



# ALGA

# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Cultivation Model and Self-Assessment

A Toolkit for Assessing and Cultivating DEI Practices in Audit Shops



*Prepared by ALGA's  
DEI Committee*

*April 2024*

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# Section 1: Overview and Background

## DEI Cultivation Model and Self-Assessment Purpose

This Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Cultivation Model provides six key factors for cultivating DEI growth within an audit organization. The accompanying Self-Assessment guides audit shops through a self-assessment process to assess diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices within their office. Together, the purpose of the DEI Cultivation Model and Self-Assessment is to support audit shops in prioritizing and integrating DEI into their practices.

***Why a cultivation model?** DEI and related concepts are not a one-size-fits-all model. Models that rank maturity or capabilities can create linear hierarchies for shops to benchmark against rather than encouraging curiosity, innovation, and an ever-evolving approach to DEI. Given this, it is recommended that audit shops use this DEI Cultivation Model and Self-Assessment to support their shop's continued growth and development as it relates to better integrating DEI within their own practices, rather than as a tool for comparing their success to other shops.*

## How We Created This DEI Cultivation Model and Self-Assessment

We identified and interviewed a sample of nine audit shops across the country who have been working to integrate DEI into their practices to understand their approaches to DEI, as well as their strengths and challenges in integrating DEI into their practices. Interviewed audit shops included:

- City of Austin, Texas
- City of Berkeley, California
- City of Chicago, Illinois
- City of Portland, Oregon
- City of Sacramento, California
- City of San Diego, California
- City of Seattle, Washington
- King County, Washington
- Oregon Metro, Oregon

We also surveyed current members of ALGA's DEI Committee to identify additional best practices and resources.

Using the results of these efforts, additional best practice research, and our own knowledge and expertise, we identified six key factors for continually cultivating DEI growth within audit shops. These six factors were used as the basis for the DEI Cultivation Model described in Section 2.

## Section 2: DEI Cultivation Model

We identified six key factors for cultivating DEI growth. Together, these six factors make up the cultivation model. Audit shops who implement these six factors are more likely to successfully integrate and cultivate DEI within their office.

### **Factor #1: Leadership is oriented toward DEI**

The orientation of audit shop leadership, and of the jurisdiction as a whole, is a key factor in the level of DEI engagement, integration, and prioritization within an audit shop. Audit shops in jurisdictions where DEI is a priority often have greater access to resources, support, and criteria for DEI-related audits than audit shops in jurisdictions not supportive of DEI work. While the jurisdiction's level of engagement or support may be outside of an audit shop's control, it is an important factor to consider when examining how to cultivate DEI within an audit shop.

Audit shop leadership's DEI prioritization also has a significant impact. A chief audit executive (CAE) that actively encourages DEI engagement, conversations, and training is likely to have more staff engagement with DEI topics than a CAE that does not discuss DEI with staff.

### **Factor #2: DEI is incorporated into office strategy and culture**

It is important for audit leadership to create an environment that supports and reinforces DEI values and behaviors. By aligning their strategy and culture with DEI principles, audit shops can create a sense of shared purpose and commitment amongst staff, which can help motivate and engage them in DEI initiatives. This might include setting specific goals and objectives related to DEI, allocating resources and staff time to support DEI initiatives, and normalizing conversations and training around DEI.

### **Factor #3: Staff diversity is prioritized**

Staff diversity adds richness that positively impacts auditing. Differing perspectives reduce bias and increase independence while different experiences bring new tools and creativity. It is important for staff diversity to be prioritized through the development of meaningful strategies as intention alone is not enough to generate a diverse and inclusive team.

#### **Factor #4: DEI is well-integrated within audit processes**

Staff may have the best intentions to incorporate DEI into audits, but this may not be done consistently without tools and resources to stay on track. Implementing tools and resources to support staff can support consistent approaches to assessing equity, better assurance that equity is considered effectively, and support for staff when audit topics don't easily lend themselves to the topic of equity.

#### **Factor #5: The community is meaningfully engaged**

To ensure audit work addresses disparities effectively it is important for audit shops to engage with the marginalized communities that are impacted most by these disparities. Engaging with communities through reciprocity and building trust is important to communicate audit results, connect the community with services the audit shop can provide, and incorporate community interest into planned audit schedules so you know what topics will have the most impact.

