

Creating Racial Equity Audit Recommendations

Listed below are the 52 Audit Recommendations that were made including for each the target timing, the audit point status as of November 2023, and any commentary that was provided on the audit point status. A complete audit document for each process, which contains more detail about the audit recommendations and how they were developed, is on file in the church's google drive.

Procurement Process

Audit Point P1:

Adopt the percent of purchases from Trustee accounts that are from MBE (Minority Business Entity) vendors as a key Trustee Metric

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: This has been adopted as part of the "Minority Vendor Purchasing Policy". For 2023 a 20% goal was set for MBE vendors for all purchases excluding Government Entities, and Utilities.

Audit Point P2:

Investigate expanding identification of MBE vendors from the state certified list to lists certified by other organizations.

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On schedule, to be planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: A file for minority vendor sources has been set up in the Administrator's office. A listing of which lists we want to obtain has been completed. Requesting the lists is next to be done.

Audit Point P3:

After gaining experience with these metrics in 2023, explore if there are ways to improve their effectiveness. An example might include increasing the scope of measurement (e.g. calculate for all FHC purchases)

Timing: To be determined

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On schedule, to be planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: After getting results for 2023, trustees will discuss ways to be more effective early in 2024.

Audit Point P4:

Create reporting capabilities to track the percent of Trustee account purchases made from DBE vendors and MBE Vendors

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: A report was designed and implemented by Matina Grant, Co-Treasurer. This is being reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Audit Point P5:

Establish goals for these metrics and periodically report to Session on the performance of these metrics versus target (data to be available to congregation as well)

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: A 2023 goal for MBE purchases was set at 20% for all purchasing excluding government and utilities. The third quarter report showed that MBE vendors accounted for 21.10% and DBE vendors accounted for 5.36%.

Audit Point P6:

Execute the actions Trustees have already planned (Adding more MBE's to the vendor list, soliciting input on MBE's from the congregation, and reaching out to local minority business organizations/councils) as part of the initiative to ensure greater participation inclusion of minority run companies in the procurement process

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Behind Schedule, but planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status:

The Minority Vendor Policy was enacted not only for the Trustee Ministry, but for the entire church. This will be reviewed again in early 2024 to see if any modifications need to be made. Minority vendor files are being accumulated in the church administrator's office, but may not be complete by the end of the year. Communication to the congregation will go out via the weekly email and will be completed in 2024.

Audit Point P7:

Add an initiative/project to increase minority business entity vendor participation in FHC procurement as measured by the percent of purchases sourced from minority vendors (or incorporate this project into current initiative)

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On Schedule, Planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: A new MBE goal will be set in January 2024.

Audit Point P8:

The Final Bid Solicitation Policy/procedure should be adopted into the FHC Policy manual.

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On Schedule, Planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: The Minority Vendor Purchasing Policy will be included in the new church policy manual.

Audit Point P9:

Add guidance regarding solicitation of bids from MBE vendors to the Bid Solicitation Policy. At a minimum, for the requirement that one quotation be received from a DBE vendor, add a guideline that among DBE vendor types, solicitation of a quotation from an MBE vendor is preferred.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: This requirement is part of the Minority Purchasing Policy approved by Session on April 26, 2023.

Audit Point P10:

Create a process to train members of all ministries/committees responsible for purchases in Procurement policies for Major purchases and to have them certify their understanding of the policy.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On Schedule, planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: The Minority Purchasing Policy will be given to every Ministry early in 2024. Explanation of the policy will be given at Session with an offer to meet individually with ministries if needed.

Audit Point P11:

Develop and maintain an easily referenced minority business entity vendor list

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Behind, Planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Minority business directors from state, federal, and local sources are still needed. Hopefully this will be completed by the end of 2023, or early 2024

Audit Point P12:

Develop procurement guidelines for purchases under \$1000, and include in the Ministry member training process.

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: This is outlined in the Minority Purchasing Policy.

Audit Point P13:

Enhance the plan to implement a major purchase tracking document that includes the companies that were contacted to provide a bid, by also including in the tracking document the basis by which the procurement decision was made.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On Schedule, Planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: A vendor tracking form was designed but it still needs to be implemented

Church Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles

Audit Point M1:

The church should formally define and communicate what its vision statement is.

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: The new website's "About Us" section explains the vision that "Forest Hill Church endeavors to create a Beloved Community" including a description of what the Beloved Community is, and the origin of this term.

Audit Point M2:

If "Building the Beloved Community" or a variation of it is the vision statement, provide a way for the reader to understand the reference to the Beloved Community (e.g. use of accompanying notes, additional wording,...)

