

City Recruiting and Hiring Efforts



Objective

Do City efforts to recruit and hire result in a qualified and diverse workforce?

Background

A qualified and diverse workforce can benefit organizations by promoting innovation, complex thinking, and more effective decision-making. According to Strategic Direction 2023, the City wants to “improve our competitiveness as an employer to attract, efficiently hire, and retain a diverse, highly skilled workforce across the entire City organization.” The Human Resources Department leads this effort, but the selection of new employees is the responsibility of each Department Director.

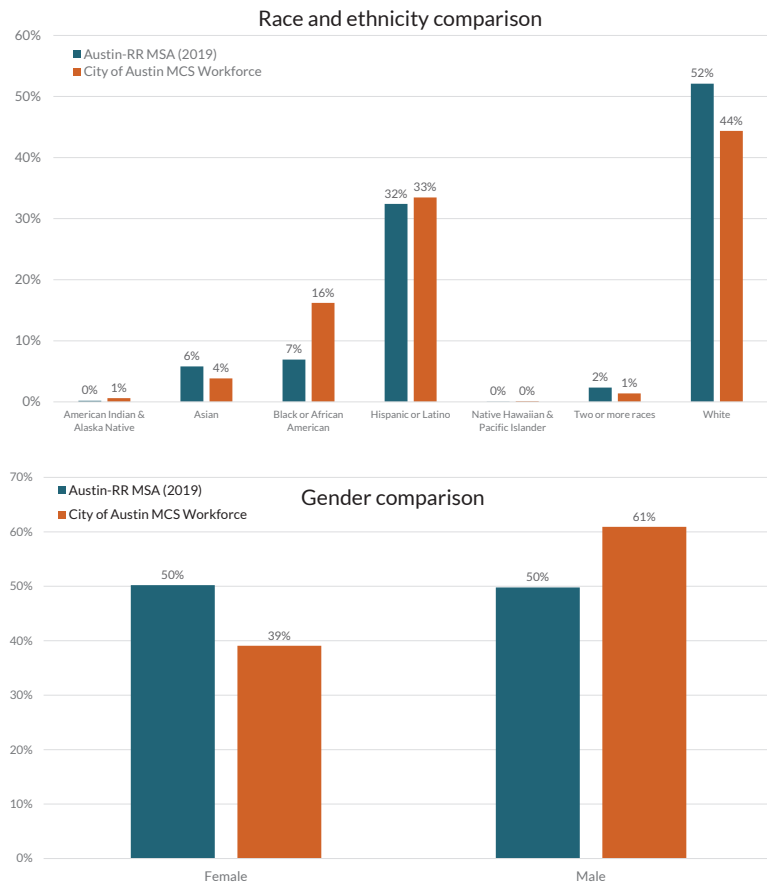
The City of Austin’s Municipal Civil Service (MCS) rules state that the hiring process must be competitive for all qualifying positions and all hiring decisions must be made based on merit and fitness. The City’s Human Resources Department (HRD) created administrative rules that outline the recruitment, selection, and advancement of candidates through the recruiting and hiring process.

What We Found

Finding 1: The City of Austin needs to be more deliberate in its pursuit of a diverse workforce and can do more to proactively identify and remove gaps in the workforce at the Citywide and department level.

- The City of Austin workforce mostly aligns to the racial and ethnic demographics of the community, but the City’s workforce is less representative at the department level.
- At the Citywide and department levels, the City’s workforce does not appear representative of the community-at-large in terms of gender.

Exhibit 1: Citywide comparison of race and ethnicity, gender between the MCS-eligible workforce and the Austin-Round Rock MSA.



SOURCE: OCA Analysis of fiscal year 2020 City Banner Data and 2019 American Community Survey estimates

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What We Found, Continued

Current City initiatives are not sufficient to proactively identify and address workforce disparities.

- HRD states that the City's workforce should closely mirror the community, however this goal is absent in guiding documents and lacks associated performance measures.
- The City also does not have a process to strategically identify departments with employee demographics that do not align to the community so that those departments can deliberately enhance recruiting and hiring efforts to correct disparities.
- Equity assessments do not provide ongoing, timely demographic information to departments to help them strategically address recruiting and hiring gaps.
- Direct assistance to departments is only provided to those that both acknowledge deficiencies in their recruiting and hiring efforts and request this assistance.

Finding 2: HRD is not consistently reviewing and enforcing departmental compliance with recruiting and hiring guidance.

- HRD does not regularly review recruiting and hiring data or departmental hirings to ensure compliance with established policy.
- HRD does not closely monitor applicant statuses in the eCareer system to ensure all applicants are properly moved through the system and given an appropriate final status.