#### **Factor #6: Reporting is accessible**

There may be barriers that prevent members of different communities from being able to access and interpret audit work. Audit shops can use a DEI lens to ensure that audit work is available to as many members of the community as possible and to help auditors communicate more effectively.

## Section 3: Self-Assessment

Audit shops can use this Self-Assessment to assess the current state of their efforts to integrate DEI into their audit shop and to determine opportunities for cultivating DEI practices. In other words, they can use it to assess their alignment with the DEI Cultivation Model. The statements in Part 1 are organized based on the six key factors in the DEI Cultivation Model and are indicators of successfully integrating DEI into an audit shop's practices. Here are some suggestions for implementing this Self-Assessment effectively.

- It is recommended that audit shops consider completing the Self-Assessment collaboratively with multiple members of their team to promote inclusion of a range of perspectives and opinions.
- Team members may have different opinions when completing this Self-Assessment. It is important for audit leadership to recognize this and encourage conversations that value and respect differing perspectives.
- It is important for this Self-Assessment to be completed honestly and openly. Low ratings are opportunities for improvement and not meant to be seen as negative. This is especially important to remember for statements in factor 1, which are related to audit leadership.
- For this exercise to result in meaningful change, it is important for audit leadership to meaningfully engage with the process and support the implementation of action items coming out of this assessment.
- The self-assessment should be completed on a recurring basis, such as every 1 to 2 years, for continued cultivation of DEI practices over time.

**Part 1. Rate the below statements using the following scale.** Some statements may not be relevant to your shop or practical in your particular environment and these may be skipped. However, it is important to be honest about when a statement is truly not practical and when it is just not prioritized.

|                                                |                                                                         |                                                                                            |                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| We have not yet started work in this area. (1) | We have started work in this area, but it has not been implemented. (2) | We have implemented this practice, but it is not fully developed or consistently used. (3) | We have fully implemented this practice. We consider our work in this area a model to others. (4) |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| Factor 1: Leadership is oriented toward DEI                                                                                                                                             |               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Statement                                                                                                                                                                               | Rating        |
| 1. Our jurisdiction has a DEI-focused office or staff.                                                                                                                                  |               |
| 2. Our jurisdiction prioritizes DEI in its strategies and decision-making processes.                                                                                                    |               |
| 3. Our leadership team prioritizes or requires DEI.                                                                                                                                     |               |
| 4. Our leadership team consistently educates themselves on DEI issues and best practices.                                                                                               |               |
| 5. Our leadership team sets clear expectations for DEI initiatives.                                                                                                                     |               |
| 6. Our leadership team models DEI values and behaviors in their own leadership practices.                                                                                               |               |
| 7. Our leadership team fosters a culture of inclusion by promoting open communication, valuing diverse perspectives, and creating opportunities for staff to engage in DEI initiatives. |               |
| <b>Factor 1 Total</b>                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>___/28</b> |

| <b>Factor 2: DEI is incorporated into office strategy and culture</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Statement</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Rating</b> |
| 1. We have language in our mission and/or vision related to DEI.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |               |
| 2. We have incorporated DEI into our strategic plan and/or have a DEI strategic plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |               |
| 3. DEI is consistently incorporated into our annual audit plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               |
| 4. We have assessed DEI initiatives within our organization.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |               |
| 5. We consistently incorporate DEI into decision-making processes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |               |
| 6. We have DEI-related goals and objectives.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |               |
| 7. We have regular, office-wide discussions on DEI.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |               |
| 8. We have organizational performance metrics related to DEI. In other words, we know what we are trying to achieve, and we monitor how successful we are at achieving it.                                                                                                                                         |               |
| 9. Leadership is held accountable for DEI initiatives.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |               |
| 10. Staff are held accountable for DEI initiatives. This might include staff performance metrics related to DEI.                                                                                                                                                                                                   |               |
| 11. We have considered how to best assign resources to DEI initiatives and acted based on the best approach for audit shop. This might include hiring a DEI-focused person, establishing a DEI committee, clearly assigning specific DEI initiatives to DEI champions, or requiring DEI engagement from all staff. |               |
| <b>Factor 2 Total</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>___/44</b> |

