



UTC
PEAR
Pro-Equity Anti-Racism

PEAR Strategic Action Plan

Sept. 1, 2023

**Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) Strategic Action Plan
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
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Contact Information

Agency/Department/Board/Commission Name: Utilities and Transportation Commission

Agency Leader/Head Name: Dave Danner, Chair

Telephone number: 360-664-1208

Email address: dave.danner@utc.wa.gov

PEAR Team Information

Has your Agency/Department/Board/Commission established your complete PEAR Team (Executive Order 22-04 Section 2c)?

Tip: Revisit the PEAR Team Orientation Session guidance on establishing a complete PEAR Team.

- Answer: YES

Provide the name and email address of all PEAR Team members:

Agency Executive Leaders:

- [Dave Danner](#), Chair
- [Ann Rendahl](#), Commissioner
- [Milt Doumit](#), Commissioner
- [Amanda Maxwell](#), Executive Director
- [Karen Abron](#), HR Director
- [Rayne Pearson](#), Administrative Law and Policy Director
- [Anna Gill](#), Consumer Protection and Communications Director
- [Scott Rukke](#), Pipeline Safety Director

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- [Neiri Carrasco](#), Regulatory Services Director
- [Kathy Hunter](#), Transportation Safety Director
- VACANT, Operations Director
- VACANT, Equity Director

Agency Equity Officer:

- [Amanda Maxwell](#), Executive Director

Employees:

- [Molly Brewer](#), Regulatory Services
- [Stacey Brewster](#), Admin Law and Policy
- [Amanda McCarthy](#), Consumer Protection and Communications
- [Melissa Cheesman](#), Admin Law and Policy
- [Andrea Detlefsen](#), Human Resources
- [Samantha Doyle](#), Admin Law and Policy
- [Audrey Ferrie](#), Consumer Protection and Communications
- [Jacque Hawkins Jones](#), Regulatory Services
- [Kristen Jenkins](#), Consumer Protection and Communications
- [Jimmy Nyanwapolu](#), Admin Law and Policy
- [Jason Lewis](#), Legislative Program Director, Tribal Liaison
- [Heather Moline](#), Regulatory Services
- [Mathew Perkinson](#), Transportation Safety
- [Marina Rathbun](#), Pipeline Safety
- [Jing Roth](#), Regulatory Services
- [Kathi Scanlan](#), Regulatory Services
- [Jaclynn Simmons](#), Regulatory Services

External Customers:

We began hosting external advisory group meetings with a small group of participants. We hosted three meetings in 2023 and have paused this effort until our equity director is hired and onboarded. We will provide a list of participants once this effort resumes.

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Agency Partners:

- Dept. of Commerce
- Dept. of Equity
- Dept. of Health
- Dept. Of Ecology
- Attorney General’s Office Public Counsel Unit/Utilities Division

Experts for Key Business Lines:

- UTC Employees
- Washington Federation of State Employees
- Regulated Industry NGOs (Front and Centered, The Energy Project, NWECA, Sierra Club etc.)
- NARUC
- Investor-Owned Utilities

PEAR Service Line Investments

1. PEAR Service Line Investment 1 – Leadership, Operations, and Services

Agency Key Business Line(s): Administration, Commissioners, Finance, Communications, Policy, Legislation, Regulatory Services, Human Resources, Agency Committees

PEAR Service Line where the needs are greatest: Leadership, Operations, and Services

PEAR Service Line Priority where the needs are greatest: Relational partnerships, learning organization, enterprise alignment, leadership modeling

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PEAR Service Line Investment 1 description - Summarize the policies, processes, practices, and procedures related to this investment:

This investment explores the organizational alignment with PEAR priorities, seeks to establish an equity program within the commission, and codify Equity Impact Reviews into all processes and procedures.

What disparities do you seek to decrease or eliminate with this investment?

Improved access to the commission for our customers and impacted communities, centering equity at the highest level, reflecting equity principles in the employee experience.

Which people groups and/or places, with the greatest need, does this investment focus on?

