

City of El Segundo
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee
Community-at-Large Report
May 2, 2023

City Strategic Plan

The DEI Community-at-Large Subcommittee had the opportunity to review and explore diversity, equity and inclusion efforts as it relates to the community. The subcommittee identified multiple actions to support and advance Goal 1 of the City of El Segundo’s Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan – Goal
Enhance customer service, engagement and communications; Embrace diversity, equity and inclusion

Overview

1. DEI Community-at-Large: Background
 2. DEI & City of El Segundo: The Landscape
 - A. History of El Segundo (with a DEI lens)
 - B. Data & Statistics
 - C. Community Experiences & Feedback
 - D. Examples from Other Communities
 3. Recommendations & Next Steps
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DEI Community-at-Large: Background

The DEI Committee aims to inspire and activate efforts to integrate diversity, equity and inclusion into City of El Segundo decisions, service-delivery and policies to improve the well-being of all our communities. We commit to:

- Listening and advising with an equity lens as we help foster a healthy, just and inclusive El Segundo, instilling a sense of understanding, healing and belonging for all who live, work and play here.
- Engaging the community and holding ourselves accountable to acknowledge and correct historical inequities and current disparities, and change outdated, harmful narratives.
- Moving forward with urgency and purpose, allyship and collaboration, to support transparent and actionable solutions that will remedy these inequities and serve our diverse community.

The Community-at-Large Subcommittee has met regularly (every other week) starting March 5, 2021 (shortly after subcommittees were assigned) and has focused on community experiences as they relate to living, visiting and working in El Segundo. For the purposes of this report, community members are defined as those who live, work and/or attend school in El Segundo.

AREAS OF FOCUS

1. Design and implement a community-wide survey to serve as a baseline and help prioritize DEI's efforts.
2. Research and gather historical and current data, statistics and narratives/anecdotes. This may include a process to gather information from community partners who have and are currently collecting information from the community as it relates to DEI.
3. Working with the group to analyze and distribute the data to inform all our efforts.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Community is committed to collaborating with the DEI Committee and continues to interact and engage.
2. Education is needed for the greater community regarding the meaning and purpose of DEI as well as the role of the DEI Committee.

DEI & City of El Segundo: The Landscape

A. HISTORY OF EL SEGUNDO

Regional Considerations

The city of El Segundo was founded in 1917 in the middle of the petrochemical boom in Southern California. It is estimated that in the 1920s, almost 20% of the world's oil production came from the Los Angeles metro area. In order to meet increased demand, oil companies recruited tens of thousands of workers from the Midwest and the South.

As the population in Southern California swelled, these new migrants found themselves settling into neighborhoods along racial lines. This practice of redlining not only impacted cities like El Segundo then - it also continues to be a major factor in the current demographics today.

Redlining

[Redlining](#) is a term that is used to describe the practice of segregating cities or neighborhoods along racial and/or ethnic lines. During the Great Depression, the Federal Government created the Home Owners' Loan Program in an effort to stabilize the housing market which had suffered a severe crash. Undesirable terrain, proximity to pollution, and other factors were considered hazards; however, the most damaging for minorities was that their own race was considered a hazard as well. These individuals could only live and own homes in the "red" areas on the map (those communities that received a D or lower on the grading scale) and thus could not reside in El Segundo.

Even though El Segundo was "a company town founded by Standard Oil, where 'oil wells, refinery and tank farms' were all derogatory influences, and the beach was defiled by a large outfall sewer and oil tanker docks and loading facilities, redlining was ruled out because residents protected their properties against 'racial hazards.' El Segundo received a high yellow grade and was even lauded as a model for neatness and upkeep." (Daniel G. Cumming NYU & C108 HOLC 1939)

The use of real estate covenants (which was outlawed after the Fair Housing Act) was widely used in El Segundo with evidence of such documents still available today. These covenants explicitly banned the sale of a house to non-Whites, thus locking out members of all other races from ownership.

