

ORDER OF COMMISSIONERS COURT
Authorizing the expenditure of funds

The Commissioners Court of Harris County, Texas, convened at a meeting of said Court at the Harris County Administration Building in the City of Houston, Texas, on the ____ day of _____, 2023 with all members present except _____.

A quorum was present. Among other business, the following was transacted:

**ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR CONSULTING
SERVICES UNDER JOB NO. 21-0317 WITH ELITE RESEARCH, LLC. THE
AGREEMENT WITH ELITE RESEARCH, LLC WAS APPROVED AT
COMMISSIONERS COURT ON MARCH 22, 2022, ITEM 22-2097**

Commissioner _____ introduced an order and made a motion that the same be adopted. Commissioner _____ seconded the motion for adoption of the order. The motion, carrying with it the adoption of the order, prevailed by the following vote:

Vote of the Court	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Judge Hidalgo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comm. Ellis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comm. Garcia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comm. Ramsey, P.E.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comm. Briones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The County Judge thereupon announced that the motion had duly and lawfully carried and that the order had been duly and lawfully adopted. The order thus adopted follows:

IT IS ORDERED the Harris County Judge is authorized to approve for and on behalf of Harris County the expenditure of \$526,773.00 in funds under Job No. 21-0317 for the Agreement between Harris County and Elite Research, LLC. The expenditure will provide program evaluation for the Youth Justice Community Reinvestment Fund (“Services”). The Request For Proposal: Harris County Office of Justice and Safety and Harris County Juvenile Probation Department Youth Justice Community Reinvestment Fund Scope for Third-Party Evaluator, the BAFO, and the Agreement is incorporated herein as though fully set forth word for word.

The Services provided under this Order will meet the 10% MWBE participation goal through the use of Elite Research, LLC at 100% MWBE participation.

All Harris County officials and employees are authorized to do any and all things necessary or convenient to accomplish the purpose of this Order.



PROPOSAL

Harris County Office of Justice and Safety and Harris County Juvenile Probation Department

Youth Justice Community Reinvestment Fund

Scope for Third-Party Evaluator

Submission: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 at 5:00PM CT

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Abbreviations Used Throughout This Document

- The Fund = Youth Justice Community Reinvestment Fund
- The Collective = Change Happens and sub-grantees
- ER = Elite Research, LLC
- DWS= Divergent Web Solutions
- RFP = Request for Proposal

Statement of Interest

Elite Research, LLC is a **WBENC-certified Women Owned Small Business (WOSB), Historically Underutilized Business (HUB), and SBA certified** (certifications available upon request) research and statistical consulting firm based out of Dallas, Texas with staff also located in North Texas, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston. For more than 19 years, Elite Research has provided superior research and evaluation design, survey design and collection, statistical and qualitative analysis support, and grant (federal and foundation) assistance to companies, government entities, private and public organizations, academic institutions, along with nonprofit organizations, and independent researchers. ER works as direct and third-party evaluators on nation-wide and international research surrounding assessment, strategic planning, as well as data collection and analysis. We have extensive experience in capacity building and training in these areas, as well as developing strategic plans based on analysis leading to growth and sustainability of projects, developing multi-disciplinary grant direction for university institutions, grant development, project management, and evaluation, strategic planning and qualitative and quantitative research design and analysis. Relevant deidentified project samples are available in Appendix A.

Elite Research is uniquely qualified to carry out all the services listed in the SOW. Our team consists of graduate (Masters and PhD) level consultants with extensive experience and training in theoretical statistics and their application, design, sampling, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed data collection methodologies, training, and project involvement both domestically and internationally. Our professional and academic backgrounds vary from Clinical and Social Psychology, Business, Informatics, Marketing, Sociology, Statistics/Biostats, and International Relations to Economics, Anthropology, and International and Comparative Education. The varied academic and professional training allow for cross-reference of experience and abilities, broadening range of knowledge and expertise.

Our team's diverse experience, along with our educational and professional expertise and the way we work with our clients, brings a strong support for the projects we work on. Elite Research not only brings strategic planning experience, but also the added benefit of experience in planning, operationalizing, program design and evaluation. We understand the value of articulating outcomes and building a theory of change and/or logic model(s), and the necessary embedding of monitoring and evaluation (tracking and reporting) processes that ensure organizations are moving in the right direction. More importantly, ER is able to carry these organizations from planning to operationalizing. Operationalizing considers *how the plan is specifically to get carried out – the who, what, when, where, and how*. Particularly critical to this process is understanding the various players and their capacities, as well as what capacity building (training processes, resource alignment, etc.) must occur to facilitate implementation and growth. Being able to bring a neutral, experienced, and objective voice into this process is important in order to validate everyone involved. This background helps us in our strategic planning sessions because we *start with the end goal in mind and develop the processes needed along that path*.

A division of ER, Divergent Web Solutions is a professional solution for marketing, data collection, web design, and visualization display created as a solution to help its clients reach their target market directly. Their core services stem from the research and evaluations teams' quality data to product custom dashboards, web pages, forms, social media, and content management, and is driven by a team of web developers, online content managers, and database administrators that creates secure technical and visual masterpieces since 2015. They own and administer an online survey platform tool called PsychData.

PsychData, has supported researchers and evaluators in more than 30 states. Institutional Research Boards prefer the way data is maintained and collected with this tool, given that its typical use is with students and researchers collectively for the past 20 years. The tool provides survey collection and a system for data collection that is easily used with statistical software that can be utilized in tandem with visualization software used for near real-time reporting.

Scope of Work

Backbone organizations, also considered intermediary organizations, are increasingly being engaged to work with (sub)grantees in the context of collective impact. They often hold dual roles where they engage collaborative partners to advance a shared agenda and distribute accountable funds to those partners. The purpose of this proposal is to outline a method of evaluating the *Change Happens* model, funded by the *Youth Justice Community Reinvestment Fund* (“the Fund”), focusing on the backbone organization’s ability to meet its objectives of **increasing community-based support for youth at risk or involved in the juvenile justice system** and to study the **effectiveness of sub-grantee program delivery** (Change Happens and its sub-grantees are referred to as “the Collective” within this proposal). This evaluation, however, does not consider the fiscal accountability of partnerships.

Key to both study goals is the development of a Change Happens logic model to identify the *theory* behind why they believe their programs will work, to identify metrics and measures to collect and analyze data, and to provide a “living” model that can be adjusted as data provides insight. The below very simplified example could serve as the basis of this evaluation framework, which would be built out in the early stages of this contract.

RESOURCES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES			IMPACTS
Funding from	Identify Capacity Needs	# of needs identified	Increased knowledge of	Increased use of ____	Increased community-based support for <u>at-risk youth</u>	Reduced numbers of at-risk youth
Program staff	Train & Support	# of personnel trained	Increased use of ____	Increased use of ____	Increased community-based support for <u>youth in the juvenile justice system</u>	Reduced numbers of youth in juvenile justice system
Partnerships	Identify Service Providers	# of new providers	Increased ability to	Increased number of ____		Community-based continuum of care
Facilities	Build Service Network	# of connections	Increased use of ____			

Having such a model in place allows for other organizations to learn from this program and implement their own versions from what is conducted in Harris County. It also allows for very targeted evaluation design. For example, what does it mean for Change Happens to provide *Training & Support*? Once those elements are defined, evaluation questions can be designed that would appropriately ask the right questions and measures designed to capture relevant data (for example, *the number of personnel trained*). The logic model, itself, provides the framework for *monitoring progress* towards desired impacts.

Just as a logic model is needed to guide the direction of the grantee (Change Happens), individual logic models for each of the sub-grantees should also be developed. As many of these community-based organizations could be in early-stage development, a logic model would strengthen their programs and initiatives by identifying organizational or community assets that can be mobilized to help their programs succeed. The process would also help identify resource gaps (e.g., needed trainings and support) and other barriers (e.g., policies that may affect coordination) that may influence program operations or performance. By doing this upfront work, many of the gaps and barriers can be identified and resolved before a program is implemented; it also helps to avoid scope creep and work outside their focus. The process helps to uncover *assumptions* about why the programs are needed and how organizers understand the program to work. Finally, as community organizations could be implementing very different programs, their logic models would dictate the *different types of metrics* needed to monitor their work.

When it comes to collecting and tracking output and outcome data, if the grantee and sub-grantees do not already have a platform identified, **PsychData**¹ is a strong option for consideration. Developed by academics and practitioners, PsychData is a secure online data collection² platform that is owned and managed by ER.

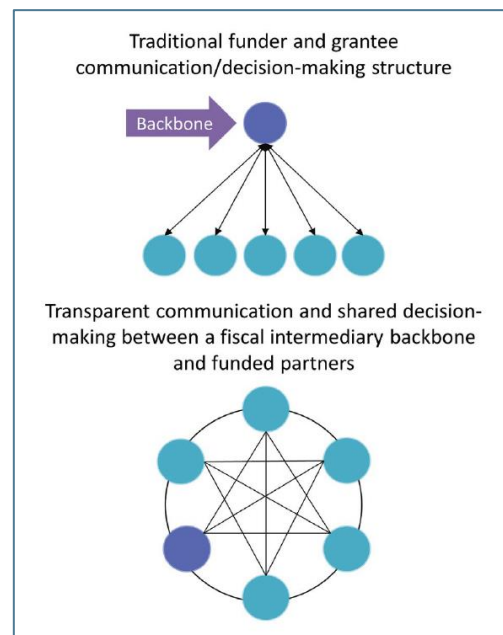
The following pages outline the projected work to address the RFP objectives. It is expected that much of the design will be articulated during the planning phase once Elite Research is able to meet with the Fund and the Collective awardees. Please see Appendix B for process descriptions.

Project Phases

Phase 1. Planning & Evaluation Design

1.1 Initial meeting(s)

- Prepare for ongoing collaboration
 - Obtain contact information for contacts of Change Happens and sub-awardees³ with whom ER will be working.
 - Establish time for routine meetings and status/update protocols.
- Identify “other” stakeholders that can speak into the evaluation process; stakeholders should reflect the demographics of the community served
- Determine whether evaluation should consider the extent to which the “5 Key Conditions for Shared Success”⁴ are met by the Collective
 - Identify which model of communicating and decision making⁵.
- Review goals and key objectives and evaluation questions, modify/update deliverable timelines
- Finalize evaluation protocol for Year 1 (Identify interim and final report deliverables)



¹ PsychData (PD) is a professionally developed and maintained web presence utilizing state-of-the art technology that combines parent-level, centralized database architecture with strict security policies and procedures. As a result, the services meet and exceed industry standards for Internet security as well as IRB policy for the protection of research participants. A redundant, high-bandwidth, private transport network provides worldwide network connectivity for PD. This network has demonstrated 99.999% availability, which means that the network will be down no more than 5 minutes in one year. PD’s servers are housed in a secure data facility that is monitored 24/7 by network operations professionals for all aspects of operational security. Biometric/intrusion sensors, card readers, personal identification numbers, and environmental sensors are used to ensure server integrity and safety. Redundant HVAC systems ensure an optimized operational environment. Server power is provided by a redundant, multi-stage, uninterruptible system. Even in the event of a catastrophic commercial power failure, diesel generators seamlessly provide backup power. PD’s survey support help desk provides technical support to users with timely, professional answers to all questions. Support hours for assistance with password reset, new accounts, and all troubleshooting needs are Monday-Friday 8am-9pm. After-hours support is available online through the PD website.

² Many benefits of both intercept and online data collection methods have been outlined in the literature. Specifically, online data collection can be more cost effective, reach a wider audience than traditional data collection methods, increased response rate, and may result in higher quality of data collected. Furthermore, researchers have also noted that the increased anonymity offered by online survey collection may yield more truthful responses compared to face-to-face or phone interviews in which participants may respond in a pro-social or socially desirable manner out of fears of judgment (Herrwegh D. (21 August, 2007). Mode differences between face-to-face and web surveys: An experimental investigation of data quality and social desirability effects. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*)

³ According to Kelly Venci Gonzalez, in an email dated August 4, 2022, the Fund hopes to fund **4-6 organizations** (“sub-grantees”). Change Happens will have an “individual plan for each organization depending on need to increase capacity and technical expertise. So, for example, one organization might need assistance forming a 501(c)(3) status while others might need help with staffing and program development.”

⁴ Turner, S., Merchant, K., Martin, E., & Kania, J. (2012). Understanding the value of backbone organizations in collective impact: Part 1. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. <https://doi.org/10.48558/X3KJ-BS10>

⁵ Lynn, J., Breckinridge, K., Denault, A., & Marvin, C. (2015). When backbone organizations become the funder: The use of fiscal intermediaries in the context of collective impact. *The Foundation Review*, 7(4). <https://doi.org/10.9707/1944-5660.1268>. Available at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/tfr/vol7/iss4/9>

- 1.2 Familiarization with data sources and documents
 - Change Happens and the Fund share pertinent program documents
 - Discuss availability of key data metrics and protocols for data access
 - Begin the data request process, if necessary
- 1.3 Development of **Change Happens logic model**
 - Change Happens and Elite Research work to develop an overarching logic model detailing the resources, activities, outputs, outcomes (short, medium, and long term), and overall desired impact of the model
- 1.4 Meet with **sub-grantees**
 - Understand key points of contact (roles and responsibilities)
 - Discuss proposed program work
- 1.5 Development of **sub-grantees' logic models**
 - Sub-grantees, Change Happens, and Elite Research work to develop a programmatic logic model detailing the resources, activities, outputs, outcomes (short, medium, and long-term), and overall desired impact of each sub-grantee's work (4–6 in total)
 - Identification of where Change Happens intends to support each sub-grantee identified (logic models)
 - Understand what training, tracking systems, databases, resources, etc. sub-grantees may need to monitor and efficiently collect data.
 - Identify existing data sources and tools relevant to evaluation (i.e., surveys, secondary data)
- 1.6 Identification of key metrics relative to Change Happens (grantee) and each sub-grantee (4–6)
 - Identification of measures necessary to capture data for key metrics; possibly pull indicators for assessing backbone effectiveness from FSG's *Sources and Measures of Influence in Collective Impact*⁶

Backbone Effectiveness: 27 Indicators

Guide Vision and Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners accurately describe the common agenda Partners publicly discuss / advocate for common agenda goals Partners' individual work is increasingly aligned with common agenda Board members and key leaders increasingly look to backbone organization for initiative support, strategic guidance and leadership
Support Aligned Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners articulate their role in the initiative Relevant stakeholders are engaged in the initiative Partners communicate and coordinate efforts regularly, with, and independently of, backbone Partners report increasing levels of trust with one another Partners increase scope / type of collaborative work Partners improve quality of their work Partners improve efficiency of their work Partners feel supported and recognized in their work
Establish Shared Measurement Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared data system is in development Partners understand the value of shared data Partners have robust / shared data capacity Partners make decisions based on data Partners utilize data in a meaningful way
Build Public Will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members are increasingly aware of the issue(s) Community members express support for the initiative Community members feel empowered to engage in the issue(s) Community members increasingly take action
Advance Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target audience (e.g., influencers and policymakers) is increasingly aware of the initiative Target audiences advocate for changes to the system aligned with initiative goals Public policy is increasingly aligned with initiative goals
Mobilize Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funders are asking nonprofits to align to initiative goals Funders are redirecting funds to support initiative goals New resources from public and private sources are being contributed to partners and initiative

- Satisfaction surveys should be included in measures to assess sub-grantees satisfaction with Change Happens' capacity building services, communication, and collaboration support

1.7 Development of data collection measures

- Data to be collected should include input and review by stakeholders

⁶ Source: <https://www.fsg.org/resource/sources-and-measures-influence-collective-impact/>

Phase 2. Change Happens Evaluation

- 2.1 Set up data collection and monitoring plan, including protocols, processes, and check points
 - Identify who is responsible for collecting what data and when
 - Data to be collected should include input and review by stakeholders
- 2.2 Provide Change Happens staff training (if necessary)
- 2.3 Conduct periodic qualitative interviews with key points of contact
 - Determine their understanding of key points of implementation and identify if implementation occurred as planned/designed
 - Identify areas of support needed and a plan for addressing it
 - Interview protocols will include input and review by stakeholders
- 2.4 Conduct periodic quantitative data review. Analysis will include input and review by stakeholders
 - Disaggregate data to assess racial, social, and economic equity that may need to be addressed
 - Identify areas of support needed and a plan for addressing it
- 2.5 Conduct stakeholder interviews (program personnel, community leaders/members, sub-grantee personnel, and beneficiaries)
 - Code for themes and analyze interview data to identify areas of key support (impact) and supplement information gathered through surveys
- 2.6 Conduct analysis to answer evaluation questions
 - Use descriptive and inferential statistics to identify areas of program impact, where possible
 - Disaggregate results by race/ethnicity, gender, and other demographics to determine if impact is greater for some groups than others (i.e., moderation analysis)
 - Pull results from the qualitative and quantitative analyses to highlight the successes of the programs and actionable recommendations for program improvement and sustainability
- 2.7 Document timeline, process, lessons learned, and over-arching recommendations (on-going)
 - Findings will include input and review by stakeholders

Phase 3. Sub-Grantee Implementation Evaluation

- 3.1 Set up data collection and monitoring plan, including protocols, processes, and check points
 - Identify who is responsible for collecting what data and when
 - Data to be collected should include input and review by stakeholders
- 3.2 Provide Sub-grantee staff training (if necessary)
- 3.3 Conduct periodic qualitative interviews with key points of contact
 - Determine their understanding of key points of implementation and identify if implementation occurred as planned/designed
 - Identify areas of support needed and a plan for addressing it
 - Interview protocols will include input and review by stakeholders
- 3.4 Conduct periodic quantitative data review. Analysis will include input and review by stakeholders
 - Disaggregate data to determine issues of racial, social, and economic equity that may need addressed
 - Identify areas of support needed and a plan for addressing it
- 3.5 Document timeline, process, lessons learned, and over-arching recommendations (on-going)
 - Findings will include input and review by stakeholders

Phase 4. Findings & Reports

- 4.1 Prepare Year 1 Interim Evaluation Report
 - Summarize preliminary results with a focus on describing participant characteristics and equitable participation, recruitment successes and challenges, and progress made towards program goals using graphics, tables, and narrative text
 - Report strengths and limitations of research design
 - Detail next steps, respond to feedback from Change Happens (grantee) and sub-grantees
- 4.2 Prepare Year 2 Final Evaluation Report (Similar steps as 4.1)

Project Management (Across All Phases)

With the use of project management software and custom tools and processes, the project management team will directly lay out critical paths and nonessential tasks for team to focus on at any time. Worker allocation will be determined based on project and timeline need. These discussions happen with stakeholders to determine resource, time, and effectiveness. Constant review and refinement occur.

Standard meetings organized by Elite Research include initial kickoff meeting, analysis plan meeting, bi-weekly team meetings, monthly summary meetings.

Weekly e-mail status updates are provided by the Lead to the entire project team. Progress Reports and invoices are presented quarterly.

Timeline of Deliverables

The timeline outlined in the RFP states a two-year project period starting in 2023. The timeline proposed below is dependent on the award date and modified components to the proposed Work Plan defined in the initial planning phase.

Activity	Responsible	Year 1 - Year 3 Months																								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Phase 1. Planning & Evaluation Design																										
1.1 Initial meeting(s)	ER/CH/HC																									
1.2 Familiarization with data sources and documents	ER																									
1.3 Development of Change Happens logic model	ER																									
1.4 Meet with sub-grantees	ER																									
1.5 Development of sub-grantees' logic models	ER																									
1.6 Identification of key metrics	ER																									
1.7 Development of data collection measures	ER																									
Phase 2. Change Happens Evaluation																										
2.1 Set up protocols, processes, and check points	ER																									
2.2 Provide CH staff training (if necessary)	ER/CH																									
2.3 Conduct periodic qualitative interviews	ER																									
2.4 Conduct periodic quantitative data review	ER																									
2.5 Conduct stakeholder interviews	ER																									
2.6 Conduct analysis to answer evaluation questions	ER																									
2.7 Documentation	ER																									
Phase 3. Sub-Grantee Implementation Evaluation																										
3.1 Set up data collection and monitoring plan	ER																									
3.2 Provide Sub-grantee staff training (if necessary)	ER																									
3.3 Conduct periodic qualitative interviews	ER																									
3.4 Conduct periodic quantitative data review	ER																									
3.5 Documentation	ER																									
Phase 4. Findings & Reports																										
4.1 Prepare Year 1 Interim Evaluation Report	ER																									
4.2 Prepare Year 2 Final Evaluation Report	ER																									
Communication & Meetings																										
General communication																										
Check in with key project personnel																										

Deliverables

Elite Research proposes the following phased deliverables:

Year 1

- Updated evaluation goals, deliverable timelines and milestones, and evaluation plans
- Baseline measures, including surveys and interviews for key stakeholder groups
- Data for specific outcome metrics, catalog, and codebooks of data sources
- Protocols for data collection, monitoring, access, and use for analysis
- Deidentified data files and codebooks, statistical syntax, outputs, tables, results in lay terms

- Periodic (TBD) reporting of qualitative and quantitative data
- Branded draft and final Evaluation Report 1

Year 2

- Periodic (TBD) reporting of qualitative and quantitative data
- Updated versions of process and code files from Year 1
- Branded draft and final Evaluation Report 2

Cost

The engagement costs of this proposal are outlined in the table below based on the proposed work plan and timeline. The costs associated with consulting services are invoiced in ¼ hour increments. ER uses a blended hourly rate for the proposed work plan for the project team members. Blended hourly rates are calculated based on salary, fringes, benefits, and operating expenses as standard to the industry with our **government entity discount of 10%** already applied.

Software, instruments, and licenses needed for this project are owned and operated by Elite Research. Please note, due to COVID-19 guidelines and travel restrictions, this methodology assumes a series of local and *virtual meetings*. If in-person services are determined essential by any of the non-Harris County based staff, the travel requirements and budget needed will be documented and agreed upon.

Proposed Budget

The proposed cost of the work plan is below based on the project team's hourly work toward the outlined phases. Communication and meetings are included in each phase. This table may be modified with approval by both parties for potential change in scope of work. It does not contain costs for participant incentives, additional subject matter experts, travel, or other expenses, should any be identified and approved during the project.

	<u>Year 1</u>				<u>Year 2</u>				<u>Total</u>	
	Hours Lower	Range Upper	Cost (\$) Lower	Range Upper	Hours Lower	Range Upper	Cost (\$) Lower	Range Upper	Cost (\$) Lower	Range Upper
Phase 1. Planning & Evaluation Design	800	925	\$81,769	\$89,818	100	150	\$10,221	\$14,565	\$91,990	\$104,384
Phase 2. Change Happens Evaluation	700	850	\$71,548	\$82,536	950	1200	\$97,101	\$116,521	\$168,649	\$199,057
Phase 3. Sub-Grantee Implementation	550	700	\$56,216	\$67,971	650	800	\$66,438	\$77,681	\$122,654	\$145,651
Phase 4. Findings & Reports	350	450	\$35,774	\$43,695	300	350	\$30,663	\$33,985	\$66,438	\$77,681
Full Project Total	2400	2925	\$245,308	\$284,020	2000	2500	\$204,423	\$242,752	\$449,731	\$526,773

*Communication & meetings, process documentation contained & invoiced within each phase.

Billing Structure

ER does not require an advanced payment in order to begin contracted work. A purchase order or approved contract issued to ER will initiate the work outlined in this proposal. Time worked will be billed at the midpoint and/or phase completion and payment of invoiced hours is net 30, with a 10-day dispute process outlined in the contract. If the timeline is extended an updated invoice structure will be updated, outlined, and approved by all parties to this proposal. If the proposed work plan and engagement changes, this disbursement plan may be updated in reflection of those changes.

Dependency Clause

ER will use reasonable effort to provide the services outlined in this proposal provided that the service recipient relays clear and reasonable requests for service, and that when request changes occur they are documented and scope is adjusted for timeline, resources, or deliverables. Obligations to perform any services are outlined in separate contractual documentation and are not part of this proposal. Harris County acknowledges that some of the services outlined in this proposal require instructions, data, information, and access from Harris County or third parties, or are dependent in whole or in part of completion of prior acts by the Service Recipient, if those pre- or post-requisites are not provided ER will not be liable for breach of the representations, warranties or covenants made under this proposal or the life of the contract due to these outlined dependencies.

