey have an official mentorship program.

—— Paid Leave

A topic that was brought up in both the employee survey and literature review, but was not emphasized in the employer survey was increased PTO, sick time, and family leave benefits. A few employers discussed the importance of PTO, but the focus for most employees was a lack of family leave benefits. Many employees feel that the minimum family leave from Washington State, although better than many other states in the U.S., is still not enough. This topic closely relates to the need, highlighted above, for flexible work (i.e., remote work, flexible schedules, etc.).

— Next Steps

As part of the Chapter's efforts to address barriers that women and nonbinary people face in the workplace, this report will be shared with the Puget Sound region's major public and private employers via email, through a launch event on February 15, 2024, and shared at our annual gala on March 12, 2024. In the 2024-2025 WTS year, the Glass Ceiling Committee will begin another round of surveys to see if the glass ceiling has been raised and look towards hosting advocacy and education events with public and private employers to continue the conversation.

[1] tamika l. butler, Trustee of TransitCenter, Subtext Issue 1, February 2022

Introduction and Study Objectives

According to a study published in 2019 by the Mineta Transportation Institute, women accounted for less than 15% of the total transportation occupation workforce in 2017. As part of its mission to strengthen the transportation industry through the advancement of women and nonbinary leaders, the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) Puget Sound/Seattle Chapter (Chapter) is committed to addressing barriers that women and nonbinary people face in public and private workplaces throughout the industry. In the 2021-2022 WTS year, the Chapter formed the first Glass Ceiling Committee (Committee) to research whether women and nonbinary people in the Puget Sound transportation industry faced a glass ceiling limiting their career advancement.

This report is the Committee's inaugural assessment to inform the Chapter's advocacy efforts with the region's public and private employers and will act as a baseline for subsequent reports. This report is based on the efforts of other WTS chapters, including the San Francisco Bay Area and Greater New York chapters, who have been reporting on glass ceilings in their regions since 2012 and 2017 respectively.

Similarly to the San Francisco Bay Area and Greater New York chapters, the purpose of this report is to:

▸ Better understand the current status of women and nonbinary people in the transportation industry.

▸ Track the career advancement of women and nonbinary people in the Puget Sound transportation industry in future years.

▸ Identify any barriers to women and nonbinary people's advancement.

▸ Identify which programs, provided by companies and agencies in the workforce, support women and nonbinary people's advancement in the profession.

▸ Transfer knowledge of best practices to local industry leaders.

The Chapter is intimately familiar with the obstacles, challenges, and opportunities facing the industry, and this report will provide another tool to develop the vital support needed for women and nonbinary transportation professionals to succeed in the industry. Programs will be aimed at equalizing leadership opportunities for all genders and will support a balanced and diverse labor force in the transportation profession.

Study Approach

The Committee's research method consisted of conducting a literature review, a survey of transportation employers in the Puget Sound, and a survey of Puget Sound transportation employees who identify as women and/or nonbinary.

— Literature Review

The Committee researched and reviewed over 20 news articles, journal articles, and reports related to the career advancement of women, and identified key themes related to barriers and challenges. In addition, the Committee reviewed articles related to the experiences and unique challenges of women of color in the workplace. Lastly, the Committee reviewed articles that highlighted the challenges that women faced during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, and how the pandemic disproportionately affected women.

— Employer Survey

The Committee administered the first employer survey in Spring 2023 to establish a benchmark of the status of women and nonbinary people in the Puget Sound transportation industry. The survey requested employee demographic data reported in 2022; information related to policies and programs; and barriers to the recruitment, retention, or advancement of women and nonbinary transportation professionals. The Committee reached out to 71 public and private transportation employers in the central Puget Sound region (Snohomish, King, and Pierce counties). Of the 71 employers that were contacted, 36 surveys were completed, with six of the survey responses being submitted by employers with multiple offices in the Puget Sound. The overall response rate was 42%.

— Employee Survey

The Committee administered the first anonymous employee survey in Fall 2023 to establish a benchmark of how women and nonbinary people in the Puget Sound transportation industry view themselves in the workplace. The survey requested employee demographic data; information related to policies and programs; the importance of policies and programs for career advancement; whether employees feel supported at their workplace; whether employees experience barriers at their workplace; and policies and programs established during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee sent the employee survey out to the WTS Puget Sound/Seattle community in two newsletters, and Chapter board members were asked to share the survey within their workplaces. Approximately 190 women and nonbinary transportation professionals answered the survey.

Literature Review

In reviewing research for this literature review, the Committee found that the majority of research is on barriers to women in the workplace, and had difficulty finding trusted research on barriers nonbinary professionals face to advancement in their careers. The lack of research on nonbinary professional advancement presents yet another barrier to their advancement in the transportation industry and limits our research in this report. In future reports, the Committee plans to engage with an experienced librarian to address this limitation and continue the conversation about how the Chapter and our region's employers can support our nonbinary colleagues and their advancement.

> *"For every 100 men who are promoted from entry-level roles to manager positions, only 87 women are promoted, and only 82 women of color are promoted."*

— General Barriers for Women in the Workplace

Women face an array of challenges in the workplace, some of which are compounded over time. The "broken rung" of the corporate ladder - getting stuck at the entry level - makes reaching managerial positions and rising up within an organization more difficult for women. The 2022 Women in the Workplace report from McKinsey, in partnership with LeanIn.org found that "for every 100 men who are promoted from entry-level roles to manager positions, only 87 women are promoted, and only 82 women of color are promoted."[2] This "broken rung" reduces the cohort of women who are considered for leadership positions. In addition, txhe limited number of women in leadership face more obstacles than men in the same positions, including microaggressions that undermine their authority.[3] For example, women in leadership positions are twice as likely as men in the same positions to be mistaken for someone more junior.[4] Of women in leadership, 40% note that their work to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is not acknowledged during performance reviews and women are more than 1.5 times as likely as men at the same level to note their desire for DEI commitments as a reason for leaving their position.[5]

> *"...women in leadership positions are twice as likely as men in the same positions to be mistaken for someone more junior."*

Women in the workplace, especially those in leadership roles, benefit significantly from workplace flexibility. The Women in the Workplace report from McKinsey found that remote work options are particularly important to women. Results from the study found that just one in ten women want to work mostly in-person.[6] Remote or hybrid environments reduce the number of microaggressions that an employee may experience throughout each work week.[7] This flexibility is even more important to people with disabilities who may face added challenges of meeting on-site.[8] However, remote work is not without its drawbacks. Remote work may reduce connections to the team and make it more difficult to recognize exemplary work.

The Skimm's State of Women Report 2023 noted that "women in senior management roles are 50% more likely than women in non-management roles to say they do not plan to have children in the future."[9] Understanding the needs of women, including those who choose to have children, will help prepare the workplace for supporting staff at all levels. Another headwind that women face in work culture is the gender pay gap. At the time that the State of Women Report 2023 was written, the article found that women are typically paid 18% less than men.[10] The report also noted that "studies show that pay transparency completely closes the pay gap."[11]

— Women of Color in the Workplace

Bias is not only related to gender; many women face bias related to their race, sexuality, disability status, or other identities they hold. Women of color face compounding discrimination in the workplace, which the McKinsey Women in the Workplace report found can be much greater and more challenging than barriers faced by either individual identity. Research as part of the Women in the Workplace report exemplified that "we're amid a 'Great Breakup.' Women are demanding more from work, and they're

[2] "Women in the Workplace 2022: The Full Report." Lean In. leanin.org/women-in-the-workplace/2022.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] "State of Women Report 2023." theSkimm. https://www.theskimm.com/stateofwomen
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

leaving their companies in unprecedented numbers to get it."[12] This statistic is particularly notable among the few women in leadership and women of color.[13] The report also found that allyship from other colleagues can greatly influence the experiences of women of color.[14] The Women in the Workplace report states that "when women of color feel like they have strong allies at work, they are happier in their jobs, less likely to be burned out, and less likely to consider leaving their companies."[15] Accordingly, it is critical to consider intersectional identities of workers and ensure that they feel comfortable in their workplace. The State of Women Report 2023 included a survey question about whether or not respondents agree that "society treats women like second-class citizens," and "the deck is stacked against women."[16] Seventy-four percent of all respondents agreed, with even higher rates of agreement reported from LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, etc.) and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) respondents.[17] Intersectionality is critical when evaluating women in the workplace, as identities often overlap and create compounding challenges.

In Lean In: The State of Black Women in Corporate America, the authors noted that Black women are severely underrepresented in leadership roles in corporate America.[18] When asked, Black women surveyed indicated that they felt their ethnicity played a role in their ability to be promoted and developed into leaders within their organization.[19] Barriers to success (reflected in the survey results) included lack of access to senior leadership, experiencing microaggressions by coworkers, and being overly scrutinized by colleagues, perhaps due to their lack of equal representation in the workplace.[20] Survey respondents also felt that they didn't have strong allies (non-Black employees who advocate on behalf of their Black colleagues) in their places of work.[21]

> " *If employers want to do better by women, they must do better by Black women.* "

The authors of the Lean In: The State of Black Women in Corporate America study offered solutions to gender and racial inequities in the workplace, including tracking and sharing statistics on advancement opportunities. The authors offered additional recommendations to measure success, including that companies need to establish metrics with accountability and transparency to show organizational change over time. Metrics should also address mentorship, sponsorship, and professional development opportunities. The authors also recommended that companies offer financial incentives to hiring managers for meeting diversity targets. If hiring and promotions are the "biggest levers" for improving Black women's representation in companies, then removing bias in decision making also needs to be prioritized. In addition to eliminating bias in hiring and promotion, employers should provide an inclusive workplace where everyone feels a true sense of belonging. Companies must define what that looks like and how employees can make their colleagues feel welcomed and valued. The conclusion drawn by the authors is this: "If employers want to do better by women, they must do better by Black women."[22]

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[12] "Women in the Workplace 2022: The Full Report." Lean In. leanin.org/women-in-the-workplace/2022.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] "State of Women Report 2023." theSkimm. https://www.theskimm.com/stateofwomen
[17] Ibid.

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[18] Lean In: The State of Black Women in Corporate America. http://leanin.org/research/state-of-black-women-in-corporate-america
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Lean In: The State of Black Women in Corporate America. http://leanin.org/research/state-of-black-women-in-corporate-america.