Klan Influence/Titus Alexander

While we only have anecdotal evidence that El Segundo was a "sundown town", we do know that there was a contingent of Ku Klux Klan members in the city. In fact, "Los Angeles County's South Bay, which includes El Segundo, was a hotbed for the Ku Klux Klan a century ago. In 1922, an estimated 12,000 people — including an El Segundo contingent — attended a Klan rally in Whittier Hills. In 1923, the El Segundo Herald recounted how members of the Methodist church got "a real thrill" one Sunday when 10 white-robed Klan members "walked solemnly down the aisle, asked for prayer and left \$120" to pay the church's debts." (Meg Loe, LA Times)

This presence served to intimidate and discourage any non-White person from opening a business, visiting or residing in El Segundo. Titus Alexander, a prominent Black entrepreneur, had visions of a luxurious beach retreat for the growing Black population in Southern California. Although the city of Los Angeles initially agreed in 1923 to lease him the land, his plans were met with stringent opposition in El Segundo and other beach cities and he was forced to abandon the project.

1940s-1990s

As in most beachside communities in Southern California this time period, El Segundo's demographics stayed almost exclusively White. During WWII, an El Segundo resident and business owner erected a

sign at the NW corner of Oak and Main that advertised discrimination towards Jewish and Japanese Americans. This public display of racism and religious intolerance was common in Southern California, reflecting the attitudes of many residents in the area.

Nevertheless, there were citizens with progressive views who lived in town as well. Frank Snow, editor of the El Segundo Herald, opined that the sign reflected poorly on the city and that “Negro people are entitled to be treated as human beings”.

During the 1960s and 70s, many communities such as Hawthorne, Inglewood, Lynwood, and Compton begin to see a dramatic shift in their demographics. This phenomenon - known as “white flight” - changes communities almost overnight from predominantly White to almost all Black or Latino. In El Segundo, however, there was hardly any increase in diversity with African Americans only making up 0.5% of the population in 1980.

Present Day El Segundo

In the past 20 years, the city has found itself in the midst of a demographic shift. Roughly 3 in 10 residents are minorities and there are a wide array of religious faiths practiced in El Segundo.

Nevertheless, there are many residents who still feel unwelcome in El Segundo. “Black in Mayberry”, a documentary released in 2021 by Tanya Taylor, illustrated life in El Segundo through the lens of various Black residents who described their experiences of racism, tokenism, and fear. The documentary was widely watched and received widespread support.

B. DATA & STATISTICS

There are hundreds of bias-related incidents experienced by community members and visitors that have been shared with local community organizations, El Segundo schools, El Segundo-based employers, and the DEI Committee. Bias-related incidents and experiences of El Segundo community members have been shared through a recent [documentary](#) and in prominent local [newspapers](#). Some have led to legal action, lawsuits, and litigation as well.

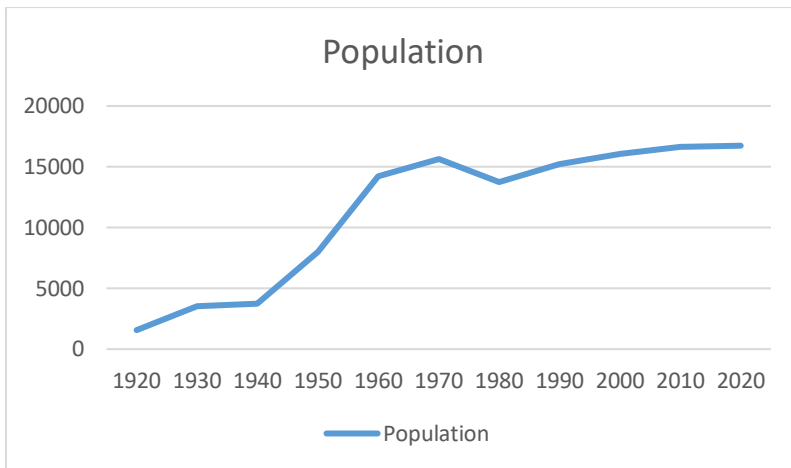
And these are just the incidents that have been shared. According to [Police Chief Magazine](#), it is estimated that only one-third of hate crimes are reported, not including hate incidents. Per the [State of California](#), a **hate crime** is a crime against a person, group, or property motivated by the victim's real or perceived protected social group. You may be the victim of a hate crime if you have been targeted because of your actual or perceived: (1) disability, (2) gender, (3) nationality, (4) race or ethnicity, (5) religion, (6) sexual orientation, and (7) association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. A **hate (or bias) incident** is an action or behavior motivated by hate but which, for one or more reasons, is not a crime. Examples of hate incidents include name-calling, insults, displaying hate material on your own property, posting hate material that does not result in property damage, and distribution of materials with hate messages in public places.