| <b>Factor 3: Staff diversity is a priority</b>                                                                                                                                                          |               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Statement</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Rating</b> |
| 1. We have a shared understanding in our office about how diversity could make our team stronger and improve our audits.                                                                                |               |
| 2. We have strategized about how we could better recruit and retain staff.                                                                                                                              |               |
| 3. We have a hiring plan in place to intentionally recruit diverse staff.                                                                                                                               |               |
| 4. We have a commitment to DEI in our job postings.                                                                                                                                                     |               |
| 5. We publicize job openings with culturally specific professional organizations or publications.                                                                                                       |               |
| 6. We partner with a diverse range of local universities for internships and recruitments.                                                                                                              |               |
| 7. We have a hiring plan in place to intentionally recruit diverse staff.                                                                                                                               |               |
| 8. We have considered how minimum qualifications affect candidate pool diversity and reviewed/updated our minimum qualifications based on this understanding.                                           |               |
| 9. We include 360-degree reviews during employee evaluations so that newer and potentially more diverse staff can weigh in.                                                                             |               |
| 10. Knowing that it can be uncomfortable to be singled out when a group is trying to diversify, we have created affinity groups so people can find peer support even when they are not in the majority. |               |
| 11. Our current team culture is inclusive and open to new ideas.                                                                                                                                        |               |
| 12. We have created mentorship programs to help new staff develop career plans and advance with the organization.                                                                                       |               |
| 13. We have conducted standard exit interviews to learn about opportunities to make our team more welcoming.                                                                                            |               |
| 14. We provide opportunities for staff to engage in key DEI training, such as training on implicit bias.                                                                                                |               |
| 15. We require office-specific Continuing Professional Education focused on DEI.                                                                                                                        |               |
| 16. We include topics like microaggressions and gender identification to anti-discrimination and equal employment human resources policies.                                                             |               |
| <b>Factor 3 Total</b>                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>___/64</b> |

| <b>Factor 4: DEI is well-integrated within audit processes</b>                                                                                                                   |               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Statement</b>                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Rating</b> |
| 1. We have developed audit policies and procedures that make space for staff to consider equity at various points throughout the audit.                                          |               |
| 2. We include an equity-focused brainstorm at the beginning of every audit, not just audits with an obvious equity focus, to consider risks and stakeholders.                    |               |
| 3. We have created tools or training for staff on sensitive or trauma informed interviewing techniques to encourage them to incorporate lived experience into audit evidence.    |               |
| 4. We disaggregate data to look for inequities even when outcomes are positive at the macro level.                                                                               |               |
| 5. We consistently incorporate community voices into audit evidence.                                                                                                             |               |
| 6. We prioritize equity when conducting a risk assessment to put together our audit plan.                                                                                        |               |
| 7. We have reminders built into our procedures to consider equity throughout the audit process.                                                                                  |               |
| 8. Staff are encouraged to use evidence gathering techniques such as disaggregating data and gathering qualitative data to amplify the voices of people experiencing inequities. |               |
| <b>Factor 4 Total</b>                                                                                                                                                            | <b>___/32</b> |

| <b>Factor 5: The community is meaningfully engaged</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Statement</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Rating</b> |
| 1. We have identified who in the community it is important for our shop to connect with, especially communities historically underserved by our jurisdiction.                                                                                                                                                |               |
| 2. We have determined what barriers exist to engaging in reciprocal relationships with these communities.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               |
| 3. We have developed goals and a strategy to remove identified barriers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |               |
| 4. We have developed metrics to understand how well we have addressed these barriers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |               |
| 5. We have options for the public to submit audit ideas and provide feedback for what upcoming audit ideas are most meaningful or helpful for them. For example, this could include website or email submissions, an accountability hotline, and holding inclusive, public audit topic planning discussions. |               |
| 6. We ensure accessible participation through multiple avenues that allow members of the community to connect with our shop and participate in the ways that work best for them.                                                                                                                             |               |
| 7. We ensure staff are provided training on trauma-informed interactions with members of the community.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |               |
| 8. Our relationships with the community are mutually beneficial rather than extractive.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |               |
| 9. We clearly communicate how our work impacts the community.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |               |
| 10. We conduct regular and accessible outreach and engagement with different community organizations to share our messages.                                                                                                                                                                                  |               |
| 11. We facilitate opportunities for public input and considerations into audit topics.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |               |
| 12. We are prepared to engage with diverse communities, especially those that experience systemic barriers, in a sensitive and trauma-informed way.                                                                                                                                                          |               |
| 13. We are thoughtful and strategic to engage the community in a manner that prevents harm and extractive relationships.                                                                                                                                                                                     |               |
| 14. We partner when possible, such as with our jurisdiction's DEI offices or through connecting with other audit shops.                                                                                                                                                                                      |               |
| <b>Factor 5 Total</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>___/56</b> |