Project Personnel

To facilitate the most meaningful discussion, Elite Research proposes a core team to produce the strongest outcomes. The team presented here exemplify the strength in cultural competency, strategic planning, evaluation, and developing actionable insights from findings. Elite Research's anticipated team will consist of **Dr. Rene Paulson** (oversite of the directors, process optimization and data management directions, President and Senior Statistician), Harris County based **Ms. Ila Casselberry** (primary project lead, evaluation and project management, data analysis, results interpretation), **Dr. Ryan Krone** (quantitative oversight, survey/instrument development), **Ms. Nikki Huddleston** (qualitative oversight, design, coding, analysis, visualization), **Ms. Mindy Chandler** (evaluation, design, and community impact), Harris County based **Dr. Sen Zhu** (quantitative research design, analysis, benchmarking), **Dr. Karina Donald** (qualitative collection and analysis), Harris County based **Ms. Chelsea Leonard** (project management, qualitative collection and analysis), **Mr. Pete Gackebach** (quantitative data collection and analysis), and **Ms. Melissa Belson** (quantitative data collection and analysis). Our content expert **Dr. Connie Hassett-Walker** (juvenile and minority criminal justice) will be consulted as needed. Please see Appendix C for the company and project team organizational charts and Appendix D for team profiles.

Dr. Rene Paulson – Oversight, President, & Senior Statistician. Brings culturally-competent expertise in strategic planning facilitation and organizational leadership. With a background in attitude and behavioral change from her doctorate and master's in experimental psychology from Texas Christian University, Dr. Paulson is able to create a neutral environment where all opinions are heard; she is able to read a room, understand the unstated feelings, and elicit the necessary feedback to build and design strategies. She hears what is not necessarily said, and is able to articulate themes from collective response. Part of her work as a consultant for organizations is to help them think through their collective impact strategies to achieve social change. Her main goal in the development of both companies was to provide scientific and technical support to institutions seeking collaborative expertise across academic business functions including research and evaluation, program design, marketing and advertising, informational systems and technologies, operations and strategic planning. Dr. Paulson is based in Dallas County.

Ms. Ila Casselberry – Lead Evaluation Consultant. Brings expertise in the areas of research design and evaluation, as well as statistical techniques. As an evaluation consultant, Ila works with clients to determine the best path forward with their research, evaluation, or analytic needs in order to create actionable insights from their data. As a passionate applied statistician with years of experience conducting public health and community impact research, she specializes in outcome and process evaluation, cost-effectiveness analysis, matching procedures, and modeling impact. She is committed to conducting research and evaluation with equity lens to produce evidence to inform policy and practice as well as passionate about motivation theory and social and emotional learning. Dr. Casselberry is **based in Harris County**.

Dr. Ryan Krone – Director of Quantitative Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, & Learning. With his master's in international political economy and doctorate in public policy and political economy from University of Texas at Dallas, Dr. Krone brings expertise in advanced statistics, evaluation, research design, instrumentation development, and online survey data collection. He directs and conducts a team of consultants in the areas of

research design and advanced statistical techniques. He has supported quantitative work on survey assessments and evaluations of education programs, health and social programs, global health projects, and public health issues. He has particular experience and education directly relating to public policy. His role and that of the quantitative team will be one of providing review planning, survey design and methodology, technical assistance, analysis, and insight related to quantitative data. Dr. Krone is based in Dallas County.

Ms. Nicole Huddleston – Director of Qualitative Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, & Learning. Brings expertise in qualitative research and evaluation design, coding, and analysis. She directs and conducts a team of consultants in the areas of research design and advanced techniques. She has worked with numerous researchers, practitioners, and communities to design qualitative research through interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observations. Ms. Huddleston holds a master's in applied anthropology from the University of North Texas and is passionate about utilizing social science research methods to solve real-world problems. Her role and the qualitative team will be one of providing technical assistance, CATI training, and serve as the coordinator of collection and training in support of accuracy and efficiency. Ms. Huddleston specializes in assisting researchers and organizations in designing, evaluating, and implementing sound and rigorous projects, as well as in analysis and reporting of qualitative and mixed methods data. Ms. Huddleston is based in Collin County.

Ms. Arminda Chandler – Research and Evaluation Consultant. Brings culturally-competent expertise in nonprofit program design, evaluation, and project management to help a strengthened strategic planning process. With her master's in Education and Human Development from George Washington University, Mindy has worked with leaders, researchers, and practitioners in the nonprofit and philanthropic world to design strong long-term designs through the development of theories of change and logic models, and then identifying appropriate outcomes, indicators, and measures (including the development of instruments tailored for their purpose). She has worked with clients on their strategic planning, and remains the go-to person for follow-up. Her role will be one of using her sound evaluation background to prepare a strong strategic plan and community outreach framework. Her role will be one of co-facilitation where needed, ensuring that discussions remain on-task, taking session notes, tracking time, and consolidating the findings. Ms. Chandler is based out-of-state.

Dr. Sen Zhu – Senior Research Analyst. Sen's dual doctoral work in pathophysiology from Peking University and Jining Medical University gives him unique understanding in the fields of bioinformatics and medical research, but his statistical knowledge and experience expand into areas of technical aspects such as analysis, benchmarking, dashboard creation and integration, as well as data visualization, advanced statistics, evaluation, and research design. He aligns collected and model data for customer satisfaction surveys, community assessment, and health research. He excels in helping clients better understand the research and analysis process, how to implement the practical application of research and statistical methods, and the justification for their use. He is a strong proponent of making the client a collaborator in the process. His role will be to bring technical assistance and insight to longitudinal analysis visualization and benchmarks, reporting, data preparation, analysis, and database needs. Dr. Zhu is based in Harris County.

Dr. Karina Donald – Qualitative Analyst. Brings expertise in mixed method design and culturally-relevant approaches to research across a broad range of industries. With a master's in art therapy from George Washington University and doctorate in marriage and family therapy from Texas Woman's University, Dr. Donald specializes in analyzing non-verbal expressions in human experiences, including projects in the arts. She has supported numerous projects where she has designed qualitative research through interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observations. Her role will be one of providing design and implementation, and oversight of data collection techniques and best practices. Dr. Donald is based out-of-state.

Ms. Chelsea Leonard – Project Manager/Data Collection. Brings expertise in qualitative research, project management, optimization, and communications. She has held roles within the organization in business optimization and program management. She often is tasked with designing systems and processes for increased impact, efficiency, quality improvement and cost reduction. As Chelsea is working towards her master's in Social

Justice and Human Rights from Arizona State University, she continues to be passionate about utilizing social science research methods to provide broad solutions to communities. Chelsea also specializes in interviewing as a means of gathering data from individuals but is skilled in participant observations and case study review. This allows her expertise to shine when training in data collection techniques. Ms. Leonard is **based in Harris County**.

Mr. Peter Gackebach – Research Analyst. Brings the technical expertise to ensure quality and accuracy of data, processing, and presentation. Through the interpretation of raw data through analysis programs and skills, he uses data to create actionable insights that derive strategy and directives for stakeholders, government officials, business executives and organizations. With his degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Maryland, Pete has worked in over 20 countries as data support on research projects that span various organizational needs. Mr. Gackebach is based out-of-state.

Ms. Melissa Belson – Research Associate. Coordinates data collection needs and is skilled in online, in-person, and other methods of collection. She is trained in one-on-one interview techniques as well as focus group moderation. She designs sample frames and coordinates with panel partners to identify appropriate participants for data collection. She is instrumental in survey development and online setup and distribution of said surveys. She is keen on timelines and works efficiently and accurately. She monitors and validates collected data to confirm accurate reporting and creates process manuals for organizational capacity building in these areas. She also performs data migration and data entry. She has applied knowledge to coding data and preparing data files for analysis. Leaning on her degree in Psychology from the University of Texas at Dallas, Melissa's role will be one of providing technical assistance, CATI training, and serve as the coordinator of collection in support of accuracy and efficiency. Ms. Belson is based in Dallas County.

Dr. Connie Hassett-Walker, Criminal Justice Expert —Norwich University. Brings expertise in criminal justice, specifically with juveniles and minorities. Her PhD entitled, "Delinquency and the Black Middle Class," received second place from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. She is a current assistant professor in the Department of Justice Studies & Sociology at Norwich University; she was formally a professor of Criminal Justice at Kean University and College of New Jersey. She has recently conducted evaluations on afterschool educational enrichment programs, a study on the effects of criminal justice system exposure on youth's substance use trajectories (NIH/NIDA), and an evaluation of a school counseling grant to improve district children's access to mental health counseling and support from guidance counselors and social workers. She is currently engaged in a review of criminal justice literature from the 1921 Tulsa, Oklahoma Riot and Cover-Up. Dr. Hassett-Walker is based out-of-state.

References

Elite Research's experience with evaluation and assessment extends into the nonprofit sector. The following projects represent a breadth of experience working in the field of qualitative research for nonprofit organizations and groups working with diverse constituents.

Project: *Focus Groups Consultant for SAGECents*

Partner: SAGE USA

Project Description: SAGE collaborated with LifeCents to develop a financial wellness app called SAGECents that targets users in the LGBT older adult community because of a lack of financial wellness information and resources available for members of this community. Users who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), rural users, and users who identify as transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary (TGNCNB) have used the SAGECents app in higher numbers than anticipated; as a result, SAGE contracted Elite Research for to design and conduct focus groups with 3 segments (rural users, TGNCNB users, BIPOC users) of its SAGECents app users in order to assess their user experience. Deliverables include: Review, Design & Planning, Data Collection, Analysis and Results, SWOT, Descriptive Statistics

Dates: April 2021 – August 2021

Contact: David Vincent, Chief Program Officer, (646) 439-2116, dvincent@sageusa.org

Project: *Evaluation of EHF's Holy Currencies Program*

Partner: Episcopal Health Foundation

Project Description: To properly inform the evaluation methods needed for EHF's Holy Currencies program requested, ER laid out 4 phases and utilized a mixed-method approach to data collection. It began with detailed planning phase which sets out the expectations of the relationship and points of contact, further modifies evaluation and analysis questions, and then moves into designing the evaluation data collection measures. Review of the program curriculum and key informant interviews with congregational leaders will determine questions used in a survey that will go out to all congregations. Once the survey data has been analyzed, focus groups with congregational members (at various levels of participation) will be utilized in order to gain a deeper, richer understanding of the data. This approach is best suited to address the objectives to: 1) Identify which elements of EHF's Holy Currencies program facilitated congregations' ability to sustain their ministries successfully; 2) Identify what characteristics of congregations were barriers and facilitators to ensuring the Holy Currencies were embedded in church ministries; 3) Identify what additional supports EHF could offer to congregations to strengthen and sustain their Holy Currencies initiatives; and 4) Identify the overall impact of the Holy Currencies on congregations, particularly on the relationships congregations have on their specific communities.

Dates: 2021 – Current

Contact: Shao-Chee Sim, VP of Research, Innovation and Evaluation, (713) 225-0900; ssim@episcopalhealth.org

Project: *Multiple Assessment Projects*

Partner: The Racial Equity Group

Project Description: Various projects in collaboration with the Racial Equity Group to provide a full framework to states and municipalities on the Assessment of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion leadership pipeline. The assessment informs leadership of employee competency levels, data collection gaps, and opportunities to modify policies and practices to advance equity and become equity focused institutions. Training is provided to leadership for implementation and operationalization. Achieving racial and gender equity included ensuring service delivery, employment, procurement, and programs are administered with an equity mindset to prevent disparate impacts on people of color and women, on what may appear as neutral policies, practices, and procedures, culminating in a countywide equity plan that sustains diversity and equity.

Performance Period: 2021 – Current

Contact Reference: Bird Guess, President & CEO; 617-730-2326; bguess@racialequitygroup.com

Key Services: Proposal Development/Alignment, Assessment, Sampling Plans, Data Collection, Preparation, Analysis, Reporting, Visualization, Stakeholder Communication, Actionable Insights, Training, Presentations

Related Project Examples

Our team's diverse education and professional expertise, and the way in which we work together and with our clients brings a strong support for the projects we work on. Each of the project team have extensive travel and cultural understanding, which serves to support qualitative research and evaluation efforts. Our experience in community-based projects has taught us that community and leaders are the gatekeepers for successful programs and assessment efforts. Related community, evaluation, and assessment project work includes, but is not limited to:

- SAGE collaborated with LifeCents to develop a financial wellness app called SAGECents that targets users in the LGBT older adult **community** because of a lack of financial wellness information and resources available for members of this community. Users who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (**BIPOC**), rural users, and users who identify as transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary (**TGN CNB**) have used the SAGECents app in higher numbers than anticipated; as a result, SAGE contracted Elite Research for to design and conduct **focus groups** with 3 segments (rural users, TGN CNB users, BIPOC users) of its SAGECents app users in order to assess their user experience.
- To properly inform the evaluation methods needed for Episcopal Health Foundation's Holy Currencies program requested, ER laid out 4 phases and utilized a **mixed-method approach** to data collection. It began with detailed planning phase which sets out the expectations of the relationship and points of contact, further modifies evaluation and analysis questions, and then moves into designing the evaluation data collection measures. Review of the program curriculum and key informant interviews with congregational leaders will determine questions used in a survey that will go out to all congregations. Once **the survey** data has been analyzed, **focus groups** with congregational members (at various levels of participation) will be utilized in order to gain a deeper, richer understanding of the data.
- Various projects in collaboration with the Racial Equity Group to provide a full framework to states and municipalities on the Assessment of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion leadership pipeline. The assessment informs leadership of employee competency levels, data collection gaps, and opportunities to modify policies and practices to advance equity and become equity focused institutions. Training is provided to leadership for implementation and operationalization. Achieving racial and gender equity included ensuring service delivery, employment, procurement, and programs are administered with an **equity mindset** to prevent disparate impacts on **people of color and women**, on what may appear as neutral policies, practices, and procedures, culminating in a countywide equity plan that sustains diversity and equity.
- Conducting a statewide **needs assessment** study in Oklahoma with the Oklahoma Association for Problematic and Compulsive Gaming (OAPCG) regarding the behavioral and rehabilitative needs of the residents. ER's sampling frame of the state produced respondents that mirrored the U.S. Census data for the state. ER designed the survey, completed the representative sampling plan, collected the data via **CATI telephone interviews**, social media, and with survey link distribution. ER cleaned and prepared the data, conducted primary and secondary data analysis, prepared draft and final reporting, **strategic planning**, visualization, facilitated stakeholder meetings and various presentations for OAPCG and the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.
- Community needs assessments seek to gather data regarding the needs of a community, in order to determine current situations and identify areas of action. They are essential to solid and comprehensive planning, so that resources are maximized and redundancies avoided. Elite Research is preparing and conducting such a community **needs assessment** for Community Action Agency (CAA) to serve as a guide in planning and developing the next strategic plan and provision of services aimed at self-sufficiency, **education**, and **support** in Jackson, Lenawee, and Hillsdale Counties to low-income residents. Elite Research is also developing a written strategic plan document that presents the planning

process, the research, the analysis, opportunities, and strategies that will guide CAA for the next 2 to 3 years.

- With a focus on geographic disparities in Saudi Arabian mortality as it relates to the Saudi Vision 2030 and National Transformation Plan (a formal planning process for utilization of its resources for development), Elite Research supported the Kingdom's government agencies to produce a theory of change that tackles health inequalities, maximizes opportunities of the impact of nonexistent policies on **mortality disparities**, and to advocate for strategies to bring desired **policy change**. Through the collection and analysis of the Kingdom's data, ER worked with Stakeholders to understand and learn formal and informal decision-making structures and power relationships to help the action policy derived from analysis to inform the implementation of policy and to help manage the change associated.
- Evaluation development and analysis for UKAID project preventing violence against children in Pakistan. Particular attention had to be given to the **cultural and religious dynamics** for data collection. Iterations of evaluation design and input were necessary to build protocols that would work in country and across regions. Capacity building across the Pakistan, US and European team members was also key, creating a shift toward the use of data informed decisions and strong program evaluation skills.
- Parkland Center for Clinical Innovation, a nonprofit healthcare organization approached Elite Research to assist in conducting an evaluation of a funded program that seeks to address social determinants of health for vulnerable populations in north Texas to develop a meaningful understanding of the experiences of individuals who have interacted with the program, including patients, social workers, and program staff members using mixed methods. ER designed the qualitative methodology, and all qualitative data collection instruments, while incorporating client feedback. We collected data through observational notes, **focus groups**, and **semi-structured interviews** with patients who successfully completed the program, patients who did not complete the program, social workers, and program staff members. Focus groups and interviews were available in English and Spanish. We audio-recorded and transcribed all data, as well as translated all recorded data in Spanish into English for analysis. We then uploaded all transcribed data into a computer-assisted qualitative analysis software for coding and analysis. We used emergent, descriptive coding techniques, along with thematic analysis, to answer the study's research objective. **Qualitative results** were integrated with quantitative results collected by the client to provide a better understanding of the research objective. We created a detailed summary report that provided an in-depth understanding of the experiences of participants.
- The Exeter Group, a healthcare talent management firm, approached consultants from ER, requesting assistance in collecting and analyzing **qualitative data** and reporting results in order to conduct a culture assessment for a county hospital. We collaborated with the client to design the methodology, **interview guides**, and **focus group** scripts. We trained the facilitators and interviewers, as well as conducted the full data collection that included thirty focus groups and ninety one-on-one interviews with diverse groups of hospital employees and community members. Focus groups and interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, as well as through interpreters for those needing assistance in other languages. Following data collection, we prepared the raw data for analysis by creating transcriptions of all audio-recorded focus groups and interviews, as well as translating transcriptions into English. Once prepared, we coded the transcribed data using computer-assisted qualitative analysis software, summarizing key concepts. Coded data were then organized into major themes in order to answer the project's research questions. A summary report of the major findings from the study, actionable insights, along with other deliverables, were presented.
- As part of their service evaluation, the Teachers Retirement System of Texas contracted ER in early 2020 for their annual Membership Satisfaction Survey of both their retirees and active member participants. This survey reviews member engagement of **health, social, and economic variables** and products. ER redesigned the survey, translated it for native Spanish speaking participants, collected data via online survey tool distribution in email, and via **CATI telephone survey**. ER supplied the data management,

analysis, graph and chart creation, report, and facilitated stakeholder meetings and board presentations. Continuing in 2021, dashboard development and near real-time monitoring began.

- The development of a community readiness assessment, pilot study, **qualitative and quantitative evaluation**, and monitoring of safe water installation projects for Water Mission (NGO) in Kenya, Haiti, Tanzania, and Honduras. The community readiness aspect of this project was found to be critical to water uELLC and upkeep of the wells. Building the instrument required interaction and research with local community and (inter)religious leaders. ER partnered with Water Mission to refine their strategic goals for research, align with their overall mission and **strategic plan**, and development of a theory of change. To operationalize the plan, Elite Research provided tools and frameworks, along with instruction and oversight, to conduct **literature reviews** related to the outcomes included in their ToC.
- Program evaluation and impact assessment for Samaritan's Purse's Operation Christmas Child. The protocols and instruments designed for this evaluation were tested in Indonesia, Senegal, South Africa, Romania, and Burkina Faso, with local involvement in the process, and later used as routine measures for their internal M&E program. A subsequent study was conducted to identify spiritual metrics. Currently, a global impact study is being conducted. Special sensitivity given to understanding local **community religious and cultural dynamics**.
- Monitoring and evaluation framework and tool being developed for International Samaritan, to be used in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, and Nicaragua. This project considers education, water, and health and wellness programs. The process included local leadership involvement, and is tied to their theory of change and logic model, and based on documented measures in the literature. Special sensitivity given to the process due to beneficiaries in garbage dump communities. Capacity building and organizational integration are critical to International Samaritan, so they want not only to have deliverables, but actually own the development of them with Elite Research as their guide and to create an organization **culture shift** toward the use of data informed decisions.
- Monitoring and evaluation framework and tool being developed for Every Village, to be used across South Sudan. This process included **focus groups** with various levels of leadership stakeholders both in-county and at their international headquarters. Much time was spent developing an aligned theory of change and logic models for their people, water, and radio programs. Special sensitivity given to the process due to civic and tribal strife.
- The purpose of this project was for ER to provide understanding on how physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants view and provide self-management support to patients with regard to a specific chronic medical condition to the American College of Rheumatoid Arthritis. The objective of the study was to develop a detailed **understanding of the current situation** of self-management support for this condition from the perspectives of medical care providers, including identification of needs and opportunities for future education and support. Data were collected through **focus groups**. A detailed summary report was delivered to the client.
- Capacity building trainings, evaluation design, and subsequent statistical analysis was conducted for OneHope, Inc.'s global study on attitudes and behaviors of youth. This study survey over 154,000 secondary school aged students from 44 countries across North America, Latin America, Africa, Europe, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. Consultants also served in obtaining governmental permissions, community religious leadership permission, and the on-the-ground data collection process, analysis and reports, as well as project oversight.

In each of the above examples of conducted assessments and focus groups, reporting was designed to serve populations, in underserved, rural and minority communities with inequities in health, diversity, social, age, gender, behavior, etc. Raw data was provided in Excel and/or SPSS. Reporting on qualitative data based on representation of the community samples are critical to shape the need for an increase or decrease in programs or ways in which a community is impacted and served. To meet these needs, ER works diligently as a partner in designing, interpreting, and reporting of this data.

Service Model Descriptions

ER will identify a primary contact person to be the go-to on questions and status, and a team member will be assigned to manage the day-to-day tasks, deadlines, scheduling, etc. As planning progresses, team members will be assigned to various aspects of this work. Management responsibilities will be outlined and shared on the joint Dropbox or other shared secure file system.

Core Values and Processes

Our mission revolves around the empowerment of researchers. Capacity building and cultural competence allows us to help impart our knowledge in the gaps where you find it necessary for training, process development and improvement, or templates for future use. Our goal is not to maintain projects over time, but to help you with the higher-level needs where you see fit. Elite Research's is committed to our core values of:

Collaboration: we are committed to partnerships and synergistic ideas ultimately create the greatest value

Cultural Humility: we are committed to strive to know more about and understand the communities with which we work, while being reflexive about our position as outsiders, because we know cultural competence as not something to be attained but rather something to always be working towards

Empowerment: we are committed to creating opportunities for growth in knowledge, skills, and practices

Equity: we are committed to work that builds access and power for all, as well as using disaggregated data to highlight existing inequities

Environmental Responsibility: we are committed to leaving less of an environmental footprint through our internal and external practices

Data Integrity: we are committed to quality, valid, and reliable data that can be trusted

Fiscal Integrity: we are committed to making responsible and effective use of available assets and not taking advantage of those with whom we work

Social Impact: we are committed to working towards a greater good

Transparency: we are committed to being clear, direct, honest, and engaging communication

COVID-19 Considerations

Research and evaluation design and planning, as well as data collection, will look different during COVID-19 – especially if there are resurgent waves of the pandemic. Certain considerations must be taken in light of the restrictions for the safety of all personnel and stakeholders. Projects must consider essential versus non-essential items, delayed data collection and results due to shutdowns, contingency plans, pivoting to more productive or alternative methods, augmenting the pace of the project, availability of certain equipment, etc. Elite Research will work to consider any necessary changes to the data collection methodology; these changes may include the need to plan for physical (social) distancing, linking participants to COVID-19 screening and care, remote data collection, etc. Providing a safe experience for all will remain key through these efforts.

Structure & Business Management

The company follows a functional organizational structure with oversight from the President. Functional departments such as research, evaluation and statistics, data collection and field service, computing and information technology, web and marketing, editing, and optimization coordinate regularly with production groups based on individual project needs. This allows facilitation of expert staff per project, rather than the duplication of products or resources. Unlike other firms, consultants at ER are often trained in real-world research, rather than solely theoretical or mathematical approaches, and, as such, are highly qualified to deal with the unique situations that often go hand-in-hand with real-world research. Elite Research uses a combination of WPM, CPM, and AEP to manage projects. While these project management approaches can seem conflicting, Elite Research's expertise in where to use different management approaches throughout a large-scale project can optimize the efficiency and accuracy of the work needed.

WPM is often seen as the simplest way to plan a project. Tasks flow down the list in sequential order, just like a waterfall. In this basic system, a team must complete one step before starting the next. The general components of WPM include specification of consumer requirements: concept, design, and planning; creation

of a product (coding, etc.); integration into current systems; validation (testing, debugging, etc.); product installation; and ongoing maintenance. CPM project management falls in line with WPM by highlighting tasks that teams cannot begin until finishing others. For example, the gap assessment should be conducted prior to any mapping techniques. CPM devotes adequate resources to this critical chain while devoting enough resources to other tasks such that they can run concurrently, but still have enough of a buffer to reassign resources when needed.

CPM makes strings of tasks that each depend on the other creating sequential items that form a team's critical path. By determining a critical path and focusing on these important tasks above all others, managers can avoid frustrating bottlenecks. They can allocate more resources to any items on a critical path that lag behind and threaten delays. With the CPM, managers can pull workers from nonessential tasks when they need to "unkink" the chain of events in their critical path. Because workers can complete non-essential tasks at any time, the company can continue working at a normal pace, despite changes in worker allocation. CPM is a useful strategy in a project such as this because many tasks can be worked on simultaneously, but at times there will be critical paths to be followed. Having access to a diverse team such as ER's should allow the Client to feel confident that all aspects of the complex project are considered along the path rather than implementation as a separate team from content condensing, etc.