— Women in Transportation

In 2020, the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) published a study entitled Attracting, Retaining and Advancing Women in Transit. The findings of the study indicated that there were a number of themes that could account for underrepresentation of women in transit jobs. Social factors (including gender roles, lack of support, lack of development programs, and lack of advancement opportunities), cultural factors (such as masculine culture in the workplace), lack of flexible work schedule, lack of family benefits, and lack of access to childcare may all contribute to having fewer women in transit positions.[23]

The TCRP's study concluded that strategies were being implemented by transit agencies to recruit, retain and advance women in leadership roles and agencies. Agencies self-reported via a survey that there was an increase in the number of women employed in transit jobs from 2015 to 2020. The study's survey found that women comprise 35% of transit jobs on average, but did not include data from previous years for comparison.[24] While not all transit agencies had strategies in place to address the recruitment and retention of women, the survey results of the study showed "promising information" that transit agencies are focusing on diversity and inclusivity in their business practices.[25] The study authors offered strategies that could overcome barriers to employment including the following: outreach in schools, communication within communities about transit as a career, outlining agency goals for recruitment, networking opportunities, providing training and development support, improving support for women's responsibilities outside of work, providing mentoring programs, and developing guidance on career development.[26]

— Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic uprooted many workplaces and caused a profound and sustained disruption to workplace culture around the world. The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality paper in the National Bureau of Economic Research found that the COVID-19 pandemic has both heightened gender discrepancies through higher rates of women's job losses and childcare expectations, while simultaneously creating opportunities to level the job market with flexible work arrangements and shifting social

norms surrounding childcare.[27] Women tend to work in places that do not have the capability to work from home, including critical services such as the food and healthcare industries.[28] In these cases, men may take on more childcare responsibilities while working remotely which provides a model to shift social norms.[29] The report also noted that "regular" recessions tend to affect men's employment more severely than women's, but the COVID-19 economic downturn more severely impacted industries that employ more women and was paired with the abrupt closure of schools and societal expectation for women to take on the burden of daytime childcare.[30] If women are expected to take on the role of childcare and their job is not possible to do remotely, they are at higher risk for losing their job, either due to a closure or by choice. Given these significant changes, impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender in the workplace are expected to outlast the health emergency.

[23] Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP). 2020. Attracting, Retaining, and Advancing Women in Transit. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/25741.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

[27] National Bureau of Economic Research. 2020. The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality. http://www.nber.org/papers/w26947
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

> *"Only during World War II, when women were urgently needed in factories and offices to replace men who were in the military, did the government establish a far-reaching federally subsidized network of nurseries and child care centers in nearly every state. Once the war ended, so did the support."*

The New York Times published an article titled Why Some Women Call This Recession a 'Shecession' that illuminates the ways in which women were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic-related recession.[31] The article states that "women accounted for 55% of the 20.5 million jobs lost in April [2020], according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, raising the unemployment rate for adult women to about 15% from 3.1% in February [2020]."[32] In comparison, the unemployment rate for adult men increased to 13% at the onset of the pandemic.[33] Women of color fared worse, with unemployment rates for Black women at 16.4% and Hispanic women at 20.2%.[34] Also from the New York Times, Recession with a Difference: Women Face Special Burden found that this recession, as compared to others, impacted far more women early on.[35] Most other recessions start with impacts in the manufacturing and construction industries, where men are more prevalent.[36] The unemployment statistics exemplify how women's status in the workforce has taken a downturn since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Traditional gender roles and the expectation that women are primarily responsible for childcare was particularly evident when childcare facilities closed. Harvard Business Review's To Keep Women in the Workforce, Men Need to Do More at Home found that in March 2020, men and women over age 16 had the same unemployment rate (4.4%).[37] As the COVID-19 pandemic began, unemployment skyrocketed with rates among women rising 2.5% higher than rates among men.[38] The gender gap in unemployment disappeared by the summer of 2020 and rose again in September, particularly among women aged 20 and over.[39] This timeline aligns with the start of the school year. Accordingly, "in [different-sex] families where fathers do a greater share of childcare, mothers were far less likely to suffer negative employment outcomes in the early days of the pandemic."[40] Recession with a Difference: Women Face Special Burden notes that "only during World War II, when women were urgently needed in factories and offices to replace men who were in the military, did the government establish a far-reaching federally subsidized network of nurseries and child care centers in nearly every state. Once the war ended, so did the support."[41] The article noted that the workplace should facilitate men's time at home to alleviate childcare burdens on their partner.[42] This could include remote work options, flexible scheduling, and paid leave.

The pandemic also exposed financial vulnerabilities for women. The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality identified single mothers as a group that faced significant challenges as the sole earner for the family while juggling childcare needs while schools and daycares were shut down.[43] This community is not insignificant: 21% of all children in the U.S. live only with their mother, as compared to 4% living only with their father.[44] With little room for alternate arrangements while social distancing measures were in place, single mothers were often unable to work.[45] The State of Women Report 2023 found that since the pandemic, many women are looking to solidify their finances through seeking promotions, taking on a side job, adding passive income streams, and investing in their education.[46]

[31] The New York Times. 2021. Why Some Women Call This Recession a 'Shecession'. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/09/us/unemployment-coronavirus-women.html
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] The New York Times. 2021. Recession with a Difference: Women Face Special Burden. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/17/business/economy/women-jobs-economy-recession.html
[36] Ibid.
[37] Harvard Business Review. 2021. To Keep Women in the Workforce, Men Need to Do More at Home. https://hbr.org/2021/04/to-keep-women-in-the-workforce-men-need-to-do-more-at-home

[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] The New York Times. 2021. Recession with a Difference: Women Face Special Burden. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/17/business/economy/women-jobs-economy-recession.html
[42] Harvard Business Review. 2021. To Keep Women in the Workforce, Men Need to Do More at Home. https://hbr.org/2021/04/to-keep-women-in-the-workforce-men-need-to-do-more-at-home
[43] National Bureau of Economic Research. 2020. The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality. http://www.nber.org/papers/w26947
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] "State of Women Report 2023." theSkimm. https://www.theskimm.com/stateofwomen

Survey Findings

While the research informs broader trends across the United States, the Committee's task was to dive deeper into specific baseline data that would help reveal trends in the Puget Sound transportation industry. In spring 2023, the Committee distributed an employer survey, and in fall 2023, the Committee distributed an employee survey. These surveys highlighted feedback from some of the region's largest public and private transportation employers, in addition to representation from smaller Puget Sound transportation-related firms.

— Employer Survey

—— Distribution and Participation

In spring 2023, the Committee distributed an employer survey requesting:

- ▸ Employee demographic data reported in 2022,

- ▸ Information related to the policies and programs to support career development (and to support women and nonbinary people with competing responsibilities at home and in the workplace), and

- ▸ Barriers to the recruitment, retention, or advancement of women and nonbinary people.

The Committee reached out to 71 public and private transportation employers in the central Puget Sound region (Snohomish, King, and Pierce counties). The list of public and private transportation employers was developed through consulting WTS Puget Sound/ Seattle committees, board members, and research by the Membership Committee into Women and Minority-Owned Businesses (WMBE) in the Puget Sound.

Of the 71 employers that were contacted, 30 unique surveys were completed, representing a 42% response rate. An additional six surveys were completed for employers who filled out a survey for each Puget Sound office location of the same company - for a total of 36 survey responses. None of the questions were required to be answered in order for the survey to be submitted, so responses ranged from eight to 36 responses per question, with most questions generating between 20 to 30 responses.

Based on WTS Glass Ceiling efforts around the country, this response rate is fairly typical for baseline efforts given that transportation industry employers may not be familiar with WTS or the Glass Ceiling initiative. Response rates typically increase as WTS chapters publish more reports.

The survey was organized into the following sections:

1. Organizational demographics

2. Employment data

3. Organizational policies

4. Identified barriers named in exit interviews

5. New policies, initiatives, and programs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic

—— Organizational Demographics

The Committee received survey responses from employers in all three central Puget Sound counties: Snohomish County, King County, and Pierce County. Of the jurisdictions represented, the highest number of responses came from Seattle (44%), followed by Bellevue (17%) and Tacoma (8%).

The responses from "Other" include Tumwater, Sammamish, Woodinville, Lacey, Edmonds, Redmond, and Kirkland. It is important to note that two responses included in "other" - Lacey and Tumwater - are a part of a fourth county, Thurston County, which included a private and a public company and were 5% of total responses.

Graph 1: Employer survey respondents' Puget Sound office location
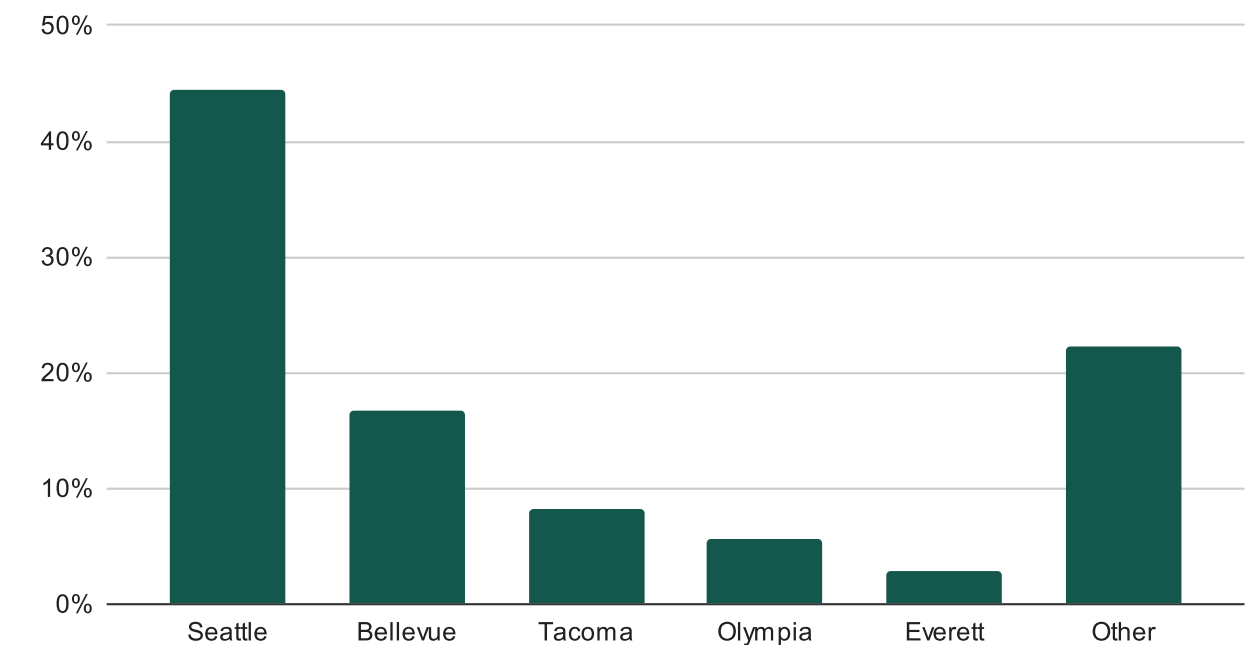
Of the survey respondents, 33% represented a public agency, while 64% represented a private employer. One respondent marked "other" and did not specify the type of employer.

