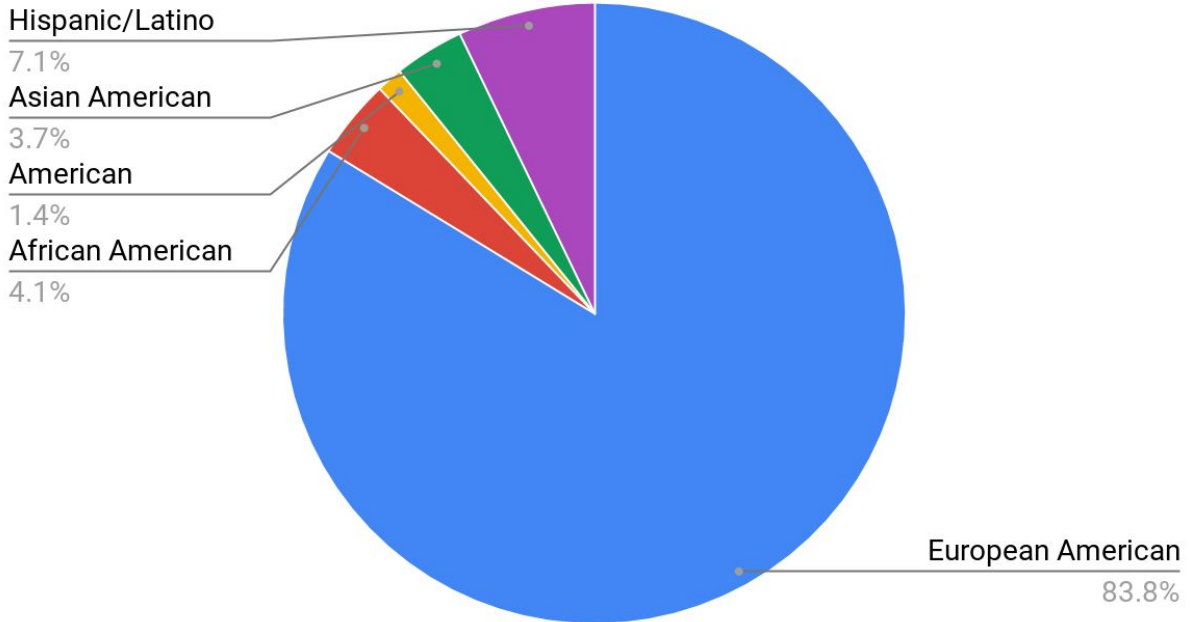# Executive Summary

The Washington State Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, also known as WSRID, reviews its bylaws to adjust its work scope to serve the interpreters in Washington State. Black Lives Matter's recent movement regarding calls to action on dismantling institutional racism drives this organization to review its organizational structure. This report serves as a guideline for WSRID to review and adjust its bylaws for inclusive language, make changes to its organizational structures to be inclusive of current and future members, and decide which direction the organization wants to go. This report's recommendations are created from statistical information regarding demographics of WSRID members and Washington State's Deaf/Deafblind residents, informational interviews with three groups of stakeholders, and my expertise on inclusive actions within an organization to incorporate. The intention of the recommendations is to give the organization a starting point in shifting towards being an inclusive organization for the Washington State residents.

Background

The Washington State Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf was established in 1968. The establishment of WSRID was created as an affiliate organization for the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. WRID has served the Washington State interpreting community and the deaf community over the years. In recent years, there has been a growing movement called Black Lives Matter, which calls for reforming the system by conducting a deeper analysis of institutional racism. In the RID's 2018 Annual Report reported on the demographics of certified interpreters nationwide. The pie chart is as below:

The information above was retrieved from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf's website. 14,284 RID members got counted from the national database. The raw numbers provided by RID got converted into percentages that you see in the pie chart above. There are five regions under RID. The next chart will focus on Region V's demographic information from the RID's website to specify the percentage of interpreters' demographics. The chart is on the next page.
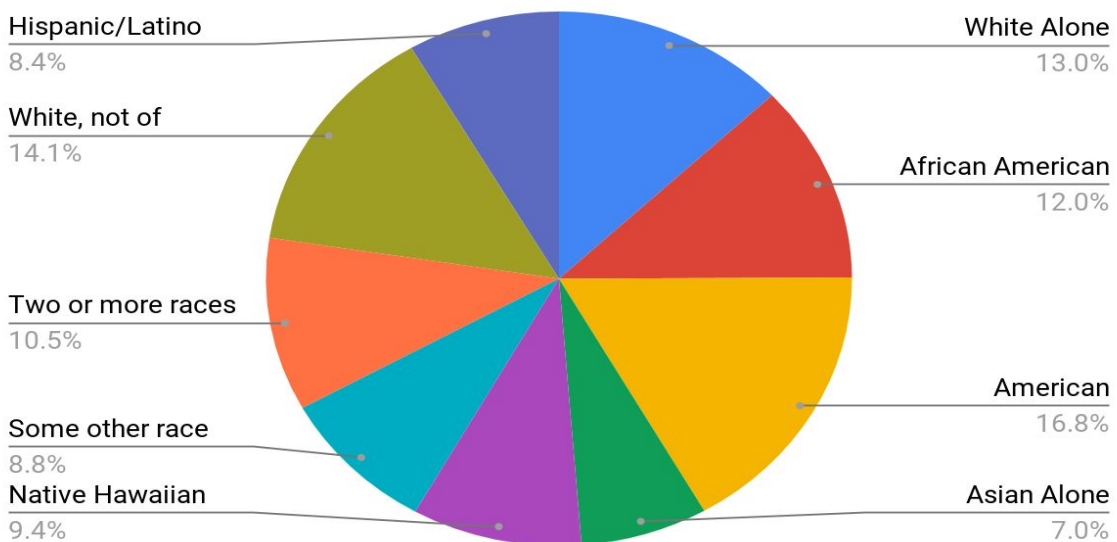
Region V Demographic Breakdown

