

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at OCS

The Michigan Office of Child Support is making diversity, equity, and inclusion a part of our culture. That includes moving towards claiming an anti-racist, multi-cultural identity. We lead our work explicitly though not exclusively with race because racial inequities have been baked into the creation and ongoing policies of all human services programs including child support. Unless it is otherwise countered, racism operates at individual, institutional, and structural levels and therefore is present everywhere. We also lead with race because we know if we can solve for racial inequities, we will also address other dimensions of identity that are marginalized. Advancing equity requires addressing all areas of marginalization and understanding the interconnected nature of what we are pushing against.

We are:

- Building our capacity to address equity and inclusion in child support.
- Reckoning with the ways this program has helped and harmed families throughout its history.
- Envisioning new ways of being with each other and those we serve that are inclusive and increase understanding.

This is part of a broader focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion within state government and at MDHHS. In 2017 MDHHS created a DEI plan for the department and created the MDHHS DEI Council. In 2020 the department created the Office of Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI). In 2020 Governor Whitmer proclaimed racism as a public health emergency (Exec Dir. 2020-9).

OCS also began talking about DEI in 2017. We held our first introduction to system racism workshop in April of 2018 and created a DEI Group later that year, which is still going strong.

All staff at OCS are required to take the 2 MDHHS mandatory computer-based trainings on health equity and systemic racism, as well as attend a one-day workshop on an introduction to systemic racism.

We have multiple, on-going efforts around DEI at OCS.

- 1) DEI Group – made up of staff across OCS who have taken Analysis of Systemic Racism training and are working through multiple sub-teams to change the culture of OCS. The team hosts lunch and learns, shares information with staff about marginalized communities, reviews practices, and makes recommendations for improvements to achieve more equitable outcomes.
- 2) Implementation of an Equity Impact Assessment Tool – led by the Program Development Division, OCS is using methodology to assess policy and practice decisions within an equity framework.
 - a. As part of the Equity Impact Assessment process, we have created a DEI Advisory Council which meets monthly to co-create policies and evaluate decisions.
- 3) Program Development Division (PDD) Employee Engagement Inclusion (EEI) Group - As part of their response to employee engagement surveys, PDD staff are working to build capacity and address DEI as part of their efforts to include many voices in decision making.
- 4) Anti-Racism Transformation Team- Planning & Design Task Force – A new team kicking off in October 2021 to specifically focus on the child support program overall and moving towards anti-racism.
- 5) The Program Leadership Group has made incorporating DEI one of our core operating principles.