Having a highly competent PEAR leadership team will improve the employee experience and build trust between our team and the people we serve. We have received feedback from community partners that the UTC needs to eliminate barriers to participation in commission processes and increase access to commission services and proceedings. The UTC needs to establish relationships with organizations that represent highly vulnerable and underrepresented communities, which will take time. We are establishing a PEAR external advisory team to help provide guidance on our strategies and investments. We are actively exploring ways to increase access to participatory funding for commission proceedings.¹ Based on feedback from employees, the UTC is evaluating organizational silos to identify common root causes across the commission and to tackle persistent inequities and complex issues.

Did your agency consult with tribal governments and Recognized American Indian Organizations (RAIOs)? How does this investment address the consultation they provided? Indicate N/A if not applicable.

¹ RCW 80.28.430

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The UTC invited tribal governments to an external listening session on PEAR in August 2022 with the Commissioners. We heard feedback that we need more access to the commission for tribal customers and governments. The commission also must formalize a Tribal Consultation Policy (see the Community Engagement and Partnerships investment).

What did impacted communities/employees/other interested parties identify as the root causes of the disparities? How will your investment address the root causes?

- **Root causes of disparities identified:** Not enough knowledge about the commission; lack of partnerships with impacted communities; not centering underrepresented voices
- **We will address root causes by:** Improving relational partnerships, establishing an equity program within commission

How does your investment address concerns and priorities identified by impacted communities/employees/other interested parties?

- **We will address concerns by:** Centering equity at the highest level, being accountable and communicating at all points during the process; creating a feedback loop that addresses the actions taken based on community input
- **We will address priorities by:** Matching our communities and employees' priorities, increased outreach, improved EDI leadership modeling, increased EIRs on all processes

How will/could your investment increase or decrease benefits for communities/employees/other interested parties? Increase or decrease burdens? How will your agency identify and minimize any unintended harms?

Better access to UTC services, more input in UTC decisions, ensuring the voice of customer is centered in equity impact reviews and if unintended harm occurs be prepared to adapt and communicate.

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PEAR Determinants of Equity supported by this investment: Equity In Jobs & Job Training; Equity in Justice Systems & Laws

PEAR Determinants of Equity Group(s) [Community Support Systems (Trunk), Family Support Systems (Branches), Community Infrastructure (Root System), Government Practices (Soil & Nutrients)] supported by this investment:

Government Practices (Soil & Nutrients)

Desired PEAR Outcome(s):

- Equity Impact Reviews
- Participatory Funding
- Effective Operations
- Structural Reviews

PEAR Habit(s) needed to achieve desired PEAR Outcomes: Trust, Avoiding the quick fix, centering equity at the highest level, leaders as models, dismantling silos, relationship investments, sustainability

PEAR Service Line Investment Lead or Team - Who is responsible for leading the actions? Commissioners, Executive Director, and Leadership Team

Collaboration needs - Who does the agency need to collaborate with to make the investment? OFM (budget funding) State HR/Union (policy development)

What are the potential barriers, challenges, and/or risks of this investment?

Lack of resources, funding, staff; lack of support from leadership.

Solution(s) identified to address resource needs and barriers/challenges/risks:

Ensure equity program funding in 2023-25 Budget, measure PEAR competencies of people leaders.

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PEAR Service Line Investment Start Date: 10/1/22

PEAR Service Line Investment Target End Date: 10/1/23

PEAR Performance Measure(s) - What measures will be used to determine effectiveness of investments? Were these measures informed by impacted communities/employees/interested parties? Choose a minimum of 1 outcome measure used to evaluate effectiveness of the investment in achieving the desired PEAR Outcome. Choose 1 process measure used to evaluate whether investment activities have been accomplished.

- **Outcome Measure 1:** Leadership at all levels of our organization who are effective, transparent, and accountable in advancing pro-equity, racial justice, access, and belonging.
- **Process Measure 1:** 100% of UTC employees that have PDP measures related to PEAR and EDI Competencies in their position descriptions and evals
- **Process Measure 2:** 100% of UTC leaders that have PDP measures related to PEAR and EDI Competencies in their position descriptions and evals

PEAR Goals - What exactly will your agency achieve in the first 3 months (Quarter 1) after investment start date? Were these goals informed by impacted communities/employees/interested parties? Choose 1 goal for each outcome and process measure.