Additional Observations:

- Further analysis of pay throughout the organization may provide insight into inequities. A cursory analysis found that departments with more employees that identify as "White" were correlated to higher average pay.
- The City of Austin appears to be out of compliance with three federal grants awarded to the Austin Police Department (APD). Grant provisions require the City to report workforce demographic data to the Department of Justice, however APD was unaware of these reporting requirements.

What We Recommend

We issued six recommendations to the Human Resources Department.

To address Finding 1:

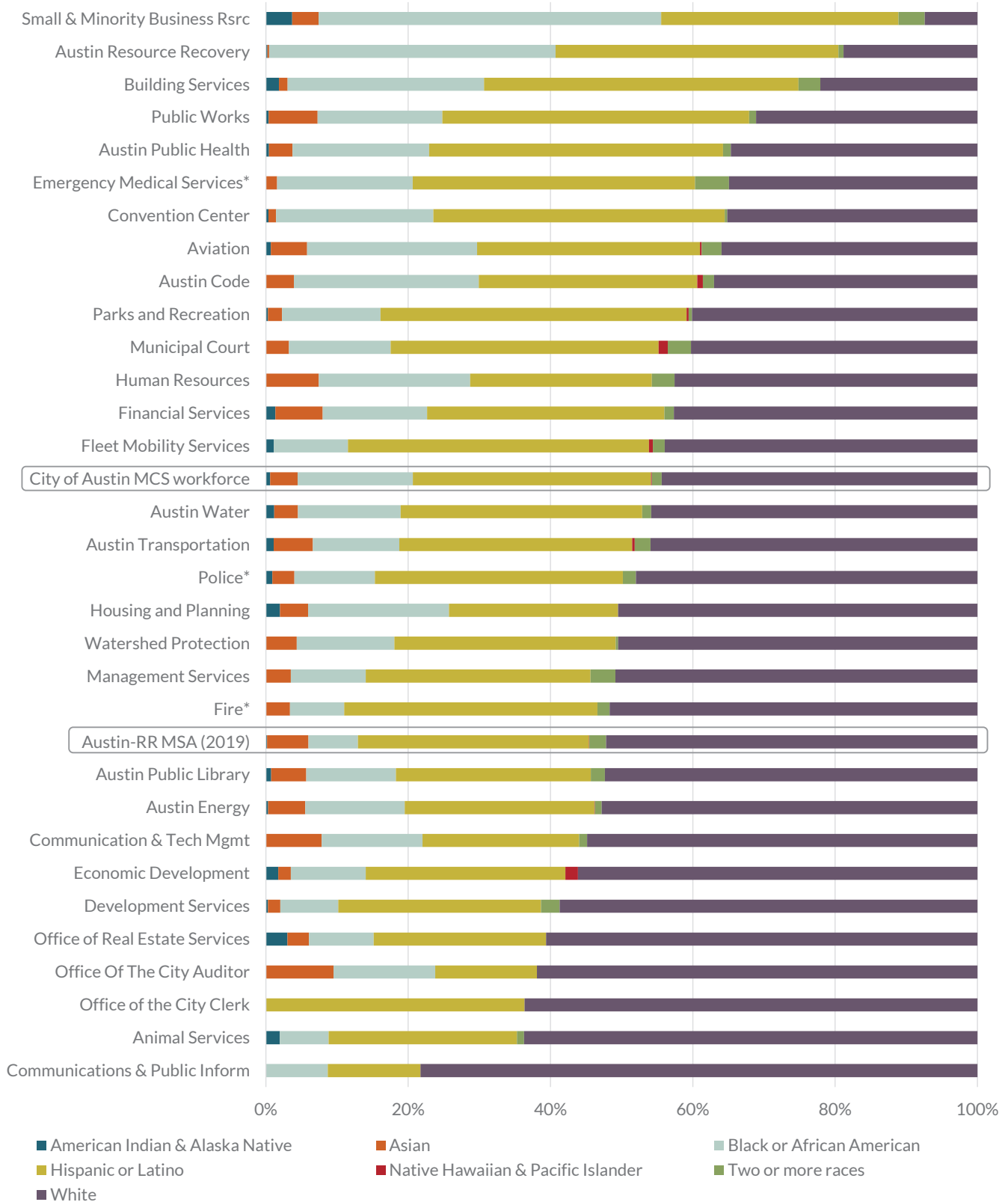
1. HRD should work with City Management to create citywide plans for recruiting a more diverse workforce.
2. HRD should proactively identify and work with departments that have racial and ethnic disparities when compared to the community.
3. HRD should add strategies to help departments resolve gender disparities.
4. HRD should analyze best practices in diverse hiring that could aid the city in its hiring efforts.