The private employers that responded to the survey were also asked to select all types of consulting services provided. Engineering/design received the highest number of responses (68%), with planning (36%), communications and public engagement (31%), architecture/landscape (31%), project management/project controls (27%), and construction management (27%) following.

Graph 2: Consulting services employer survey respondents provide

All employers were asked how many employees worked in the office or department of the survey respondent in 2022.
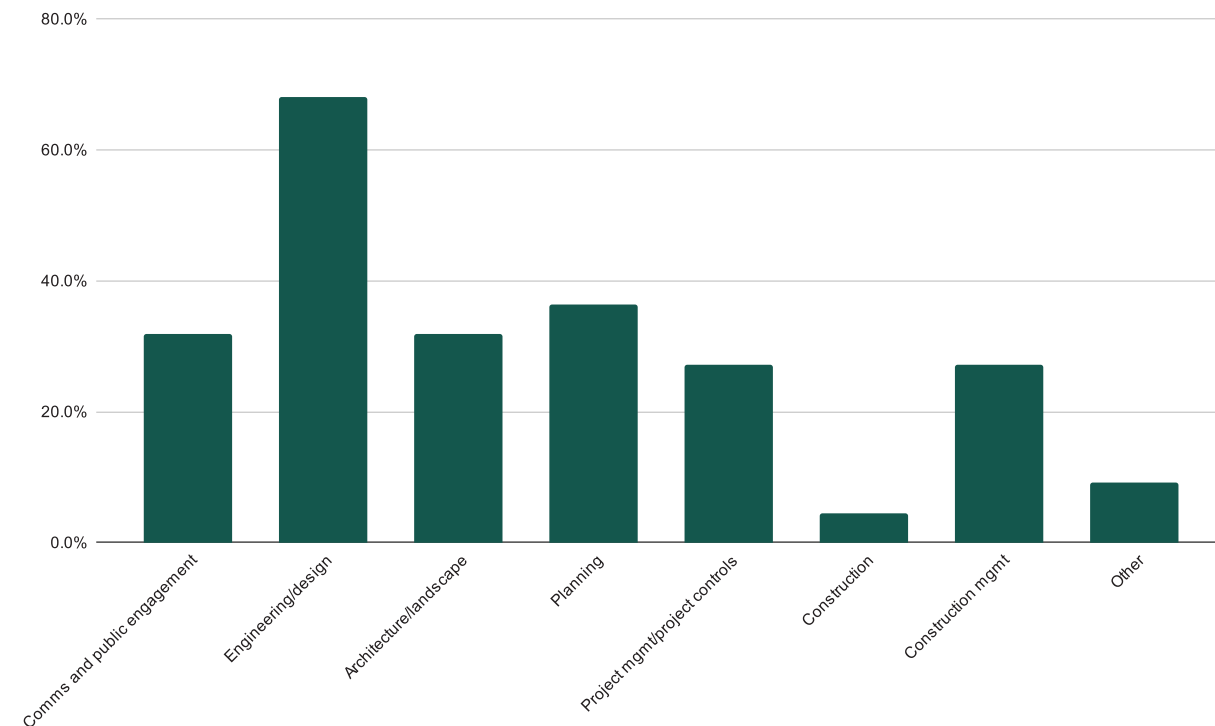
Table 1: Size of employer survey respondents' company or agency

Size of Employer	# of Employers
Small employers (under 50)	12
Medium employers (51-250)	11
Large employers (over 251)	9

Employer Survey Data

Employers were asked whether they collected data disaggregated by gender, gender identity, and by race. Table 2 shows that while most employers collect data disaggregated by gender and race, the industry has room to grow in collecting data disaggregated by gender identity.

Table 2: Employer survey respondents' data collection

Data	Yes (%)	No (%)
Disaggregated by gender	90%	10%
Disaggregated by gender identity	46%	54%
Disaggregated by race	89%	11%

Female-Identifying Employees and Managers

When asked what percentage of employees in the office identify as female, the average of all survey respondents was 40%. When split into public sector and private sector, the public sector average was 28% and the private sector was 43%. When asked what percentage of employees who identify as female were managers, all percentages drop aside from senior-level managers in public employers, as shown in Table 3 on the next page. This baseline data is not far from the United State's Department of Transportation's fiscal year 2010 data which is the closest comparison publicly available. In 2010, the USDOT reported that they had 32% of women in senior-level management roles and 31% in mid-level management roles.

Table 3: Percent of female-identifying managers in employer survey respondents' company or agency

Female-Identifying Managers	Public %	Private %	Total %
First- to mid-level	23%	14%	15%
Senior-level	31%	12%	16%

When asked what percentage of employees in the office identified as females of color, the average of all survey respondents was 15%. When split into public sector and private sector, the public sector average dropped to 7% and the private sector increased to 17%. The table below shows that there is a significant drop in management roles for employees who identify as females of color in both the public and private sector.

Table 4: Percent of female-identifying managers of color in employer survey respondents' company or agency

Female-Identifying Managers of Color	Public %	Private %	Total %
First- to mid-level	5%	7%	7%
Senior-level	3%	5%	4%

Nonbinary Employees and Managers

When asked what percentage of employees in the office identify as nonbinary, the average of all survey respondents was 0.2%. When split into public sector and private sector, the public sector average stayed consistent at 0.2% and the private sector dropped to 0.1%. As shown in the table below, the industry still has significant room to grow in the potential for career advancement for our nonbinary colleagues.

Table 5: Percent of nonbinary managers in employer survey respondents' company or agency

Nonbinary Managers	Public %	Private %	Total %
First- to mid-level	6%	-	2%
Senior-level	-	-	-

When further disaggregated by nonbinary individuals of color, there is a clear glass ceiling. Only one public employer reported having a nonbinary individual of color and reported having that individual in a first- to mid-level manager position. All other employers reported no nonbinary individuals of color and there was not a single nonbinary individual of color who was part of an employer's senior-level management team.

Organizational Policies

Employers were asked questions about their organizational policies and whether those organizational policies were implemented before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Part-Time

Employers were asked whether they had a part-time policy. Of the employers who answered the question, only two answered "no." For those who answered yes, they were asked if the policy was adopted after March 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Only one employer answered "yes." All other employers answered that they had part-time policies in place prior to the pandemic. Employers were also asked what percentage of employees worked part time in 2022. The average was 12%, with the public sector average as 5% and private sector average as 14%.

When asked whether employees can alter their work schedules with supervisor approval (including flex time and work that varies from traditional 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.), only two employers said "no." When asked if they had an official policy that allows employees to alter their work schedules, 78%, or 21 respondents, said "yes." Employers were again asked if this was a new policy adopted after March 2020. Similar to the part-time policy results, only two employers said "yes."

Remote Work

When asked about whether employees can work from home or a location outside the office, only one employer said that employees cannot. However, when asked whether the employer had a remote policy, only 70%, or 19 respondents, said "yes." Employers were asked if this policy was adopted after March 2020 and the responses were fairly evenly split with 47% saying "yes" and 53% saying "no."

Getting to a more granular level, the survey asked employers what percentage of employees worked from home or another location outside the office at least two days a week in 2022. The average was 58%, with the public sector average as 51% and private sector average as 63%.

Mentoring

About 30% of employers stated that they had an official mentoring program, and most said their mentoring program was in place prior to 2020. When asked how many employees participated in the mentoring program, the four employers that had a mentoring program averaged 17% of employees participating.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Approximately 82% of employers answered that their organization conducts DEI trainings and about 60% of trainings were established prior to 2020. When asked

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whether DEI training was required for all staff, only two employers said "no." When asked whether their employer formally stated its commitment to DEI, 92.6% of employers said "yes". Of the employers that said yes, 50% established their commitment in 2020 after the George Floyd protests and racial reckoning that took place all over the country, that was felt deeply in Seattle in the summer of 2020 with the creation of the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone (CHAZ) and daily protests in Capitol Hill.

Employers were also asked which DEI elements their organization established. The responses are captured in the table below.

Table 6: DEI elements established in employer survey respondents' company or agency

DEI Element	Total %
Policy with a definition of diversity	71%
DEI elements incorporated into mission and vision statement	83%
DEI Plan or Strategy	83%
DEI committee overseeing DEI efforts	79%
Full-time DEI staff person(s) overseeing DEI efforts	46%

Succession Planning

Employers were split on whether their organization had implemented succession planning, with 56% implementing succession planning and 44% having not implemented succession planning in their organization as of 2022. When asked when they implemented succession planning, 40% of employers implemented it in the last three years.

Identified Barriers Named in Exit Interviews

Employers were asked to name how often the following issues were raised during recruiting or exit interviews:

▸ Flexible work schedule

▸ Childcare (onsite) or subsidized childcare

▸ Family leave

▸ Work culture

▸ Compensation

▸ Promotion opportunity

▸ Professional development opportunities

▸ Vacation and sick time PTO policy

The graphs below capture combined data from the public and private sector separately.

Combined public and private sector responses

The barrier that was identified most often in exit interviews was "compensation" which was then followed by three nearly equivalent barriers - "work culture," "professional development opportunities," and "vacation and sick time/PTO." The barriers that "rarely" or "never" came up at the majority of employers were "family leave," "promotion opportunity," and "childcare (onsite) or subsidized childcare."