Under-reporting is just one of the challenges facing our collective efforts to address and improve DEI. Other potential barriers and challenges include a lack of dedicated paid staff/resources and DEI committee turnover. In light of these challenges, this report includes key takeaways, actions and recommendations from the Community-at-Large Subcommittee.

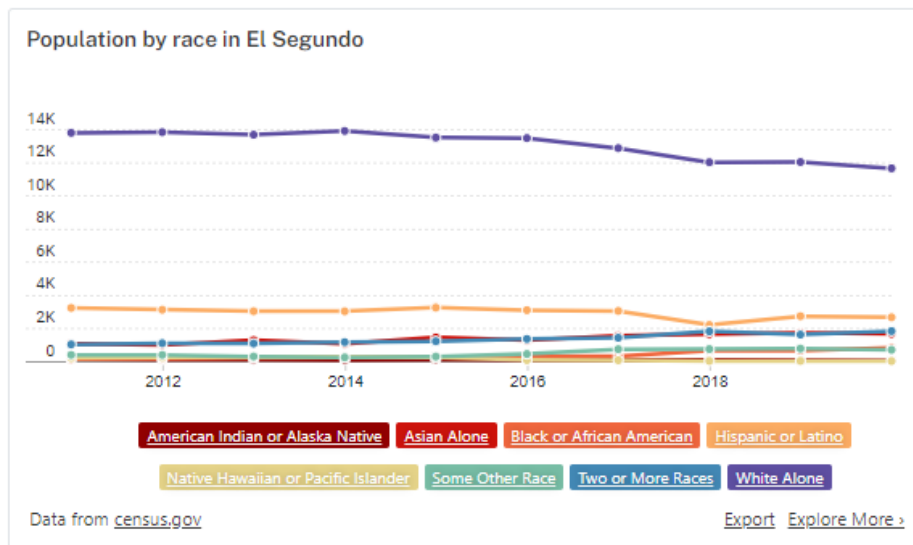
KEY FINDINGS

- 1920-1970 population increased by **899%**, 1970-2020 population increased by **7%**, and population only increased by **0.5%** from 2010-2020
- From 2012 to 2020 Caucasian population is only race steadily decreasing

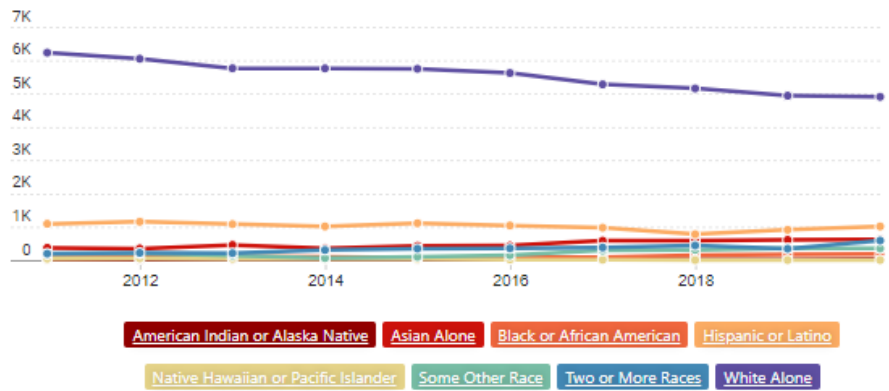
- Housing units occupied by “White alone” is steadily decreasing
- Asian population showing steady increase in income, has highest median household income by race
- Median age for African Americans in El Segundo decreased from 50 in 2010 (highest overall) to 16 by 2019. Older African Americans and those without school-aged children are leaving El Segundo. We are the only of the six cities surveyed in this area that has any race where median age is that of a minor.
- As of 2017 El Segundo has no residents identifying as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- More males in El Segundo have bachelor’s degrees while more females have graduate or professional degrees.
- More than 50% are not homeowners...majority renters



https://datacommons.org/place/geoid/0622412?utm_medium=explore&mprop=count&popt=Person&hl=en