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: The "Beloved Community" section of the website includes information for reader to understand the source and context of this statement

Audit Point M3:

Rewrite the Mission Statement so that it meets the objective of a mission statement, clearly supports the church's racial equity goals, and uses an effective communication style.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: No Update

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Session will be responsible for this audit point in 2024

Audit Point M4:

Modify the current guiding principles to more strongly support the church's racial equity goals by having these principles more clearly communicate 1) Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness apply to every aspect of the church community, culture and norms, and 2) working to address the systemic causes of justice issues is a core value

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: No Update

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Session will be responsible for this audit point in 2024.

Audit Point M5:

Investigate methods and/or forms of communicating the guiding principles (core values) that could increase the impact they have on organization behavior.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: No Update

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Session will be responsible for this audit point in 2024.

HR Policies and Compensation

Audit Point H1:

The job descriptions should state the need to follow all FHC policies. Those with purchasing responsibilities should highlight the need to follow the "Minority Purchasing Policy" whenever possible.

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Behind, Planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Note: The HR Policy and Compensation audit was completed late in 2023, which limited how much action could be taken in 2023 to implement the recommendations

Audit Point H2:

Explore and implement options for obtaining training and tools for creating unbiased job requirements, and documenting the process.

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On schedule, to be planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status:

Audit Point H3:

Create and implement a policy defining the process and expected results for achieving a diverse slate of candidates for any job opening.

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Behind Planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status:

Audit Point H4:

Create and implement a process for the Personnel Committee to verify and document that a diverse slate of candidates has been evaluated, consistent with policy requirements before a final candidate selection for a position is made.

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Behind, Planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status:

Audit Point H5:

Explore and implement options for interviewers/evaluators to be periodically trained on ways to prevent bias in the interview process as well as how to use evidence seeking questioning and analysis.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On Schedule, To Be Planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status:

Audit Point H6:

A neutral party (which can be from the personnel committee) should be asked to check for bias before every hire.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On Schedule, To Be Planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status:

Audit Point H7:

Create and implement a policy for achieving diversity in the candidate search & selection team.

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Behind, Planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status:

Audit Point H8:

All documents, including evaluation notes and questions asked, should be kept on file for future reference and review.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Evaluations and meetings with employees are documented and kept in personnel files.

Audit Point H9:

Develop with each employee annual goals, review these on a quarterly basis, document progress or lack thereof. This should include ways to develop skills and get necessary education.

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On schedule, Planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Goal setting and development are part of performance evaluations

Audit Point H10:

Document in writing the annual evaluation process that the respective employee can reference.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Done through Annual Performance Review Documentation

Audit Point H11:

The liaison process should be documented since this is a critical part of maintaining a dialogue during the year that should not go away if Personnel Committee membership turns over. This will also increase consistency of process execution.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On schedule, planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Part of documentation to be done on committee's process

Audit Point H12:

In the Personnel Policy Manual, it should clearly state that there will be no repercussions to an employee if a grievance is filed. In addition, a formal "Whistle Blower" policy should be written and included in the church's Policy Manual protecting individuals who report activities believed to be illegal, dishonest, unethical, or otherwise improper.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On schedule, to be planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status:

Audit Point H13:

Pay ranges should be established for each job description based on market and PC(USA) data and reviewed on a periodic basis to ensure equity and market value. A policy describing this process, including how often ranges are reviewed, should be written.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On schedule, to be planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Current process is informal and ad hoc.

Audit Point H14:

Consider posting an employee organization chart, e.g. on the website.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On schedule, to be planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Under consideration

Grant Process

Audit Point G1:

Define and track metric(s) that can be used to assess progress in achieving racial equity goals, but that are not too complex to be able to maintain. Periodically report on metric(s) performance to Session and the congregation

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On schedule, planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: x

We are still doing too much of this on the “back end”, but now have noted that we’ll ask additional organizational questions during the community grant process: 1) Who are the organization's leaders, 2) Who do they serve? and 3) Noting community-based and/or grassroots organizations. For the first time, we had explicit grant review criteria and a team of reviewers(including non-J&M Members).

Audit Point G2:

Better publicize the start of the grant solicitation process to the congregation in order to get wider participation by the congregation in the grant solicitation process

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: New process - a NOMINATION form, shared with congregation 4 ways - announcement during services; handout during services; Tower; weekly email - 10 applications received - set a goal of 15 for 2024

Audit Point G3:

Modify the grant application process to reduce its complexity and/or create a less time consuming application option (e.g. ministry member supporting application submission for prioritized application submitters)

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: New process accomplishes this audit point by shifting burden of completing the form from the applicant to the FHC member completing the nomination. Additionally, the nomination form was simplified and multiple channels were made available to complete the application (Online, paper and via phone)

Audit Point G4:

Enhance the grant decision making process to include formal prioritization of the grant criteria and documentation of the basis for making grant decisions

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: For the first time, we had explicit grant review criteria and a team of reviewers (inc non-J&M members!).