Graph 3: Barriers identified in exit interviews
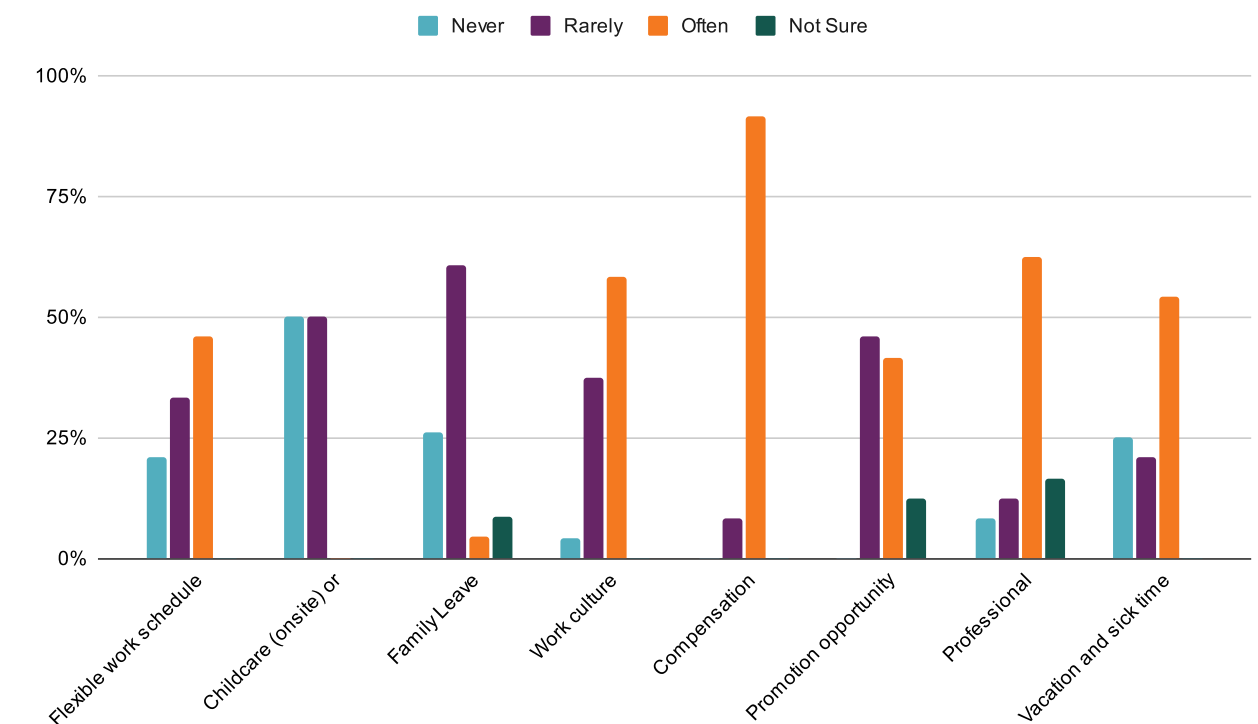
Public sector responses

The public sector responses differ slightly from the combined public/private responses. While compensation was still one of the most identified barriers in exit interviews, there is a starker contrast between "rarely" and "never" in public sector data. In addition to being highlighted as a barrier that often came up, some public sector employers highlighted "Vacation and sick time/PTO" as a barrier that "never" came up. While "childcare (onsite) or subsidized childcare," "family leave," and "promotion opportunity" were also highlighted as barriers that rarely came up in the combined p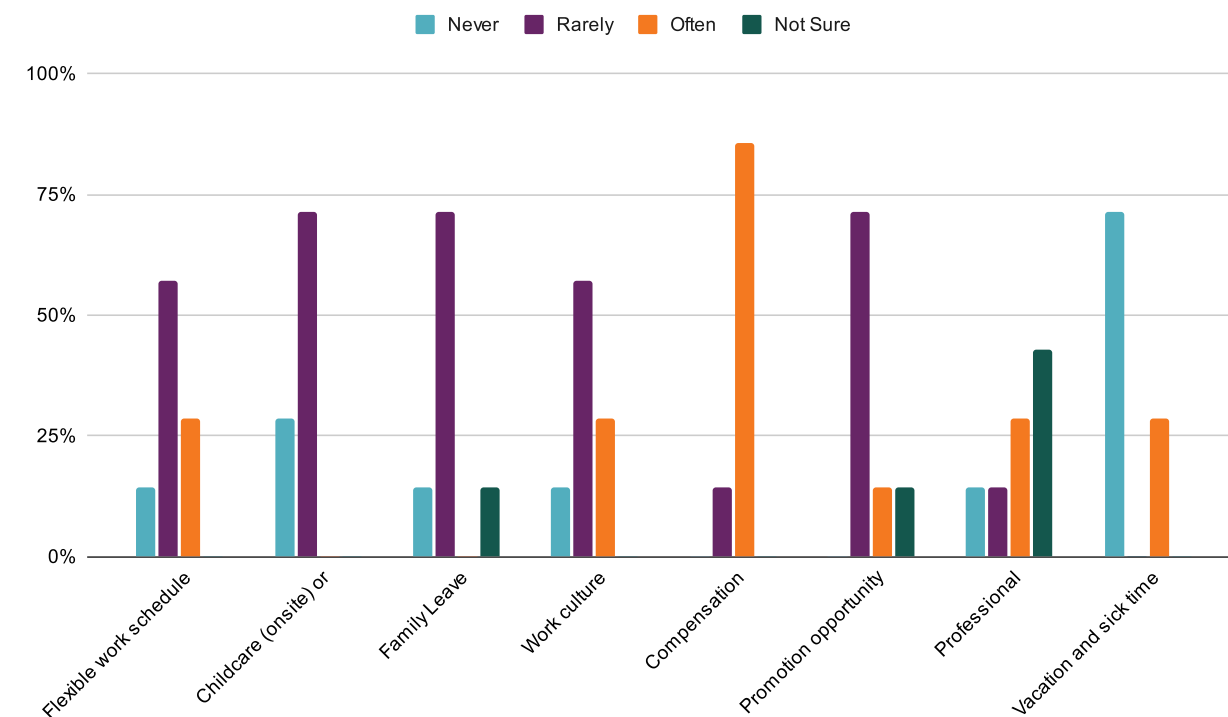ublic/private sector responses, "work culture" and "flexible work schedule" joined as additional barriers that rarely came up in exit interviews.

Graph 4: Barriers identified in exit interviews - public sector

Private sector responses

The private sector responses mirrored the combined public/private sector responses with the barrier identified most often in exit interviews as "compensation" which was then followed by three nearly equivalent barriers - "work culture," "professional development opportunities," and "vacation and sick time/PTO." The barriers that "rarely" came up most often was "family leave," and the barrier that "never" came up at the highest rate was "childcare (onsite) or subsidized childcare."

Graph 5: Barriers identified in exit interviews - private sector
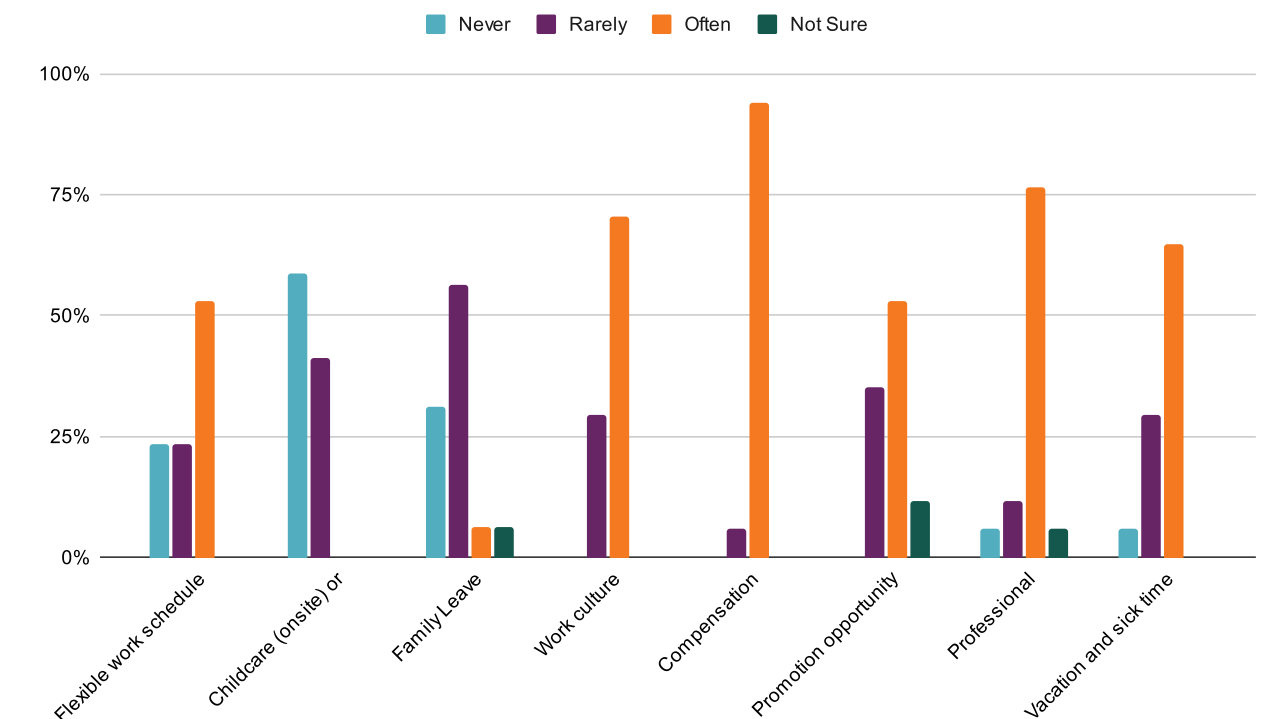
Employers that ranked "flexible work schedule," "work culture," and "vacation and sick time PTO policy" as "often" were asked to elaborate. The findings are included on the following page.

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Flexible Work Schedule

Employers shared a range of comments, including employers that prioritized remote work and flex schedules to recruit candidates and others who noted that the Puget Sound area standard was at least two days of working at home per week. Others noted that they heard that employees would like to work from home more frequently than one day per week, but their policy was to review remote work on a case-by-case basis and in some organizations, flexible work arrangements were not always formalized. Larger organizations that are headquartered elsewhere also expressed tension between their leadership's approach to flexible work arrangements versus the offices in the Pacific Northwest.

Work Culture

Employers noted that work culture was a huge driver of retention and was shared actively in the recruiting and onboarding process. Others shared that consulting can be a high-demand job that often requires more than 40 hours a week which can be challenging. Some employers also noted that an inclusive work culture led to a more positive experience for employees with high-demand jobs.