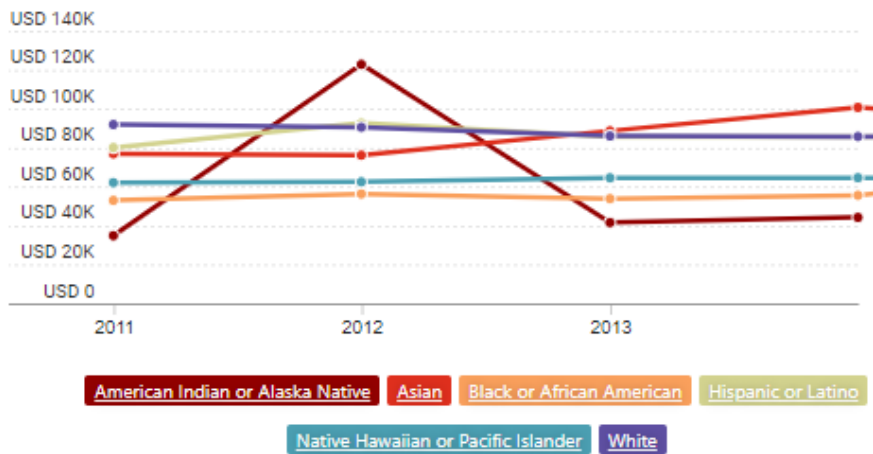
Housing units by householder race in El Segundo



Data from census.gov

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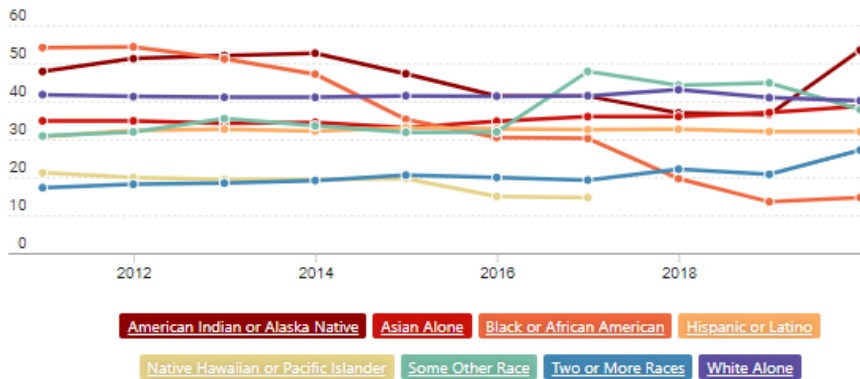
Median household income by race in El Segundo



Data from census.gov

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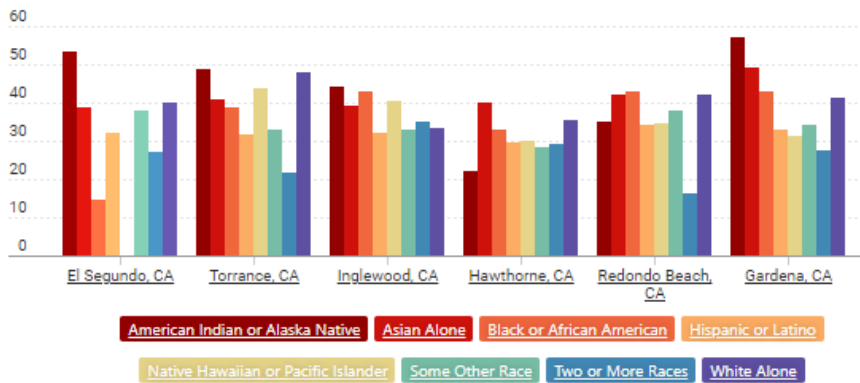
Median age by race in El Segundo



Data from census.gov

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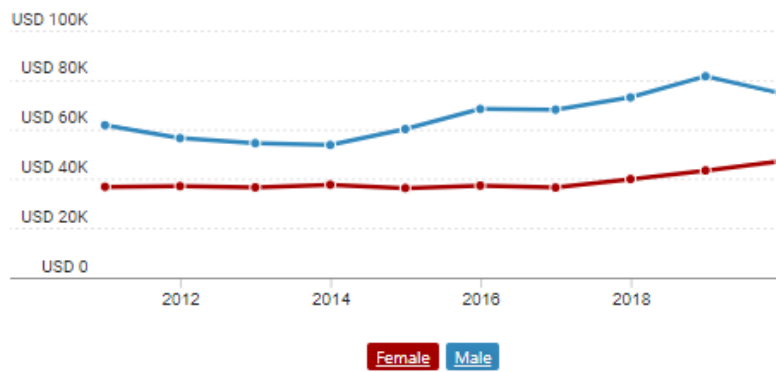
Median age by race: cities near El Segundo (2020)