AEP focuses on the agile approach of adaptability to changing situations and constant, regular feedback usually ideal for smaller software projects and/or those with accelerated development schedules but incorporating the extreme programming focus of defining values and processes to improve software quality and ensure responsiveness to evolving customer requirements. The core principles are simplicity, communication, feedback, respect, and courage. AEP teams do not embrace as much flexibility as other Agile teams, undertaking tasks in a strict priority order. The EP methodology mandates specific engineering practices such as test-driven product development, automated testing, simple and elegant design, refactoring, etc. For the long-term success of this complex project, AEP is important to being flexible where the project management allows but providing the rigor and testing to create a lasting product and sound, valid data collection and reporting.

With the use of project management software and custom tools and processes, the project management team will directly lay out critical paths and nonessential tasks for team to focus on at any time. Worker allocation will be determined based on project and timeline need. These discussions happen with stakeholders to determine resource, time, and effectiveness. Constant review and refinement occur.

Quality Assurance Measures

It is the policy of ER's team to provide quality work, service, and products that meet or exceed needs and expectations. Our quality assurance approach focuses on defining quality, measuring quality, and improving quality. **Defining quality** means identifying the expected level of performance for a project or system whether it is for technical performance, service access, interpersonal relations, service delivery, safety, etc. These standards are based on up-to-date scientific evidence but may also include stakeholder perception and expectations depending on the circumstance. **Improving quality** involves closing the gap between the current and expected level of quality; this is done by identifying the element that needs improvement, analyzing the problem, developing possible solutions (hypotheses), implementing the changes and testing their effectiveness, and then determining the best way forward (abandoning, modifying, or implementing the change). **Measuring quality**, to Elite Research, is all about determining whether current performance meets or complies with expected standards. To do this, specific and appropriate-to-industry performance indicators must be identified and then used to assess the level of compliance with standards. The ER team will apply quality measures for alignment with approaches to work to ensure process optimization both in project management, partnership development, and work product.

Capacity Building

Within government and educational entities, ER provides capacity building in all its services including research design, sampling frameworks, data gathering, data preparation, analysis, reports, and presentation of data. ER is skilled in grant proposal development, strategic planning, community-based needs assessment, training in

technical writing and editing, process development and maintenance. They have worked in strategic implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion stakeholder trainings, and best practices. They have led national educational workshops on utilizing research, evaluation, and statistical techniques. They fill the gaps and develop the human resources to maintain research, processes, and procedures.

Collaboration and empowerment are central tenets of Elite Research; our impact as a group is in the tools and processes we embed in others, as much as the work we produce. This is done through intentional training in areas where our clients need support, building solid and feasible methodologies and protocols for data collection and analysis, and supporting our clients through those processes. Collaboration with our clients as well as field experts is critical to our success.

Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility

Cultural competence is defined by the HHS' Health Resources & Services Administration as the "behaviors, attitudes, and policies that can come together on a continuum that will ensure that a system, agency, program, or individual can function effectively and appropriately in diverse cultural interaction and settings. It ensures an understanding, appreciation, and respect of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups"⁷. In 1998, Tervalon & Murray-Garcia⁸ introduced the idea of cultural humility as "a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redressing power imbalances...and to developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations." There has been much debate on whether professionals in public health, medical, social work, and other fields should take a cultural competence *or* a cultural humility approach to their work. We uphold the same position as Greene-Moton and Minkler (2020)⁹, that "we see substantial complementarity and synergy between the concepts and practice of cultural humility and cultural competence."

Understanding that we cannot ever be *fully* competent in another's culture, we view cultural competence as not something to be attained (or not), but rather a reminder and prompt to continue to strive to know more about and understand the communities with which we work, while being reflexive about our position as researchers and evaluators. The two concepts work together to provide professionals (and citizens at large) with critical tools for working with diverse individuals, groups, and communities in today's complex world.

As part of our approach utilizing both practices, we understand that our own evaluation work is culturally-influenced, as is stated by the AEA¹⁰ that, "Evaluations cannot be culture free. Those who engage in evaluation do so from perspectives that reflect their values, their ways of viewing the world, and their culture. Culture shapes the ways in which evaluation questions are conceptualized, which in turn influence what data are collected, how the data will be collected and analyzed, and how data are interpreted." The ways in which we are mindful and committed to taking both a cultural competence and cultural humility approach include, but are not limited to:

- Practice cultural relativism; the idea that a person's or group's beliefs, values, and practices should be understood within context of their own culture and not judged by values and beliefs of another culture.
- Engage in self-reflective thinking.
- Take the time up front to really learn about the cultural realities of groups with whom we work in order to diminish misunderstandings and distrust that can hold partnerships from reaching full potential.
- Acknowledge our own explicit and implicit biases, assumptions, as well as stereotypic beliefs.
- Recognize and value natural systems (family, community, church, etc.) as support mechanisms.

⁷ Selig, S., Tropiano, E., & Greene-Moton, E. (2006). Teaching cultural competence to reduce health disparities. *Health Promotion Practice*, 7(3 Suppl.), 247S–255S. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839906288697>

⁸ Tervalon, M. & Murray-Garcia, J. (1998). Cultural humility versus cultural competence: A critical distinction in defining physician training outcomes in multicultural education. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 9, 117–125.

⁹ Greene-Moton E. & Minkler M. (2020). Cultural competence or cultural humility? Moving beyond the debate. *Health Promotion Practice*, 21(1), 142–145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839919884912>

¹⁰ American Evaluation Association. (2011). *American evaluation association public statement on cultural competence in evaluation*. <https://www.eval.org/Portals/0/Docs/aea.cultural.competence.statement.pdf>

- Understand that the needs of some groups may require that they are served and facilitated by people who share their cultural identity.
- Being conscious of the fact that cultural groups are affected—directly and indirectly—by the evaluation decisions, and working to ensure those perspectives are given consideration in the evaluation process.
- Listen to the needs of stakeholders without making generalizations about individuals based on some element or fact related to a cultural group.
- Analysis of data should include cultural and contextual factors related to the issue being evaluated.

Practical evaluation terms include educating ourselves about the cultural groups involved in the programs and evaluation, which can include literature reviews, desk research, and informational interviewing with stakeholders and other members of target populations. We provide surveys, interviews, and focus groups in multiple languages and include interpreters when appropriate.

When collecting data, we consider diversity within target populations and strive to include voices from varied groups. We practice reflexivity and cultural awareness when designing data collection instruments such as questionnaires and interview and focus group guides by carefully scrutinizing instrument wording for appropriateness given the cultural context of target populations, and for biases or assumptions being reflected in the wording. We recognize that involving stakeholders in the evaluation process is essential to the success of an evaluation, and we draw upon them to provide feedback on data collection instruments, and we pilot instruments with target samples. Continuing this approach as evaluation plans and instruments are developed and utilized, as data are analyzed and interpreted, being careful of tokenism, avoiding jargon, exclusive language and behaviors, ensuring stakeholders from diverse backgrounds are a part of the process, and recognizing that diversity means relationships of difference are concrete ways to incorporate cultural competence and cultural humility into our work.

Capacity Building with Racial and Social Equity Lens

Racial and Social Equity Approach

Equity is critical to our future. Elite Research is committed not only to culturally-competent practices, but also to applying a racial and equity lens to the work we do. Applying a racial and social equity lens in research means that we look at the implications for effective *long-term* change benefiting society as a whole. When considering our support through a racial and equity lens, we do this in multiple ways:

- **Research design** – we consider the full scope of beneficiaries and stakeholders in the design process, along with *how* we would use disaggregated data to benefit those groups. Since the audience and client have the inside knowledge, we build processes and communication that honors and builds trust. We consider the audience for those receiving the intervention or assessment, and ensure that the language is not only inclusive but relevant to them. We also commit to never over-selling to a client or grantee what they do not need, but rather work with them to identify their goals and build a design that supports their vision.
- **Data collection** – we consider the audience during data collection, and try to bring facilitators and data collectors that mirror the audience. We also try to use collection measures (online, offline, etc.) that meets the audience’s need/desire – meeting them where they are, recognizing time and capacity constraints that they may be under.
- **Analysis** – we consider demographics in the data, and conduct analysis that compares key groups, produce findings that are disaggregated by categories that would be critical to the equity conversation.
- **Reporting** – we consider the audience for whom the project is intended, and ensure that the language and goals are met. We encourage stakeholders to be a part of the writing process, especially when it comes to conclusions and recommendations that are made.
- **Overall** – we try to create a diverse work culture within our own organization, both internally and externally with those with whom we subcontract. We build research plans that draw on multiple collaborators, and build our team members’ portfolios by broadening their involvement across project and client types.

We, as Elite Research, acknowledge that while we bring extensive evaluation and statistical knowledge, our approach may not be aligned with ECLLC's unstated or intuitive ideas. As such, we want to remain flexible and welcome dialogue around areas that ECLLC would prefer be handled in a different way.

Trauma Informed Approach & Cultural Humility

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration¹¹ defines trauma as the result of “an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.” Understanding the role of trauma and creating a trauma-informed *approach* to the work they do helps organizations further their goals and objectives. Organizations, across service-sectors and systems, are being encouraged to examine a trauma-informed approach to benefit all stakeholders, to conduct a trauma-informed organizational assessment and change process, and to involve clients and staff at all levels in the organizational development process.

A trauma-informed approach reflects adherence to six key *principles*¹² rather than a prescribed set of practices or procedures. These principles include: Safety, Trustworthiness and Transparency, Peer Support, Collaboration and Mutuality, Empowerment, Voice and Choice, and Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues. These principles may be generalizable across multiple types of settings, although terminology and application may be setting- or sector-specific. With regards to Elite Research’s work, incorporating a trauma-informed approach to collecting data for evaluation serves as a universal precaution for carefully approaching sensitive topics. In our approaches to evaluation, we take care to choose the **appropriate method of data collection** (focus groups or facilitated discussions, interviews, self-administered surveys, etc.), considering environmental and factors that may remind participants of aspects of their trauma. **Informed consent** is a critical component of a trauma-informed approach to evaluation, because it ensures that a participant fully understands the research and what will be asked of them *prior* to consenting; ensuring that participants know that their participation is voluntary, that participation (or lack of) does not affect access to services, and providing multiple decision points throughout a survey or interview are ways in which we can honor participation.

When **developing assessment measures or instruments**, we pay attention and are careful with emotionally-charged words (such as “rape,” “assault,” and “victim”), and ensure that it is reviewed by someone from the target population to ensure appropriate language and tone. Our qualitative **interviewers are trained** not only in interviewing procedures, but also on trauma and trauma responses so that they are well-prepared in interviewing; they also are able to engage with people of different backgrounds in an empathetic and non-judgmental way, and build in time for reflection and debrief those involved in the process. **Confidentiality** is extremely important for all participants, but especially those affected by trauma, so we do not ask for more identifying information than is absolutely necessary, and personally identifying information that could link to an individual is not included in any reporting documents or other deliverables. Finally, Elite Research tries to offer to all participants further **support resources** for those that may experience distress requiring professional help.

Cultural humility is often an overlooked component of a trauma-informed approach. Traditionally viewed as separate concepts, these two approaches to health and community work should be considered synonymous concepts as trauma usually is housed in some sort of cultural context. Promoting cultural humility, a respectful approach that requires reflection, engagement, and self-critique, can help strengthen relationships across all stakeholders, supporting higher quality support services and care. When placing a greater emphasis on cultural humility, organizations make more purposeful and deliberate efforts to build more inclusive and diverse teams, which represent those being served.

Intersectional Equity

Elite Research carefully considers intersectional equity in their approach, which focuses on “the voices of those experiencing overlapping, concurrent forms of oppression in order to understand the depths of the inequalities

¹¹ Source: https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf

¹² Source: https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf

and the relationships among them in any given context.”¹³ Using an intersectional lens also means recognizing the historical contexts surrounding an issue, which directly falls in alignment with the ECLLC framework’s systemic thinking. ER consultants also use an intersectional lens in our work, understanding that all aspects of culture (including socially constructed categories like race and gender, and inequalities such as sexism, racism, poverty, etc.) are **interconnected**, and therefore, to truly understand people’s experiences and address social issues, these must be considered within the context of **an interrelated and intersectional whole**.

Our intersectional feminism approach is guided by the **six core ideas** of intersectional frameworks: (1) **social inequality**, (2) **power**, (3) **relationality**, (4) **social context**, (5) **complexity**, and (6) **social justice**. Additionally, when possible, we incorporate **community-based research methods** in our work, such as **participatory action research**, which centers the experiences and perspectives of traditionally marginalized and/or excluded voices from project/program design to implementation. We pair these methods with an intersectional framework in order to gain in-depth and contextual understandings of problems and solutions that are informed by those who are the intended beneficiaries of the research outcomes. Please see the Community Participatory Approach section for more information on our process using these methods.

Advanced Security Management & Brief Data Security Program

Data governance of government data is provisioned by security responsibilities to protect personally identifiable information. This is managed through risk assessment, software selection and usage, access level management, as well as policies and procedures that govern this data. ER restricts access to controlled data that may be confidential or secured. Our commitment is to the client’s data and how inappropriate access might adversely affect our long-standing excellent reputation. ER promotes a strong stance against malicious data theft, internally and externally through increased user awareness with documented and policy driven data management, storage, and usage. Our data program applies to all client or company data in storage, awareness, access, and retention and is subject to all risk assessment and compliance for HIPAA, HITRUST, HITECH requirements. All company employees and affiliates are expected to abide by the standards of this program. Access is granted with specific credential and managed by a single administrator.

A multi-tenant, compliant, cloud-based location is provided for internal non-networked file storage, along with secure data transfer and sharing. Records of security access to the storage and sharing of files is routinely audited. Credentials are managed by the security administrator and identity management and provisions are handled through support@eliteresearch.com e-mail communication with IT support. IT support will provide any requested documentation of the data security policy and governance under NDA assuming proposal award. Password requirements are outlined within the policies and procedures executed by the company. Individual requirements for security at the desktop, workspace and credentials are outlined in the company data standards protocol. Levels of access are granted per project and data file management requirement.

Our servers are housed in a secure data facility and are monitored 24 hours-per-day and 7 days-per-week by network operations personnel for all aspects of operational security. Biometric/intrusion sensors, card readers, personal identification numbers, and environmental sensors are used to ensure server integrity and safety. Server power is provided by a redundant, multi-stage, uninterruptible system. In the event of a catastrophic commercial power failure, diesel generators provide seamless backup power. A redundant, high-bandwidth, private transport network provides connectivity between our servers and the world. The local fiber connectivity is redundant with three fiber rings with dual entry points from Optical Carrier-12 (OC-12) hardware. This network has demonstrated 99.999% availability, which means that the network will be down no more than 5 minutes in one year. Access control methods in place are withheld within the policies and procedures and audits are regularly conducted. Incident reports are communicated within 24 hours to the support team. Outlined per job description are data level ownership, administration, responsibility, and response requirements. Any access found within violation of this program and written protocol are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. No network access is provided to subcontractors or affiliates.

¹³ Bilge, S., & Collins, P. H. (2016). Intersectionality. Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Appendices

Appendix A: Project Deliverable Examples

Appendix B: Process Descriptions

Appendix C: Company & Project Team Organizational Charts

Appendix D: Team Profiles

Appendix A: Project Deliverable Examples

QUANTITATIVE REPORT AND DATA VISUALIZATION

QUALITATIVE BRIEF REPORT

SAMPLE DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION REPORT DO NOT COPY



CONTEXT

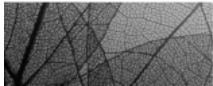
- The Inclusive Culture Diagnostic Survey measures individual perceptions and attitudes towards cultural and structural dimensions of inclusion within an organizational context.
- The survey consists of 17 items rated on a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*).

SURVEY PARTICIPATION

- The survey was launched on August 17 and closed on August 28.
- The survey closed with more than 240 responses.
- 230 individuals shared demographic information.

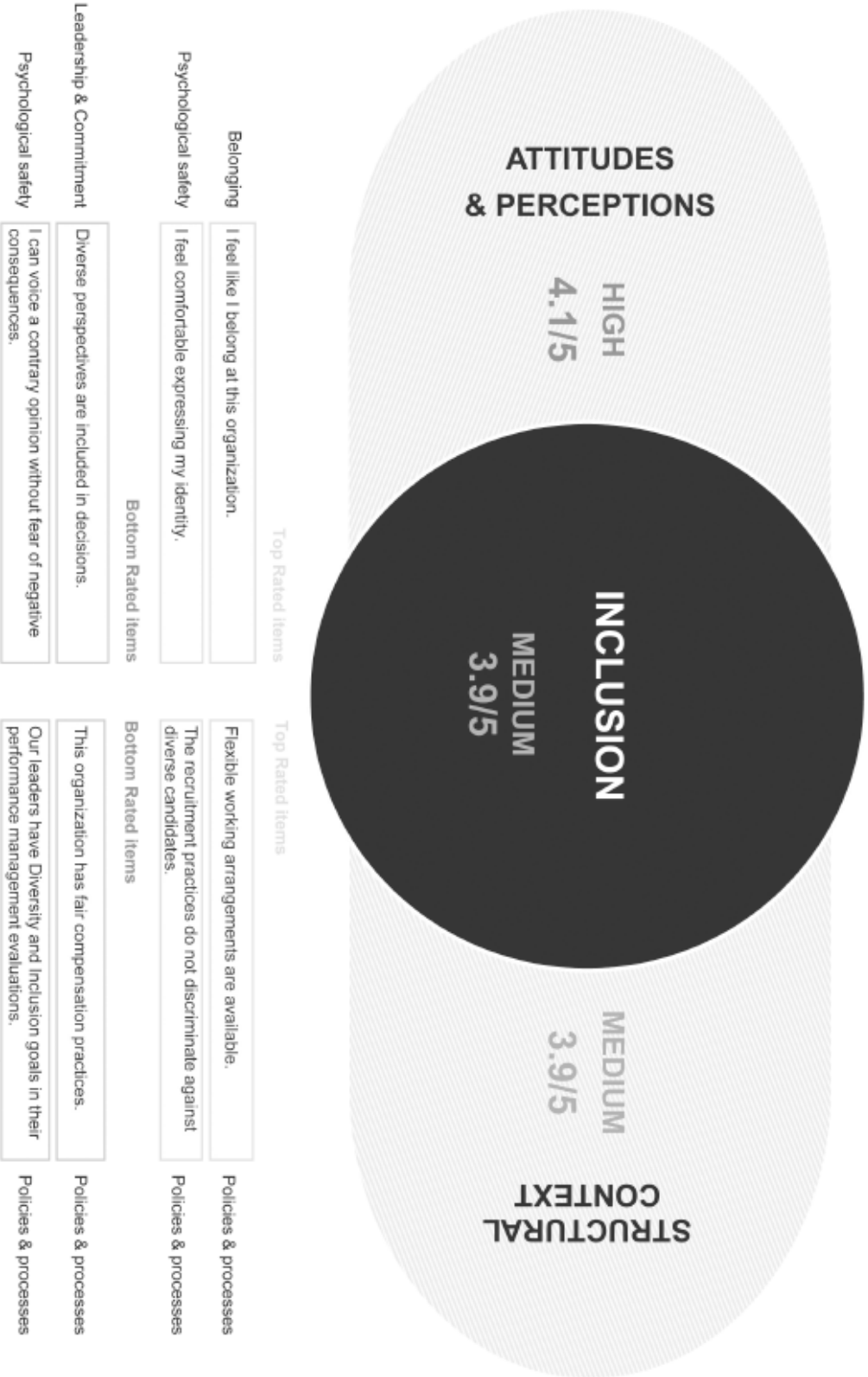
SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

	Count	Percentage		Count	Percentage
Gender			Tenure		
Male	121	52%	Less than 1 year	66	29%
Female	83	36%	1-5 years	93	41%
Non-binary	1	0%	More than 5 years	38	17%
Prefer not to say	26	11%	Prefer not to say	30	13%
Sexual Orientation			Function		
Heterosexual	186	81%	Sales / Commercial	128	57%
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual	14	6%	Marketing	28	13%
Prefer not to say	30	13%	Supply Chain & Operations	22	10%
Race			Finance	16	7%
White	147	64%	IT / IS	6	3%
Latino/a or Latin American	25	11%	HR	4	2%
African - black/white/other	10	4%	General Management	3	1%
Asian	6	3%	Strategy	2	1%
Black - Caribbean/ Afro-Caribbean/ Afro-American	3	1%	Legal	2	1%
Prefer not to say	38	17%	Other	13	6%
Age					
Below 40	122	53%			
Above 40	81	35%			
Prefer not to say	27	12%			



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INCLUSION IS: A state in which all individuals can fully leverage their distinct traits and still experience belonging, ownership, and empowerment within the organization.



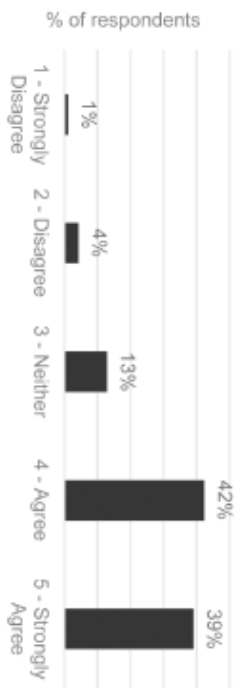
Scoring key: 1(strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither), 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree)

DIMENSIONS OF INCLUSION: DRILL DOWN



GROUP ATTITUDES & PERCEPTIONS

BELONGING 4.2/5



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY 4.0/5



LEADERSHIP & COMMITMENT 3.9/5

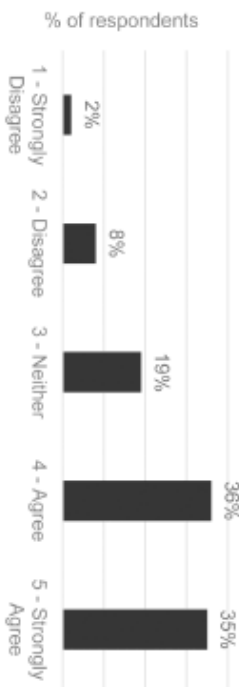


GROUP STRUCTURAL CONTEXT

DEVELOPMENT 3.8/5



POLICIES & PROCESSES 3.9/5



2. Sample, Institutional Assessment, Racial Equity Continuum (deidentified, partial)

COMMITTED: promotes Racial Equity

- Routinely collects, disaggregates, and evaluates data by race/ethnicity in hiring, promotions, operations, budgeting and resource allocation, contracting and procurement, etc.
- Equips leadership and staff with tools and training to make Racial Equity standard operating procedure
- Has integrated Racial Equity into organizational strategic priorities with specific action plans
- Publicly shares data on Racial Equity goals and progress with internal and external stakeholders
- Has accountability mechanisms for advancing Racial Equity, diversity, and inclusion

COMPLIANT: pressured to Racial Equity

- Does not collect, disaggregate, or evaluate data by race/ethnicity in hiring, promotions, operations, budgeting and resource allocation, contracting and procurement, etc.
- Reactionary and provides Racial Equity training after complaints or potential illegal discriminatory events
- Begins Racial Equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives after internal or external events, but allows stagnation or non-prioritization to occur
- Has no accountability mechanisms for advancing Racial Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Issues public statement or resolution supporting and committing to Racial Equity, diversity and inclusion

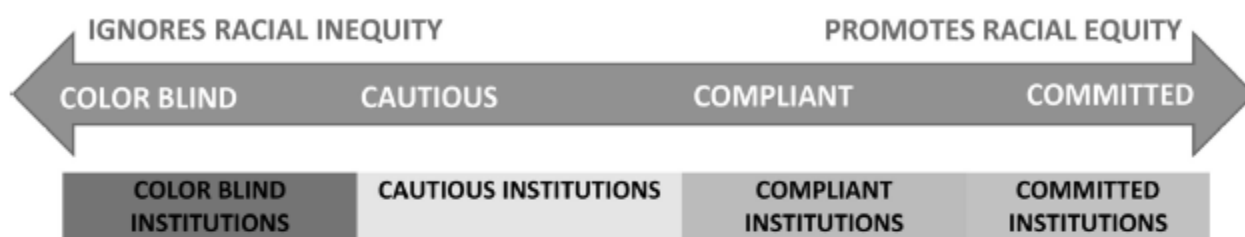
CAUTIOUS: hesitant to Racial Equity

- Does not collect, disaggregate, or evaluate data by race/ethnicity in hiring, promotions, operations, budgeting and resource allocation, contracting and procurement, etc.
- Values improving Racial Equity in principle, but has no plans to operationalize it in practice
- Has awareness of racial disparities data and understands closing gaps is important for the institution
- Has no accountability mechanisms for advancing Racial Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Has not integrated Racial Equity into organizational strategic priorities with specific action plans

COLORBLIND: ignores Racial Inequity

- Does not collect, disaggregate, or evaluate data by race/ethnicity in hiring, promotions, operations, budgeting and resource allocation, contracting and procurement, etc.
- Believes organizational policies, practices, and operations are race neutral and colorblind
- Has no accountability mechanisms for advancing Racial Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Assumes all employees and community stakeholders have equal opportunity and are treated equally without race being a factor
- Has not integrated Racial Equity into organizational strategic priorities with specific action plans

Identify where your organization is on the *Racial Equity Continuum*.