Vacation And Sick Time PTO Policy

Many employers noted the importance of this benefit for work-life balance, and added that employees want to know they have the freedom and flexibility to take time off when they need it. One employer noted that while they offer three weeks of vacation, most candidates are asking for four weeks.

New Policies, Initiatives, and Programs Resulting from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Employers shared new policies, initiatives, and programs implemented as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Remote/hybrid work and remote interviewing significantly expanded as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions. Employers also commented that they implemented initiatives to support remote/hybrid work, including increasing remote work spaces, home office reimbursement funding, and sharing technology tips for hybrid work. One employer attributed their 3% jump in hiring and retaining people of color from 2020 to the present to the increase in remote work and interviewing.

Employers also commented on policies that impacted employee's mental health and ability to care for their families. One employer shared that employees were able to borrow or donate sick/PTO leave, in addition to adding flexible policies to allow employees to work remotely and care for their children and family members. Another employer shared that their organization expanded mental health benefits.

— Employee Survey

— Distribution and Participation

The Committee administered the first anonymous employee survey in Fall 2023 to establish a benchmark of how women and nonbinary transportation professionals in the Puget Sound transportation industry view themselves in the workplace. The survey was organized into the following sections:

1. Gender identity
2. Demographic information
3. Organization information
4. Organizational policies and programs
5. Importance of policies and programs
6. Policies and programs established during COVID-19

The Committee sent the employee survey out to the WTS Puget Sound/Seattle community in two email newsletters, on November 6, 2023 and November 17, 2023. Chapter board members were also asked to share the survey within their workplace. Approximately 190 women and nonbinary people who self-identify as transportation professionals answered the survey. None of the questions were required to be answered in order for the survey to be submitted, so responses ranged from 176-185 responses per question.

The Committee is not aware of any other WTS Glass Ceiling efforts around the country that have done employee surveys, so there is no comparison for response rates. As Chapter newsletter subscribers become more familiar with the Glass Ceiling initiative, the response rates are likely to increase in future reports.

— Gender Identity

The first question of the survey was a screening question. Respondents were asked which gender(s) they identified with. Respondents who selected "male" were thanked for their interest and the survey terminated. Of the remaining respondents, 97% identified as "female," 2% identified as "female" and "nonbinary," 1% identified as "nonbinary," and 1% identified as "female" and "transgender." Due to rounding, the overall percentage is slightly over 100%.

*Table 7: Genders represented from survey respondents*

Answer Choices	Total %
Female	97%
Nonbinary-Female	2%
Nonbinary	1%
Transgender-Female	1%

Demographic Information

A total of 165 people chose to provide the optional demographic information. This information will help the Committee better understand who is represented in this baseline survey, and how the survey distribution may need to be modified for the next report.

Thirty percent of respondents are between 41 and 50 years old, followed by 20% of respondents who are between 28-33, 16% between 34-40, 15% between 22-27, and 14% between 51-60. The spread of age of respondents is well represented, although respondents age 61 and older and age 21 and younger appear to be underrepresented. This is likely due to retirement and many people under 21 not yet being in the workforce.

Graph 6: Age of employee survey respondents
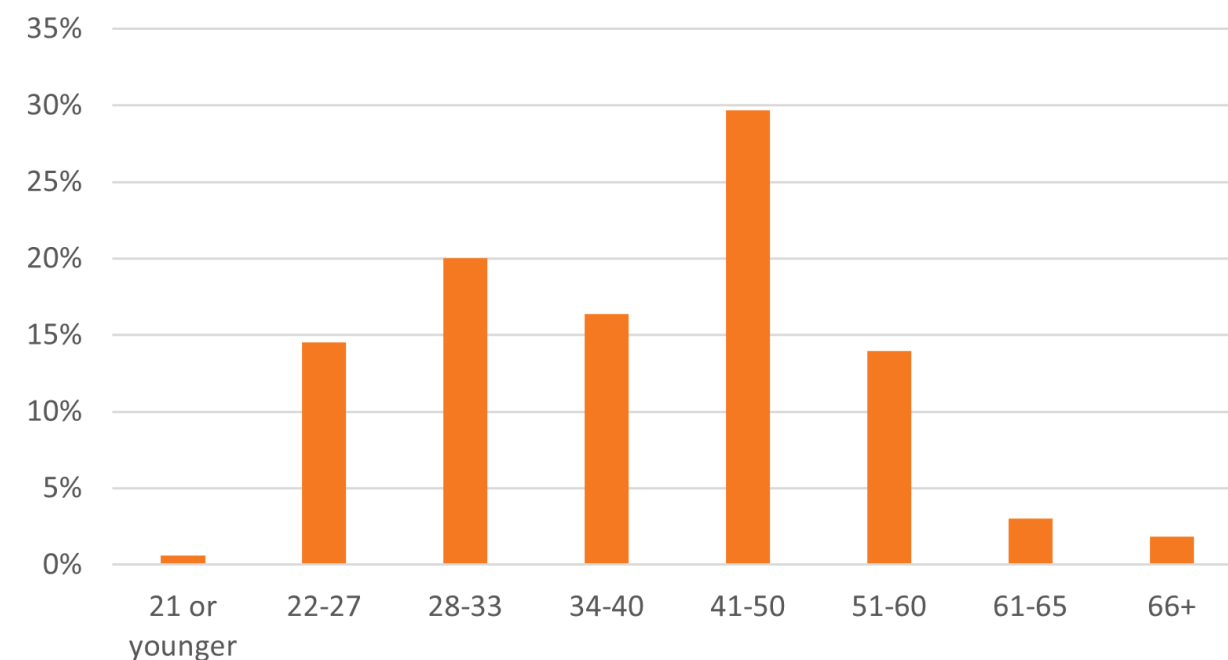
The majority of respondents (163 of 165) chose to answer the question regarding racial and ethnic identities. The majority identify as "White" (67%), followed by 13% who identify as "Asian or Asian American," 4% who identify as "Asian or Asian American" and "White," and 4% who identify as "Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx" and "White." All results are shown in the table below.

Table 8: Racial or ethnic identities of employee survey respondents

Racial or Ethnic Identities	Total %
White	67%
Asian or Asian American	13%
Asian or Asian American + White	4%
Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx + White	4%
Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx	3%
Prefer Not to Respond	2%
American Indian or Alaska Native + White	1%
Asian or Asian American + Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander + White	1%
Black or African American	1%
American Indian or Alaska Native + Black or African American + White	1%
American Indian or Alaska Native + Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx	1%
Asian or Asian American + Black or African American	1%
Asian or Asian American + Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx / White	1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%

When asked about identifying as LGBTQIA+, the majority of respondents - 81% - said "no." About 18% of respondents said "yes" and 2% selected "Prefer Not to Respond."

Graph 7: Percent of employee survey respondents who identify as LGBTQIA+
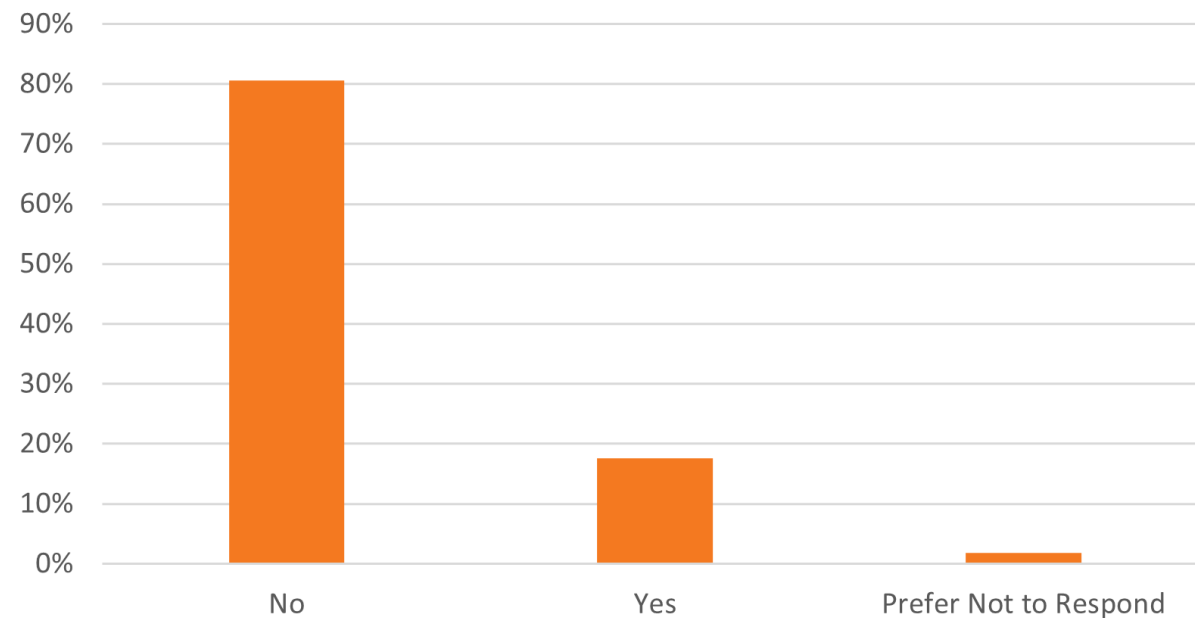
The table below shows the respondents' ages compared to their total annual household income. Please note that the question asks for household income, not personal income. Darker shading indicates a larger proportion of respondents in that category.

Table 9: Age and household income of employee survey respondents

Age	Less than $25k	$25-$49k	$50-$74k	$75-$99k	$100-$149k	$150-$200k	$200-$250k	$250k +
21 or younger	-	-	1%	-	-	-	-	-
22-27	-	1%	2%	6%	1%	2%	1%	1%
28-33	1%	-	1%	3%	7%	1%	4%	2%
34-40	-	-	-	1%	5%	4%	2%	4%
41-50	-	1%	-	1%	5%	5%	5%	11%
51-60	-	-	-	1%	5%	2%	2%	2%
61-65	-	-	1%	1%	-	1%	1%	-
66+	-	-	1%	1%	-	-	-	1%

The table below shows the respondents' education level compared to their total annual household income. Please note that the question asks for household income, not personal income.