- **Outcome Measure 1 Quarter 1 Goal:** Track EDI competency completion in PDP process
- **Process Measure 1 Quarter 1 Goal:** Establish new field for EDI competencies in PDP tracking spreadsheet and update as EDI competencies are included in PDPs
- **Process Measure 2 Quarter 1 Goal:** 100% of new employee's position descriptions and expectation documents include EDI competencies

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**What data sources will your agency use to measure success?
Consider data sources created by impacted
communities/employees/other interested parties if available.**

- Internal spreadsheet tracking annual reviews, trial services, and probationary status and completion of signed PDs and evaluations
- Employee Survey Scores

**Describe the plan to partner, share, listen, adjust, and learn with
impacted communities/employees/other interested parties during
investment implementation:**

The new EDI competencies have been discussed with staff through their development and adoption in Spring 2022. We will continue to provide information and gather feedback from staff to ensure they understand the competencies. We will focus our investment on explaining the pathways for employees to learn and grow in this critical area of knowledge and behavior as we continue to build work environments grounded in diversity, equity, inclusion, and respect where people thrive, our missions are accomplished, and the public is served.

**Describe the plan to partner, share, listen, adjust, and learn with
impacted communities/employees/other interested parties during
investment evaluation:**

We will utilize employee survey scores, management EDI competency evaluations, and internal and external listening sessions to learn and adjust as we evaluate the effectiveness of our investment.

2. PEAR Service Line Investment 2 – Workforce Equity

Agency Key Business Line(s): Administration, Finance, Communications, Human Resources, Administrative Law, Agency Committees, Leadership Teams

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PEAR Service Line where the needs are greatest: Workforce Equity

PEAR Service Line Priority where the needs are greatest: Build a culture of Pro-Equity, Access, Racial Justice, and Belonging

PEAR Service Line Investment 1 description - Summarize the policies, processes, practices, and procedures related to this investment:

Restorative practices will increase benefits and decrease burdens by actively working to heal racialized trauma within our workforce through extensive training at all levels, with an emphasis on restorative leadership training; specifically by continued cultural competency and antiracism trainings for all employees (ongoing individual trainings and quarterly all staff trainings); by creating a culture where those who are harmed feel empowered to speak up and assured that harms will be remedied; by creating a culture of continuous feedback. Focusing on workforce diversity and cultural competency and undergoing EIRs for commission policies and procedures.

What disparities do you seek to decrease or eliminate with this investment?

- More diverse workforce
- Fair hiring and promotional practices and processes
- Create growth and development opportunities and training programs
- Recognizing the value of work experience and relatable and transferable skills for work across the commission
- More transparency around hiring and job expectations,
- Fuller participation in hiring decision making
- Leadership team that reflects the diversity of our population

Which people groups and/or places, with the greatest need, does this investment focus on?

- UTC Employees
- Prospective UTC employees

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Did your agency consult with tribal governments and Recognized American Indian Organizations (RAIOs)? How does this investment address the consultation they provided? Indicate N/A if not applicable.

- N/A

What did impacted communities/employees/other interested parties identify as the root causes of the disparities? How will your investment address the root causes?

- **Root causes of disparities identified:** Lack of diversity in workforce/leadership, lack of cultural competency among staff and leadership, lack of transparency in hiring and promotional decisions
- **We will address root causes by:** Building our workforce to reflect the population we serve, training ourselves to become culturally competent and actively antiracist, removing barriers to recruitment

How does your investment address concerns and priorities identified by impacted communities/employees/other interested parties?

The restorative practices service line investment is a necessary foundation to ensure that investments are beneficial to impacted people groups and places. Failing to address these foundational issues could create additional burdens for impacted people groups and places regardless of other service lines put into place.

How will/could your investment increase or decrease benefits for communities/employees/other interested parties? Increase or decrease burdens? How will your agency identify and minimize any unintended harms?