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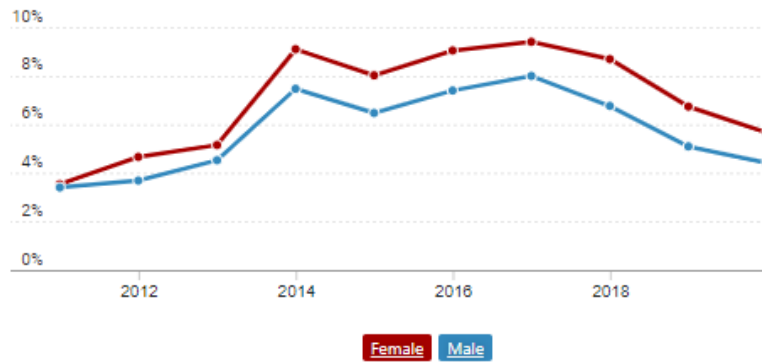
Median income by gender in El Segundo



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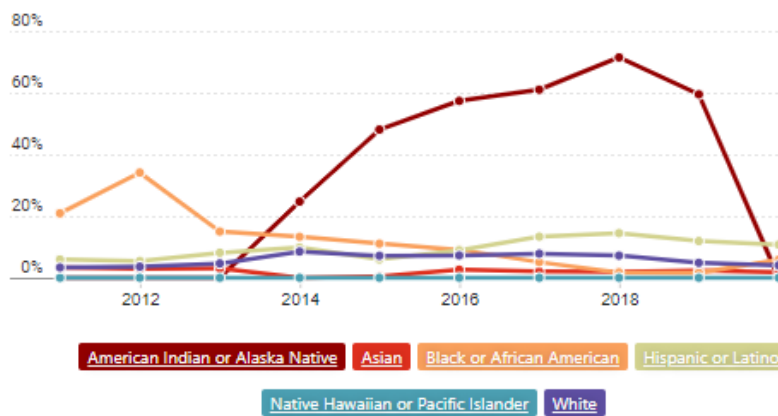
Poverty rate by gender in El Segundo



Data from [census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

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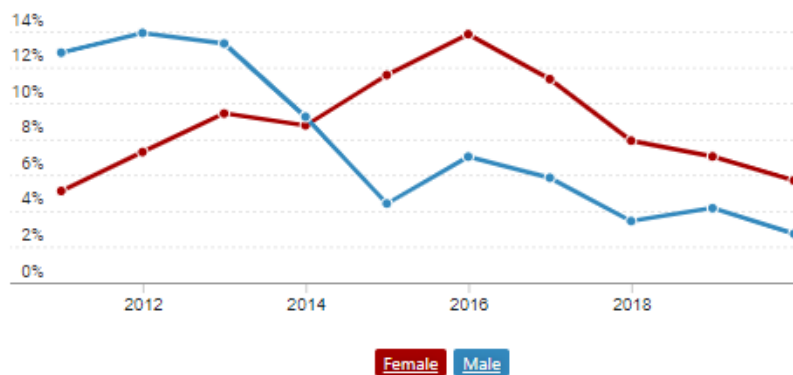
Poverty rate by race in El Segundo



Data from [census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

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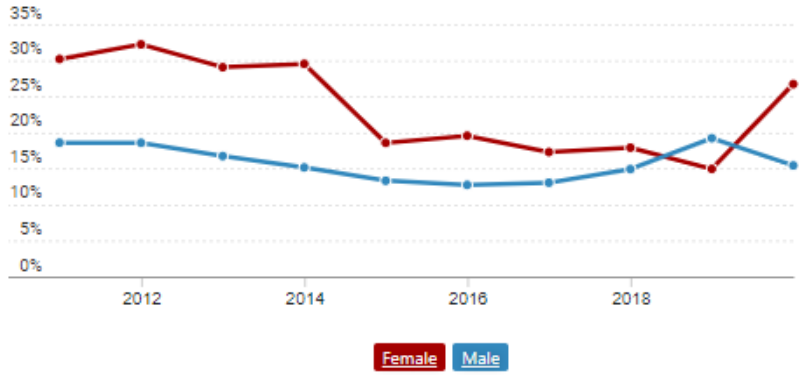
Rate of associate degree attainment by gender in El Segundo