Table 10: Education and household income of employee survey respondents

Education	Less than $25k	$25-$49k	$50-$74k	$75-$99k	$100-$149k	$150-$200k	$200-$250k	$250k +
Completed some college	1%	-	1%	-	4%	-	-	-
Graduate of a 2-yr college	-	-	-	1%	1%	1%	-	1%
Graduate of a 4-yr college	-	1%	4%	6%	7%	7%	5%	7%
Post-graduate degree	-	-	-	6%	12%	8%	8%	13%
Trade/vocational school graduate	-	-	-	1%	-	-	-	-

── Organization Information

The Committee received survey responses from employees in all three central Puget Sound counties - Snohomish, King, and Pierce. The highest number of responses at 54% came from Seattle, followed by 28% from Bellevue, 6% from Olympia, and 3% from Tacoma. Other locations include Redmond, Edmonds, fully remote, Everett, Federal Way, Kenmore, Kirkland, Shoreline, and Tukwila.

Graph 8: Employee survey respondents' Puget Sound office location

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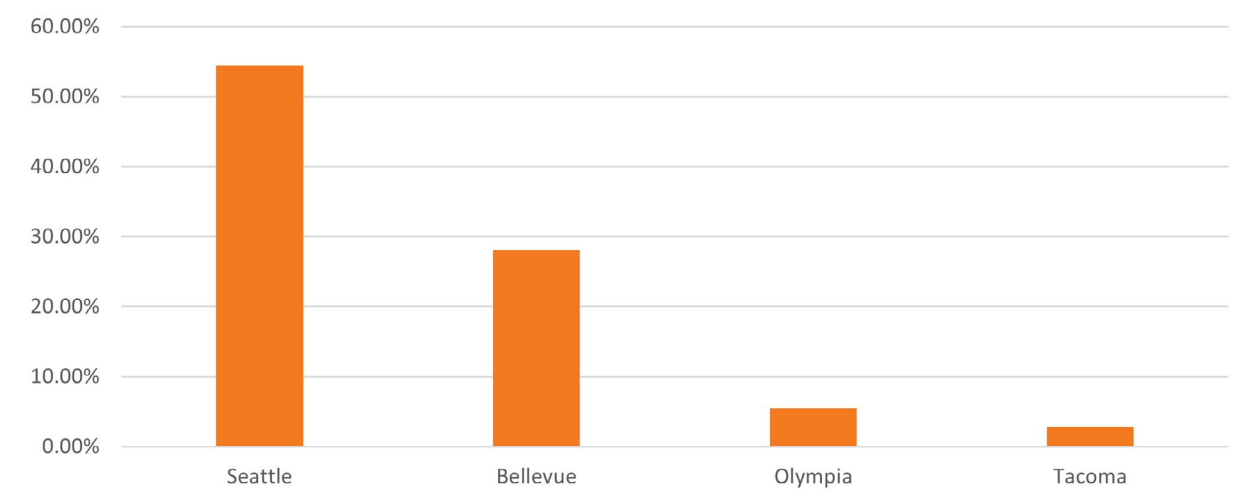
Employees were asked what type of company, organization, or agency they worked for. The highest number of responses at 60% came from private companies, followed by 38% from public agencies, and 2% from nonprofit organizations.

Employees were asked what consulting services they specialize in. Multiple answers were allowed for this question. Sixty-three percent of respondents specialized in engineering/design, followed by 36% in planning, 32% in project management, 23% in communications/public engagement, 22% in construction management, 15% in architecture/landscape, 9% in construction, and 2% in both environmental and procurement. In the "other" category, 8% of respondents noted that they specialize in technical writing, data analytics, equity, business development, transit operation, urban design, and right-of-way acquisition.

Graph 9: Employee survey respondents' consulting service specialty
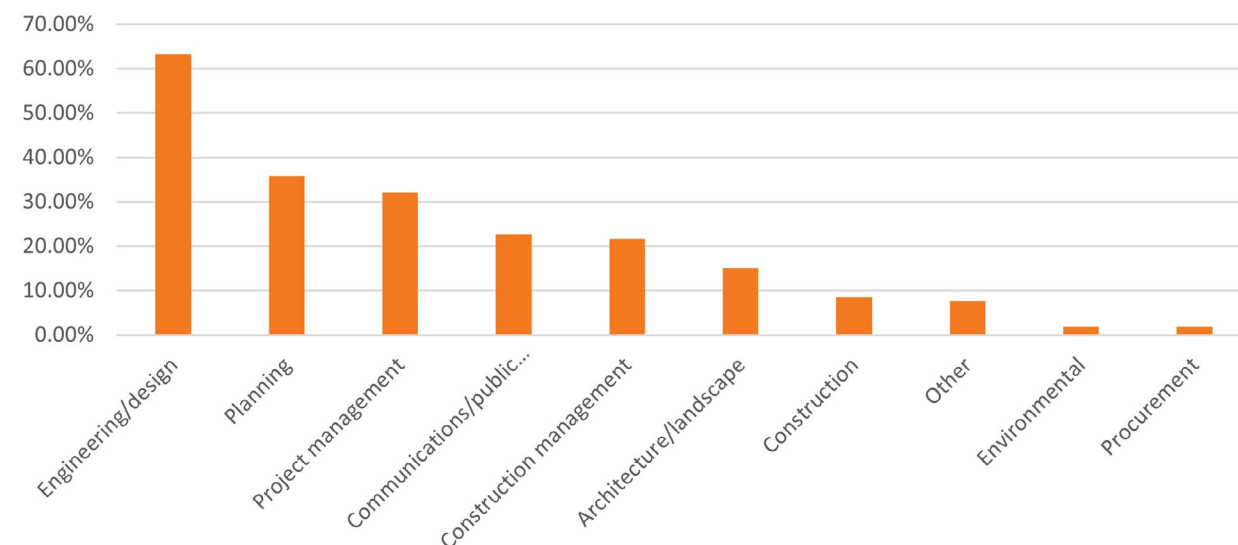
Organizational Policies and Programs

The next series of questions relate to specific programs and policies within employee's organizations.

Part-Time

Employees were asked whether their place of work had a part-time policy. A part-time policy is defined here as people working 31 hours per week or less. Of the employees who answered the question, 70% answered "yes," 24% answered "I don't know," and 7% answered "no." The survey response was above 100% due to rounding.

Respondents were then asked if they have the option to alter their work schedule with supervisor approval. This includes flex time and work that varies from the traditional 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. working hours. Of the employees who answered the question, 96% answered "yes," 3% answered "I don't know," and 1% answered "no." These responses differ from the employer survey, where a higher percentage reported a part time policy and a lower percentage reported a flex policy.

Working Location

When asked whether employees could choose to work from home or another location outside the office (including field offices, construction sites, etc.), 74% said "yes," 18% said "my default location is at home," 6% said "no," and 2% did not know. This is similar to the employer survey results.

Mentoring

Sixty-three percent of respondents stated that they have an official mentoring program, while 27% do not have an official mentoring program, and 10% did not know. This is significantly higher than the employer survey of which 30% had an official mentoring program. This suggests that a high number of employee survey respondents work for an organization with an official mentoring program.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Approximately 79% of employees answered that their organization conducts DEI trainings on microaggression, unconscious bias, or other related topics. Approximately 13% responded "no" and 8% responded "I don't know." Less than half - 42% - of respondents said that trainings are required for all employees. A quarter of respondents, or 25%, said "no" and 33% said "I don't know."

Survey respondents were asked to identify which DEI elements their workplace has established. Respondents were able to select all that apply. Although not a direct comparison, results from the employer survey (shown in Table 11) are included on the next page. Across both surveys, most employers seem to have DEI elements incorporated into mission and vision statements, a DEI Plan or Strategy, and/or a DEI committee. The biggest takeaway between the results is that employees may not be aware of their organization's DEI commitments, since employee responses are generally lower than the employer responses.

Table 11: DEI elements identified by employee and employer survey respondents

Answer Choices	Employee Responses	Employer Responses
Policy with a definition of diversity	56%	71%
DEI elements incorporated into mission and vision statement	60%	83%
DEI Plan or Strategy	60%	83%
DEI committee overseeing DEI efforts	60%	79%
Full-time DEI staff person(s) overseeing DEI efforts	45%	46%
Unknown	7%	N/A
None	3%	N/A

Importance of Policies and Programs

In this section of the survey, respondents were asked to rank the importance of policies and programs to help advance them in their career. About 165 respondents submitted their rankings, although some respondents skipped ranking certain rows like childcare and family leave. This may be because those topics are not applicable to them, and the survey did not have a "N/A" category. Particularly insightful statistics are highlighted in Table 12.

> " *I feel that using flexible working hours and other accommodations to allow for family time can often give the impression to others that you're a subpar employee if the work culture does not support people helping their families.* "

In general, the responses for most programs and policies skew toward "very important" and "important." Notably, the "childcare (onsite) or subsidized childcare" category is the only program or policy where the majority of respondents - 62% - said "not important." Respondents said "work culture," "vacation and sick time PTO policy," and "compensation" were "very important" and ranked these highest out of the programs and policies listed.

Table 12: Importance of policies and programs for employee survey respondents

Program or Policy	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Flexible work schedule	2%	13%	32%	53%
Flexible work location	2%	18%	30%	50%
Childcare (onsite) or subsidized childcare	62%	13%	19%	6%
Family Leave	12%	17%	36%	35%
Work culture	2%	2%	27%	69%
Compensation	1%	3%	32%	65%
Promotion opportunity	1%	10%	35%	55%
Professional development opportunities	1%	10%	40%	50%
Vacation and sick time PTO policy	1%	7%	27%	66%

Survey respondents were asked if they would add any additional policies or programs to the list shown in the table above. Thirty-seven respondents provided answers, which can be categorized into the following list:

▸ Healthcare benefits (4)
▸ Advocate at managerial level (3)
▸ Representation in leadership (3)
▸ Mentoring (2)
▸ Attendance at trainings and conferences (1)
▸ Business travel policy (1)
▸ Champion or sponsor (1)
▸ Commute benefits (1)
▸ Feminine health support (1)
▸ Flexible licensure requirements (1)
▸ Part time policy (1)
▸ Sabbatical (1)
▸ Supportive leadership (1)
▸ Tuition reimbursement (1)
▸ Work abroad policy (1)

Five respondents elaborated on the importance of work culture. One person said "I feel that using flexible working hours and other accommodations to allow for family time can often give the impression to others that you're a subpar employee if the work culture does not support people helping their families." Another person said "flexibility and understanding that our lives outside of work need to be accommodated" was important to them. Others noted that hard-working colleagues, workload balance, and professional respect are important.