Step 1: Mark all the boxes that you feel describe your organization's current approach to Racial Equity.

Step 2: Count the number of marks checked in each of the four categories and enter here:

Committed approach ____

Compliant approach ____

Cautious approach ____

Colorblind approach ____

Step 3: You can identify where your organization is positioned by looking at the highest number in your totals. The specific items not checked for each category are typically considered next steps.

If you are using this assessment in a group, determine if your colleague's scores display a pattern. It's important to begin a discussion about differences in how the organization is viewed differently, and why. These kinds of discussions are the catalyst for transformative change and the foundation for making Racial Equity standard operating procedure!

3. Sample, Racial Equity SWOT (deidentified, partial)

REPORT SUMMARY

Racial Equity Group (REG) is pleased to submit this report to assist the Health Authority, Public Health Division and local public health authorities to improve health and wellbeing for all residents in communities. In March 2017, two pilot departments - Public Health and Human Resources completed the Equity Eye Analysis toolkit.

The toolkit consist of two primary tools; Racial Equity SWOT analysis and the Systems Thinking process. REG facilitated training to guide department leader's application on how to perform a Racial Equity SWOT analysis and a Systems Thinking process. The goal was to equip both departments with the ability self-identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT Analysis), in the context of Racial Equity, as well the ability to see the dynamic interconnection of problems, structures and processes as contributors to root causes of racial disparities in various domains of their departments.

Racial Equity SWOT Analysis

This analysis was conducted based on two spectrums, positive vs. negative and internal vs. external. Strengths and Weaknesses are characteristics within departments interpreted to be policies, procedures, and practices promoting equity (Strengths), or ignoring equity (Weaknesses). Opportunities and Threats are external to the institution and measured by their impact on the departments, positively, (Opportunities), or negatively, (Threats).

Systems Thinking Process

In conjunction with conducting a Racial Equity SWOT analysis, departments applied a Systems Thinking process used to interpret events and problems holistically and for understanding how systems and structures distribute and deny opportunity inside departments and institutions.

SUMMARY OF EQUITY EYE ANALYSIS OUTCOMES

- ❖ Departments discovered overall strengths and equitable practices were frequently in the domains of recruitment, commitment from leadership, and cross-departmental collaboration
- ❖ Department's most frequent weaknesses and inequitable practices and policies were in the domains of data collection, interviewing, program decision-making, and community engagement
- ❖ Strengths from departments were summarized and recommended to be shared across all departments as internal best practices
- ❖ Policy templates were recommended to be used across departments to address common weaknesses with flexibility to customize templates
- ❖ Threats were identified as a shrinking Black and Latinx talent pool as gentrification and other factors are driving people of color to other cities, states and communities.
- ❖ Opportunities varied by department and included numerous potential community partners focused on Racial Equity and potential to build capacity, influx of health equity funding.

Leaders and managers from both departments were trained and instructed to conduct an analysis on the following comprehensive list of core equity domains and indicators:



Each of the eight domains were evaluated based on four Racial Equity indicators: *Access, Treatment, Quality and Outcomes* relative to departments core functions and were scored using the below Racial Equity ratings:

RACIAL EQUITY RATINGS	CRITERIA
HIGHLY EQUITABLE	Excellent performance on all four Equity Eye indicators
SOMEWHAT INEQUITABLE	Good performance on all four Equity Eye indicators
MODERATELY INEQUITABLE	Fair performance on all four Equity Eye indicators
HIGHLY INEQUITABLE	Underperformance on all four Equity Eye indicators

The Racial Equity SWOT analysis was designed using sector specific customized questions to provide a comprehensive understanding of current policies, practices and procedures. Below are a few sample questions.

❖ Access

- What opportunities and mediums does our department provide for residents to share recommendations on programs, policies, and/or plans?
- What are the specific racial disparities observed based on data in hiring, promotions and retention for our department?

❖ Treatment

- What are our department's strategies for driving racial/ethnic diversity of our staff?
- What dollar amount and percentage of your department's budget is allocated towards achieving racial diversity goals?

❖ Quality

- Does our department measure, monitor and manage data by race/ethnicity to ensure the absence of disparities in service delivery?
- Is our level, frequency and duration of service comparable for all stakeholders?

❖ Outcomes

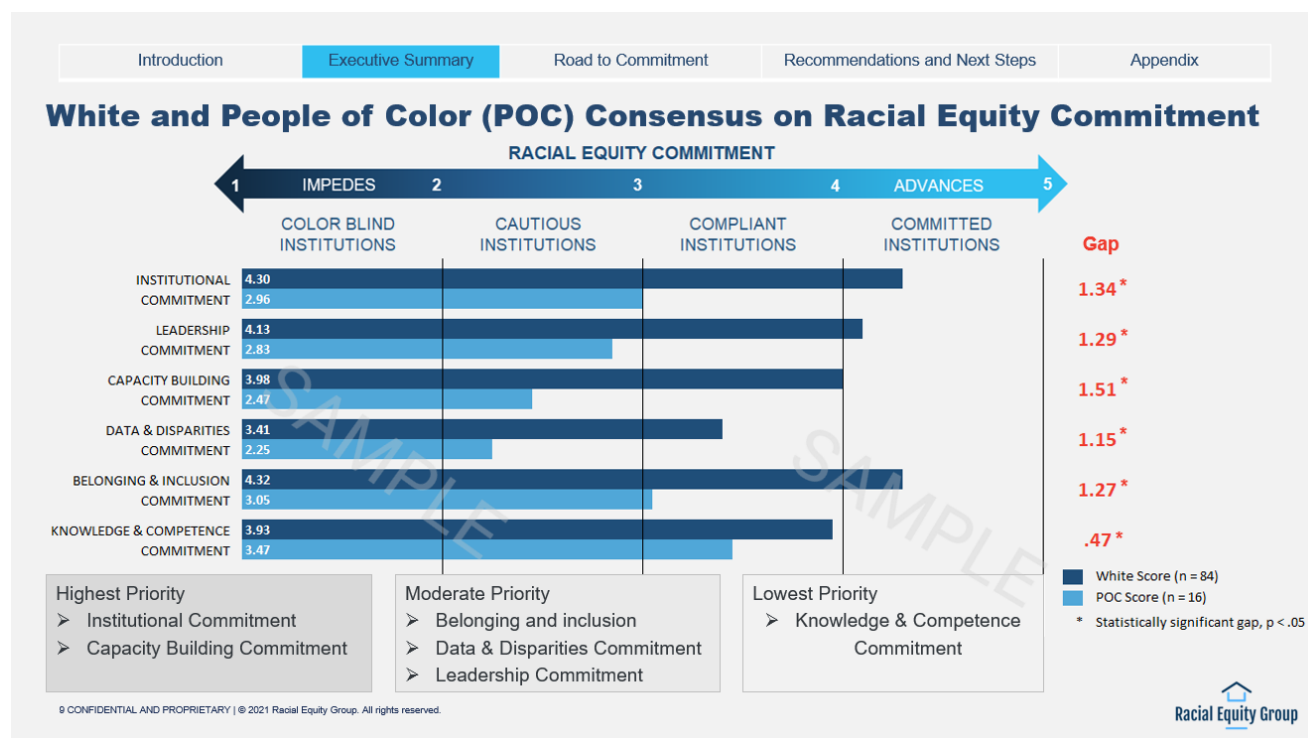
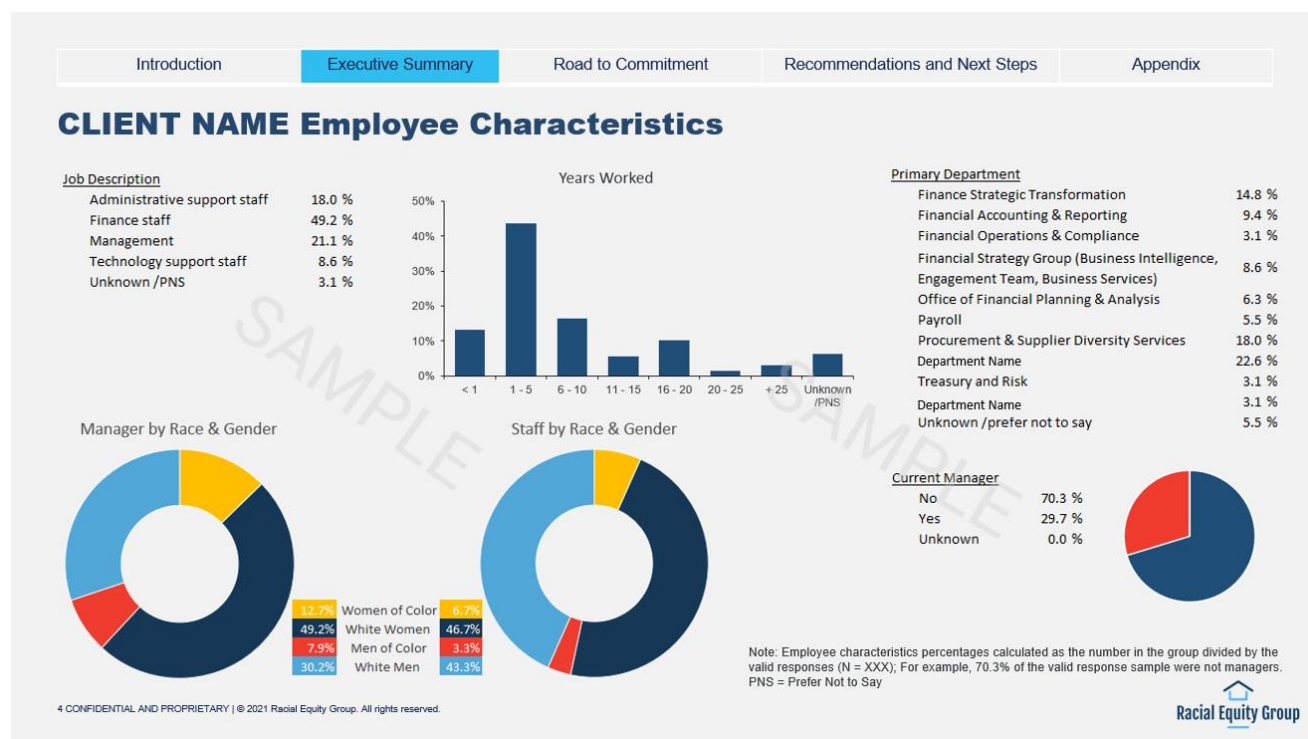
- In what ways does our department's budget disproportionately burden Black, Latinx and people of color communities?
- What needs to be different in our department's culture, workforce, policies, practices, and procedures?
- What strategies does our department apply to minimize disparate impact to Black, Latinx and other communities of color, resulting from policies, practices, procedures, and programs?

****Questions above are samples and may not be used for your Racial Equity SWOT Analysis****

Goal	Action	Evidence of Change
1 Increase the enrollment of graduate students from historically underrepresented backgrounds.	<p>Establish 1-2 strong bi-directional relationships with minority serving institutions to increase graduate student applications and establish clear course credit transfer pathways.</p> <p>Develop mentorship groups made up of HUB faculty, graduate students and current undergraduate students to meet with potential applicants.</p>	<p>Strength of MSI relationships</p> <p># of aligned courses for transfer by program(s)/MSI</p> <p>% increase in graduate applications by equity characteristics</p>
2 Increase the enrollment of undergraduate students from historically underrepresented backgrounds.	<p>Partner with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to recruit, develop, and fund school/program alumni to host or participate in ## of geographically targeted information sessions, annually.</p> <p>Develop mentorship groups made up of HUB faculty, graduate students and current undergraduate students to meet with potential applicants.</p>	<p># of sessions hosted by target area</p> <p># of alumni recruited to participate</p> <p># of session participants by equity characteristics</p> <p>\$ allocated to hosted sessions</p>
3 Increase, relative to the labor market availability, the employment of faculty and staff from underrepresented or non-traditional backgrounds.	<p>Support hiring officials and search committees in considering contributions to inclusive excellence in every search through the standardization of IE as a measure of merit and building evaluative capacity through educational development.</p> <p>Compensation practices should be reviewed with a D&I lens (policies & practices).</p> <p>Confirm your talent attraction and development processes at senior levels sufficiently bias free and equitable</p>	<p>% of job applicants and new hires compared to the labor market by equity characteristic</p> <p>% of searches considering IE as merit</p> <p>% of search committees attending Provost training sessions</p> <p>Rubric for IE as a consideration</p>
4 Improve equity in overall satisfaction with advising and mentoring.	<p>Bi-annually review faculty, staff, and student perceptions of advising and mentoring efforts to identify improvement opportunities.</p> <p>Develop mentorship groups made up of HUB faculty, graduate students and current undergraduate students to meet with potential applicants.</p>	<p>Change in satisfaction as measured by SERU and COACHE by equity characteristics</p> <p># of faculty/staff/student focus groups held</p> <p>Narrative of process changes made</p>
5 Increase sense of belonging among students, faculty, and/or staff from historically underrepresented groups.	<p>Establish and provide support for affinity groups so students, faculty, and/or staff from historically underrepresented groups can connect with each other.</p>	<p># of students, faculty, staff engaging with affinity groups</p> <p>\$ allocated to support affinity groups</p> <p>Narrative of affinity group activities</p> <p>Changes in sense of belonging for affinity group members</p>
6 Increase opportunities for positive interaction between students, faculty, and/or staff from different backgrounds.	<p>Host ## activities or programs throughout the year to provide informal and/or structured opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to engage with others from different backgrounds.</p>	<p># of sessions hosted</p> <p># of students, faculty, staff attending sessions by equity characteristics</p> <p>\$ allocated to hosted sessions</p> <p>Changes in perceptions of intergroup relations measured by SERU/COACHE</p>

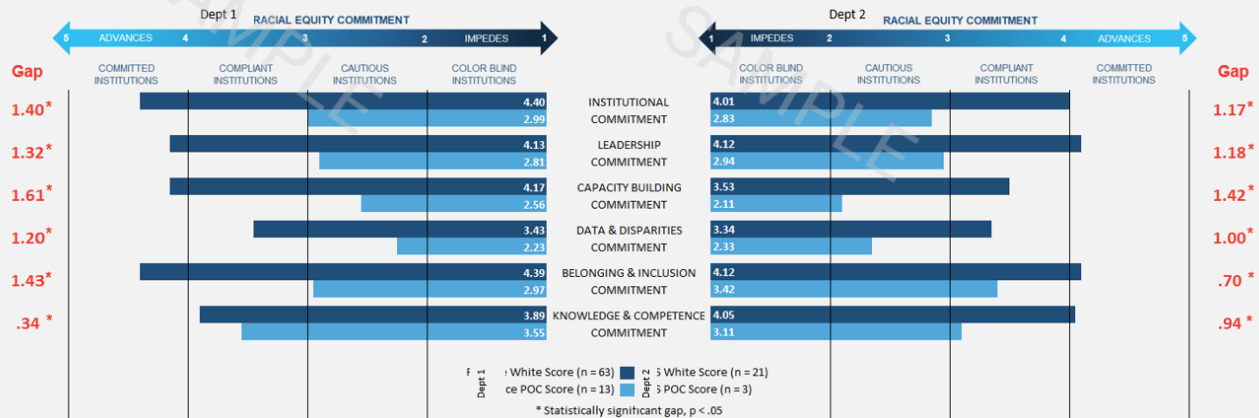
7	Enhance climate through the establishment of a process for faculty and students to co-create living-learning programs for nontraditional/historically underrepresented communities.	Partner with Xxxxx Housing & Residence Life to establish a first-generation living learning program with shared academic experiences.	# of faculty and students participating Changes in perceptions of belonging for first-gen students (SERU) # of aligned courses/experiences \$ on living-learning program
8	Increase overall perceptions of the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Develop rubric with guidelines to evaluate faculty's contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Leadership team demonstrate greater ownership and commitment to D&I via a communication and action plan. Creative communication strategies such as blogs, internal meetings, and business wide update sessions. Offer training focused on how to embed this commitment in their behavior, styles of communication, language, and decisions they make.	Rubrics created % faculty using rubric in annual review % use of rubric to evaluate candidates
9	Ensure equity in the promotion and tenure process.	Facilitate an annual developmental opportunity for members of the P&T committee that review up to date research on opportunities to mitigate implicit bias in the faculty evaluation process. Development plan for high potentials. Formal sponsorship programs can signal commitment to increased representation and help to drive visibility for underrepresented groups	Developmental sessions/dialogues held Summary of evaluation rubric changes % of faculty achieving promotion and/or tenure by equity characteristics
10	Expand access to development and research support funds that advance inclusive excellence.	Establish a Dean's fund and application process for financial support of faculty and staff development and/or research that contributes to advancing the school's equity and inclusion goals. Develop faculty research profiles that are externally and internally searchable (SEO) to promote excellence and potential research partnerships.	\$ total annual pool of funds \$ allocated in support # of faculty/staff receiving funds by equity characteristics
11	Promote student well-being through investments in culturally responsive advising and mentoring.	Establish a position for coordinating culturally responsive academic advising. Invite and incentivize faculty to participate in XXXXXX Inclusive Classroom session. Develop mentorship groups made up of HUB faculty, graduate students and current undergraduate students to meet with potential applicants.	Position(s) created \$ in salary support # of students advised by characteristics % Change in school/program level advising perceptions (SERU)
12	Incorporate inclusive excellence considerations in the academic program review.	Review program accreditation recommendations for opportunities to meaningfully incorporate equity and inclusion, and IE plan elements, in all academic program reviews. Invite and incentivize faculty to participate in XXXXXX Inclusive Classroom session.	# of programs reviewed which consider IE in process Summary of program changes with new criteria/area of study

13	Deepen and expand the range of community partnerships in which faculty, staff, and students are engaged.	<p>Work with the Xxxxx Equity Center, the research office, and ER to cultivate mutually beneficial research relationships between faculty, staff, students, and community-based organizations.</p> <p>Develop faculty research profiles that are externally and internally searchable (SEO) to promote excellence and potential research partnerships.</p>	<p># of new partnerships established</p> <p>% of CBO partners identifying perceptions of reciprocity in partnership</p> <p>\$ spent and/or \$ in sponsored funding for CBO connected research</p>
14	Contribute to community wealth building through small, local, and supplier diversity programs.	<p>Partner with Xxxxxx Supplier Diversity to host local/small business vendor forums with faculty and purchasers by spending category (i.e. laboratory equipment, language translation services, catering)</p> <p>Enhance training on cross cross-cultural communication and an inclusive environment for all our in our area, especially staff managers and faculty.</p>	<p># of forums held</p> <p>% increase in local and small business spend by category</p> <p># of Xxxxx supplier diversity consultations requested by area</p>
15	Engage alumni in place-based impact investment and learning partnerships.	<p>Establish a program that provides an avenue for alumni giving and engagement with place-based UVA service-learning partnerships.</p> <p>Create a research focused giving campaign that focuses on key work in the HUB communities, research conducted by HUB students, faculty, etc.</p>	<p># of service-learning partnerships supported</p> <p># of alumni engaged</p> <p>\$ raised and provided as support to establishing and maintaining service learning partnerships</p>
16	Increase the participation of historically underrepresented Xxxxxxx-area residents in public events.	<p>Establish an event/program evaluation database to track events by department and topic which collects participant feedback.</p> <p>Enhance training on cross cross-cultural communication and an inclusive environment for all our in our area, especially staff managers and faculty.</p>	<p>Database developed</p> <p>% of events/program tracked</p> <p>% of participants providing feedback</p> <p>Analysis of participation by affiliation status and location</p>



DEPT 1 & DEPT 2: White and People of Color (POC) Consensus

- > For all 6 core competencies, the gap between Whites and POC were similar for Finance and SFS
- > For Institutional Commitment and Capacity Building Commitment, Finance scores were greater than SFS scores for both White and POC.
- > For Leadership and Data & Disparities, Finance scores were similar than SFS scores for both White and POC, but white scores were greater than POC scores.
- > For Belonging & Inclusion, SFS scores were less than Finance scores for Whites, however SFS scores were greater than Finance scores for POC.
- > For Knowledge & Competence, SFS scores were greater than Finance scores for Whites, however SFS scores were lower than Finance scores for POC.



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Road to KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE COMMITMENT



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White and People of Color (POC) Consensus

CLIENT NAME	Benchmark (Org = 570)	White (n = 379)	POC (n = 147)	Unknown (n = 44)	Gap
OVERALL RACIAL EQUITY COMMITMENT	3.58 (0.86)	3.72 (0.78)	3.19 (0.97)	3.61 (0.86)	0.54 *
INSTITUTIONAL	3.23 (1.18)	3.35 (1.18)	2.86 (1.16)	3.46 (1.08)	0.49 *
LEADERSHIP	3.60 (1.12)	3.76 (1.04)	3.16 (1.21)	3.70 (1.11)	0.60 *
CAPACITY BUILDING	2.96 (1.25)	3.08 (1.23)	2.63 (1.28)	3.19 (1.11)	0.45 *
DATA & DISPARITIES	3.14 (1.29)	3.32 (1.27)	2.70 (1.31)	3.11 (1.10)	0.61 *
BELONGING & INCLUSION	3.86 (1.05)	4.08 (0.90)	3.30 (1.19)	3.88 (1.02)	0.78 *
KNOWLEDGE & COMPETENCE	3.91 (0.74)	3.98 (0.68)	3.74 (0.86)	3.95 (0.58)	0.23 *

Numbers in parentheses = Standard Deviations; * Statistically significant gap, $p < .05$; Gap = Absolute Value of White Minus POC

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Racial Equity Core Competency Definitions

Institutional Commitment: Racial Equity is an organizational priority at an enterprise level with dedicated talent, resources, and accountability structures established to ensure effective execution and success.

Leadership Commitment: Manager, supervisors and leaders at the department/functional level have taken ownership of Racial Equity by establishing goals, setting expectations, leading by example and implementing policies and practices to advance Racial Equity.

Capacity Building: Measure of how well an organization establishes collaborative partnerships with external stakeholders who have a shared purpose to advance Racial Equity.

Data and Disparities: Measure of how well an organization measures (collects), monitors (tracks) and manages (evaluates) data disaggregated by race and ethnicity.

Belonging and Inclusion: Measure of employee's feelings of being valued, accepted and empowered within an organization.

Knowledge and Competence: Measure of employee's knowledge, skills and ability to advance Racial Equity.

Measurement

Competencies were assessed based on participants level of agreement using a scale of 1 to 5 where:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Somewhat Disagree
- 3 = Neither Disagree nor Agree
- 4 = Somewhat Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree



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Member Satisfaction Survey - Overview

Member Satisfaction

- Retirees rate performance higher than Actives

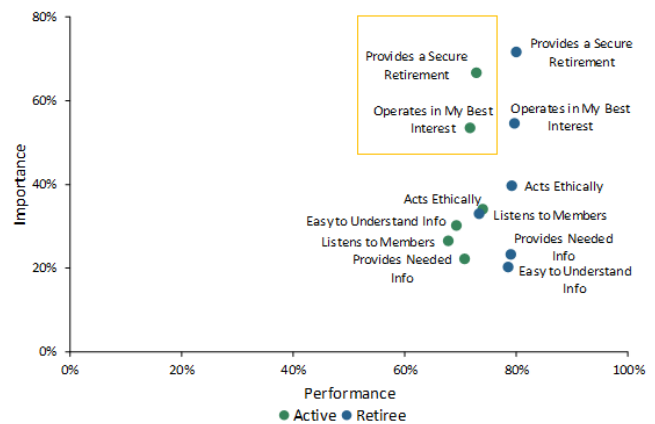
TRS Provides a Secure Retirement

- Very important and actives rate performance lower
- **Possible need for retirement planning education**

Operates in My Best Interest

- Very important and actives rate performance lower
- **Possible need for greater communication on TRS decisions**

TRS Active and Retiree Values



Importance Rate which items are the most important to you (Choose top 3): e.g., *I know TRS operates in my best interest.*

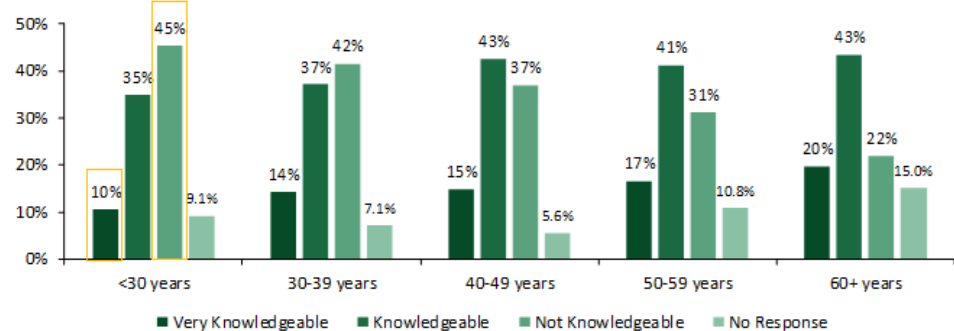
Performance Rate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements (percent Strongly Agree or Agree): e.g., *I know TRS operates in my best interest.*

Note: Percent calculations exclude Neutral and No Response.