Data from [census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

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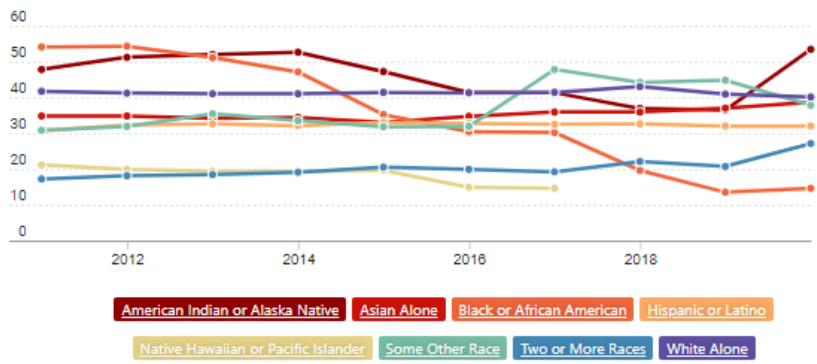
Rate of graduate or professional degree attainment by gender in El Segundo



Data from census.gov

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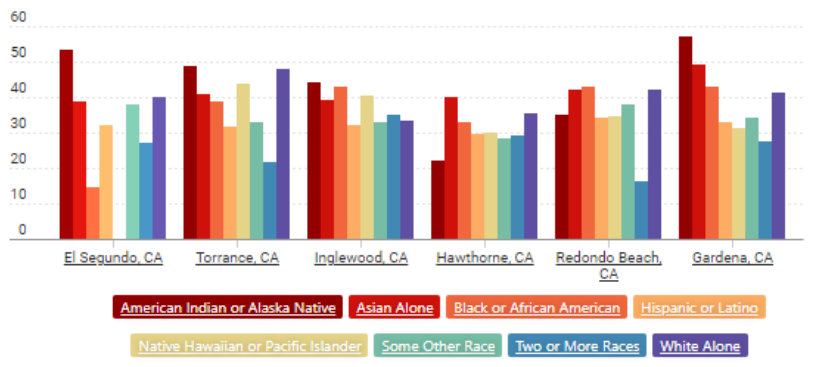
Median age by race in El Segundo



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Median age by race: cities near El Segundo (2020)



Data from census.gov

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C. COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES & FEEDBACK

Through the City's DEI Survey, community interactions at the farmer's market, public comments at DEI Committee meetings and community members reaching out to us, we began to explore and identify DEI-related needs of community members. The most prevalent themes are listed below. Please note: The complete survey data is not included due to the fact that the percentage of survey responses received is not sufficient to be considered representative of the El Segundo community. Since the survey's launch in July 2022, the City has received 486 responses to the DEI Survey.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Community dialogue and education

While one hate incident is one too many, there are dozens of hate, bias and DEI-related incidents happening to residents and community members in El Segundo each year. This is evidenced by the high number of community experiences shared at events, on film, in media; mentions in communications, conversations and public comments with the DEI Committee and the City; the significant amount of feedback, stories, and requests for support with issues that take place within El Segundo schools; and information collected from local businesses, not to mention the personal experiences of members of the DEI Committee itself.

However, some DEI Survey responses indicate the scope of residents who do not understand the purpose and concept of DEI, are not aware of the demographic make-up of El Segundo residents and community members (including those who work and attend school here), don't see value in DEI, or are against DEI as a whole and see it as a threat to our city. See some of these survey responses below.

Here is a summary of research identifying [reasons behind resistance to DEI](#).

Survey Responses

"Stop with this dei bulls*** and leave our town alone."

"You're making a big deal for less than 1% of population."

"Everything is fine with the city. The inclusion committee is not even necessary. Racism is something mostly made up by the media."

"Who cares. DEI is made up nonsense that has no use."

"Again the Idea of somehow legislating DEI is the stupidest idea in the history of stupid ideas"

"The city should not be wasting time and money on fake DEI. El Segundo is a welcoming community, and the ESPD does its job to keep us safe."

"Committees like DEI foster separation between citizens, cause resentment, and encourage kids to view themselves either as victims or guilty of perceived bias based on their skin color. Keep CRT out of our schools and save the drag queens for adult venues."

"Good management, staff - no need to accommodate DEI pushers."