There is some overlap between the employer and employee survey. In the employer survey, respondents noted the top three barriers identified most often in exit interviews as compensation, followed by professional development opportunities, then work culture. For the employee survey, employees identified the top three most important policies and programs as work culture, followed by vacation and sick time/PTO policy, then compensation.

Several conclusions could be drawn from the variance in employer and employee responses. Although compensation and work culture are in the top three for each, they fall in different places in the ranking. While compensation is the most commonly reported barrier or issue in exit interviews, work culture is the most important policy or program for employees. This could suggest that work culture may be difficult to define in an exit interview, or compensation is seen as a more commonly understood reason for leaving an organization.

> *Management has a bigger role to play. They need to see growth and development, advocate for it and take steps to continue developing employees by providing not just training opportunities, but advancement opportunities.*

Support at Work

The survey asked employees to answer the question, "do you feel supported as a woman/nonbinary person in your workplace?" A total of 134 people answered the question. Responses were long-form text and categorized into four categories: Yes, Mostly, Somewhat, No. Of the people who responded, 62% answered "yes," 15% answered "mostly," 16% answered "somewhat," and 7% answered "no."

Of those categorized as "yes," one person said "if I was planning to have kids (which I am not), I don't think I would feel as supported as there is no paid leave and work is demanding." Another qualified their response by saying, "I have not had the experience of maternity leave and having young children to see what the support is like yet though."

Of those categorized as "mostly," one person said "I feel the effects of working in a predominantly cis-het [cisgender heterosexual] male dominated field in my everyday interactions with colleagues and clients." Another person said "management has a bigger role to play. They need to see growth and development, advocate for it and take steps to continue developing employees by providing not just training opportunities, but advancement opportunities." Another person said "I feel supported but I still feel underpaid."

Of those categorized as "somewhat," one person said "my company does not actively discriminate, but does not address the cumulative/intersectional difficulties of not being a cisgendered male in the workplace." Another person said their workplace is "not equally supportive throughout the organization."

Of those categorized as "no," one person said there is "no support in regard to equal pay relevant to experience and education." Another person said "As a female considering starting a family, we get the minimum [family leave] from Washington State. Our firm is otherwise 'pleased to provide us 6 weeks of maternity leave,'" suggesting a need for more family leave support.

> *While flexible policies are technically in place, there is still a heavy bias toward working from the office.*

Barriers to Advancement

The survey asked employees to answer the question, "are there barriers to your advancement as a woman/nonbinary person in the workplace?" A total of 105 employees responded to this question. Of those who responded, 47% responded "no," and 53% responded "yes" with a space to elaborate. For those who responded yes, their answers were categorized into the following barriers:

- Overt or subconscious sexism (16)
- Lack of work flexibility (11)
- Lack of promotion opportunities (10)
- Lack of childcare (8)
- Increased mental/emotional load due to gender (2)
- Being a woman of color (1)
- Inadequate benefits (1)
- Lack of pay transparency (1)

- ▸ Lack of representation in leadership (1)
- ▸ Licensure requirements (1)
- ▸ Did not elaborate (4)

Regarding sexism, responses ranged from overt instances of sexism, to bias toward cisgender men, to a "good old boy" mentality in the workplace. One person said "I just got told casually a couple of months ago by an executive that if I were more relaxed and friendly in my demeanor I would have more success." Another said "there is an expectation that I must act more like a man and I'm not allowed to have emotions and be myself."

For lack of work flexibility, one person said "while flexible policies are technically in place, there is still a heavy bias toward working from the office. It is heavily implied (and sometimes outright stated) that 'face to face' interactions are key to professional development and promotion opportunities. This places women and femme-presenting folks in a bind given that family/childcare responsibilities still traditionally fall on women's shoulders." Several people noted that working after-hours or while taking time off often feels like a requirement. Several people also noted that even though part time and flexible work schedules are allowed, they experience bias and often have to work more than their part-time description states.

Regarding a lack of promotional opportunities, responses ranged from the real or perceived lack of positions open to women, lack of transparency for the promotion process, restrictive job descriptions, and the need to go above-and-beyond to get a promotion compared to cis-gender men.

For lack of childcare, one person said "I find it very difficult to advance when my time and energy is so curtailed while raising two small children. I am overworked and overscheduled, but cannot work overtime because of childcare. I often have to miss work due to sick kids or closed daycares. I have no energy to do my work and childcare is extremely expensive in this area, so I have often considered quitting my full-time job." Several people noted the discrimination against women and nonbinary people who have children, and the disadvantage they are at due to the lack of flexibility to work longer hours or participate in after-hours events where internal relationships are developed that often lead to promotional opportunities.

Regarding increased mental/emotional load due to gender, respondents referred to the intangible weight or burden of being the gender minority in an industry and the additional mental or emotional struggle that results from that.

Policies and Programs Established During COVID-19

Employees were asked what new policies, initiatives, or programs their organization, company, or agency put in place to support employees because of the COVID-19 pandemic. 121 people responded to this long-form text question and responses were categorized as follows:

- ▸ Hybrid work (72)
- ▸ Flexible work schedule (56)
- ▸ Remote work (16)
- ▸ Additional health benefits (16)
- ▸ Childcare or family leave (9)
- ▸ Home office equipment (5)
- ▸ Pay increase or stipend (4)
- ▸ Mental health benefits (3)
- ▸ Additional training (2)

Hybrid work and flexible work schedules were often mentioned in the same response. Some respondents specifically mentioned fully remote work, which was categorized separately from hybrid work, even though there may be some overlap depending on how the respondents classify hybrid and remote work.

Some unique positive responses included team mental health check-ins and resources; cell phone and wi-fi stipends; increased PTO; home office supply delivery; emergency PTO bank; and wellness benefits to support home exercise. One respondent said their company vowed not to let a single employee go, and were able to keep that pledge. Some unique negative responses included reduced pay and healthcare cuts for dependents.

A total of 74 of the 121 respondents said that the new policies mentioned above are still in place. Whereas, 22 of the 121 respondents replied "other" and specified that some of the policies are still in place, like hybrid or remote work, while others have been replaced, like extended COVID-19 sick time. Of the 22 "other" responses, 12 people specifically mentioned increased pressure or policies requiring return to office. A total of 20 of the 121 respondents said the new policies are no longer in place. Most of these responses relate to hybrid or remote work options. Finally, 4 of the 121 respondents said their company did not implement new policies at all.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Employers

The results of our surveys indicate that a glass ceiling does exist in the transportation industry in the Puget Sound. While employers are making progress in supporting and advancing women into leadership positions, there is still progress to be made for White women, and even greater progress needed for women of color and nonbinary transportation professionals.

As employers support women and nonbinary staff to break through the glass ceiling, both the literature review and employee survey results called out the importance of flexible work, including remote work, flexible work hours, and a supportive work culture. These are important takeaways for employers to understand as the results do not completely align with the topics most commonly brought up in exit interviews. For example, employees frequently mentioned the importance of flexible work in regard to childcare and the importance of family leave, while employers marked those topics as "rarely" or "never" mentioned. This data suggests that employees may not feel comfortable sharing these topics, or it may be easier to mention compensation in an exit interview as opposed to trying to define work culture.

Flexible Work

The most prevalent topic of the employee survey and literature review was the importance of flexible work. This includes remote work, hybrid work, and flexible work hours. Flexible work has a different meaning to everyone, but some key themes include a need to balance childcare, elder care, and general home workload. The literature review emphasized the importance of understanding the balance of career and family for women, and recommends that employers promote men taking family leave so that home workloads are more evenly distributed across genders, thereby alleviating childcare burdens on women. Employers noted they heard that employees would like to work from home more frequently than one day per week, but some noted that their policies are to review remote work on a case-by-case basis. Larger organizations that are headquartered elsewhere also expressed tension with their leadership's approach to flexible work arrangements that did not align with the offices in the Pacific Northwest.

Supportive Work Culture

A similar topic in the employee survey and literature review was the importance of a supportive work culture. Work culture was ranked the most important policy or program in the employee survey, and ranked as the third most common barrier in employer exit interviews. Given that several employers noted that work culture was a huge driver of retention, this policy is an important focus for employers looking to support the advancement of women and nonbinary professionals, particularly for women and nonbinary professionals of color.

Mentorship and Professional Development

One common topic between the employer and employee surveys was mentorship and professional development opportunities. Findings from the literature review suggest that professional development and mentorship can be extra challenging for women of color, for whom barriers include lack of access to senior leadership, experiencing microaggressions by coworkers, and being overly scrutinized by colleagues. In order to combat real or perceived barriers for women of color, organizations need to establish metrics with accountability and transparency to show organizational change over time. Metrics should also address mentorship, sponsorship, and professional development opportunities. Organizations could offer financial incentives to hiring managers for meeting diversity targets. And lastly, more organizations could establish mentorship programs. Only 30% of employers who responded to the survey have an official mentorship program. The literature review and employee survey suggest there is an unmet demand for more mentorship opportunities.

Promotional Opportunities

In the employee survey, respondents noted a lack of promotional opportunities related to the real or perceived lack of positions open to women, lack of transparency for the promotion process, restrictive job descriptions, and the need to go above-and-beyond to get a promotion compared to cis-gender men. Strategies that could reduce barriers for women and nonbinary people include outreach in schools, communication within communities about transportation as a career, creating organizational goals for diverse recruitment, creating networking opportunities, providing training and development support, improving support for traditionally women-responsibilities outside of work, providing mentoring programs, and developing guidance on career development.

> *"...women are typically paid 18% less than men, and this gap varies drastically depending on race and ethnicity."*

Gender Pay Equity

Another headwind that women and nonbinary people face that is noted across the employer survey, employee survey, and the literature review is the gender pay gap. The State of Women Report 2023 found that in 2023, women are typically paid 18% less than men, and this gap varies drastically depending on race and ethnicity. Employers have an opportunity to close the pay gap by being transparent about pay, which has been proven to work. When women and nonbinary people know they are being treated fairly based on their experience and education, everyone thrives.

Paid Leave

Finally, a topic that was common to the employee survey and literature review, but was not emphasized in the employer survey was increased PTO, sick time, and family leave benefits. A few employers discussed the importance of PTO, including one employer who mentioned most candidates are asking for four weeks of PTO. However, the focus for most employees was a lack of family leave benefits. Many employees feel that the minimum family leave from Washington State, although better than many other states in the U.S., is still not enough. Employers can support, attract, and retain employees by creating flexible work and family leave policies, and create a positive work culture by promoting men to take family leave so that home workloads are more evenly distributed across genders.