Member Satisfaction Survey – Overview

Age Group

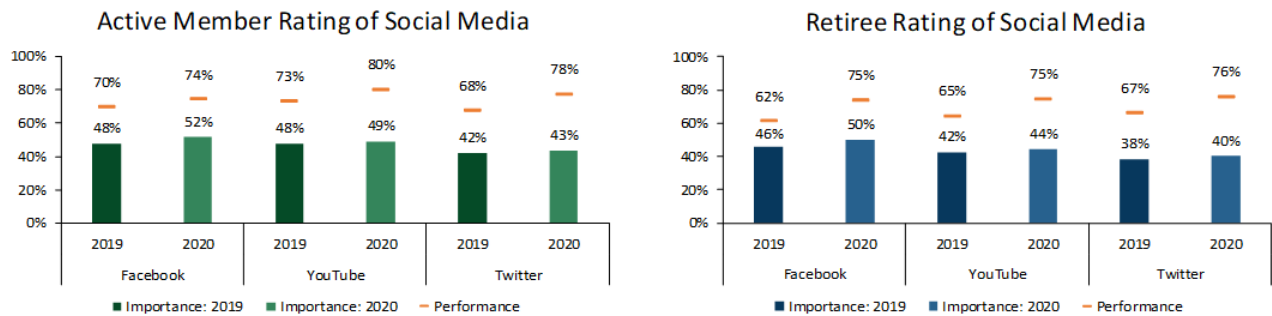
Knowledgeable about Saving for Retirement Outside TRS
For Active Members by Age



- Younger active members less knowledgeable about saving for retirement outside TRS

Member Satisfaction Survey – Communications

Social Media

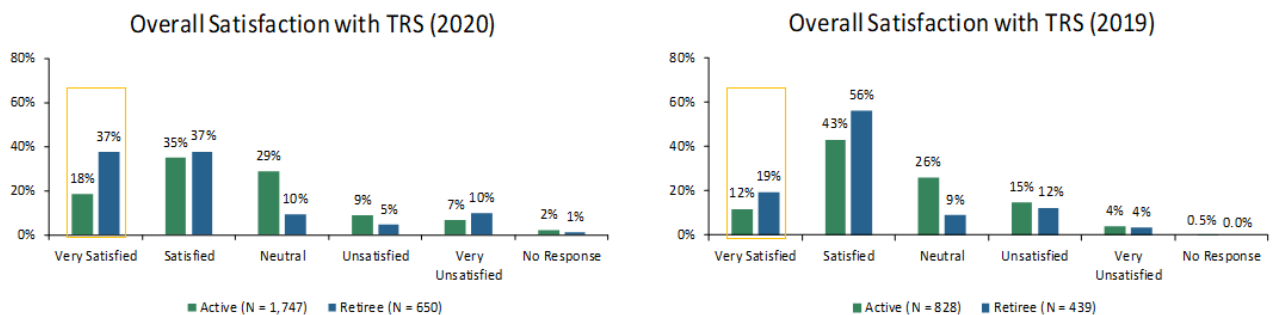


- Increase in importance and performance for all social media communication methods from 2019 to 2020

Importance Out of the following social media platforms, how important is it for you to be able to find TRS information on: e.g., Facebook
Performance Out of the following social media platforms, how helpful is the information TRS provides on (percent Very Helpful or Helpful): e.g., Facebook
 Note: Percent calculations exclude Neutral and No Response.

Member Satisfaction Survey – Overview

Overall Satisfaction



- **Rating steady between 2020 and 2019** with greater percent of respondents Very Satisfied
- Retirees more satisfied than active members with active members more likely to respond Neutral

Qualitative Brief Report

Purpose

Developing a successful Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) plan is predicated on identifying the goals, strategies, activities, outputs, and outcomes (short-, medium-, and long-term) which are documented in a theory of change and logic model. To develop these tools, understanding stakeholders' experiences is critical. Stakeholders are those that are involved at different levels of "program" or organization, from leadership to on-the-ground implementers. Each level of stakeholders brings with them a different perspective and experience, which are needed in order to understand the full picture of how a program or organization operates. Assumptions of stakeholders' experiences, attitudes, and general understanding of goals and outcomes could severely affect the success of a program.

Background

Initially, focus groups were planned. However, in the very early discussions with Every Village, Edessa and Elite suggested a slightly different approach to more formalized focus groups. "Conversations" with the team seemed to fit more appropriately with this project, taking a more *informal* route to the same goal. The point of the exercise was to elicit information that would help build logic models and a theory of change, not to examine processes or evaluate procedures or implementation. Because "focus groups" tend to communicate *research and evaluation* and research and evaluation tend to make people feel like they are under examination, the idea was to remove any formality around the activity to alleviate nervousness and promote open and honest feedback. To these same ends, the questions were sent out beforehand to allow reflection and preparedness.

Conversations

Planning

In planning meetings on April 7, 2021, it was determined that there would be 3 levels or groups of "conversations" – one with Board Members, one with Every Village Headquarters staff in Houston, and one with Every Village Project Managers in South Sudan and Uganda. Andrew Brown informed Every Village staff that Edessa and Elite would be conducting some information gathering "conversations." On April 8, 2021, Andrew Brown emailed Board Members and Every Village Headquarter staff to set up an online conversation to be facilitated by Elite Research. The questions that would be discussed were sent at that point for participants to review and prepare.

Due to concerns of time and internet availability, it was determined that in-country Program staff would complete their responses via email directly to Elite Research. On April 15, 2021, Elite Research sent the preliminary questions to the in-country Director, Daniel Lual, for review and feedback, which was approved on his end April 16, 2021. It was also agreed that Daniel would send the email to Program Managers directly, but that their responses would go directly to Elite Research.

Data Collection

On April 13, 2021, Elite Research facilitated the first conversation with Every Village Headquarters staff in Houston, Texas. There were five Headquarters staff in the meeting, with Daniel Lual connected via WhatsApp through a computer. Each of the staff represented various functions of the organization: overall leadership, water and radio leadership, marketing and communications, community relations, and donor development. *Following this initial conversation, Elite Research and Edessa Research modified the questions for the Board Conversations.*

On April 19, 2021, Elite Research facilitated the second conversation with Every Village Board Members located *mostly* in Texas. Six board members were in attendance. One board member was not able to make the call, but asked to provide his feedback immediately afterwards. Elite Research called him directly and asked him the same questions that were discussed in the online meeting.

On April 26, 2021, Daniel Lual sent Every Village Project Managers in South Sudan and Uganda an email, *Understanding Every Village*, which included the questionnaire. Elite Research received four completed questionnaires.

Findings

The goal of these conversations was to identify the goals, strategies (activities), and outcomes that result from the work of Every Village – specifically through its Water, Radio, and People programs.

Talking Points	Main Points	Interesting Mentions
Goal	<p><u>Transformation</u> of every village in South Sudan by the spread of the gospel and community development (water and radio)</p> <p><u>Sustainability</u> – South Sudanese able to maintain the programs (financially and through leadership)</p> <p>Growing and thriving <u>nation for Christ</u> (nation-building for Christ)</p>	<p><i>Board member used the word “fully transition” for sustainability.</i></p> <p><i>Board members (most) were more focused on preaching the gospel.</i></p>
Strategies	<p>Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drill wells, provide spare parts, facilitate maintenance and repairs ▪ Share financial cost <p>Radio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build radio stations, employ on-air staff, distribute solar radios, supply equipment (computers, recorders, and solar power systems) ▪ Biblical programming <p>People (Training)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership workshops, conferences, on-job training ▪ Formal education, as necessary ▪ Pastoral training and pastoral networking (conferences) to ensure Biblical standards 	<p><i>PMs noted health and education community development programs; repeater towers. Board mentioned not knowing what their training is.</i></p> <p><i>PMs noted people program being ‘missionary’ oriented; HQ staff noted this element as most fluid and without definition; Board spoke of supporting local, indigenous staff and building them up (there were some conflicting opinions on whether missionaries should still be on the ground). Board also did not know what type or training is done for staff (they understood People program to include training of water and radio as well).</i></p>
Outcomes	<p>Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to provide access to clean, safe water <p>Radio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to provide access to gospel <p>People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ empowered, Biblically-sound SS leaders <p>Ultimately – changed people</p>	<p><i>HQ staff mentioned that donors have different expectation/idea of radio content than is delivered.</i></p> <p><i>PMs considered this “staff empowerment.”</i></p>

Beneficiaries	Primary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-country staff Secondary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-country, local churches ▪ Community members 	<i>PMs considered in-country staff the primary beneficiaries, while local churches and community members were secondary beneficiaries.</i> <i>One board member mentioned, “everyone in earshot” is beneficiary</i>
Assumptions	Continued <u>infrastructure</u> work Continued <u>relationship building</u> with government and community leaders <u>Professionally and spiritually mature</u> staff Community desire and <u>willing to pay</u> for services	
External Factors	Financial support Geo-political stability Government partnership Stable supply chain for parts	

Findings mostly aligned with preliminary discussions with Every Village’s Andrew Brown and Brad Beless. The conversations, however, highlighted some issues of differences in *how* staff and board members talk about the programs and goals, as well as a lack of definition around the People program. Most significantly was the importance the Board placed on the People program, as they understood it, and yet had very little information about it (no knowledge of the trainings given to staff, pastors, etc.). These incongruous understanding highlighted the need to formally define Every Villages’ efforts in these areas *which is part of the process of developing logic models*.

The findings from all three data collection points were used to build out draft versions of Water, Radio, and People logic models, which then allowed for a roll up into a larger organizational logic model. The outcomes noted above were used as the starting points for the “long-term” outcomes, and subsequent group work helped parcel out the short- and medium-term outcomes leading up to the refinement of the long-term outcomes themselves (the outcomes chain).

Other

Although not part of the objectives of the in-country questionnaire, additional information came out that may or may not be of interest to Every Village. Some program managers expressed:

- Lack of comparable pay to work performed; radio staff work more
- Lack of sufficient number of staff; they need more people to run the programs
- Lack of sponsorship for training and capacity building; they desire more training
- Lack of health care or insurance cards; they wish to have more treatment options for them/family
- Lack of transport to run programs more smoothly; need car and motorbikes at each location
- Lack of in-country Head Office; need proper offices for their staff
- The need to conduct a hygiene program to accompany the Water aspect

Appendix B: Process Descriptions

Elite Research views itself as a support structure for its clients. We work to develop a customized package of services to meet the client's specific need. In some cases, it means research design, data collection, analysis, and report writing, while at other times, it is providing a specific service the client cannot do themselves for any specified reason (time, resource, or lack of expertise).

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is an organization's process of defining its strategy, or direction, through clearly defined goals and objectives. The process results in a clear, succinct strategic plan, which is used to guide decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy. Just as organizations need goals and strategies, the process of strategic planning must have goals and strategies requiring a tailored approach. This approach must take into consideration how organizations work and the ultimate change they seek to make in the world (their impact). Elite Research not only brings strategic planning experience, but also the added benefit of experience in planning, operationalizing, program design and evaluation of academic and philanthropic work. We understand the value of articulating outcomes and building a theory of change and/or logic model(s), and the necessary embedding of monitoring and evaluation processes that ensure organizations are moving in the right direction. This background helps us in our strategic planning sessions because *we start with the end goal in mind and understand the processes needed along that path.*

Determining where an organization needs to go depends on, in large part, where it finds itself today. In order to understand today, a situational assessment must take place. Elite Research proposes a qualitative approach to this assessment, whereby organizational leaders are asked to qualitatively respond to a series of questions (crafted by our content experts) through interviews. Findings from this assessment will help build a current profile for the organization with accurate, up-to-date data to inform the strategy sessions to follow.

Our proposed approach starts with refining the mission and key values. We need to start with the mission which states why your work is important and the key values that flow from it. Often, this step is actually one of the most challenging aspects for boards and key stakeholders to agree on. Our key facilitator is masterful at eliciting opinions and thoughts (even those in fledgling state), and then consolidating and distilling central ideals into focused themes. It is also our experience that agreement on idea/theme, and not exact wording, is critical to the successful momentum of group work; participants begin to feel tired and frustrated when too much time is spent on exact wording. We avoid this by ensuring that we understand the intention of the theme, and then we wordsmith outside of group work. From this, we move to strategic goal creation, followed by a self-reflective SWOT Analysis that allows participants to reflect on key questions whose responses are consolidated and used as the basis for discussions around the development of objectives. For organizations that do not have logic models, we help their teams develop these models that are aligned to the strategic goals and objectives of the sessions.

For the strategic planning process, Elite Research facilitators rely upon an Alignment Model, Gap Planning, and the Bryson Model framework. We say "loosely" because we borrow from all three as we go, and interweave processes that we have found to be most helpful to organizations – especially those that have social impact as a key outcome.

Evaluation Design

Evaluation is a critical element of business, nonprofit, academic, and medical/health services. While each may call it something different, the function is the same. Each industry "evaluates" whether processes are carried out as specified, how many were used, how the program performed, were targets met, etc. When change is the ultimate intended outcome, evaluation seeks to answer questions such as how well are we doing what we say we are doing, are we actually making a difference in this community, what transformation has taken place with this group of people, etc. Elite Research works with clients to develop strong evaluation designs and plans, based on logic models that ensure data answers the evaluation questions. Data collection follows quantitative,

qualitative, and mixed method protocols that will withstand academic scrutiny. Evaluation reports (and reporting in general) are tailored to the audience engaging with them.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer questions about a project, program, or policy. Essentially, evaluation determines the value of a collection of actions, and provides information to improve the project, program, or policy as it develops and progresses (formative) or evaluate the results and outcomes once it is complete (summative). Evaluations should be guided by logic models that help planners both appropriately plan the project or program, but also anticipate and evaluate the outcomes that are intended as a result of the project or program activities. Quantitative, qualitative, or both (mixed methods) may be utilized to elicit evaluation data.

Program Evaluation

Elite Research program evaluation consultants use both existing and collected data to determine the overall effectiveness of a project or program. In conducting program or project evaluations, consultants collaborate with clients to utilize a variety of research designs, drawing from both quantitative and qualitative methods; including experimental designs, quasi-experimental designs, descriptive or observational designs, cross-sectional designs, cohort or longitudinal designs, case studies, focus groups, in-depth interviews, and more. This process begins with planning meetings to determine overall evaluation goals, evaluation questions, analysis needed, logistics, socio-cultural considerations, and data collection limitations or challenges. Once this is done, a logic model is developed that maps out the resources needed, the strategies and activities that will be put into play (i.e., "the program"), the direct numerical results (outputs) from these activities, and the change that these actions will produce in the lives of the beneficiaries (outcomes). An evaluation plan is then developed that outlines how the outputs and outcomes will be measured, when they will be measured, and who will be responsible for measurement. Methodologies for these measurements, or assessments, are developed; when clients intend on collecting data themselves, training and coaching is provided. Finally, when the data is analyzed and ready for presentation, comprehensive evaluation reports are created that directly reflect the primary accomplishments of the program evaluation and answer the evaluation questions, along with providing lessons learned and recommendations for future programming.

Third Party Evaluation

With growing transparency and accountability measures and requirements, grantees are increasingly required to provide an independent, third-party evaluation of their work. Elite Research has experience in providing these services, even to high federal funding levels. Often times, Elite Research works with clients before proposal submission to create evaluation plans and are written into the grant itself as the contracted evaluator. Sometimes, the team is requested to join post award, and at other times, Elite Research is asked to either correct the work of a previous contractor or finish an evaluation project in which the original evaluator walked away. The preference is always to work with the grantee at the beginning, so that we can help build a strong plan.

Needs Assessment

Elite Research has worked with clients to develop and implement needs assessments across specific populations in order to determine identify stakeholders, community needs, organizational priorities, and allocation of resources. From general process oversight through to direct implementation, consultants work with clients, depending on desire involvement level, to achieve their goals. Consultants help develop assessment measures, both quantitative (survey) and qualitative (focus groups and interviews), and provide the level of analysis that best suits the research goals.

Capacity Building

Capacity building is not a one-time effort to improve short-term effectiveness, but a continuous improvement strategy toward the creation of a sustainable and effective organization. By this definition, capacity building is an

investment and strengthening of an organization's ability to fulfill its mission. It is a commitment to continual improvement. In the realm in which Elite Research works, capacity building means helping organizations fill in the gaps they have in terms of skills and tools to use data to make decisions, improve program design, enhance service delivery, and strengthen their impact and advocacy efforts. We are intentional in the initial planning and preparatory stage to understand what current capacities are, where growth is desired, and building a plan to meet those needs.

Process Optimization

Several of the Elite Research consultants are certified in process optimization and project management techniques, such as Six Sigma, Lean and Agile Extreme. Elite Research consultants apply these techniques across numerous fields, not just manufacturing, to help reimagine, implement, and automate flexible, scalable, and accurate processes that will drive productivity and diminish overhead. Throughout the project, we will identify the process challenges and opportunities that are costing ISC time, money, and resource wastage, and set a strategy in place to increase efficiency while maintaining accuracy. Specific documentation and code will also be included to implement these processes for long-term improvement.

Nonprofit Consulting

Elite Research understands the dynamics of working with nonprofits. Central to this bank of expertise is our role in conception and development. Our consultants work with nonprofits in multiple capacities including the current Program Management of an activity tracking system which supports reporting and accreditation. Our team has spearheaded many knowledge management systems and data management repositories to help universities manage internal data and knowledge dissemination in a systematic and optimized way. Our team members have also successfully submitted and been written into grant proposals and supporting awards as external evaluators or statistical analysts to help support research driven missions. Statistical consultants with ER support nonprofits in preparing charts and tables without redundancy for research, reports, manuscripts, and online presentations, and have been published in multiple online resources. Finally, we have provided support in building database systems, data integration and insights, branded reporting processes, research for internal departments, and overall marketing.

Qualitative Services

Qualitative Design. With the understanding that sampling populations are situated within a unique context in terms of culture, region, and other factors, each group will be evaluated individually and in-depth through qualitative methods. In addition to potential research questions proposed in the RFP and questions that address current practice, common barriers, and limitations to effectiveness results will inform additional areas of focus that are needed to understand current practices in the field. Such data collection can include focus groups, semi-structured and structured one-on-one interviews, and site visitation with a smaller sample will provide observational data and document analysis.

To optimize resources and time, as well as to accommodate COVID-19 social-distancing measures (if still a consideration at the time), data will be collected virtually through a web-based videoconferencing platform, with the exception of participants who receive site visits. All recorded data will be transcribed verbatim and uploaded into a computer-assisted qualitative analysis software such as NVivo or Dedoose for coding and analysis. Data will be analyzed through a thematic analysis approach.

Qualitative Data Collection. Elite Research qualitative consultants have training and experience in the design of sound qualitative data collection instruments, such as interview guides and focus group scripts, as well as in collecting data from observations, field notes, unstructured and semi-structured interviews, focus groups, as well as from relevant documents. Elite Research consultants are skilled at collecting robust, in-depth qualitative data by paying careful attention to the wording on data collection instruments and during interviewing/moderating that avoids assumptions or bias, as well as with the appropriate use of probing. Consultants are experienced in recording data using hand-written notes, video and audio recorders, and mobile applications. Elite Research consultants are skilled at preparing and analyzing multiple forms of qualitative data

for analysis, including transcribing video and audio-recorded data, incorporating relevant documents, photographs, and artifacts, and coding and analyzing textual and visual data. Consultants are experienced in using a variety of coding techniques (e.g., descriptive, magnitude, in vivo, evaluation, values, etc.) to assist in the iterative coding process in order to answer a study's research questions. Consultants are also skilled in multiple computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) packages (including NVIVO, ATLAS.ti, MAXQDA, Dedoose, and Symphony) to aid in organization and visualization of data for analysis and presentation of results.

Elite Research recommends that the data be analyzed using the methods described above in order to keep the process focused on understanding best practices, as well as to leave openness to the concepts that emerge from the data.

Qualitative Coding and Analysis. The qualitative data will be coded and analyzed thematically for main themes and sub-themes. Analyses will identify key themes that emerge across all groups and interviews as well as the unique issues that are noted for specific populations. Qualitative data will first be prepared for coding and analysis by creating full transcriptions of audio data from focus groups and interviews. If any focus groups were conducted in a language other than English, they will first be transcribed in the original language and then translated into English for analysis.

Transcribed focus group and interview data will include the following:

- Uploading all transcriptions into a computer-assisted qualitative analysis software, such as NVivo or Dedoose.
- Reading all transcribed data and applying appropriate codes to the data that summarize concepts that help answer the objective, which is to understand best practices. The objective will constantly be referred to throughout the coding and analysis process in order to keep the process focused on answering the objective.
- The coding process will include emergent coding, which involves codes that are developed from the data as they emerge as patterns during data analysis rather than imposing predetermined codes on the data prior to analysis.
- Review coded data and organize into major themes that help answer the project objectives.

Elite Research recommends that the data be analyzed using the methods described above in order to keep the process focused, as well as to leave openness to the concepts that emerge from the data. While differences will be noted where appropriate, analyses will focus on findings common across sample populations. Selected paraphrased quotes – without personal identifying information – will be presented in the narrative of the report to further illustrate key points.

Data Collection Protocol. ER will design a specified data collection protocol that will cover all the basic elements of the data collection decision-making and processes. This protocol will be designed and distributed for feedback to ensure that it is in alignment with its objectives and processes for data collection. Elements of this protocol will include, but are not limited to:

- A brief justification for the project and team composition
- Research question(s)
- A description of the program/research methods, data collection protocols and scripts
- Study population and sampling techniques
- Descriptions of the instrumentation and data collection tools used to measure
- Implementation schedules
- A detailed discussion of the data collection, validation, and storage processes

Literature & Systematic Reviews

Elite Research has had substantial experience in planning and developing literature and systematic reviews, in addition to conducting meta-analyses for a variety of different project types, particularly with a specific focus in educational outcomes and behavioral sciences. We support researchers in not only reviewing their literature review for appropriateness to the topic, but also identifying those resources in publication databases. For

systematic reviews and meta-analyses, we support researchers by identifying potential sources to be included in the review and analysis, coding of the study components, and the qualitative and quantitative analysis and presentation needs.

Statistical Consulting

With regard to our specific experience in each of these areas, ER consultants have Masters and PhDs in related statistical fields and are experienced in a variety of software packages (including STATA, SPSS, SAS, MPlus, Smart PLS, WarpPLS, EViews, ARC GIS, and R Stats) enabling them to handle any statistical need. They are skilled in a variety of statistical methods, such as basic descriptive analyses, factor analyses, cluster analyses, multivariate analyses of variance, multiple regressions, logistic regressions, propensity score analyses, hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), meta-analyses, geo-spatial mapping, structural equation modeling (SEM), Q-sort analyses, machine learning, Bayesian methods, and more. Statistical consultants strive to not only present accurate results through our data analysis services, but also ensure that the client understands the techniques utilized. With every project, consultants explain and summarize the research findings in plain, everyday language. Throughout the course of any given project, the consultants at ER strive to be 100% transparent about our process, so that clients not only get findings to their research questions, but also begin to learn about the decision-making process that drives statistical analyses and reporting.

Advanced Analytics

Advanced analytics are the foundation for leveraging big data to discover deeper insights, make predictions, or generate recommendations. As such, they yield complex models using sophisticated techniques and tools such as data mining, machine learning, forecasting, visualization, simulation, and multivariate statistics.

If you want to make predictions about future events, you need ***predictive analytics***. This type of analytics uses machine learning and data mining techniques to define likelihood of future trends and behaviors based on current and historical data. Organizations use predictive analysis to minimize risks, save costs, and increase competition. ***Prescriptive analytics*** aims for optimal recommendations, answering “What should be done?” This type of analytics, pulling together descriptive and predictive analytics, is widely used in business to identify the best options for a specific situation. Prescriptive analytics uses techniques such as simulation, algorithms, machine learning, graph analysis, and more.