Audit Point G5:

Enhance the Grant performance tracking process so that grant performance information is consistently received from grant recipients and is evaluated.

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: April 2024 event - to build community with every grantee and the FHC community. After church, we'll host a luncheon and have opportunity for fellowship (through the meal) and learning (grantees sharing their work). We'll have each grantee create a one-pager, and have ways to engage AND get involved, too.

Audit Point G6:

The ministry should evaluate the cost/benefit of implementation of Grant Management Software to be used as the basis for a decision regarding what action should be taken in this area

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Grant Management Software will not provide benefits that justify the cost as we are moving away from a traditional grant-making process

New Website Audit

Audit Point W1:

Modify the lead picture of "Faith in Action" to show a black hand and a white hand grasping each other with either the black hand on top or the two hands aligned horizontally

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Website picture modified

Audit Point W2:

Increase the number of photos showing diversity in several or all of the following leadership sections: Deacons, Trustees, and Adult Spiritual Formation

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On Schedule, Planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Pictures to be submitted by ministries.

Audit Point W3:

Modify the lead paragraph describing Racial Equity at Forest Hill Church to better reflect how integral racial equity activities are within the church as a whole, and within each ministry of the church.

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Website paragraph modified.

Audit Point W4:

Add a quotation(s) by top leadership (i.e. the pastor and/or Session) about the church's commitment to racial equity.

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Racial Equity Landing Page now includes a statement about the church's commitment to being intentional about racial equity all parts of our faith community

Audit Point W5:

Adding some sentences accessible somewhere on the page about detail of the history of FHC and all the work it has done for racial equity over the years to include the Forest Hill Housing Corporation (now HRCC), its support of the Heights Community Congress, Labre, Sanctuary, etc

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On schedule, to be planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: In Progress. Will include historical information about Cleveland Heights and FHC.provided by the Racial Repair and Restoration Task Force

Audit Point W6:

Eliminate use of the abbreviation CRE for Creating Racial Equity

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Abbreviation removed from Website.

Audit Point W7:

Change the overall description of Creating Racial Equity Team to the following; "In 2019, an in-depth Racial Equity survey was taken by church members and active participants in the life of the church. As a result of this survey, the Creating Racial Equity team was created to support each of the church's ministries in implementing the survey team recommendations and in

measuring the church's progress on the recommendations. The Creating Racial Equity is comprised of two specific focus groups: the audit team and the ministry/programs team."

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Text changed.

Audit Point W8:

Change Creating Racial Equity Audit Team Description to: "The Audit team conducts racial equity audits of specific church processes, such as procurement policies, guiding principles and personnel hiring practices, to identify and address gaps between organizational racial equity goals and actual performance."

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Text changed.

Audit Point W9:

For the Racial Equity Book Club, show the planned schedule of books to be read in the future rather than a list of books read in the past

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Schedule changed.

Audit Point W10:

Consider modifying the commentary about the Beloved Community to include a stronger statement about social justice action being a key element in the journey to create the Beloved community

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Beloved Community Section moved and modified

Audit Point W11:

Add the Church's Mission and Guiding Principles to the website

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Mission and Guiding Principles added:

Audit Point L1:

Create the basic process documentation required to help ensure the process remains effective over time, particularly as committee membership turns over

Timing: In 2024

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: Complete

Commentary on Audit Point Status: A compilation of everyone asked in 2023 for a particular lay leadership position and why or why not they accepted a lay leadership position will be documented to help next year's nominating committee. The CRE Ministry has provided a

notebook so that this information, along with the mission of the ministry and pertinent policies can be passed from one group to another

Audit Point L2:

Formally measure, track and report how well the racial composition of the church's Lay Leadership represents the congregation. An example of how these metric(s) could be defined and calculated is outlined in a separate document.

Timing: In 2023

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On Schedule, planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: A way to formally measure and track the racial composition of lay leaders and comparing this data to the overall church's demographics is underway. This will also be included in the ministry notebook that can be referenced and updated each year

Audit Point L3:

Consider conducting either "exit interviews" of lay leaders coming off assignment, or targeted interviews of current lay leaders (e.g. persons of color) as an additional source of information about obstacles to achieving lay leadership diversity.

Timing: To be determined

Audit Point Status as of 11/2023: On schedule, planned

Commentary on Audit Point Status: Current minority lay leaders as they go off their positions will be contacted to gain information on any particular obstacles. This will assist the 2024 Nominating Committee in its work.