

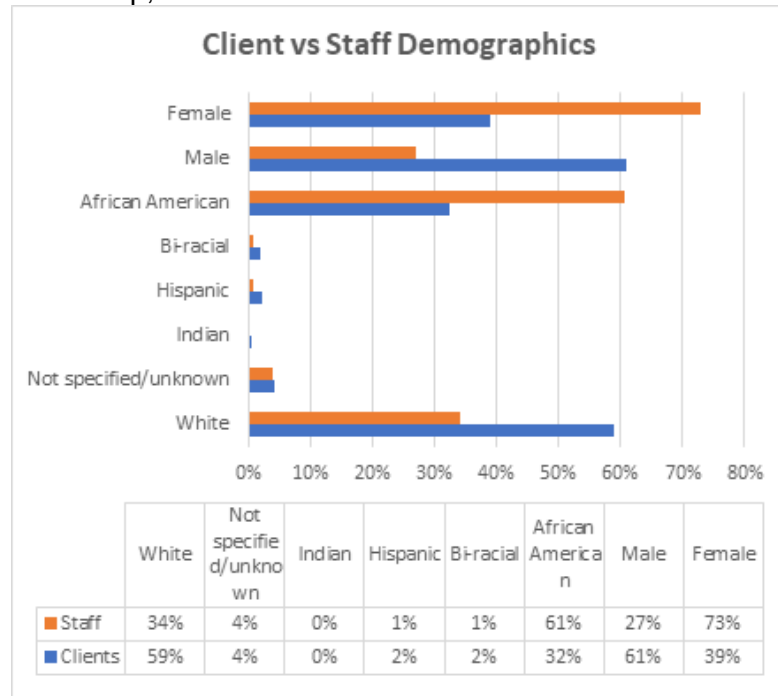
June 2021

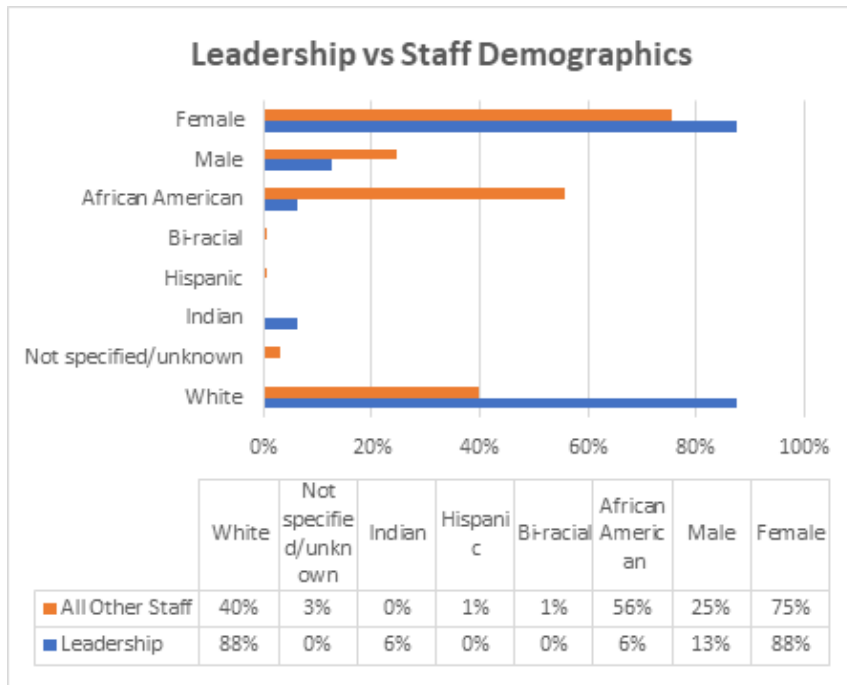
Dear friends of UCP Heartland,

Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to attend a few of our DEI (Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion) Council meetings. I have enjoyed the safe haven, honest discussion, education, and listening to ideas on how we can translate this environment into the culture of UCP Heartland to make it a more inclusive workspace for our clients, staff, and community as a whole. The Council states that we believe in cultivating a transparent work environment that embraces diversity by honoring and respecting multiculturalism, prioritizing equity, and offering an overall satisfactory work experience through inclusive engagement opportunities.

An important piece to creating positive change in a culture is simple education and not being afraid to have conversations. It is easy to say simple, but very difficult to translate into the reality of the world we live in or work in. The feeling of I don't want to say the wrong thing, therefore, I am going to completely avoid this topic will not produce positive results, rather, status quo. In our leadership team meeting this week, we began the agenda with an educational piece on inclusion, which in my opinion, is the most important piece of the conversation. In fact, our mission and what UCP Heartland has fought for since 1953 for people with disabilities is about rights, respect, dignity, and inclusion. Like I said earlier, it is simple, and we know what to do: make sure we treat people fairly and respectfully and have equal access to opportunities and resources that allow everyone to contribute fully. This is certainly not a new concept, but for some reason WE, as a generality including myself, struggle to make this a reality for all. Hence, why it is important to bring it up, talk through it, be open to learning, and most importantly always strive to be better.

UCP Heartland is a diverse organization from not only a staffing point of view but the clients and families we support. Below is a chart of a few comparable demographic data points of staff, leadership, and clients.





I will admit, we have some work to do when we look at leadership and the diverse make up, however, data in my opinion is only one part of the equation. It goes back to the inclusion word. One of my favorite quotes around this topic is “Diversity is being invited to the party, inclusion is being asked to dance, and belonging is dancing like no one’s watching.” We as an organization will continue to improve on tracking and set diversity targets, but we must make sure everyone feels like they belong and support a diverse culture through our actions.

I have often told people it is hard to keep up with all the different days and months throughout the year to highlight, celebrate, and bring insights about culture, diversity, and history in our world: Black History Month, Disability Awareness Month, Disability Employment Month, Pride Month, Juneteenth, Women’s History Month, Autism Awareness, Asian Pacific Heritage Month, religious holidays, etc.

As I am writing this on June 18th, tomorrow is Juneteenth which commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. Ironically, this past week Congress passed overwhelmingly, and it is the first new federal holiday created since 1983. A day of education, understanding and celebration for what took place on June 19, 1865, in the state of Texas.

The month of June is also Pride Month, an opportunity to bring awareness, understanding, and acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community. It is also a reminder that diversity is often more than what you can see. UCP Heartland values current team members of this community and welcomes new members to join our workforce.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Clint Bolser
President and CEO
UCP Heartland
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