There are numerous statistical methods, such as simple univariate analyses, multivariate analyses, factor analysis, cluster analysis, various types of regressions, hierarchical models, structural equation modeling, meta-analyses, and more. Choosing an appropriate statistical analysis is more important than selecting the most fancy and complicated statistical analysis.

Questions you must consider before conducting evaluation data analysis include, but not limited to:

- Where is the data located? Will you need to analyze from external sources as well?
- Do you need permission to access the data?
- What size is each data set?
- How familiar are you with each database?
- In what form is the data?
- Is each individual source complete and accurate?
- What do you need to do to clean the data (for inconsistencies or redundant values)?
- Do you need to convert the data before you can analyze it?
- Can you change the data in its original location, or do you need to move it to another location?
- If using different sources, how will you connect the data?
- Will your data model scale?
- Will you be able to later add data sources to your model and use it?
- Do you need summary tables to consolidate data for future analysis?
- Does your server have sufficient software and hardware to conduct the type of analysis you are seeking?

Data Visualization

Insight and solutions extracted from data do not end with statistical analysis. The results of statistical analyses need to be communicated in a way in which the broadest possible audience can easily understand them. We take pride in our ability to achieve this goal effectively and efficiently. Lengthy tables loaded with p-values and coefficients are bland and off-putting, whereas good data visualization can both demand attention and curiosity while easily delivering a complex message to the viewer. Whether it is a series of scatter plots or interactive visualization dashboards, we have a strong track record of providing the highest quality visualizations to our clients. Complexity for complexity's sake should never be the goal for visualization. If a simple bar graph communicates the intended message best, then we recommend that visualization. Far too often, flashiness is given precedent over interpretability. A great data visualization presents eye-catching aesthetics without sacrificing clarity. The consultants and developers at Elite Research have extensive experience using tools such as R, R shiny, ggplot2, D3.js, Python, Tableau, Power BI and many others to create illuminating static and interactive data visualizations following industry best practices and technological advancements in the field. We work with organizations to develop the most appropriate and effective visualization/dashboard plan, whether that is starting from scratch or integrating with the organizations existing visualization tools.

Scorecards and Benchmarking

Outcome evaluations do not all look the same. For organizations and researchers desiring strategic, diagnostic, and operational uses of their outcomes, scorecards are a useful tool. Elite Research works with their clients to develop appropriate instruments to assess desired outcomes, identify the appropriate factors associated with those outcomes, and then determine domains which produce scores for various categories. The data collected and analyzed from these instruments then produce domain scores, which function as a baseline as well as a diagnostic measure. The organization can immediately determine strategic approaches best fit for addressing the areas in need of improvement. Additional data collection at specific time intervals will reflect whether their efforts are working, allowing organizations the ability to monitor their progress towards their desired impact. Elite Research has developed and evaluated programs in the education, non-profit, and community health industries.

Visualization

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Survey Development

Once the research planning phase is completed, existing surveys are reviewed for development opportunities on the topics and criteria needed for evaluation. These surveys are used in different collection methods. Collaborative survey development is involved specifically in classroom observation as they feed into the evaluation system. Advanced logic features are used to collect staff and employee feedback, student and parent experiences, and overall community engagements. The selection of criteria and tools for the survey will allow for ease in the development of self-assessment for professional development, interviews with students, etc.

that are used to report on key competencies. The services provided will utilize a participatory approach in order to promote diversity and inclusivity in the research process itself. Leadership and employees will help guide the methods and questions that are most appropriate to the needs and people of YTWOC. By including stakeholders at every level, employees feel a sense of self-agency and buy-in into the process itself and the cultural appropriateness and feasibility of the research is enhanced. Elite Research will meet with YTWOC to identify the needed representation and at what levels in the process they are involved.

Once surveys — often called instruments, questionnaires, or assessments — have been developed or modified, they are tested for reliability and validity and then piloted. Reliability and validity of survey assesses the questions within a survey by a subject matter expert and common errors, including double barreling, creating confusion or any leading questions. The second step in the validity process is pilot testing the survey a predetermined sample. After these tests have been conducted and modifications made to the instruments, survey collection take place. Survey collection should always follow a specified sampling plan and methodology.

Most surveys confine responses to a predetermined scale or option bank in order that researchers can test hypotheses and draw conclusions from collected responses. Surveys allow researchers to ask targeted questions to targeted demographics. Survey collection can provide a large amount of data very quickly with the right delivery and data collection method. Survey collection can be done in person, over the phone, or online.

Surveys are useful in evaluation, as they are an efficient way of collecting data from a smaller group of people in order to understand the effects of your program on the broader population, and thereby answer your research and evaluation questions. However, to do this, survey questions must be written carefully, and with analysis in mind. Our consultants help ensure that the data you collect through an adequate sample can be properly analyzed to address your organizational questions, whether it is through process, outcome, or impact designs.

Satisfaction Survey. The survey will be conducted to better understand the existing culture for current recipients (strengths and opportunities for improvements) and to provide support to leaders in creating action plans which will strengthen the culture, enhance recruitment and employee retention, and improve departmental and organizational performance. Elite Research will develop the survey instruments to reflect the overall goals established in the design and planning phase. Having the final version of the survey reduces cost and time, and provides for the possibility of longitudinal trend analysis. The final sample and sampling frame will be determined in the planning phase. These data will be analyzed and presented at various structural levels discussed in the planning phase and confirmed in the data cleaning task.

Many benefits of online data collection methods have been outlined in the literature. Specifically, online data collection can be more cost effective, reach a wider audience than traditional data collection methods, increased response rate, and may results in higher quality of data collected. Furthermore, researchers have also noted that the increased anonymity offered by online survey collection may yield more truthful responses compared to face-to-face or phone interviews in which participants may respond in a pro-social or socially desirable manner out of fears of judgment¹⁴. Thus, the present project will include options for respondents to complete an online survey which is presented via email link or a telephone survey. Statistical comparisons will be made between the delivery methods. Demographic characteristics of the data will be monitored regularly for valid respondents and demographic makeup of the sample, as well as additional promotion of survey to target demographics. Announcements will target specific demographic groups for which more data is needed.

Survey Distribution & Collection Methods

Data collection for evaluation only comes after a series of important questions have been resolved in the planning and design phases. Typically, data collection comes in the form of interviews, focus groups, surveys, document review, or direct observation. Online surveys provide quick access to data. A survey is distributed via text message, email, or call to action button and data collection begins within minutes. Phone surveys may often lead to more insightful data collection as probing questions may be asked by interviewers. Address based or

¹⁴ Herrwegh, D. (21 August, 2007). Mode differences between face-to-face and web surveys: An experimental investigation of data quality and social desirability effects. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*.

location-based interviewing lends a more personal approach and may further lead to insights. Challenges of reaching populations that do not have access to internet or email addresses occur in many rural communities. Address based collection may typically be used in technological insecure locations.

Our consultants have training and experience in data collection, including a variety of web-based software training for online survey administration, postal mail out with unique identifiers, as well as CATI phone interviews of structured and unstructured surveys. If additional respondent reach is needed, ER suggests identification of conduit used to connect with those that do not have access to email. If further collection is needed, ER will contract their collection partners for location-to-location collection. Elite Research has experience in collecting and organizing structured, semi-structured, and unstructured data to prepare them for analysis. Consultants check for valid respondents, ensuring quality assurance and control. Additionally, consultants can also create a data entry template and codebook with instructions to ensure the smoothest transition from data entry to data preparation. For projects that require archival, simulated, or secondary data, consultants work with clients to ensure they obtain the most useful data to address their study's goal.

Regardless of the type of data collection method used, each of the questions and structure must be designed with the end of analysis and insights in mind. All too often, methods and questions are selected that do not provide the analysis or type of results that were desired. Questions to consider before collecting data include:

- What questions do we need to answer with this evaluation? Which methods are most appropriate to these questions? Will they provide (the most) reliable and valid data?
- Who will use these the findings? Who will make decisions based on the findings? What kinds of data would make the most sense for them?
- Where would the data come from? Who would provide it? How much data do you need?
- What resources (time, staff, budget, etc.) are available for data collection (and analysis)? How are resources appropriated between data collection, analysis, and presentation of findings?
- When do the results need to be available to the key stakeholders (i.e., decision makers)?

Companies often overlook the aspect of survey distribution where many participants are interested in the results. Your distribution method can be used to inform participants of the option to receive reporting. A system like PsychData can easily connect your participants for follow-up or study debriefing.

Sampling and Power. There are two different sampling methodologies you can choose to implement: representative sampling and complete census. A ***complete census***'s intent is to target everyone in a population rather than sample a fraction of the population. In order for a census to be effective there needs to be a way to target the entire population for distribution of the survey, often via email. To achieve certainty of reliability and validity involves follow up and more tracking to ensure enough of the population takes the survey. With a census, the overall response rate becomes the key factor in determining the validity of the responses gathered. For most studies, it is impractical in terms of time, finances, and effort to collect data on every person in the target population. A ***representative sample*** allows the collected results to be generalized to a larger population by matching sample characteristics to the population. There are two ways to achieve a representative sample: ***probability sampling*** and ***purposive sampling***. In purposive sampling, controls are placed on the types of respondents chosen for the survey in terms of quotas and we specifically look for different types of people to make sure the sample is correctly balanced. Random sampling involves choosing participants from your target population at random minimizing potential sample bias. To be able to sample randomly you need to know details about your target population, such as the gender, ethnicity, age, business type, etc.

Data Collection Protocol. ER will design a specified data collection protocol that will cover all the basic elements of the data collection decision-making and processes. This protocol will be designed and distributed for feedback to YTWOC to ensure that it is in alignment with its objectives and processes for data collection. Elements of this protocol will include, but are not limited to:

- A brief justification for the project and team composition
- Research question(s)
- A description of the program/research methods, data collection protocols and scripts

- Study population and sampling techniques, implementation schedules for each project
- Descriptions of the instrumentation and data collection tools used to measure
- A detailed discussion of the data collection, validation, and storage processes

Data Collection. Elite Research statistical consultants have training and experience in data collection, including a variety of web-based software training for online survey administration, as well as CATI phone interviews of structured and unstructured surveys. With the team's access to large databases and panel companies, online data collection is simplified for clients. Elite Research has experience in collecting and organizing structured, semi-structured, and unstructured data to prepare them for analysis. Consultants check for valid respondents, ensuring quality assurance and control. Additionally, consultants can also create a data entry template and codebook with instructions to ensure the smoothest transition from data entry to data preparation. For projects that require archival, simulated, or secondary data, consultants work with clients to ensure they obtain the most useful data to address their study's goal.

Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Telephone interviewing is a cost saver when components of the target population are widely dispersed geographically or when population densities are low. CATI is a telephone surveying technique in which the interviewer follows a script provided by a software application that is able to customize the flow of the questionnaire based on the answers provided, as well as information already known about the participant. CATI provides benefits for collecting phone interview data. Interviewers sit at a computer workstation as the software provides the customizable interview schedule and records completed interviews, refusals, out-of-service, and schedule callback times, telephone numbers across multiple stations. The computer continuously monitors the sample and interviewing process and automatically dials pre-loaded telephone numbers for the interviewers. Interview errors are reduced with standardized protocols in which the program prompts interviewers to follow.

Online Data Collection - PsychData. Many benefits of online data collection methods have been outlined in the literature. Specifically, online data collection can be more cost-effective, reach a wider audience than traditional data collection methods, increased response rate, and may result in a higher quality of data collected. Furthermore, researchers have also noted that the increased anonymity offered by online survey collection may yield more truthful responses compared to face-to-face or phone interviews in which participants may respond in a pro-social or socially desirable manner out of fears of judgment.¹⁵ Thus, the present project will include options for respondents to complete an online survey which is presented via the email link or a telephone survey. The demographic characteristics of the data will be monitored regularly for valid respondents and demographic makeup of the sample, as well as additional promotion of survey to target demographics including district. Announcements will target specific districts for which more data is needed.

Mixed Methods. Elite Research consultants draw upon their expertise in both quantitative and qualitative research methods to conduct rigorous mixed methods research and analyses that are tailored to the objectives and needs of each project. Our consultants provide clear guidance on the contexts in which a mixed methods approach is most suitable, as well as on selecting the appropriate mixed methods research design that aligns with a project's aims. Consultants work with clients to design data collection instruments, determine sequence and timing of quantitative and qualitative data collection, and appropriate sampling. After applying sound analytic techniques to analyze and synthesize quantitative and qualitative data, consultants integrate results to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research context and questions answered.

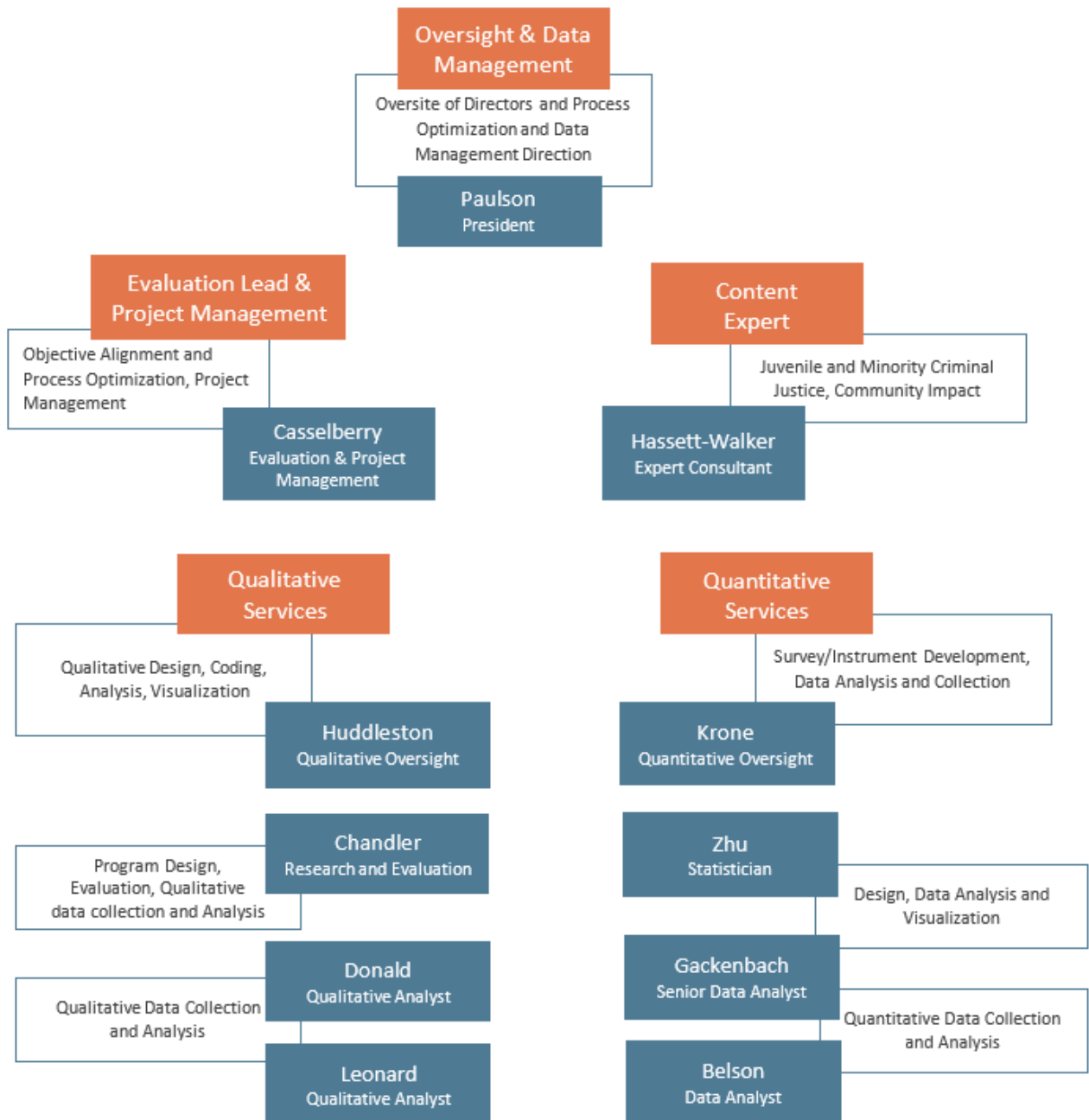
¹⁵ Herrwegh, D. (21 August, 2007). Mode differences between face-to-face and web surveys: An experimental investigation of data quality and social desirability effects. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*.

Appendix C: Company Organizational Charts

Company Organizational Chart



Project Team Organizational Chart



Appendix D: Team Profiles

DR. RENE PAULSON

MS. ILA CASSELBERRY

DR. RYAN KRONE

MS. NICOLE HUDDLESTON

MS. ARMINDA CHANDLER

DR. SEN ZHU

DR. KARINA DONALD

MS. CHELSEA LEONARD

MR. PETE GACKENBACH

MS. MELISSA BELSON

DR. CONNIE HASSETT-WALKER



REN  PAULSON

President and Senior Statistician
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BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Rene Paulson is the Founder, President, and Senior Statistician of Elite Research and Founder of Divergent Web Solutions. Her main goal in the development of both companies was to provide scientific and technical support to institutions seeking collaborative expertise across academic business functions including research and evaluation, program design, marketing and advertising, informational systems and technologies, operations and strategic planning, and finance. With a doctorate and master's in experimental psychology from Texas Christian University, her personal research has been dedicated to attitude and behavioral change in relation to minority groups and women in STEM. Dr. Paulson has led the inception, strategic planning, implementation and staffing of the first research design and analysis center in Texas State institutions. She has sat on the boards for strategic planning, quality enhancement and improvement, and advancement and opportunity for various academic entities. She is exceptional at the evaluative process and hold a Six Sigma Black Belt in optimization. Her psychological background is a foundation for the way that she leads teams and motivates and propels her staff and colleagues. She has published her work in optimization, change management, research design, and evaluation for over 20 years.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Honorary, Community Leadership, Franklin University, 2015
Ph.D. Experimental Psychology, Texas Christian University, 2004
M.S. Experimental Psychology, Texas Christian University, 2001
B.S. Psychology, Ohio University, 1999

EXPERTISE

- Creativity in reviewing external and internal factors that are the bases for current or future strategies
- In-depth knowledge of performance measurement and corrective action
- Managing complex research projects and working with diverse internal and external teams to achieve project aims within a specified timeline
- Designing effective research and evaluation strategies
- High performer capable of leading exceptional team under tough deadlines to meet key deliverables and expectations
- Translating large amounts of data into succinct reports with evidence-based actionable items
- In-depth knowledge of rigorous research methods that align with unique needs of each project
- Creating tools and solutions for process optimization and presentation
- Multi-tasker, with strong organization ability; planning, project, and people management

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Elite Research, LLC

- Direct team of consultants
- Research design and statistics
- Clinical protocols & program evaluations
- Evaluation of institutional and organizational effectiveness
- Factors for strategic development and implementation
- Optimization of data file management
- Training and capacity building

- Verification of statistical approaches
- Analyze data, manuscript preparation for grants, industry, and individual research
- Small and large group training seminars
- Organization-wide consulting

Divergent Web Solutions

- Direct technical teams from project inception to maintenance
- Develop long and short-term strategies for growth
- Develop and manage budgets for marketing, operations, and technology
- Recruit, manage, and develop personnel to support business growth
- Develop a culture of success and employee satisfaction
- Directs solutions to functional and technical problems
- Directs the work of project staff that design, develop, and test programs and information systems

Texas Woman's University

- Consult on research design and statistics for grant and faculty research
- Advise on data file management
- Training of statistical software
- Verification of statistical approaches
- Advise on manuscript and grant preparation
- Evaluation of institutional effectiveness
- Teaching, statistical programming packages, statistics primer, grant proposal development

RELEVANT PROJECT SUMMARIES

- **Horizon Health.** Support the client with job description and salary structure for current and future staff of their Health Informatics team focused on research, statistics, and database management. Due to the unique nature of the type of staff employed on this team, a new designation of structured descriptions of job tasks and skills need to be defined to better attract and retain appropriate applicants. Allocating the current and future staff into a customized matrix of skill base will allow assessment of needs and training priorities for the overall team.
- **Fairbanks, LLC.** Compared two sample methodology results, random and segmented to show the impact on Medicaid services and state level school services reimbursements as well as reviewed historical data from at least two quarters and other background information regarding parameters, sampling information, and typical data patterns. Dr. Paulson also prepared a simulated data set, conduct simulation analysis for each method, compare the results, and create a justification report including the results, appropriate theory and references justifying the recommended current sampling approach.
- **Teacher Retirement System of Texas.** As part of their service evaluation, TRS contracted ER in early 2020 for their annual Membership Satisfaction Survey. This survey reviews member engagement of health, social, and economic variables, and products. Dr. Paulson supplied the data management, analysis, graph and chart creation, report, facilitated stakeholder meetings and board presentations. She also developed customized survey instruments with online and CATI data collection, visualization, as well as process optimization for multiple years.
- **Community Impact.** Assisted in documenting the prevalence of interpersonal violence and PTSD among income-assisted men and women living in priority and nonpriority neighborhoods of Toronto and testing the validity of a theoretical model that highlights the process by which neighborhood status and gender intersect to influence violence exposure, resource availability/accessibility, and development/persistence of PTSD, as well as to identify the foundation factors and root causes for sustainable change at various points in the community system.

- **Health and Education Alliance of Louisiana.** Provided routine training and capacity building to the HEAL team and their community partners, as well as developed logic models, evaluation plans, provided analysis, and evaluated whether HEAL programs are having a significant effect on student outcomes in these schools over a three-year time period. This project was conducted in conjunction with the program implementation team to provide reporting for the HEAL organization's NOLA project effectiveness and development of CQI based on data informed decisions, as well as build tools for long-term analysis structure, coding, data preparation and other processes. The results of this 3-year assessment and capacity building significantly increased the funding and reach to the program, eventually resulting in standard screening practices in the NOLA school system.
- **Racial Equity Group.** Works with REG on collective efforts for clients in assessments to inform leadership of employee competency levels, data collection gaps, and opportunities to modify policies and practices to advance equity and become equity focused institutions. In this work, Dr. Paulson provides analytical support of the data (both primary and secondary) for action planning and implementation of change guidelines on DEI practices and policies to assess organizational pipeline, including development of performance indicators. Dr. Paulson conducts the sampling frame, survey tool setup, dissemination of link to respondents, data collection, performance analysis, and reporting/implementation. This helps to inform modifications and suggested opportunities to both current and future strategy for impact.
- **United Religions Initiative.** Conduct mixed methods impact assessment to explore the purpose of its interfaith cooperation model (Cooperation Circles), to understand if it is effective, relevant, impactful, and sustainable, and whether it is successfully adapting to the changing contexts and needs of its members. The impact assessment and capacity building will play a critical role in making data-informed decisions regarding planning, resources, challenges and gaps, goals, and future activity prioritization.
- **Lurie Children's Hospital.** A multicenter study needs processed, uniform communication, and collaboration to create standard procedures to track goals/milestones, training and recruitment, to manage site communications and resource alignment. Dr. Paulson supports Lurie Children's Hospital as an extension of their administrative team, focusing on system development of a 33-site study in administrative support in managing sites: communications, invoicing and payments for subcontracts, tracking training, trial participant recruitment and timelines.

TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES

Research Skills: Evaluation Design, Data Collection Procedures, Publication and Report Dissemination, Presentation of Findings, Interviewing Skills, Focus Group Moderation Experience, Qualitative Coding and Theme Building Analysis, Statistical Analysis, Data Processing, Data Visualization, Machine Learning (Regression, Classification, Clustering), Deep Learning (CNN, RNN), Time Series Forecasting

Statistical Skills: Bivariate Statistics (crosstabs, t-tests, correlations, ANOVA, and MANOVA), Multivariate Statistics (linear, logistic, ordinal, multinomial, Poisson, Negative binomial, Probit, Tobit, and GLM), Time Series Forecasting, Hierarchical Linear Modelling (HLM), Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Factor Analysis, Power Analysis, Missing Replacement Techniques, Bayesian Techniques

Software Proficiencies: MS Office Suite, Six Sigma, Trello, Java 8, Adobe Suite, Prezi, Oracle, Google Suite, Web Browsers, Photoshop, FileZilla, Notepad++, Dropbox, R/RStudio, SPSS, MySQL, Microsoft SQL Server, Microsoft Access, Google Ads & Analytics, Moz, Google Keyword Planner, Social Media Platforms

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Statistical Association
Search Engine Marketing Professionals Organization
International Mathematical Optimization Society
Association for Women in Mathematics
Society for the Scientific Study of Religion

Regional Educational Laboratories Southwest
Psi Chi, National Honor Society in Psychology
Society for Personality and Social Psychology
Southwestern Psychological Association



ILA D CASSELBERRY, MPH

Evaluation Consultant

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(865) 765-4971

BIOGRAPHY

Ms. Casselberry is a Research and Evaluation Consultant for Elite Research where she shines in the areas of research design and advanced statistical techniques. As a consultant, she works with clients to determine the best path forward with their research, evaluation, or analytic needs in order to create actionable insights from their data. Ila specializes in quantitative methodologies, research design, experimental design, and monitoring & evaluation frameworks. Being trained in participatory community development in undergraduate studies, Ila's first exposure to program evaluation was through a qualitative evaluation of Savings and Credit Associations in Rural Peru, which sparked her interest in pursuing monitoring and evaluation as a career. Ila has evaluation experience working in public health both primary care health systems and government health systems, as well as conducting quasi-experimental research studies throughout the globe.