- Increase diversity at all levels;
- Increase psychological safety;
- Create accessible and culturally appropriate environments to ensure all employees experience belonging;

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- Establish career pathways to economic mobility for historically marginalized and underrepresented communities;
- Establish career pathways to eliminate skills gaps in targeted industries;
- Increase job training participation by marginalized communities.
- Agency will share data and establish metrics around PEAR.

PEAR Determinants of Equity supported by this investment:

- Equity in State & Local Practices
- Equity In Jobs & Job Training

PEAR Determinants of Equity Group(s) [Community Support Systems (Trunk), Family Support Systems (Branches), Community Infrastructure (Root System), Government Practices (Soil & Nutrients)] supported by this investment:

- Community Infrastructure
- Government Practices

Desired PEAR Outcome(s): Restorative practices; removing barriers to employment, more diverse workforce

PEAR Habit(s) needed to achieve desired PEAR Outcomes:

Employee Voice, Workforce Experience, Continuous Workforce Development, Relatable Workforce, BRG support

PEAR Service Line Investment Lead or Team - Who is responsible for leading the actions?

Human Resources, Leadership Team

Collaboration needs - Who does the agency need to collaborate with to make the investment?

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Internally: OSP, Communications, ALD and Policy, Reg services, Consumer protection, EDI division, BIPOC Council, and EDI Committee.

Externally: OFM, Office of Equity, BRGs, and consumer advocates.

What are the potential barriers, challenges, and/or risks of this investment?

If employees feel safe to self-identify, if people are willing to commit to this journey, if we encounter resistance to equity and antiracism.

Solution(s) identified to address resource needs and barriers/challenges/risks:

Employee training on racial trauma, hiring an Equity Director within the UTC, continuous feedback loop.

PEAR Service Line Investment Start Date: 10/1/22

PEAR Service Line Investment Target End Date: TBD

PEAR Performance Measure(s) - What measures will be used to determine effectiveness of investments? Were these measures informed by impacted communities/employees/interested parties? Choose a minimum of 1 outcome measure used to evaluate effectiveness of the investment in achieving the desired PEAR Outcome. Choose 1 process measure used to evaluate whether investment activities have been accomplished.

- **Outcome Measure 1:** Reduce racial disparities in hiring
- **Process Measure 1:** % of new hires self-identified Black, Indigenous, or other People of Color
- **Outcome Measure 2:** Increasing pro-equity anti-racism competency of staff and leadership
- **Process Measure 2:** Process Measure 2: % of employees that attend DEI and/or racial trauma training

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PEAR Goals - What exactly will your agency achieve in the first 3 months (Quarter 1) after investment start date? Were these goals informed by impacted communities/employees/interested parties? Choose 1 goal for each outcome and process measure.

- **Outcome Measure 1 Quarter 1 Goal:** Reducing bias in hiring
- **Process Measure 1 Quarter 1 Goal:** All interview panelists (100%) must attend an annual training about reducing bias in hiring.
- **Outcome Measure 2 Quarter 1 Goal:** Establish NEO PEAR training/resource library
- **Process Measure 2 Quarter 1 Goal:** All new hires (100%) must attend a training about EO 22-04.

What data sources will your agency use to measure success? Consider data sources created by impacted communities/employees/other interested parties if available.

- The Learning Center Training platform
- Employee survey scores
- Employee pulse surveys
- State HR workforce demographic data

Describe the plan to partner, share, listen, adjust, and learn with impacted communities/employees/other interested parties during investment implementation:

This investment comes at a key time for the commission while we conduct a review of our agency values. Through this process, we intend to host listening sessions, conduct surveys, and explore from our team's perspective what cultural values we want to commit to as we center PEAR at the highest levels. This will help us explore our Workforce Equity investment and tie it together with our revised agency values.

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Describe the plan to partner, share, listen, adjust, and learn with impacted communities/employees/other interested parties during investment evaluation:

We will continue to use available data and employee and customer feedback to measure success and will commit to being adaptable to change as we receive this information. We will meet frequently with staff to discuss the PEAR action plan and performance and implement a feedback loop to adjust as needed.