Hispanic/Latino
7.1%

Asian American
3.7%

American
1.4%

African American
4.1%

European American
83.8%

Region V includes the states as listed: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington State. Unfortunately, there was no information on the demographics of interpreters in Washington State.

However, there is information about Washington State residents with hearing loss. This information was collected and documented in the 2019 U.S. Census.

Demographic of Washington's Deaf Community

Hispanic/Latino
8.4%

White, not of
14.1%

Two or more races
10.5%

Some other race
8.8%

Native Hawaiian
9.4%

White Alone
13.0%

African American
12.0%

American
16.8%

Asian Alone
7.0%

Prepared by Ritchie Bryant, 2020

People with hearing loss were counted in this data to provide information on what services could benefit the Washington State residents. The Deaf and DeafBlind residents' exact percentage who communicate by American Sign Language and Tactile ASL is unknown. The overall composition of the race for those with hearing loss is more diversified, as shown in the pie chart above.

This comparison between interpreters' demographics and the Deaf/Deafblind/Hard of hearing community is a stark contrast. To address institutional racism as called out by the BLM movement, WRID is to initiate a proactive approach to removing barriers for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) interpreters. To begin these changes, collection of data from crucial stakeholders took place.

Approach

The intention of data gathering from three groups of stakeholders is to see where recommendations could be used to improve WSRID's relationships with these stakeholders. These stakeholders I consulted with are: BIPOC members, Deaf interpreters, former WSRID board members. The experiences of these stakeholders range from firsthand experience of barriers in the interpreting profession as a BIPOC person and Deaf interpreters to institutional knowledge of WSRID as an organization.

The common theme of their statements are listed below:

1. Lack of transparent communication to members of WSRID's Action Plan.
2. Lack of visibility in the community.
3. Lack of membership participation value.

Based on these common themes of their statements, recommendations have been made for WSRID to revise and improve their organizational contribution to the communities it serves.

Recommendation 1
Review WSRID's Mission and Bylaws, and Create Vision and Core Values

The Washington State Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (WSRID) Board needs to seek ways to include Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) issues (see Figure 1) in the organization's governance and guidance documents to ensure that organizational decisions consistently align with these crucial issues.

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Rationale

The WSRID is committed to improving its membership body's diversity, equity, and inclusion by having more BIPOC and other marginalized groups, such as Deaf and LGBTQI professional interpreters. The discussions about this topic is becoming increasingly prevalent but are meaningless without concrete actions. Turning these discussions into action is difficult when the organization does not transparently reflect its commitment to DEI in its mission, vision, and core values.

WSRID's current mission states: *"The goals of the WSRID are to educate, to support and to promote the certification of interpreters/transliterators and to provide information to the general public. The principal purposes of this corporation are to initiate, sponsor, promote and execute policies and activities that will further the profession of interpretation and transliteration."* In addition to the mission statement, the WSRID currently lacks a vision statement and defined core values to include the DEI principles. Thus, the WSRID does not currently have anything in writing to demonstrate its commitment to these principles to internal and external stakeholders.

WSRID's Action

For refinement of the bylaws, the addition of the DEI principles can take place by revising the WSRID's mission statement, create a new vision statement, and to establish core values to reflect the organization's sincere commitment to DEI. By implementing the DEI into its bylaws and core values will guid e the organization's decision-making process.

