The National League of Cities has recognized Winston-Salem for its innovative programs involving cultural diversity and its efforts to promote inclusion and involvement among its citizens. The city placed second among cities with populations between 200,001-500,000 people. Mayor Pro Tempore Denise D. Adams, East Ward Council Member Annette Scippio, and Assistant City Manager Patrice Toney accepted the honor on behalf of the Human Relations/Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Department at the National League of Cities Congressional City Conference in Washington, DC in March.

The National League of Cities works to strengthen local leadership, influence public policy and support innovative solutions among its member cities, towns and villages.

Wanda Allen-Abraha, director of the Human Relations/Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Department, said that the city had cited its Building Integrated Communities program and related activities in its application. The program creates a one-stop shop for immigrants and refugees to access such services as housing, transportation, healthcare and more.

“We’re proud of the work our city is doing to become more diverse, welcoming and inclusive,” she said, “and the timing of this award, in a month in which we celebrate Diversity Awareness, couldn’t have been better.”

The city will be sponsoring activities that celebrate diversity each week of April. See CityofWS.org/dam for details. During the week of April 2, Mayor Allen Joines issued a proclamation celebrating diversity. Through a partnership with the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Public Art Commission, an exhibit of artwork with diversity themes will go on display in the lobbies of City Hall and the Bryce A. Stuart Municipal building the week of April 9. During the week of April 16, musical groups will perform in the lobby of City Hall from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Food trucks representing a variety of food from different countries will park in the north lot of City Hall April 26, 27 and 28, between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Some food trucks will offer discounts to City employees!

FACTS ABOUT INCLUSION

Up to 1 in 4 (26%) of adults in United States have some type of disability.

- 11.1% of U.S. adults have a mobility disability with serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs.
- 10.9% of U.S. adults have a cognition disability with serious difficulty concentrating, recall, and decision making.
- 6.4% of U.S. adults have an independent living disability with difficulty doing errands alone.
- 5.7% of U.S. adults are deaf or have serious difficulty hearing.
- 4.0% of U.S. adults have a vision disability with blindness or serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses.
- 3.0% of U.S. adults have a self-care disability with difficulty dressing or bathing.

Source: Centers for Disease Control
**Reality Check**

**NLC and the Equity Core Team**

The Equity Core Team is wrapping up a series of trainings, provided over the past several months, from the National League of Cities Race, Equity, and Leadership (NLC REAL) team. The trainings focused on how Equity Core Teams should function in municipal government.

NLC REAL provided training on topics such as the history of race relations, unconscious bias, discrimination, equity, and inclusion. More recently, the NLC REAL team engaged with members of the Equity Core Team to discuss the challenges and barriers with embedding diversity initiatives in departments. There was also discussion regarding the importance of having the open, strong support of leadership throughout the organization as our municipality establishes its own citywide equity plan.

Julie Puckett, Equity Assurance Administrator, assured Equity Core Team members that she was a resource for all departments and staff who need technical assistance or guidance as they introduce their peers and leadership to DEI and equity planning. Julie shared that she would be happy to share internal and national best practices for departments to adopt or customize to address their own needs. She may be reached at juliep@cityofws.org.

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**Trainings & Events**

**Cultural Competency Trainings**
- Marital Status: 4/26/23
- National Origin: 5/24/23
- Gender Expression: 6/28/23

**HR/DEI Programs**
- Fair Housing Summit: 4/25/23
- Juneteenth: 6/17/23
- Pride W-S Festival: 6/24/23

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**Equity Planning is Underway!**

Earlier this fiscal year, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion division began working with select city departments to develop equity plans. The goal is for each city department to develop equity plans that track and measure customizable strategies.

The role of the DEI division staff is to meet with departmental teams for a series of one-on-one consultations that are divided into six phases. Julie Puckett, Equity Assurance Administrator; Dr. Ronnie Christian, Human Relations/DEI Assistant Director; and Wanda Allen-Abraha, Human Relations/DEI Director, work with departmental teams, which usually include each department’s Equity Core Team representative(s), to identify areas in which the departments need guidance and feedback. These consultations result in action items and measures that will improve equity in their programs and services for the year. All equity plans are written in the Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE) framework, which is a national best practice for DEI planning.

The first “fabulous five” departments to experience the six-phased equity planning process are Fire, Utilities, Transportation, City Link, and the Fairgrounds.

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**Useful Resources for the Upcoming Months**

- DEI Equity Calendar
- Diversit in the Workplace Statistics
- 2022 Employee Equity Survey Results