| <b>Factor 6: Reporting is accessible.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                            |               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Statement</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Rating</b> |
| 1. We emphasize readability in audit reports by using plain language and effective, impactful data visualizations.                                                                                                                   |               |
| 2. When using data visualizations, we are mindful of how visual information will be communicated for people with visual impairments.                                                                                                 |               |
| 3. We use inclusive language to choose words with care and communicate more effectively.                                                                                                                                             |               |
| 4. We offer translated reports, especially if our audit topic impacts people who speak a specific language.                                                                                                                          |               |
| 5. We present audit reports using multiple forms of media that increase flexibility for how a community member can access audit work such as podcasts, YouTube videos, and HTML versions.                                            |               |
| 6. We make audit reports fully accessible for people with visual impairments, including adjusting color palettes and using alt-text to explain visualizations.                                                                       |               |
| 7. We consider our intended audience for our reports and whether we are leaving anyone out who should be included. For example, we have considered people with different abilities and people whose primary language is not English. |               |
| 8. We have considered the barriers that are or may be preventing our intended audiences from being able to access our audit work and developed strategies to remove these barriers.                                                  |               |
| <b>Factor 6 Total</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>___/32</b> |

**Part 2. Based on your ratings above, answer the following open-ended questions.** It can be helpful to discuss these questions as a team. Including more voices can promote a more diverse perspective.

1. How has our shop's DEI integration and cultivation changed in the recent past?
2. If there have been improvements, what are the key factors for these changes? For example, this might include staff champions, increased training opportunities, more supportive leadership, including DEI in risk assessments, more resources, etc.
3. What are our current strengths related to integrating DEI into our practices? Consider which overall area(s) are your strengths, as well as individual statements.
4. What are our current opportunities for improvement related to integrating DEI into our practices? Consider which overall area(s) present the most opportunity for improvement, as well as individual statements.
5. Based on the strengths and opportunities for improvement we identified, what should our priorities be?
6. How can we leverage our existing strengths and ways we've previously increased DEI to address these priority areas?

7. What is our action plan for next steps? It can be helpful to consider why you rated a statement the way you did when developing meaningful action items. To encourage accountability, list specific actions, as well as individuals responsible, priority levels, expected timelines, and expected outcomes.

| Action Item | Individual(s)<br>Responsible | Priority Level | Timeline/Deadline | Expected<br>Outcome |
|-------------|------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
|             |                              |                |                   |                     |
|             |                              |                |                   |                     |
|             |                              |                |                   |                     |
|             |                              |                |                   |                     |
|             |                              |                |                   |                     |
|             |                              |                |                   |                     |
|             |                              |                |                   |                     |

## Section 4: Advice, Examples, and Resources for Cultivating DEI

To help your shop as you seek to further cultivate and integrate DEI into your work, we have included examples of how different interviewees and survey respondents are implementing each factor below. Each section also includes advice from interviewees and respondents.

### Factor #1: Leadership is oriented toward DEI

#### Examples

- *Jurisdictional allies:* Several interviewees worked closely with their jurisdictions' office(s) and staff that were focused on DEI. One shop used its jurisdiction's requirement for department equity plans to audit implementation.

#### Advice

- Identify whether your jurisdiction has any office(s) or staff focused on DEI (including HR) and create partnerships where possible. Discuss with these staff what audit topics would be useful for their work as you prepare your audit plan.
- Evaluate whether any directives issued by your jurisdiction or related DEI offices/staff/HR could be considered audit criteria.
- If you are in a leadership position and wary of DEI, it is helpful to do some personal DEI work. Training on topics such as unconscious bias and racial equity can be very beneficial. Some organizations recommended by interviewees include GARE and the People's Institute for Survival.
- If you are in a jurisdiction or office that is less supportive of DEI:
  - Try framing potential audit topics as "procedural fairness" instead. Focus on the angle of making sure programs and services are reaching everyone they are meant to serve and are accessible, and make recommendations that address the root causes of inequity.
  - Reference that the Yellow Book now lists equity as one area of audit criteria.
  - Build relationships with other staff interested in DEI and gain buy-in, then wait for windows of opportunity to pursue related audits.
  - Use other jurisdictions as criteria if no other criteria exist.

- Research training opportunities where you can introduce DEI in less threatening ways. For example, avoid topics like implicit bias training that can create a lot of defensiveness.