Figure 1. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Explained
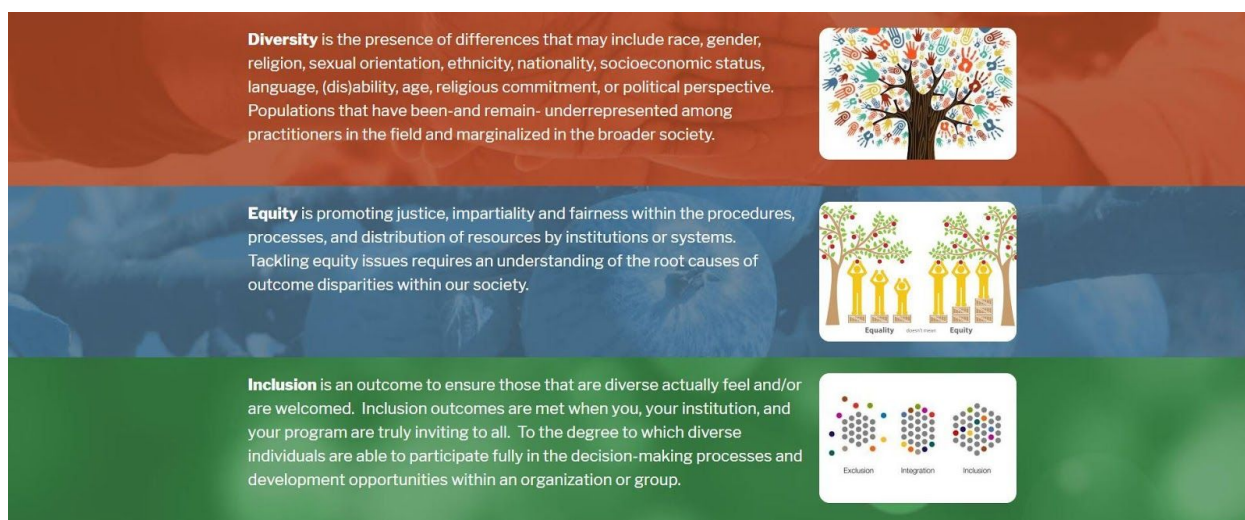
Source: The eXtension Organizing Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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Recommendation 2

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Audit Committee

The WSRID can demonstrate its commitment to DEI by establishing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Audit Committee to objectively track and report the organization's accomplishment in accomplishing its DEI goals. The Bylaws should be revised to require that the DEI Audit Committee provide the Board an annual DEI audit report, which can be used as an effective mechanism for organizational transparency and accountability. The Board will need to decide how to share this audit information with the public.

Rationale

The WSRID wants to demonstrate its commitment to the DEI principles in its membership, program, and services. Recruiting a diverse body of interpreters and mentoring them to make them feel welcomed and valued are critical to ensuring that the profession of interpretation and translation reflect the diversity of the customers the organization serves. To recruit diverse interpreters is only half of the change required under the Diversity umbrella. The other half of the requisite change is to foster an organizational culture where people get treated fairly, respected, are appreciated, and are included (under Equity and Inclusion). It is common for marginalized individuals not to reach out when they do not see someone like themselves in the organization. Thus, it is essential to initiate conversations about these critical issues to show the WSRID's commitment to DEI.

WSRID's Action

1. Establish annual measurable DEI goals and a formal mechanism for the year-end reporting on the status of these goals. The reporting process should include evaluating activities that occurred but were not part of the annual goals to identify what works and what does not work. This year-end reporting process can also provide Washington State with useful data to justify the need for more interpreting training programs tailored for members of the marginalized groups within the state.

2. Establish a mentorship program and other opportunities for marginalized groups to develop knowledge, skills, and confidence in the interpreting field. This mentorship program entails identifying and partnering with other interpreters, organizations, and companies to build lasting relationships and a sense of belonging in this effort.

Recommendation 3

Organizational and Stakeholder Partnership Identification

Partnerships with other organizations that serves the Deaf/Deafblind community utilizes various resources available to provide a wider range of exemplary services. Benefits for partnering with other organizations can range from improving efficiency, strengthening programs, expanding value propositions, and making use of compatible skills and abilities. Projects regarding community services, workshops, and events should be focused on serving the BIPOC Deaf/Deafblind community members and BIPOC ITP students.

Rationale

WSRID could utilize its current resources to complement other partnership organizations' resources. These resources could be capital, human and financial. This will increase visibility for both organizations in their community service. Identification of services that could be beneficial to these communities could be conducted between organization partners in order to fully utilize their resources and visibility. Accountability can also take place through organizational partnerships in ensuring their programs give appropriate services to appropriate groups of people who need those services. By providing support to aspiring BIPOC interpreters, they could eventually become members of the WSRID.

In addition to providing support to BIPOC adults, this extension of support could also be given to BIPOC CODAs for them to interact with other BIPOC CODAs and become aware of the culture, language, and challenges the BIPOC Deaf/Deafblind community has. This in turn will raise them to conduct a stronger allyship and greater participation when it comes to advocating for accessibility.