"The DEI needs to be shut down and Jimmy Peet sued to give back the money he gifted from the city. This committee is a racist joke."

2. City support of DEI and City-sponsored DEI initiatives

The survey and community feedback revealed a desire for more communication from the city regarding support for DEI and as well as for City-sponsored DEI events and initiatives. Residents and community members feel it is not enough to allow other groups to sponsor these types of events in town.

Residents and community members are equally as supported in the statement made by City-hosted events as they are in the events themselves. *Inform about differentiation between what schools handle and City

Survey Responses

“I feel the City could communicate a stronger message of inclusivity by creating events that honor or celebrate the different cultures of our residents.”

“Our current city council administration needs to take DEI matters much more seriously than they do. Step outside your bubble.”

“I’ve always felt the city did not, until recently, even acknowledge diversity and inclusion. I worry that the city is only now addressing it because they need to, not because they want to.”

“I do not know what programs there are for school-aged children to promote DEI.”

“El Segundo government, specifically the city council, should be more diverse in all intersections including gender, race, ethnicity, gender identity, economic status, and other marginalized communities as to best represent the citizens of El Segundo.”

“I feel that the city needs to make a clear stance that all are welcome in El Segundo and that we will fight for the rights of all. If it is not clearly said and just implied as it is now then some will try to twist the meaning.”

“Please be bold in your efforts to advance DEI efforts in our community and don’t bow to the few but loud voices trying to thwart these efforts.”

“City leadership remains largely quiet on the topic of inclusion outside of forming a DEI committee.”

“Verbal commitments and actions from city leadership. Town halls to hear directly from diverse communities. Maybe block parties to incorporate the two.”

“We have not shown a dedication to DEI. You can’t have a DEI committee to ‘check a box’ and feel you are doing enough. We don’t celebrate diversity along all marginalized groups.”

3. Support for the LGBTQIA Community

Community feedback has shown a feeling of underrepresentation and lack of support for the LGBTQIA community in city events and initiatives. The city has made recent strides in declaring June pride month starting in 2021. However, this proclamation occurred 22 years after President Clinton declared the first pride month in June 1999. There have not, to date, been any City sponsored Pride related events. There are currently no members of the LGBTQIA community in leadership positions nor on the DEI Committee.

Survey Responses

“I don’t feel that many diverse groups are being represented, especially the LGBTQIA community. I work with, and worry about, our LGBTQIA+ and other marginalized youth. I don’t think our town does enough to acknowledge and embrace differences.”

“I feel that there should be more arts and culture, as well as education and celebration, of BIPOC, LGBTQIA (and other non-white, lower income) communities. Particularly in our public spaces and in our schools. Although I myself am a high-income cis gender highly educated white person, I really wish I lived in a community that was not only inclusive but truly embraced diversity. Raising a black child in El Segundo sometimes feels scary, as there seems to be an undercurrent of racism and bigotry. Yet, I am very encouraged by this DEI efforts and I hope that meaningful change will occur.”

“I would love to see more PRIDE events in June.”

“I think there should be some way to publicly and physically display diversity in the community along with some way to show that we're looking for more. Something like theming of main street, storefronts, banners, pride days/weeks, business involvement for products, clear celebration of equal opportunity employment and diversity in staff and residents. I feel like we don't see these things in Public because people would fear being targeted for hate crimes or vandalism. and that the police would not show up quickly or effectively to stop or investigate these issues (and if you're rolling your eyes right now, that's a big issue.)”

D. Examples from Other Communities

Below are innovative examples of how other cities have shown their commitment to DEI. These ideas are budget conscious, high impact initiatives that can be easily adapted and implemented in El Segundo.

- Jacksonville’s [One City, Our City, My City](#) campaign was designed to promote respect, caring and collaboration between all citizens in Jacksonville and encourages them to learn about their neighbors’ cultures.
- Huntington’s [Open to All Campaign](#) actively promotes an inclusive environment for all people in the City of Huntington by encouraging all businesses, houses of worship, civic groups and nonprofit organizations to take the “Open to All Pledge” and maintain a safe and welcoming environment for all employees, customers, visitors and vendors.
- San Luis Obispo’s DEI website is a shining example of acknowledging a city’s past while committing to a better future: [Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | City of San Luis Obispo, CA \(slocity.org\)](#).
- City of Manhattan Beach directed staffing, use of City facilities, and funding to support the South Bay Community Coalition Against Hate (SBCCAH) in October 2022 (City of El Segundo is a member), and adopted a [resolution of apology for historic racism](#) on Tuesday, April 4, 2023, formally apologizing to the families involved in the City’s racially motivated acquisition of Bruce’s Beach, as well as to the Black community who experienced intimidation, harassment, and racial discrimination.