3. PEAR Service Line Investment 3 – Community Partnerships and Engagement

Agency Key Business Line(s): Commissioners, Finance, Consumer Protection, Communications, Policy, Legislation, Pipeline Safety, Transportation Safety, Regulatory Services, Administrative Law, Agency Committees

PEAR Service Line where the needs are greatest: Engagement & Community Partnerships

PEAR Service Line Priority where the needs are greatest: Relational partnerships and resources, Equity Impact Reviews

PEAR Service Line Investment 3 description - Summarize the policies, processes, practices, and procedures related to this investment:

This investment focuses on community building and how the commission engages with the people we serve. We will continue to develop participatory funding policies to support this work and enable us to provide funding for those who contribute their time and energy to our processes. This also includes developing a formal tribal consultation policy and welcoming tribal governments to share in developing policies and procedures that impact how they receive vital utility or transportation services.

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What disparities do you seek to decrease or eliminate with this investment?

- Increased participation in Commission proceedings will increase awareness, which will help inform Commission decisions that impact underrepresented communities.
- Disparities that will be eliminated or reduced: access to information and decision-making forums.
- Increased community customer understanding of the Commission's mission and services.

Which people groups and/or places, with the greatest need, does this investment focus on?

- Highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations, including underrepresented and marginalized communities
- Tribal governments
- UTC Employees
- Low-income customers of UTC-regulated companies

Did your agency consult with tribal governments and Recognized American Indian Organizations (RAIOs)? How does this investment address the consultation they provided? Indicate N/A if not applicable.

The Commission participates in the Centennial Accord and follows that framework and guidance for government-to-government relationships. The Commission has initiated a process to implement an agency government-to-government consultation policy to guide our Tribal engagement for PEAR activities.

What did impacted communities/employees/other interested parties identify as the root causes of the disparities? How will your investment address the root causes?

- **Root causes of disparities identified:** lack of knowledge about the commission in general (more specifically about services we offer or how our work impacts them directly); lack of access to web services (translation, accessibility)

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- **We will address root causes by:** Building awareness and understanding, meeting vulnerable and highly impacted communities where they are, creating feedback loop to reflect impact of investment and participation, investing in translation and accessibility services

How does your investment address concerns and priorities identified by impacted communities/employees/other interested parties?

- Funding and staffing are prioritized for government-to-government relations with tribes and meaningful relational partnerships with impacted communities, employees, and other interested persons.
- Deeper understanding of historical and present impacts of our government systems using PEAR data strategies and reporting that drives our decisions.
- Beginning to observe, address, and eliminate inequities and access barriers when we engage outside the agency.
- Bringing voices to our decisions from underserved areas with engagement from the communities we serve.
- Policy or action plan on how we will communicate with outside organizations.

How will/could your investment increase or decrease benefits for communities/employees/other interested parties? Increase or decrease burdens? How will your agency identify and minimize any unintended harms?

- **Increase Benefits:** Greater awareness leads to more participation, which leads to increased trust and satisfaction, which makes the Commission better postured to ensure regulated companies provide services equitably.
- **Decrease burdens:** in the long term, we hope that our efforts toward better engagement and community partnerships reduce burdens that communities face. For example, more participation leads to different decisions and outcomes, which leads to more equitable rates.

PEAR Determinants of Equity supported by this investment:

Equity in State & Local Practices; Equity in Justice Systems & Laws; Digital Equity

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PEAR Determinants of Equity Group(s) [Community Support Systems (Trunk), Family Support Systems (Branches), Community Infrastructure (Root System), Government Practices (Soil & Nutrients)] supported by this investment:

Government Practices
Community Infrastructure

Desired PEAR Outcome(s):

- Funding and staffing are prioritized for government-to-government relations with tribes and meaningful relational partnerships with impacted communities, employees, and other interested persons.
- Deeper understanding of historical and present impacts of our government systems using PEAR data strategies and reporting that drives our decisions.
- Beginning to observe, address, and eliminate inequities and access barriers when we engage outside the agency.
- Bring voices to our decisions from underserved areas with engagement from the communities we serve.
- Policy or action plan on how we will communicate with outside organizations.