WSRID Action

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1. WSRID could create an outreach program with another organization to provide support for the BIPOC individuals within the targeted group of people that both organizations' mission aim to serve.
2. Create a program for ITP students to come learn about the interpreting profession, how to navigate through interpreting scenarios as a BIPOC person, and comprehend financial decisions that impact their personal and professional lives.
3. Implement a pipeline for ITP students to navigate with a support system.
4. Create a program for BIPOC KODA to interact with each other, learn from BIPOC Deaf/Deafblind adults and BIPOC interpreters, and experience personal enrichment. This could take place as a summer camp, after school program, or a monthly meet-up.

Recommendation 4

Providing Anti-Racial and Transformative Justice Training

Leaders in organizations have an unique responsibility to lead the change on anti-racism allyship for European-American identified interpreters. To create a safe space for BIPOC interpreters and Deaf/Deafblind community members, European-Americans have a responsibility to practice allyship that promotes anti-racism philosophy and action.

Rationale

Experiences on an individual level tremendously affects a person's sense of belonging. Sense of belonging occurs in spaces an individual feels comfortable in. To transform the way the organization operates and serves the communities in Washington area, European-American interpreters and Deaf/Deafblind community members need to start having discussions about how to practice allyship for BIPOC interpreters and the Deaf/Deafblind community members who face more barriers regarding discrimination in all facets of life.

WSRID Action

Training can take place in any format to provide a diversified experience of learning about privilege and proactive allyship. It could look like a 2 hour workshop to a cultural celebration on certain holidays like Juneteenth, for example. Workshop topics could range from cultural sensitivity to learning about AAVE (African-American Verbal English), mythologies, and so on. This is where the overarching objective of teaching PPO (Power, Privilege, and Oppression) could take place in a positive light in order for interested parties to learn more

about different cultures. Cultural immersion gives an in-depth understanding of how cultures came to be in celebration of their history, their stories, and their people's way of life.

Recommendation 5

Transform from Bureaucracy to Sociocracy in Organizational Structure

Sociocracy is a governance system, just like democracy or corporate governance methods. It's best suited for organizations that want to self-govern based on the values of equality. Decision-making builds on decision-making that have a strong commitment to inclusion and egalitarian values. With the possibility of transformation for WSRID's organizational structure to reflect its core egalitarian values, it provides a greater inclusion for members' participation.

Rationale

This approach to governance as an organization has a strong appeal. It is transformational in the way members feel included in the decision-making process. For the DEI values to be implemented successfully, this approach will rely heavily on committees' input for operational imperatives regarding diversity and inclusion.

WSRID's Action

How it works is that each committee could be considered as a 'circle'. Decision making is distributed and decentralized into smaller groups Each circle includes a leader and a delegate. Leaders and delegates from each department circle together form the general circle. This creates a link that enables information to flow throughout the organization. Generally, the leader informs the circle of the operational plan, the actions to be taken and the decisions to make.

Recommendation 6

Establish a Social Enterprise Program

For WSRID to successfully set up initiatives that actively remove BIPOC aspiring interpreters' barriers, it is crucial to have funding. Several 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations have successfully established a social enterprise program to fund their existing programs. Establishing a steady income will strengthen WSRID's operational success to achieve its mission in serving its members and the Washington State community.

Rationale

Currently, WSRID depends on its funding from member dues. The current funding source will not be sufficient to initiate the previous recommendations outlined in this document. The initiative to develop a social enterprise program will be transformational to the organization's structure. This initiative could provide WSRID more flexibility in deciding how to support its aspiring BIPOC interpreters with removing barriers through a mentorship program or a scholarship or other avenue of support deemed necessary.

 In addition to providing an alternative revenue source, social enterprises provide other benefits, including direct on-the-job (OTJ) training opportunities for certain employees, the integration of innovative business frameworks into thinking and planning, and marketing advantages.

There are different models and funding that is elaborated in the attached document called, "Nonprofit Social Enterprise: Models and Funding". Refer to the document for furthering your understanding of how to establish a social enterprise program.

WSRID Action

For WSRID to successfully implement a social enterprise program, the organization must first take the time to consider the scope of work that it takes to establish this. This could be done by assigning a person and a small committee to initiate research to explore ideas and possible channels for this to take place. This person could be the Treasurer as this initiative will affect tax and adjust the organization's finances in its income stream and expenses. By researching potential ideas and considering the changes it will impact, this could give interested parties a better idea of how to run this and whether the feasibility of it can be implemented with the resources the organization has.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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By taking the first step to figure out what the potential changes the organization can take to be inclusive, it is the first step towards an important journey for WSRID to become an

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organization that truly serves its communities. Strengthening programs with DEI principles will align with the mission of educating, supporting, and promoting the certification of interpreters. To incorporate diversity in its mission, specific steps to become inclusive towards BIPOC has been outlined in this document for reference.

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