Recommendations & Next Steps

DEI's Community-at-Large Subcommittee looks forward to continuing to partner with the community to further analyze and determine action items to improve DEI in the City of El Segundo.

For prior reports, eight actionable items have been explored. The items are in various phases of completion.

	Item	Progress	Relevant Information
1.	Design and implement a community-wide survey to serve as a baseline and to prioritize DEI efforts	Complete	The community-wide survey launched in July 2022. We continue to work with the City to promote the survey and encourage more participation.
2.	Research and gather historical and current data, statistics and narratives/anecdotes.	Ongoing	
3.	Formalize a system and protocol for the flow of information when we are contacted. Implement and manage ways for community members to contact the DEI Committee (contact form, questions@ email address).	Complete	We worked with the City to set up a Let us know! online form for community members to contact us. As of the launch of the online form on July 29, 2021, we have received three contacts discussing a range of DEI topics including hate/bias incidents and personal DEI-related experiences.
4.	Offer face-to-face opportunities for dialogue, information-sharing and feedback from residents, organizations, and other community members	Ongoing	To date, the DEI Committee has hosted one panel discussion (featuring Aerospace), activities in honor of United Against Hate Week (2021 and 2022), as well as presence at the Farmer's Market.
5.	Identify and collaborate with partners (such as the Arts Council and ESUSD) as they relate to using the data and community feedback to inform and implement public education and awareness initiatives.	Ongoing	Examples of these efforts include a partnership with Arts Council on Festival of Holidays/Joy Around the World events and our committee's participation on the South Bay Community Coalition Against Hate.
6.	Explore opportunities to address the complete history of El Segundo.	In progress	This may include a panel featuring historians, a mural or historical walking tour, and proclamations acknowledging DEI and taking a stand against DEI-related injustice and hate.
7.	Distribute a regular communication to the city (newsletter, City Council meeting updates)	Initial planning	
8.	Maintain a calendar of events or cultural/historical months.	Initial planning	

Below is a summary of recommendations and next steps, in addition to the items presented in the chart above. Once approved, the DEI Committee will prioritize and add tasks/timing.

1. Support actions by City Council to promote healing, signal El Segundo's commitment to DEI, and acknowledge and take accountability for historic inequity, exclusion, racism and discrimination. This may include City proclamations, signage/statue/artwork (such as at the corner of Oak and Main), dedicated space in City Hall (or other similar space in the City) that highlights notable past and present diverse residents, or an update to the City's website recognizing El Segundo's problematic past and reinforcing the City's commitment to a better future.
2. Provide resources (such as online tools and training) and support interactive and/or in-person DEI training/education sessions for City Council, City staff, and the larger community, including sessions where participants can ask questions and have a safe space for respectful dialogue. Topics may include unconscious/implicit bias, bystander intervention, the meaning of DEI, microaggressions, and anti-harassment. These educational sessions can also be used to gather more community feedback.
3. Host City-sponsored, family-friendly events during Pride in June, in addition to a proclamation and lighting of the water tower and building and strengthening partnerships and collaboration with LGBTQIA organizations and school clubs. Host similar events for Juneteenth, Hispanic & Latinx American History Month, and other celebrations of historically underrepresented communities in El Segundo.
4. Create a citywide pledge similar to the "Open to All Campaign" so community organizations, businesses and others can show solidarity and their commitment to making El Segundo a more open, welcoming community. This campaign can be extended to residents who can show their commitment through posters, yard signs etc.
5. Create a network of "Community Liaisons" for the DEI Committee to consult regarding events and communications geared toward a particular demographic.
6. Work with the City and other partners to further promote the survey and gather data through community dialogue, awareness and education efforts, and other opportunities to build bridges and foster a culture of empathy and inclusion, especially for the many residents and community members who don't feel as safe or welcome as others.
7. Allocate City resources, such as a dedicated City team member with expertise and experience in DEI to implement DEI initiatives and recommendations approved by City Council and a clear budget for DEI initiatives.