PEAR Habit(s) needed to achieve desired PEAR Outcomes:

- Center community;
- Community priorities over convenience;
- Practice humility and curiosity;
- Partner with established organizations.

PEAR Service Line Investment Lead or Team - Who is responsible for leading the actions?

Leadership team

Collaboration needs - Who does the agency need to collaborate with to make the investment?

- UTC Communications team

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- BRGs
- Investor-owned utility low-income and equity advisory groups.
- Other organizations such as United Way, SEA Center for Racial Equity
- 211 – People to People
- Local community groups such as Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Partners for Rural Washington, Disability Rights Washington, Community to Community, and Alliance for a Just Society
- Partnering with state agencies such as Ecology or Department of Transportation
- Partnering with national associations such as Common Ground and NARUC
- Partnering with federal agencies such as the Federal Railroad Administration, PHMSA, Federal Motor Carrier Safety, and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Office of Public Participation

What are the potential barriers, challenges, and/or risks of this investment?

- Existing heavy workload and staff turnover.
- Budget to support travel costs to highly impacted communities.
- Potential for decisions affecting these communities to be made in the same way and on the same grounds as if they hadn't participated.
- Lack of trust and representation in our workforce.
- Lack of training for those responsible for outreach.

Solution(s) identified to address resource needs and barriers/challenges/risks:

- Participatory funding in process.
- FTEs present, however more resources are needed to execute PEAR service line investments including a review of impacts to displaced work.
- IT system updates for PEAR tracking, tribal relations, etc.
- Procedures and training for employees who will be developing outside relational partnerships.
- Work with local governments, community advocates to hear community needs.

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- Clear process for engaging with impacted communities, including existing forums for information sharing, and how various divisions share communications/engagement responsibilities.

PEAR Service Line Investment Start Date: 10/1/22

PEAR Service Line Investment Target End Date: TBD

PEAR Performance Measure(s) - What measures will be used to determine effectiveness of investments? Were these measures informed by impacted communities/employees/interested parties? Choose a minimum of 1 outcome measure used to evaluate effectiveness of the investment in achieving the desired PEAR Outcome. Choose 1 process measure used to evaluate whether investment activities have been accomplished.

- **Outcome Measure 1:** Tribal, community, and employee engagement satisfaction.
- **Process Measure 1:** 100% of leaders have completed GOIA Government-to-Government training by October 1, 2024
- **Process Measure 2:** 100% participation in Employee Engagement Survey
- **Process Measure 3:** Tracking meaningful engagements and network building with communities (ex. Listening sessions, educational workshops/trainings, meetings with community leaders/advocates, etc.)

PEAR Goals - What exactly will your agency achieve in the first 3 months (Quarter 1) after investment start date? Were these goals informed by impacted communities/employees/interested parties? Choose 1 goal for each outcome and process measure.

- **Outcome Measure 1 Goal:** Improved tribal government engagement.
- **Process Measure 1 Goal:** 50% of Extended Leadership Team has completed or is registered for Government to Government Training.

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- **Process Measure 2 Goal:** 100% participation rate in Statewide Employee Survey (October 2022).
- **Process Measure 3 Goal:** Decision Package submitted for additional expenditure authority and revenue for equity program in 2023-25 biennium.

**What data sources will your agency use to measure success?
Consider data sources created by impacted
communities/employees/other interested parties if available.**

- The Learning Center online training program
- Statewide Employee Survey Scores
- OFM finance/budget data

**Describe the plan to partner, share, listen, adjust, and learn with
impacted communities/employees/other interested parties during
investment implementation:**

As part of our PEAR plan, we established an External PEAR Advisory Board, with the first meeting held in November 2022. We held two additional meetings to discuss team roles, responsibilities and areas of interest. We decided to pause the meetings beginning in summer 2023 and will resume once we hire an equity director.

**Describe the plan to partner, share, listen, adjust, and learn with
impacted communities/employees/other interested parties during
investment evaluation:**

Through the External Advisory Board and our direct interactions with communities, we will continue to seek feedback and be adaptable in our strategic planning. We will communicate frequently any changes or improvements made because of this feedback.