## **Factor #2: DEI is incorporated into office strategy and culture**

### **Examples**

- *Office values:* One shop created an equity framework for the office to guide the shop's activities, including its DEI work.
- *Mission, Vision, and Work Plan:* Several interviewees had DEI language in their mission and/or vision and DEI audit topics in their annual work plan.
- *Talking about DEI:* One shop hosted regular staff discussions on DEI-related articles. Another interviewee discussed that recent auditee interactions sparked good office conversations around ways in which audit standards could uphold inequities.
- *Performance Evaluations:* One interviewee included DEI as an area on staff performance evaluations.
- *Roles:* Several shops had either designated DEI staff member(s) or a committee.

### **Advice**

- Start having internal conversations about what DEI means and find a shared purpose using a ground-up approach.
- DEI is driven by committed people, so partner where possible and use existing resources to get staff on board and start implementing specific tools/techniques.

## **Factor #3: Staff diversity is prioritized**

### **Examples**

- *Recruiting Strategies:* Some interviewees had specific recruiting strategies to get more diverse applicants or to gauge applicants' commitment to DEI. These strategies included publicizing openings in Black, Indigenous, and people of color-run media; application questions related to DEI importance and experience; blind application reviews; hiring panel trainings on unconscious bias; and focusing on diversifying intern hires.
- *Training:* Several shops had either general or specific DEI training requirements. Two shops had an annual CPE requirement for hours related to DEI that ranged between three to four hours. Another shop tracked CPE hours related to DEI and also offered a

volunteer time-off policy allowing staff up to 16 hours of paid time to volunteer with community-based organizations serving vulnerable populations. A fourth interviewee brought a trainer in to conduct an implicit bias training. Some of the shops interviewed were in jurisdictions that provide required DEI training for all staff as well.

### **Advice**

- Encourage staff champions but ensure that all the work doesn't fall on one person. Focus on creating an office culture where DEI begins to reinforce itself as a self-sustaining structure.
- Doing DEI training from sources outside your office can be helpful to see how important this is industry-wide and to create a shared language across the office of what integrating DEI looks like.

## **Factor #4: DEI is well-integrated within audit processes**

### **Examples**

- *Tools & Templates:* Most of the shops interviewed had a tool or template for evaluating DEI considerations in the risk assessment. One shop involved the entire office in brainstorming risks, including DEI considerations, for each audit. Some interviewees considered DEI concerns early in the process and then revisited these when developing the audit objectives and methodology. One shop included a consideration of the populations historically served by the department or program as part of the risk assessment. Another interviewee wanted to develop a formal process to summarize equity work during each audit phase.

We reviewed several of the shops' DEI-related audit tools. Some offices had planning documents that included a bullet point or a short section on equity. In a few cases, this was revisited before finalizing the audit scope and objectives, and one shop revisited DEI considerations at the end of planning, fieldwork, and reporting phases. A few interviewees required the audit team to document why equity concerns were not included or scoped out, and the chief audit executive reviewed any audits where equity concerns were scoped out for one shop. Other shops had documents that included specific questions to guide the audit team through equity brainstorming, such as:

- whether the audit topic involves certain known equity issues (like criminal justice or contracting),

- who the program is intended to serve and who it actually serves
  - identifying key groups impacted
  - historical context (especially any history of racial injustice or disproportionate impact)
  - whether the department tracks needed demographic data and how to obtain/assess data if not
  - whether the department has assessed equity impacts
  - whether the bureau includes people impacted by services in decision making
  - brainstorming the most significant equity issue for the topic
  - barriers to people taking advantage of the program
  - certain groups that may be disproportionately affected
  - documents whether further equity work will be performed/is needed
  - any potential equity issues with the data sources
  - potential biases
  - whether the audit topic falls under access, quality, procedural fairness, or outcomes
- *Leveraging Opportunities:* One interviewee was looking into adding DEI components to follow-up audits.
  - *Performance Measures:* One shop had a goal for every audit where an equity issue was identified in brainstorming to have DEI-related fieldwork on that topic. The same interviewee also had a minimum goal for equity-related recommendations in audits per year.
  - *Data:* Several interviewees mentioned using data disaggregated by different DEI indicators, such as race, ability, and gender, as an important component of DEI audits. However, they also noted that this level of detail is often missing from data. One resource mentioned is trainings by the organization We All Count.
  - *Recommendation Receptivity:* One shop said that it has started working with auditees on how to receive and work with DEI-related audit recommendations. Staff noted that this can be challenging for auditees, so providing a framework, preparing auditees, and training auditees on how to read equity analyses can improve auditee receptivity.
  - *Surveys:* A few shops incorporated DEI-related questions and tasks into preliminary audit surveys sent to the auditee, used anonymous and voluntary employee demographic surveys, and interviewed departmental DEI staff as part of initial fieldwork.