To address Finding 2:

5. HRD should take steps to periodically review departmental hirings.
6. HRD should ensure that all applicants in the eCareer system are assigned the appropriate final status when the hiring process is completed.

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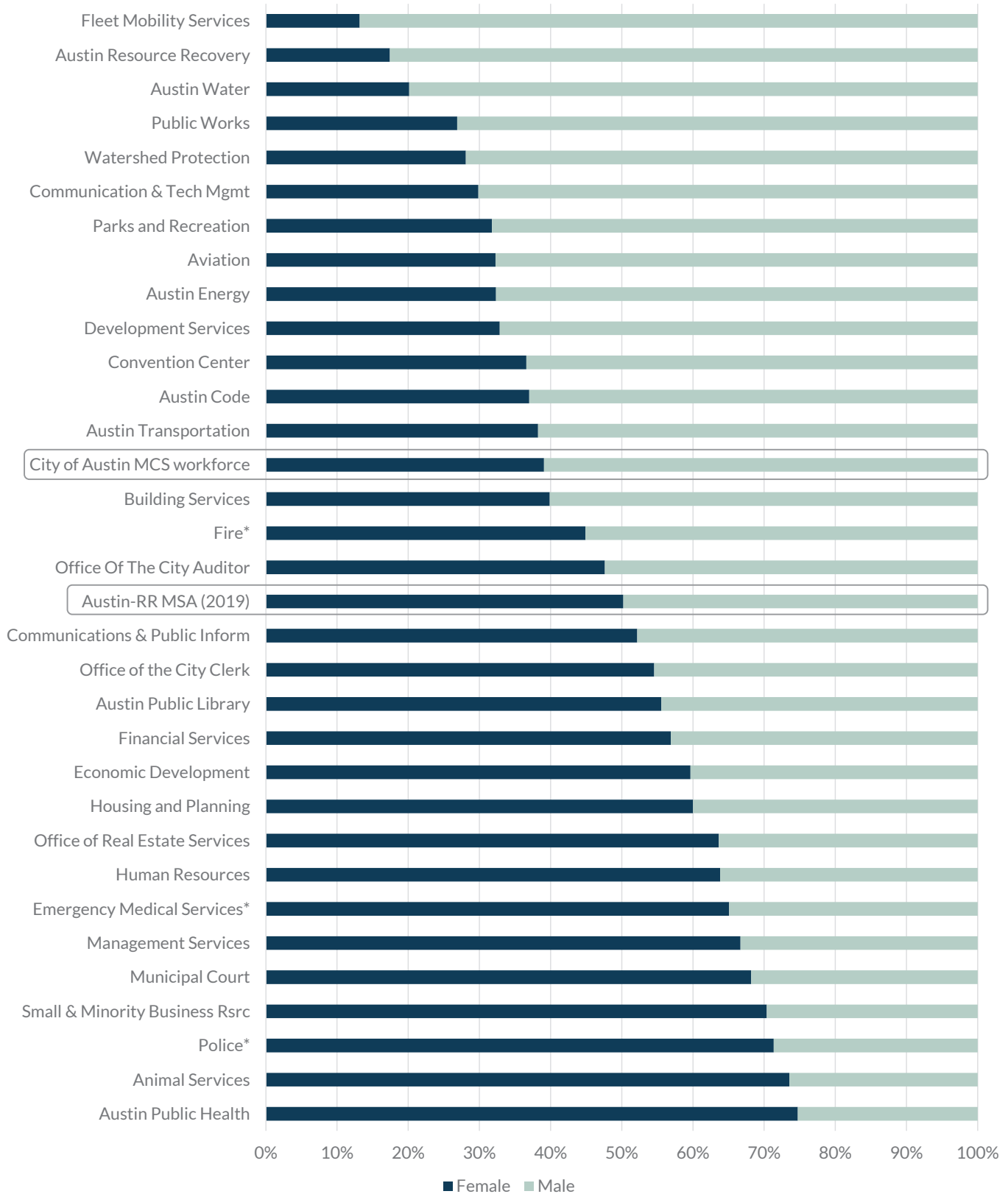
Exhibit 2: Department-level breakdown of race and ethnicity demographics for MCS-eligible employees along with Citywide and community figures.



*Indicates public safety departments that contain a large number of employees not covered by Municipal Civil Service.
SOURCE: OCA Analysis of fiscal year 2020 City Banner Data and 2019 American Community Survey estimates.

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Exhibit 3: Department-level breakdown of gender demographics for MCS-eligible employees along with Citywide and community figures.



*Indicates public safety departments that contain a large number of employees not covered by Municipal Civil Service.
SOURCE: OCA Analysis of fiscal year 2020 City Banner Data and 2019 American Community Survey estimates.