Next Steps for the Glass Ceiling Committee

Next steps for the Glass Ceiling Committee include sending another employer survey out in the 2024-2025 WTS year, which may be a revised version of the baseline survey. For employers reading this report who would like to be included in the next survey, please email the Committee at WTSPugetSoundGlass@gmail.com. The Committee plans to send another employee survey out, either in the 2024-2025 or 2025-2026 WTS year. Finally, the Committee plans to publish an updated report in 2026 that includes a review of new or updated literature.

"*Female leaders and diverse representation across transit agencies - from operators to engineers to executives - are absolutely mission-critical to building and improving mobility that is truly for everyone*"

–Christina O'Claire,
Director of the Mobility Division at King County Metro Transit, Subtext Issue 1, February 2022

Appendix A

WTS Glass Ceiling Employer
Survey Questions

Questions About Your Organization

1. Where is your Puget Sound office located?

   a. Bellevue

   b. Everett

   c. Olympia

   d. Seattle

   e. Tacoma

   f. Other (please specify)

2. What is your company, organization, or agency status?

   a. Private

   b. Public

   c. Nonprofit

   d. Other (please specify)

   If private, go to 2a.

   2a. What type of consulting services do you specialize in? Select all that apply.

   a. Communications and public engagement

   b. Engineering/design

   c. Architecture/landscape

   d. Planning

   e. Project management/project controls

   f. Construction

   g. Construction management

   h. Other (please specify)

Questions About Employment Data

All questions that reference 2022, reference the calendar year from January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2022.

3. How many total employees (full and part-time) worked in this office or department in 2022? *If public agency or nonprofit, please do not include consultants.*

4. Did your organization collect employment data that was disaggregated by **gender** in 2022?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   If answer is yes, go to 4a.

   4a. What percentage of employees in this office in 2022 were female-identifying?

   4b. What percentage of female-identifying employees were first- to mid-level managers in 2022?

   4c. What percentage of female-identifying employees were senior-level managers (or above) in 2022?

5. Did your organization collect employment data that was disaggregated by **gender identity** in 2022?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   If answer is yes, go to 5a.

   5a. What percentage of employees in this office in 2022 were **nonbinary**?

   5b. What percentage of **nonbinary** employees were first- to mid-level managers in 2022?

   5c. What percentage of **nonbinary** employees were senior-level managers (or above) in 2022?

6. Did your organization collect employment data that was disaggregated by **race** in 2022?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   If answer is yes, go to 6a.

   6a. What percentage of employees in this office in 2022 identified as **females of color**?

   6b. What percentage of employees identifying as **females of color** were first- to mid-level managers in 2022?

   6c. What percentage of employees identifying as **females of color** were senior-level managers (or above) in 2022?

   6d. What percentage of employees in this office in 2022 identified as **nonbinary people of color**?

   6e. What percentage of employees identifying as **nonbinary people of color** were first- to mid-level managers in 2022?

   6f. What percentage of employees identifying as **nonbinary people of color** were senior-level managers (or above) in 2022?

Questions About Organizational Policies

7. Does your company have a part-time policy?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   If answer is yes, go to 7a.

   7a. Was this a new policy adopted after March 2020?

      a. Yes

      b. No

   7b. What percentage of employees worked part time in 2022?

8. Do some employees alter their work schedules with supervisor approval? *This includes flex time and work that varies from the traditional 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. working hours.*

   a. Yes

   b. No

9. Do you have an official policy that allows employees to flex time or work outside the traditional 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. working hours?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   If answer is yes, go to 9a.

   9a. Was this a new policy adopted after March 2020?

      a. Yes

      b. No

10. For employees whose default location is an office or in-person location (including field offices, construction sites, etc.), do some choose to work from home or another location outside the office?

    a. Yes

    b. No

11. Do you have an official remote work policy?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    If answer is yes, go to 11a.

    11a. Was this a new policy adopted after March 2020?

       a. Yes

       b. No

    11b. What percentage of employees work from home or another location outside of the office at least two days a week in 2022?

12. Does your organization have an official mentoring program?

   a. Yes

   b. No

If answer is yes, go to 12a.

    12a. What year was the program established?

    12b. What percentage of employees participated in an official mentoring program in 2022?

13. Does your organization conduct diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training (e.g. microaggression, unconscious bias or other trainings)?

   a. Yes

   b. No

If answer is yes, go to 13a.

    13a. What year was this training established?

    13b. Are DEI trainings required for all employees?

14. Does your organization have succession planning?

Succession planning is defined in this survey as "…a comprehensive, ongoing strategic process that provides for forecasting an organization's senior leadership needs; identifying and developing candidates who have the potential to be future leaders; and selecting individuals from a diverse pool of qualified candidates to meet executive resource needs" (GAO, 2005).

   a. Yes

   b. No

If answer is yes, go to 14a.

    14a. What year was this succession planning established?

15. Not counting Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statements, does your organization formally state its commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity, and/or justice?

   a. Yes

   b. No

If answer is yes, go to 15a.

15a. What year was this commitment established?

15b. Which DEI elements has your organization established? *Select all that apply.*

   a. Policy with a definition of diversity

   b. DEI elements incorporated into mission and vision statement

   c. DEI Plan or Strategy

   d. DEI committee overseeing DEI efforts

   e. Full-time DEI staff person(s) overseeing DEI efforts

   f. Other (please specify)

16. Please rank how often the following issues are raised during recruiting and exit interviews for your organization using the ranking scale below.

	Never	Rarely	Often	Not Sure
Flexible work schedule				
Childcare (onsite) or subsidized childcare				
Family Leave				
Work culture				
Compensation				
Promotion opportunity				
Professional development opportunities				
Vacation and sick time PTO policy				

17. If you ranked "flexible work schedule" as "often," please elaborate.

18. If you ranked "work culture" as "often," please elaborate.

19. If you ranked "vacation and sick time PTO policy" as "often," please elaborate.

20. What new policies or initiatives/programs did your organization put in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Contact Information

All responses will be kept strictly confidential, and no responses will be attributed to any individual or organization. We are requesting your contact information so we can share the report with you when it is finalized, and in case there are any questions regarding your response.

21. Name

22. Company/Organization/Agency

23. Email Address

Appendix B

WTS Glass Ceiling Employee
Survey Questions

1. Which gender(s) do you identify with?

   a. Female

   b. Male

   c. Nonbinary

   d. Transgender

   e. Other (please specify)

   If survey respondents answered "male," they were taken to the end of survey.

Questions About Your Organization

2. Where is your Puget Sound office located?

   a. Bellevue

   b. Everett

   c. Olympia

   d. Seattle

   e. Tacoma

   f. Other (please specify)

3. What type of company, organization, or agency do you work for?

   a. Private

   b. Public

   c. Nonprofit

   d. Other (please specify)

4. What type of consulting services do you specialize in? *Select all that apply.*

   a. Communications and public engagement

   b. Engineering/design

   c. Architecture/landscape

   d. Planning

   e. Project management/project controls

   f. Construction

   g. Construction management

   h. Other (please specify)

5. Does your company, organization, or agency have a part-time policy*?
   A policy that allows people to work 31 hours/week or less.

   a. Yes

   b. No

   c. I don't know

6. Do you have the option to alter your work schedule with supervisor approval?
   This includes flex time and work that varies from the traditional 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. working hours.

   a. Yes

   b. No

   c. I don't know

7. If your default location is an office or in-person location (including field offices, construction sites, etc.), can you choose to work from home or another location outside the office?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   c. My default location is at home

   d. I don't know

8. Does your company, organization, agency, or office have an official mentoring program?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   c. I don't know

9. Does your company, organization, or agency conduct diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training (e.g. microaggression, unconscious bias or other trainings)?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   c. I don't know

10. Are DEI trainings required for all employees?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   c. I don't know

11. Which DEI elements has your company, organization, or agency established? *Select all that apply.*

   a. Policy with a definition of diversity

   b. DEI elements incorporated into mission and vision statement

   c. DEI Plan or Strategy

   d. DEI committee overseeing DEI efforts

   e. Full-time DEI staff person(s) overseeing DEI efforts

   f. Other (please specify)

12. Please rank the importance of the following items in helping you advance in your career using the ranking scale below (not important to very important).

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Flexible work schedule				
Flexible work location				
Childcare (onsite) or subsidized childcare				
Family Leave				
Work culture				
Compensation				
Promotion opportunity				
Professional development opportunities				
Vacation and sick time PTO policy				

13. Are there any additional items you would add to the list above? If yes, please elaborate and note your ranking of importance.

14. With your rankings above in mind, do you feel supported as a woman or nonbinary person in your workplace?

15. With your rankings above in mind, are there barriers to your advancement as a woman or nonbinary person in the workplace? If yes, please elaborate below.

16. What new policies or initiatives/programs did your organization, company, or agency put in place to support employees because of the COVID-19 pandemic? (i.e., flexible work schedule, expanded family leave, expanded benefits to cover childcare or sick time).

17. Are these new policies or initiatives/programs still in place?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   c. My company did not put in place new policies or initiatives/programs

   d. I did not work at my company in 2020 when new policies or initiatives/programs were put in place

   e. Other (please specify)

◢ Demographic Information

The following information is optional but will help us better understand if we are reaching a representative group of female and nonbinary professionals in the transportation industry in the Puget Sound.

18. Which category includes your age?

   a. 21 or younger

   b. 22-27

   c. 28-33

   d. 34-40

   e. 41-50

   f. 51-60

   g. 61-65

   h. 66+

19. Which racial or ethnic identities do you identify with? *Select all that apply.*

    a. American Indian or Alaska Native

    b. Asian or Asian American

    c. Black or African American

    d. Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx

    e. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

    f. White

    g. Prefer not to respond

20. Do you identify as LGBTQIA+?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. Prefer not to respond

21. Which of the following best describes your total annual household income?

    a. Less than $25,000

    b. $25,000-$49,999

    c. $50,000-$74,999

    d. $75,000-$99,999

    e. $100,000-$149,999

    f. $150,000-$200,000

    g. $200,000-$250,000

    h. $250,000 or more

    i. Prefer not to respond

22. What is the highest level of education you have received?

    a. High school graduate

    b. Completed some college

    c. Graduate of a 2-yr college

    d. Graduate of a 4-yr college

    e. Trade/vocational school graduate

    f. Post-graduate degree

    g. Prefer not to respond

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