- *Trauma-Informed/Sensitive Techniques:* Several shops noted the importance of trauma-informed interviewing techniques and identified this as a desired area of growth.

### **Advice**

- When you're newer to DEI audits, start small and pick a topic that lends itself to DEI (such as choosing a vulnerable population for your scope rather than a department or program). Focus on internal criteria, such as language in the jurisdiction's mission statement or code about related topics like anti-discrimination and policies from your jurisdiction's DEI office (if one exists).
- Be strategic and thoughtful when conducting DEI-related audits. Don't just do it for "checkquity" (coined by [Adanna Abakporo](#)) and when staff aren't trained well on DEI, such as how to talk to people while maintaining confidentiality.
- Using templates to create dedicated moments to reflect on DEI implications is a helpful way to get the conversation started.
- Be sure not to lose sight of equity-related concerns once you get past the risk assessment and planning stages.
- Getting a process down is critical; you can always refine it later. Make sure there are steps that are outlined and simple tools, as well as ongoing training and informal discussions to elevate tools, techniques, and personal and audit shop awareness.
- Formalize equity-related steps into your audit processes to emphasize its importance and promote consistency in considering equity in your audits.
- Include recommendations to auditees on improving data collection and disaggregating by DEI indicators where possible.
- Connect with other audit shops to share experiences and lessons learned.

## **Factor #5: The community is meaningfully engaged**

### **Examples**

- *Reciprocal and Non-Extractive Relationships:* Several interviewees identified that creating reciprocal, non-extractive relationships with community organizations was key to advancing their DEI work. Interviewees noted that reading existing research and publications by community organizations before reaching out, encouraging staff to volunteer with community organizations, and building dedicated and outreach functions helps to ensure these relationships are mutually beneficial. Outreach functions engage

in activities like running focus groups, sharing information about services available to the community, providing a connection point between staff and the community, and keeping shops on track for removing barriers for reciprocal relationships.

- *Vulnerable Populations:* One shop identified that a goal for the future is to work with organizations serving unhoused communities to ensure that the shop is getting important input it may not otherwise receive.
- *Public Audit Ideas:* Several shops interviewed had different options for the public to submit audit ideas and report malfeasance, including website forms, running an accountability hotline, and holding inclusive, public audit topic planning discussions.

### **Advice**

- Partner with local community organizations serving vulnerable populations and focus on creating reciprocal, sustainable, and non-extractive relationships. Local universities are also good partners.

## **Factor #6: Reporting is accessible**

### **Examples**

- *Multiple Media:* Several shops interviewed offered their audits in multiple media formats for accessibility and to reach a wider audience, including podcasts, YouTube videos, and HTML webpages in addition to PDF downloads.
- *Accessibility for Visual Impairments:* A few interviewees noted making adjustments to website and audit report templates for visually impaired individuals, such as adjusting the color palette. Several shops expressed interest in making their reports more accessible in the future.
- *Translation:* Two shops had some audit reports translated into other languages, primarily Spanish, and several interviewees expressed interest in offering translated copies. Budget constraints were cited as an obstacle to this.
- *Readability:* Nearly all of the shops we spoke with discussed focusing on readability, such as using plain language and data visualizations, to improve accessibility and reach a wider audience.

**Advice**

- Previous ALGA conferences have included useful sessions on accessible reporting; check these for opportunities to improve accessibility for people with visual impairments and to increase readability.
- Check for alignment with any state or regional accessibility laws, policies, or resources.

# Authors and Contributors

This DEI Cultivation Model and Self-Assessment was created by ALGA's 2024 DEI Tools Subcommittee, including:

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The development of the DEI Cultivation Model and Self-Assessment was also supported by ALGA's 2024 DEI Committee who provided thoughtful review and input throughout its development. Additionally, the following audit shops provided valuable feedback on DEI practices in their shops:

- City of Austin
- City of Berkeley
- City of Chicago
- City of Portland
- City of Sacramento
- City of San Diego
- City of Seattle
- King County
- Oregon Metro