EDUCATION

M.S. Public Health, University of Texas Health Science Center

B.A. Community & Economic Development, Covenant College

EXPERTISE

- Longitudinal analysis of student growth, HLM and fixed effects techniques
- ROI, cost-effectiveness, and cost-feasibility analysis
- Attention to detail that exceeds expectations of client/program needs
- Matching procedures, propensity score approaches and CEM
- Survey design and scale creation, factor analysis and IRT
- Program evaluation
- Project management with exceptional attention to detail under tight deadlines
- Written and oral presentation of compelling and accessible data stories (published)
- Data documentation and strategies for reproducible results
- Spreading optimism with a positive attitude and growth mindset
- Quantitative Research Methods, Analysis, Reporting
- Global: Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Peru, Togo, Tanzania
- Topics: Impact Evaluations, Child Protection/Safeguarding, Child & Youth Development, Church Partnerships, Disability Inclusion, Gender Inclusion, WASH

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Elite Research, LLC

- Research design and statistics
- Advanced statistical analysis
- Manuscript preparation for grants, industry, and individual research
- Verification of appropriate research design and statistical approaches
- Advise on data file management
- Training of company processes and statistical methods and software

Compassion International

- Survey Design

- Literature Review
- Theory of Change/Logic Models
- Research Design
- Data Collection & Training
- Project Management
- Data Analysis
- Data presentations

Healthcare Services (General)

- Health Services and Resources Administration (HRSA) Reporting
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Projects
- Clinical Quality Improvement
- Mental Health Statistics Improvement Program Survey
- Grant Management
- Child Abuse Prevention Evaluation
- Community Needs Assessments

TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES

Research Skills: Research Design, Panel Data Analysis, Stata Programming Language, Presentations, Longitudinal Modeling, Program Evaluation, Data Analysis, Data Cleaning, Presentation Design, Statistics

Statistical Skills: Bivariate Statistics (crosstabs, t-tests, correlations, ANOVA, and MANOVA), Multivariate Statistics (linear, logistic, ordinal, multinomial, Poisson, Negative binomial, Probit, Tobit, and GLM), Time Series Forecasting, Hierarchical Linear Modelling (HLM), Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Factor Analysis, Power Analysis, Missing Replacement Techniques, Bayesian Techniques

Software Proficiencies: MS Office Suite, Web Browsers, Social Media Platforms, Dropbox, SurveyCTO, Qualtrics, STATA, MaxQDA, Tableau



RYAN KRONE

Director of Quantitative Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, & Learning
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BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Ryan Krone is the Director of Quantitative Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, & Learning (MERL) for Elite Research where he directs and conducts a team of consultants in the areas of research design and advanced statistical techniques. With his Master of Science in International Political Economy and Ph.D. in Public Policy and Political Economy, both from University of Texas at Dallas, Dr. Krone brings expertise in advanced statistics, evaluation, research design, instrumentation development, and online survey data collection. As a research consultant, Dr. Krone works with clients to determine the best path forward with their research, evaluation, or analytic needs in order to create actionable insights from their data. He has extensive expertise in helping clients identify their research needs and develop a strategic plan to execute against their goals. He excels in helping clients better understand the research process, how to internalize the practical application of research and statistical methods, and the justification for their use. He is a strong proponent of making the client a collaborator in the process in order to achieve this. Dr. Krone leads a talented team of research consultants, analysts, and assistants that have helped to drive growth for the company and contribute to empowered researchers/organizations and more rigorous research in the field.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Public Policy and Political Economy, University of Texas at Dallas, 2016
M.S. International Political Economy, University of Texas at Dallas, 2012
B.A. History, Friends University, 2001
B.A. Art, Friends University, 2001

EXPERTISE

- Expertise in guiding clients to help them identify their research needs, goals, and strategies.
- Excels at educating clients on methods and research process
- Capable of leading high performing teams under tough deadlines to meet expectations of client/program needs
- Designing effective research and evaluation design strategies
- In-depth knowledge of statistical techniques and modeling

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Elite Research, LLC

- Lead quantitative consultants department
- Research design and statistics
- Grant proposal development
- Analyze data
- Manuscript preparation for grants, industry, and individual research
- Verification of appropriate research design and statistical approaches
- Advise on data file management
- Training of company processes and statistical methods and software

Texas Woman's University

- Program evaluation
- Survey/instrumentation creation

- Online survey data collection
- Statistical analysis and reporting
- Consulting design and statistics for students and faculty

RELEVANT PROJECT SUMMARIES

- **Teacher Retirement System.** As part of their service evaluation, TRS contracted ER in early 2020 for their annual Membership Satisfaction Survey. This survey reviews member engagement of health, social, and economic variables, and products. Dr. Krone supplied the data management, analysis, graph and chart creation, report, facilitated stakeholder meetings and board presentations. He also developed customized survey instruments with online and CATI data collection, visualization, as well as process optimization for multiple years.
- **Horizon Health.** Support the client with job description and salary structure for current and future staff of their Health Informatics team focused on research, statistics, and database management. Due to the unique nature of the type of staff employed on this team, a new designation of structured descriptions of job tasks and skills need to be defined to better attract and retain appropriate applicants. Allocating the current and future staff into a customized matrix of skill base will allow assessment of needs and training priorities for the overall team.
- **Fairbanks, LLC.** Compared two sample methodology results, random and segmented to show the impact on reimbursements as well as reviewed historical data from at least two quarters and other background information regarding parameters, sampling information, and typical data patterns. Dr. Krone also prepared a simulated data set, conduct simulation analysis for each method, compare the results, and create a justification report including the results, appropriate theory and references justifying the recommended current sampling approach.
- **Community Action Agency.** Dr. Krone conducted a community needs assessment through surveys to serve as a guide in planning and developing the next strategic plan and provision of services aimed at self-sufficiency, education, and support in Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale Counties to low-income residents.
- **Texas Tech University.** Performed analysis and data collection for a university-wide survey focused on how the school setting promotes or inhibits academic performance by collecting data from students, staff, families, etc., focusing on major categories of safety, teaching and learning, interpersonal relationships, and the institutional environment. A 15-minute community needs assessment survey was developed and administered via telephone, F2F, and online, as well as focus groups/interviews with key stakeholders were conducted.

TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES

Research Skills: Study Design, Research Design, Survey Design, Data Collection Procedures, Data Management and Preparation, Statistical Analysis, Post-Estimation Diagnostics, Statistical Writeup, Development of Tables and Figures, Publication and Report Dissemination, Presentation of Findings

Statistical Skills: Bivariate Statistics (crosstabs, t-tests, correlations, ANOVA, and MANOVA), Multivariate Statistics (linear, logistic, ordinal, multinomial, Poisson, Negative binomial, Probit, Tobit, and GLM), Time Series Forecasting, Hierarchical Linear Modelling (HLM), Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Factor Analysis, Power Analysis, Missing Replacement Techniques, Bayesian Techniques

Software Proficiencies: MS Office Suite, Dropbox, Trello, Microsoft Excel, SPSS, Stata, Lisrel, Mplus, AMOS, R / R Studio, ArcGIS, G*Power, Optimal Design

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management

Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society



NICOLE HUDDLESTON

Director of Qualitative Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, & Learning
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BIOGRAPHY

Nicole Huddleston is the Director of Qualitative Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, & Learning with Elite Research. She has worked as a research consultant on projects utilizing qualitative and mixed methods research for diverse clients across a broad range of industries since 2007. Ms. Huddleston holds a master's in applied anthropology from the University of North Texas and is passionate about utilizing social science research methods to solve real-world problems. Ms. Huddleston specializes in assisting researchers and organizations in designing, evaluating, and implementing sound and rigorous projects, as well as in analysis and reporting of qualitative and mixed methods data. Ms. Huddleston leads a talented team of research consultants, analysts, and assistants that have helped to drive growth for the company and contribute to empowered researchers/organizations and more rigorous research in the field.

EDUCATION

M.A. Applied Anthropology, University of North Texas, 2007
B.A. Sociocultural Anthropology, Brigham Young University, 2005

EXPERTISE

- In-depth knowledge of rigorous research methods that align with unique needs of each project
- Insight into cultural considerations and culturally-appropriate approaches to research
- Managing complex research projects and working with diverse internal and external teams to achieve project aims within a specified timeline
- Attention to detail for precision and accuracy at all project stages
- Capable of leading high performing teams under tough deadlines to meet expectations of client/program needs
- Flexibility and creativity in addressing project challenges
- Multi-tasker, with strong organization ability, planning and project management
- Designing effective research and evaluation strategies
- Translating large amounts of data into succinct reports with evidence-based actionable items
- Instrument development and methodological protocols

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Elite Research, LLC

- Lead qualitative research department
- Consult on qualitative research methodology and design
- Consult on mixed methods research methodology and design
- Data collection including interview/focus group creation and moderation
- Coding and analysis of mixed methods data
- Coding and analysis of qualitative data
- Consult and train qualitative coding, analysis, and software (NVivo, ATLAS.ti, MAXQDA, Dedoose)
- Manage large, complex qualitative research projects
- Evaluation of institutional and organizational effectiveness
- program evaluations
- Proposal writing

- Results report writing
- Review of manuscripts for publication

Texas Woman's University

- Consult on qualitative research methodology and design
- Consult on mixed methods research methodology and design
- Consult on qualitative coding and analysis
- Training graduate students on qualitative coding, analysis, and NVivo software
- Training faculty on qualitative coding, analysis, and NVivo software
- Drafting and review of grant proposals
- Review of manuscripts for publication

Independent Consultant

- Qualitative research design
- Coding and analysis of qualitative data
- Results report writing
- Presentation of results
- End-to-end project management

Mercer

- End-to-end project management
- Vendor management
- Design and lead training workshops on research and analysis
- Qualitative and quantitative research design, data collection, and analysis
- Survey design and implementation
- Program evaluation
- Proposal writing
- Results report writing and presentation of results

RELEVANT PROJECT SUMMARIES

- **SAGE.** The purpose of this project was to conduct focus groups with 3 segments (rural, TGNCNB, BIPOC users) of its SAGECents app users in order to assess their user experience (UX) with the app as well as commonalities or intersections among the groups so that specific needs may be addressed. SAGE also wanted to gather information on how respondents from these segments first discovered both SAGE and SAGECents, where they receive what they perceive as trusted information, and additional information that might inform culturally appropriate outreach strategies for these groups.
- **Community Action Agency.** Ms. Huddleston conducted a community needs assessment through interviews and focus groups to serve as a guide in planning and developing the next strategic plan and provision of services aimed at self-sufficiency, education, and support in Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale Counties to low-income residents. She is also developing a written strategic plan document that presents the planning process, the research, the analysis, opportunities, and strategies that will guide CAA for the next 2 to 3 years.
- **United Religions Initiative.** Conducted a mixed methods impact assessment to explore the purpose of its interfaith cooperation model (Cooperation Circles), to understand if it is effective, relevant, impactful, and sustainable, and whether it is successfully adapting to the changing contexts and needs of its members. The impact assessment and capacity building will play a critical role in making data-informed decisions regarding planning, resources, challenges and gaps, goals, and future activity prioritization.
- **Parkland Center for Clinical Innovation.** Conducted an evaluation of a funded program that seeks to address social determinants of health for vulnerable populations in north Texas to develop a meaningful understanding of the experiences of individuals who have interacted with the program, including patients, social workers, and program staff members using mixed methods. Ms. Huddleston was on the

team that designed the qualitative methodology, and all qualitative data collection instruments, while incorporating client feedback. Qualitative results were integrated with quantitative results collected by the organization to provide a better understanding of the research objective. A detailed report that provided an in-depth understanding of the experiences of participants was created at the end of the 8-week project.

- **The Exeter Group.** Collected and analyzed qualitative data from patients, community members, and hospital staff related to diversity, equitable practices, and culture of the hospital and its community programs. Following data collection, the transcribed data was coded using computer-assisted qualitative analysis software, summarizing key concepts. Coded data were then organized into major themes to answer the project's research questions. A report of the major findings, recommendations, and implementation strategies was presented at the end of the 6-week project.
- **JPS Hospital Network Culture Assessment.** The purpose of this project was to conduct a culture assessment with healthcare talent management firm for JPS. Thirty focus groups and ninety one-on-one interviews with diverse groups of hospital employees, public health workers, and community members were conducted. Focus groups and interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, as well as through interpreters for those needing assistance in other languages.
- **Texas Woman's University.** Provided routine training and capacity building to the team and their community partners, as well as developed logic models, evaluation plans, provided data preparation, analysis, and evaluated whether the models were having a significant effect on various health outcomes over a 9-year time period. This project was conducted in conjunction with the program implementation team to provide effectiveness and development of CQI based on data informed decisions, as well as builds tools (assessment instruments and apps) for long-term assessment, coding, data preparation and other processes. The results of this seven-year assessment and capacity building significantly increased the funding and reach of the program, eventually resulting in standard assessment practices in clinics and shelters, as well as local and national policy change.
- **Health and Education Alliance of Louisiana.** Provided routine training and capacity building to the HEAL team and their community partners, as well as developed logic models, evaluation plans, provided analysis, and evaluated whether HEAL programs are having a significant effect on student outcomes in these schools over a three-year time period. This project was conducted in conjunction with the program implementation team to provide reporting for the HEAL organization's NOLA project effectiveness and development of CQI based on data informed decisions, as well as build tools for long-term analysis structure, coding, data preparation and other processes. The results of this 3-year assessment and capacity building significantly increased the funding and reach to the program, eventually resulting in standard screening practices in the NOLA school system.

TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES

Research Skills: Evaluation Design, Data Collection Procedures, Publication and Report Dissemination, Presentation of Findings, Interviewing Skills, Focus Group Moderation Experience, and Qualitative Coding and Theme Building Analysis, Program Evaluation, Strategic Planning

Software Proficiencies: SPSS, ATLAS.ti, Symphony, NVivo, MAXQDA, Dedoose, HTML, QuestBack, SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics, Panopto, Canvas, Trello, Dropbox, MS Office Suite

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Anthropological Association
Society for Applied Anthropology



ARMINDA CHANDLER

Research & Evaluation Consultant
achandler@eliteresearch.com
(972) 538-1374

BIOGRAPHY

Arminda (Mindy) Chandler is a Research & Evaluation Consultant for Elite Research where she directs evaluation efforts for domestic and international programs. She has extensive experience working with clients' varying evaluation and data collection needs, and brings successful grant funding experience from foundation, state, and federal levels. With her master's in Education and Human Development from George Washington University, Mindy brings culturally-competent expertise in nonprofit program design, evaluation, and project management to help a strengthened strategic planning process. She works with leaders, researchers, and practitioners in the nonprofit and philanthropic world to design strong long-term designs through the development of theories of change and logic models, and then identifying appropriate outcomes, indicators, and measures. Having served as a third party evaluator for federal grants, she has proven to have an eye for detail, to ask insightful questions, discern key lessons, make valuable recommendations, and have the ability to deliver on key deliverables.

EDUCATION

M.A. Education & Human Development, George Washington University, 2004
B.S. Human Environmental Science, Oklahoma State University, 2002

EXPERTISE

- Capable of leading high performing teams under tough deadlines to meet expectations of client/program needs
- Multi-tasker, with strong organization ability, planning and project management
- Federal, state, and foundation grant development
- Logic model development and tying it to planning and evaluation
- International data collection
- Instrument development and methodological protocols
- In-depth knowledge of social media marketing platforms

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Elite Research, LLC

- Survey and instrumentation creation or modification
- Online survey data collection
- Analyze data for grants, industry, and individual research
- Small and large group training seminars
- Manuscript and grant preparation
- Program and grant evaluations
- Consult on research design and evaluation for nonprofits

Texas Woman's University

- Consult on evaluation design and analysis for grant and faculty research
- Program evaluation
- Grant evaluation
- Conduct trainings & workshops for grant evaluation

OneHope, Inc

- Consult on research design & integration
- Advise on data file management
- Analyze data, manuscript preparation
- Direct team of multiple project coordinators
- Conduct independent and group film products and multi-project management (international)
- Strategic planning & implementation
- Development and implementation of team protocols
- Budget preparation & management

Metadigm Group, LLC

- Direct team of multiple research managers
- Conduct independent and group research and multi-project management (international)
- Development of research methodology, design, and analysis
- Strategic planning & implementation
- Development and implementation of team & nonprofit protocols
- Budget preparation & management

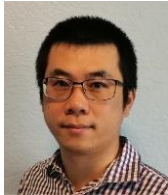
RELEVANT PROJECT EXAMPLES

- **United Religions Initiative.** Conduct mixed methods impact assessment to explore the purpose of its interfaith cooperation model (Cooperation Circles), to understand if it is effective, relevant, impactful, and sustainable, and whether it is successfully adapting to the changing contexts and needs of its members. The impact assessment and capacity building will play a critical role in making data-informed decisions regarding planning, resources, challenges and gaps, goals, and future activity prioritization.
- **Parkland Center for Clinical Innovation.** Conducted an evaluation of a funded program that seeks to address social determinants of health for vulnerable populations in north Texas to develop a meaningful understanding of the experiences of individuals who have interacted with the program, including patients, social workers, and program staff members using mixed methods. Ms. Chandler designed the qualitative methodology, and all qualitative data collection instruments, while incorporating client feedback. Qualitative results were integrated with quantitative results collected by the organization to provide a better understanding of the research objective.
- **Community Impact.** Assisted in documenting the prevalence of interpersonal violence and PTSD among income-assisted men and women living in priority and nonpriority neighborhoods of Toronto and testing the validity of a theoretical model that highlights the process by which neighborhood status and gender intersect to influence violence exposure, resource availability/accessibility, and development/persistence of PTSD, as well as to identify the foundation factors and root causes for sustainable change at various points in the community system.
- **Texas Woman's University.** Developed the program logic models, help design the programs, build out appropriate outcomes and evaluations, data governance, data gathering, conduct external evaluation, and provide technical assistance to TWU-awarded grants to help close the nation's STEM skills gap and increase the number in, and diversity of, the talent pipeline through innovative and collaborative inter- and intra- institutional efforts using a multi-intervention approach to increase retention and graduation in STEM majors.

TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES

Research Skills: Evaluation Design, Data Collection Procedures, Publication and Report Dissemination, Presentation of Findings, Interviewing Skills, Focus Group Moderation Experience, Qualitative Coding, Theme Building Analysis

Software Proficiencies: MS Office Suite, Dropbox, Trello, Microsoft Excel



SEN ZHU

Senior Research Analyst
szhu@eliteresearch.com
(972) 538-1374

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Sen Zhu is a Senior Research Analyst for Elite Research where he directs and conducts advanced statistical techniques to project consultation, design, data visualization, statistical analysis, and write up. His dual doctoral work in Pathophysiology from Peking University and Jining Medical University gives him unique understanding in the fields of bioinformatics and medical research, but his statistical knowledge and experience expand into areas of data visualization and presentation, data mining and statistical analysis, and business intelligence and strategy. With more than ten years of experience in the field of data science, Dr. Zhu is proficient in using statistical and machine learning tools to deliver data-driven insights.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Pathophysiology, Peking University, 2011
M.D. Jining Medical University, 2006

EXPERTISE

- Capable of leading high performing research teams under tough deadlines to meet expectations of client/program needs
- Creating tools and solutions for data visual presentation
- In-depth knowledge of statistical techniques and modeling
- Profound experiences in building machine learning models for prediction and actionable insights
- Creativity and forethought in solving complex project issues
- Multi-tasker, with strong organization ability, planning and project management

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Elite Research, LLC

- Project consultation and design
- Junior analyst training
- Statistical analysis, research design
- Table making and statistical write up
- Manuscript and report preparation

Techlent

- Design research plans for data gathering and analysis
- Extract actionable insights from complex datasets using data mining, statistics, and database techniques
- Build predictive models and machine-learning algorithms
- Present information using data visualization techniques

Houston Methodist Research Institute

- Perform scientific research in the area of cardiovascular disease and cancer
- Design study, perform experiments and collect data
- Perform bioinformatics analysis on genomic and clinical data
- Present the findings in the form of presentations and publications

RECENT PROJECT SUMMARIES

- **SUNY Upstate Medical University.** Examining the immune responses in human subjects to determine response to symptoms for a specific virus over the course of a 28-day collection with analysis coding,

output, figures and layterms for data. Hierarchical cluster analysis with heatmap and correlation matrices for mediator grouping which shard similar change trends in dosing. Relationship comparison between mediators with clinical symptom identification. The mediators' correlations were examined by viral load.

- **Teacher Retirement System of Texas.** TRS contracted ER for their annual Membership Satisfaction Survey. This survey reviews member engagement of health, social, and economic variables, and products. Dr. Zhu supplied the data management, analysis, graph and chart creation, report, facilitated stakeholder meetings and board presentations. He also developed customized survey instruments with online and CATI data collection, visualization, as well as process optimization for multiple years.
- **Oklahoma Association for Problematic and Compulsive Gaming.** Conducting a statewide needs assessment study in OAPCG regarding the behavioral and rehabilitative needs of the residents. ER's sampling frame of the state produced respondents that mirrored the U.S. Census data for the state. Dr. Zhu cleaned and prepared the data, conducted primary and secondary data analysis, prepared draft and final reporting, strategic planning, visualization, facilitated stakeholder meetings and presentations for OAPCG and the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.
- **Racial Equity Group.** Works with REG on collective efforts for clients in assessments to inform leadership of employee competency levels, data collection gaps, and opportunities to modify policies and practices to advance equity and become equity-focused institutions. Dr. Zhu provides analytical support of the data (both primary and secondary) for action planning and implementation of change guidelines on DEI practices and policies to assess organizational pipeline, including development of performance indicators. Dr. Zhu conducts the sampling frame, survey tool setup, dissemination of link to respondents, data collection, performance analysis, and reporting/implementation. This helps to inform modifications and suggested opportunities to both current and future strategy for impact.
- **Goldspring Consulting.** Satisfaction survey analysis over 13 years of responses. Provided multivariate analysis of data to provide actionable insights to their customer' benchmarks with recommended amount of change on identified variables that impact outcomes; and identify thought leadership insights through dashboard analytics. Data visualization, reporting and presentation of findings.
- **Horizon Health.** Support the client with job description and salary structure for current and future staff of their Health Informatics team focused on research, statistics, and database management. Due to the unique nature of the type of staff employed on this team, a new designation of structured descriptions of job tasks and skills need to be defined to better attract and retain appropriate applicants. Allocating the current and future staff into a customized matrix of skill base will allow assessment of needs and training priorities for the overall team.

TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES

Research Skills: Biostatistics, Biological Research, Study Design, Statistical Analysis, Data Processing, Data Visualization, Data Mining, Feature Engineering, Machine Learning (Regression, Classification, Clustering), Deep Learning (CNN, RNN), Time Series Forecasting

Statistical Skills: Statistical Skills: Bivariate Statistics (crosstabs, t-tests, correlations, ANOVA, and MANOVA), Multivariate Statistics (linear, logistic, ordinal, multinomial, Poisson, Negative binomial, Probit, Tobit, and GLM), Time Series Forecasting, Hierarchical Linear Modelling (HLM), Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Factor Analysis, Power Analysis, Missing Replacement Techniques, Bayesian Techniques

Software Proficiencies: Python (Numpy, Pandas, Matplotlib, Seaborn, Scipy, StatsModels, Scikit-Learn, Tensorflow, Keras, Beautiful Soup, Selenium), R (Dplyr, data.table, Ggplot2, Caret), Microsoft, Tableau, Jupyter Notebook, Flask, GCP, AWS, SQL, Spark, NLTK, NLP, Linux, Github, A/B testing, Java, Dropbox, Trello, SPSS



KARINA DONALD

Qualitative Research Consultant

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(972) 538-1374

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Karina Donald is a Qualitative Research Consultant with Elite Research. She has worked as an analyst on qualitative and mixed methods projects for diverse clients across a broad range of industries since 2015. She is passionate about utilizing social science research methods to provide culturally-relevant solutions to underserved communities. With a master's in art therapy from George Washington University and doctorate in marriage and family therapy from Texas Woman's University, Dr. Donald specializes in analyzing non-verbal expressions in human experiences, including projects in the arts. She has supported numerous projects where she has designed research through interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observations.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Marriage and Family Therapy, Texas Woman's University, 2020

M.A. Art Therapy, George Washington University, 2011

B.A. Psychology, Brooklyn College, City University of New York, 2008

EXPERTISE

- Focus group and interview question development and facilitation
- Insight into cultural considerations and culturally-appropriate approaches to research
- In-depth analysis of the creative arts and non-verbal expressions
- Attention to detail for precision and accuracy at all project stages
- Multi-tasker, with strong organization ability, planning and project management
- Rigor in the integration of qualitative and quantitative data analysis

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Elite Research, LLC

- Data collection
- Interview/focus group creation and moderation
- Qualitative coding and analysis
- Qualitative and mixed methods research design consulting
- Review research proposals
- Provides training on qualitative research software (Nvivo, DeDoose)

Texas Woman's University

- Qualitative and mixed methods research design and analysis
- Interview/focus group creation
- Training of qualitative research software
- Analyze data for faculty research
- Advise on and conduct manuscript preparation
- University faculty, students, staff consulting
- Data cleaning of Fragile Families projects dataset

Child Protection Authority, St. George's Grenada

- Managed counseling department for children and adolescents affected by abuse and neglect
- Group, individual, family therapy, and art therapy for child and adolescent victims of abuse

- Clinical case consultations with professionals, and caregivers on child/adolescent abuse and neglect
- Clinical supervision for counseling staff, interns, and volunteers

RELEVANT PROJECT SUMMARIES

- **Community Action Agency.** Dr. Donald is on the team that conducted a community needs assessment through interviews and focus groups to serve as a guide in planning and developing the next strategic plan and provision of services aimed at self-sufficiency, education, and support in Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale Counties to low-income residents. She is also developing a written strategic plan document that presents the planning process, the research, the analysis, opportunities, and strategies that will guide CAA for the next 2 to 3 years.
- **SAGE USA.** The purpose of this project was to conduct focus groups with 3 segments (rural, TGNCNB, BIPOC users) of its SAGECents app users in order to assess their user experience (UX) with the app as well as commonalities or intersections among the groups so that specific needs may be addressed. SAGE also wanted to gather information on how respondents from these segments first discovered both SAGE and SAGECents, where they receive what they perceive as trusted information, and additional information that might inform culturally appropriate outreach strategies for these groups.
- **Parkland Center for Clinical Innovation.** Conducted an evaluation of a funded program that seeks to address social determinants of health for vulnerable populations in north Texas to develop a meaningful understanding of the experiences of individuals who have interacted with the program, including patients, social workers, and program staff members using mixed methods. Dr. Donald was on the team designed the qualitative methodology, and all qualitative data collection instruments, while incorporating client feedback. Qualitative results were integrated with quantitative results collected by the organization to provide a better understanding of the research objective. A detailed report that provided an in-depth understanding of the experiences of participants was created at the end of the 8-week project.
- **Texas Woman's University.** Provided routine training and capacity building to the team and their community partners, as well as developed logic models, evaluation plans, provided data preparation, analysis, and evaluated whether the models were having a significant effect on various health outcomes over a 9-year time period. This project was conducted in conjunction with the program implementation team to provide effectiveness and development of CQI based on data informed decisions, as well as builds tools for long-term assessment, coding, data preparation and other processes. The results of this 7-year assessment and capacity building significantly increased the funding and reach of the program, eventually resulting in standard assessment practices in clinics and shelters, as well as policy change.

TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES/CERTIFICATIONS

Marriage and Family Therapist Associate, State of Texas, License No. 203487

Mixed Methods Research, University of Michigan

Online Facilitation, University of the West Indies Open Campus

Board Certified Registered Art Therapist, Art Therapy Credentials Board, #14-059

Research Skills: Evaluation Design, Data Collection Procedures, Publication and Report Dissemination, Presentation, Interviewing Skills, Focus Group Moderation, Qualitative Coding, Theme Building Analysis

Software Proficiencies: SPSS, ATLAS.ti, Symphony, NVivo, MAXQDA, Dedoose, HTML, QuestBack, SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics, Panopto, Canvas, Trello, MS Office Suite

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
Mixed Methods International Research Association
Psi Chi, National Honor Society in Psychology

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies
National Society for Leadership and Success



CHELSEA LEONARD

Project Manager
Data Collection/Training
cleonard@eliteresearch.com
(972) 538-1374

BIOGRAPHY

Chelsea Leonard is the Project Manager for Elite Research where she directs daily operations for a consulting team with solution focused functional and technical problems. She has held roles within the organization in business optimization and program management. She often is tasked with designing systems and processes for increased impact, efficiency, quality improvement and cost reduction. As Chelsea is working towards her master's in Social Justice and Human Rights from Arizona State University, she continues to be passionate about utilizing social science research methods to provide broad solutions to communities. Chelsea also specializes in interviewing as a means of gathering data from individuals but is skilled in participant observations and case study review. This allows her expertise to shine when training in data collection techniques.

EDUCATION

M.A. Social Justice and Human Rights, Arizona State University, start May 2022
B.S. Integrative Studies, University of North Texas, 2019
A.A. General Studies, Associates of Arts, San Jacinto College, 2016

EXPERTISE

- Communication with internal and external partners
- Creating tools and solutions for visual presentation
- Mixed methods data collection
- Proposal development
- Creativity and forethought in complex project issues
- Multi-tasker, with strong organizational ability and attention to detail, project management

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Elite Research, LLC

- Focus group moderation, coordination, record keeping
- Structuring interviews and reports
- Organizing and managing schedules for staff, managers, and leadership
- Creating reports for managers and leadership
- Attend meetings and create notes and messages

Parkland Center for Clinical innovation

- Qualitative data collection of patients social workers, and program staff
- Taking notes and coding
- Maintaining collection schedules and updates
- Coordinating transcriptions
- Training interviewers on techniques

North Central University, Garduno Collection

- Setting up online survey platform
- Interviewing participants
- Coordinating partner panelists

Every Village (Monitoring and Evaluation System)

- Conducting focus group discussions
- Stakeholder communication
- Planning and organizing participants
- Reporting and documentation

RELEVANT PROJECT SUMMARIES

- **Every Village.** Monitoring and evaluation framework and tool being developed for Every Village, to be used across South Sudan. This process included focus groups with various levels of leadership stakeholders both in-county and at their international headquarters. Much time was spent developing an aligned theory of change and logic models for their people, water, and radio programs. Special sensitivity given to the process due to civic and tribal strife.
- **United Religions Initiative.** Business optimization and program management and designed systems and processes for increased impact, efficiency, quality improvement and cost reduction. The impact assessment and capacity building Ms. Leonard oversaw will play a critical role in making data-informed decisions regarding planning, resources, challenges and gaps, goals, and future activity prioritization.
- **Community Action Agency.** Business optimization and program management and designed systems and processes for increased impact, efficiency, quality improvement and cost reduction. Ms. Leonard also conducted a community needs assessment through interviews and focus groups to serve as a guide in planning and developing the next strategic plan and provision of services aimed at self-sufficiency, education, and support in Jackson, Lenawee, and Hillsdale Counties to low-income residents.
- **Crescendo Education Group.** For school districts in Texas and other states, a teacher professional development organization, the CEG, is working with ER to develop processes and tools for district-wide school data collection on standardized tests and grading. The evaluation of their equitable grading program involves collection planning and strategy, data management with database development, data preparation, analysis, and reporting. Project management expertise was applied by Ms. Leonard due to the scale-up of the total school collection and analysis requirements, milestones within phases capture key components and rigorous reporting was implemented to build optimization for this project.
- **SAGE USA.** The purpose of this project was to conduct focus groups with 3 segments (rural, TGNCNB, BIPOC users) of its SAGECents app users in order to assess their user experience (UX) with the app as well as commonalities or intersections among the groups so that specific needs may be addressed. SAGE also wanted to gather information on how respondents from these segments first discovered both SAGE and SAGECents, where they receive what they perceive as trusted information, and additional information that might inform culturally appropriate outreach strategies for these groups.

TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES

Research Skills: Data Collection Procedures, Publication and Report Dissemination, Presentation, Interviewing Skills, Focus Group Moderation, Qualitative Coding, Theme Building Analysis

Software Proficiencies: SPSS, ATLAS.ti, Symphony, NVivo, MAXQDA, Dedoose, HTML, QuestBack, SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics, Panopto, Canvas, Trello, MS Office Suite, Windows, Joomla!, QuickBooks, Dropbox, Basecamp

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Qualitative Research Consultants Association



PETE GACKENBACH

Research Analyst

pgackenbach@eliteresearch.com

(972) 538-1374

BIOGRAPHY

Pete Gackenbach is a Research Analyst where he serves Elite Research senior consultants by cleaning data in a variety of software packages, preparing data by assessing invalid data, missing data and basic assumptions testing, coding analysis syntax, and writing technical reports on research findings. He is often the most directly involved with the data on a micro level trained to identify critical decision points for senior research consultants. He empowers the research consultant team to present key findings and decision points to clients to ensure maximum return and accuracy on research aims and methodology. He has extensive prior experience working in monitoring and evaluation outcomes-based research for international and cross-cultural nonprofit work. With his degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Maryland, Pete has served as a project manager in more than 20 countries providing methodology design, evaluation oversight, and research training in the field.

EDUCATION

B.S. Aerospace Engineering, University of Maryland, 2005

EXPERTISE

- Data cleaning, preparation, and analysis in a variety of statistical software packages and programs
- Technical writing for bivariate and multivariate statistical analysis
- Project management and training for cross-cultural/multicultural monitoring and evaluation projects
- Data analytic support services for senior research analysts
- Qualitative and quantitative research experience in over 30 countries

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Elite Research, LLC

- Perform data cleaning and analysis tasks for report writing and presentation
- Identify data issues requiring advanced insight from research consultants and clients
- Assist research teams in supportive roles for large multiyear grants and projects
- Ensure necessary assumptions and validity of datasets required for particular analysis tests
- Combine data and cultural insights for nonprofits to optimize information for maximum impact

Metrix Research

- Designed, validated, and conducted reliability testing for quantitative research instruments to measure outcomes.
- Coached organizations on conducting monitoring and evaluation projects internally and externally
- Facilitated focus group trainings and lead focus group research for partner organizations
- Conducted literature reviews for instrument design.
- Created data entry templates with dashboard results displayed to automate analysis for international nonprofit organizations.

OneHope

- Created pointed action-oriented research reports based on quantitative findings for executive level leaders.
- Traveled to 30+ countries to train local staff on research methodology to measure impact and outcomes for nonprofit work.

- Analyzed datasets for local and international partners for practical levels of outreach services and executive level management decision makers.

AchieveAbility/Haddington Cobbs Creek CDC

- Community organizer providing supportive and social services to primarily single parents and housing insecure families.
- Served as neighborhood advisory coordinator providing city services and benefits to individuals
- Implemented neighborhood surveys to fulfill grant requirements and better serve target audience
- Taught math and computer skills courses to single-parent high school drop-outs preparing for college enrollment

RELEVANT PROJECT SUMMARIES

- **Racial Equity Group.** Works with REG on collective efforts for clients in assessments to inform leadership of employee competency levels, data collection gaps, and opportunities to modify policies and practices to advance equity and become equity focused institutions. In this work, Mr. Gackebach provides collection support of the data (both primary and secondary) for action planning and implementation of change guidelines on DEI practices and policies to assess organizational pipeline, including development of performance indicators.
- **Teacher Retirement System.** Annual analysis of membership satisfaction survey for both retirees and current members. Data collection, longitudinal analysis for trend identification, visualization reporting, and stakeholder presentation. Developed customized survey instruments with online and CATI data collection, data management, analyses, visualization, and an annual report and board presentation, as well as process optimization for multiple years.
- **Horizon Health.** Support the client with job description and salary structure for current and future staff of their Health Informatics team focused on research, statistics, and database management. Due to the unique nature of the type of staff employed on this team, a new designation of structured descriptions of job tasks and skills need to be defined to better attract and retain appropriate applicants. Allocating the current and future staff into a customized matrix of skill base will allow assessment of needs and training priorities for the overall team.
- **Fairbanks, LLC.** Compared two sample methodology results, random and segmented to show the impact on Medicaid services and state level school services reimbursements as well as reviewed historical data from at least two quarters and other background information regarding parameters, sampling information, and typical data patterns. Mr. Gackebach worked with the team that prepared a simulated data set, conduct simulation analysis for each method, compare the results, and create a justification report including the results, appropriate theory and references justifying the recommended current sampling approach.

TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES

Research Skills: Data Processing, Data Visualization, Data Mining, Machine Learning (Regression, Classification, Clustering), Deep Learning (CNN, RNN), Time Series Forecasting

Software Proficiencies: SPSS, STATA, VBA, C++, MATLAB, Mathematica, MS Office Suite, Dropbox, Trello, PhotoShop, HTML



MELISSA BELSON

Research Associate

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(972) 538-1374

BIOGRAPHY

Melissa is a Research Associate who coordinates data collection needs for the clients of Elite Research. She is skilled in online, in-person, and other methods of collection. She is trained in one-on-one interview techniques as well as focus group moderation. She coordinates with panel companies to get participants for data collection. Leaning on her degree in Psychology from the University of Texas at Dallas, Melissa is instrumental in survey development and online setup of said surveys and performs data collection. She is keen on timelines and works quickly. She validates collected data to confirm accurate reporting. Melissa creates manuals on the processes. She also performs data migration and data entry. She has applied knowledge to coding data and preparing data files for analysis.

EDUCATION

B.S. Psychology, University of Texas at Dallas, 2018

B.S. Child Learning and Development, minor in Economics, University of Texas at Dallas, 2018

Associate of Science, Collin College, 2017

EXPERTISE

- Thorough knowledge of basic and applied research, research design, and research methodology
- Experience with data analysis, both qualitative and quantitative
- Data analytic support services for senior research analysts
- Experience in conducting group research and scale development
- Experience with data, such as preparation, collection, cleaning, coding, verification, and entry
- Experience with empirical data research
- Attention to detail that exceeds expectations of client/program needs
- Ability to navigate government websites, such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Adaptable working style to support people, processes, and platforms

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Johnson and Johnson

- Data migration
- Team lead
- Data verification
- Data entry
- Data processing

Elite Research, LLC

- Preparing/coding data for analysis
- Coordinating data collection
- Data validation
- Developing survey platforms
- Identify data issues requiring advanced insight from research consultants and clients
- Creating scientific figures and tables
- Preparing and reviewing manuscripts

RELEVANT PROJECT SUMMARIES

- **The MEGA Life and Health Insurance Company.** Developed customized survey instruments for routine satisfaction and market surveys using a custom online survey data collection tool created, hosted, and maintained by Elite Research. Deliverables included online custom and branded data collection tool, response and validity reports, raw and cleaned data files in CSV format, and summary reports of each survey including descriptive statistics of overall sample, as well as by demographics such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, education level, and state.
- **Teacher Retirement System of Texas.** Annual analysis of membership satisfaction survey for both retirees and current members. Data collection, longitudinal analysis for trend identification, visualization reporting, and stakeholder presentation. Developed customized survey instruments with online and CATI data collection, data management, analyses, visualization, and an annual report and board presentation, as well as process optimization for multiple years.
- **Oklahoma with the Oklahoma Association for Problematic and Compulsive Gaming.** Distributed a statewide needs assessment survey in regarding the behavioral and rehabilitative needs of the residents and employees. Ms. Belson collected the data via CATI telephone interviews, social media, and with survey link distribution. The sampling frame of the state produced respondents that mirrored the U.S. Census data for the state.
- **Crescendo Education Group.** For school districts in Texas and other states, a teacher professional development organization, the Crescendo Education Group, is working with Elite Research to develop processes and tools for district-wide school data collection on standardized tests and grading. The evaluation of their equitable grading program involves collection planning and strategy, data management with database development, data preparation, analysis, and reporting.
- **PsychData.** PsychData is designed for social science researchers to conduct secure online surveys with academic quality, our professional survey development platform provides 600+ language options. Ms. Belson oversees the collection and export the collected data from PsychData surveys directly to statistical analysis packages such as SPSS or Excel. Institutional Research Boards prefer the way data is maintained and collected with this tool, given that its typical use is with students and researchers collectively for the past 20 years. This tool is used often for surveys and assessments for collection within organizations and institutions conducting research, assessment, and program evaluation.

TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES

Research Skills: Survey Design, Data Collection Procedures, Data Management and Preparation, Presentation of Findings

Software Proficiencies: MS Project, Dropbox, Trello, Windows, MS Office Suite, SPSS, Qualtrics, PsychData, Google Forms, Technical Writing



CONNIE HASSETT-WALKER

Professor

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802-485-3070

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Connie Hassett-Walker has expertise in criminal justice, specifically with juveniles and minorities. Her PhD entitled, "Delinquency and the Black Middle Class," received second place from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. She is a current assistant professor in the Department of Justice Studies & Sociology at Norwich University; she was formally a professor of Criminal Justice at Kean University and College of New Jersey. She has recently conducted evaluations on afterschool educational enrichment programs, a study on the effects of criminal justice system exposure on youth's substance use trajectories (NIH/NIDA), and an evaluation of a school counseling grant to improve district children's access to mental health counseling and support from guidance counselors and social workers. She is currently engaged in a review of criminal justice literature from the 1921 Tulsa, Oklahoma Riot and Cover-Up.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Criminal Justice, Rutgers School of Criminal Justice, 2007

M.P.A. New York University, Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, 1997

B.A. French, Rutgers College, Rutgers University, 1990

EXPERTISE

- Gender and public policy and management
- Research methods
- Juvenile justice
- Social justice and advocacy
- Social emotional learning

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Department of Justice Studies & Sociology, Norwich University

- Assistant Professor 2020-Present

Department of Criminal Justice, Kean University

- Associate Professor 2014 – 2020
- Assistant Professor 2007 – 2014

College of New Jersey, Department of Criminology & Justice Studies

- Adjunct Professor, (undergraduate course: Introduction to Research Methods) Spring 2007

Violence Institute of New Jersey - Research Associate

1999-2007

New Jersey Institute of Technology, New York, NY - Project Manager

1996-1999

Lebhar-Friedman Inc., Project Coordinator

1993-1996

Policy Women-Management Women, Inc.

1999-2001

- Co-founder; Board of Trustees Treasurer; newsletter writer; listserv manager, [A 501(c)3 organization]. An on-line forum for researchers, practitioners, teachers, and other individuals interested in issues relating to gender and public policy and management. PWMW sought to bring a gendered perspective to the teaching and practice of public policy by offering an annual workshop at the fall conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management.

RELEVANT PROJECT SUMMARIES

Passaic 21st CCLC ACCESS Program. An evaluation of an afterschool educational enrichment program offered in four schools in the district. Goals of the program include increasing participating students' high school graduation and college readiness; improving students' 21st Century learning skills (e.g., problem-solving, creativity, decision-making); and improving students' social and emotional functioning.

Passaic AIM to Achieve Arts Integration Program. Evaluation of an after-school NJ Department of Education-funded Readers' Theater program, implemented with a non-profit arts partner at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Passaic, NJ. AIM to Achieve seeks to improve participating reading fluency and comprehension, writing ability, and school engagement among children in grades 1-3.

Effects of criminal justice system exposure on youth's substance use trajectories. National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institute of Health (NIH). This study examined how exposure to the criminal justice system (e.g., probation, jail, prison) is related to substance use trajectories among racially and ethnically diverse adolescents and young adults.

PEACE school counseling grant. This study involved an evaluation of a school counseling grant being implemented in six schools in Passaic, New Jersey. The schools serve children in Grades 4 through 6, the target audience of the PEACE grant. The PEACE program seeks to improve district children's access to mental health counseling and support from guidance counselors and social workers by using a 3-tiered approach of service provision: primary intervention, appropriate for all youth; secondary intervention for selective children exhibiting potentially at-risk behaviors (e.g., missing school, poor grades); and tertiary services for youth exhibiting problem behaviors such as fighting.

The 1921 Tulsa, Oklahoma Riot and Cover-Up: A Review of Criminal Justice Literature. Spring 2021 Norwich University Apprentice Grant; current

Do changes in state laws affect teenage risky behavior? This study involved examining whether changes in state-level marijuana legalization and bullying prevention laws affect youth behavior (e.g., fewer drug-related arrests; fewer suicides of bullied teenagers)

An examination of health issues among women in the criminal justice system. This study involved examining the childhood risk factors for heroin addiction among incarcerated women.

An examination of mental health issues in law enforcement, first responder agencies, and corrections. This study involved examining mental health issues facing police, first responders, and correctional professionals.

Dating Violence among Older Teens and Young Adults. This study examined the relationship between dating violence/aggression, and related factors – substance use, arrest, peers' dating violence – among a sample of older teenagers and young adults ages 18 to 30 years old.

Social media, gun ownership, and gun control. This study examined the use of social media by gun owners and gun control advocates via a national online survey of residents in strict and lax gun law states.

Race, social class, communication, and the Duke University lacrosse team party. This study examined how race and social class differences between the male members of the lacrosse team members and the female performers impacted the subsequent angry verbal exchange on March 13, 2006 (i.e., the night of an infamous Duke University lacrosse party) and how this verbal exchange may have set the stage for sexual assault allegations that followed.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Society of Criminology (ASC)
Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences

ASC's Division on Life Course Criminology
Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences

September 19, 2022

Ms. Kelly Venci Gonzalez
e. Kelly.VenciGonzalez@jad.hctx.net

RE: Request for Best and Final Offer (BAFO) for Youth Justice Community Reinvestment Fund

Dear Ms. Gonzalez,

This is a response from Elite Research to your emailed request for best and final offer (BAFO) for the Youth Justice Community Reinvestment Fund, and further clarifying questions.

1. Budget

- a. Appendix A updated for BAFO

2. Timeline

- a. Is the timeline now adjusted for starting closer to November 1? If so, we would still anticipate finishing end of November/December 2024. Noting where we can find time saving elements, we will aim to move the end date back to the original proposed time

2. Scope of Work

- a. Are there specific calendar milestones or specific tasks that are unmovable regardless of when the grant begins? (i.e., a particular program element always starts with the start of the academic year)
- b. Have any changes to the scope of work been identified after review of the proposed plans?
- c. Were there items within our proposal that needed additional clarification?
- d. Would the Harris County team be open to a conversation regarding our proposal to glean any further information needed for the project and anticipated pain points/parameters that might need to be known?

While we do the best to put forth the project team at the proposal stage, our proposal team may be modified based on timeline, scope, and expertise needed based on responses to these questions and further conversations.

Sincerely,



Rene M. Paulson, President

Appendix A – BAFO Budget

The following budget has been modified to provide Harris County with the best and final offer from Elite Research.

	<u>Year 1</u>				<u>Year 2</u>				<u>Total</u>	
	Hours Lower	Hours Upper	Cost (\$) Lower	Range Upper	Hours Lower	Hours Upper	Cost (\$) Lower	Range Upper	Cost (\$) Lower	Range Upper
Phase 1. Planning & Evaluation Design	800	925	\$81,769	\$89,818	100	150	\$10,221	\$14,565	\$91,990	\$104,384
Phase 2. Change Happens Evaluation	700	850	\$71,548	\$82,536	950	1200	\$97,101	\$116,521	\$168,649	\$199,057
Phase 3. Sub-Grantee Implementation	550	700	\$56,216	\$67,971	650	800	\$66,438	\$77,681	\$122,654	\$145,651
Phase 4. Findings & Reports	350	450	\$35,774	\$43,695	300	350	\$30,663	\$33,985	\$66,438	\$77,681
Full Project Total	2400	2925	\$245,308	\$284,020	2000	2500	\$204,423	\$242,752	\$449,731	\$526,773

*Communication & meetings, process documentation contained & invoiced within each phase.

**MINORITY- AND WOMAN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE
UTILIZATION COMMITMENT FORM**

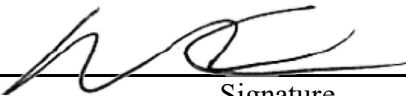
The undersigned has satisfied the requirements of the specifications in the following manner (please check the appropriate space):

- ☐ The proposer is committed to M/WBE participation on this project equal to or greater than the goal stated in the bid and has submitted WITH ITS BID a Letter of Intent for each M/WBE listed on the utilization form.

OR –

- ☐ The proposer is unable to meet the goal, is committed to a minimum of _____% M/WBE participation on this contract, and has submitted WITH ITS BID documentation of the proposer's efforts with respect to each of the good faith effort actions listed in the Good Faith Efforts Checklist in Attachment K.

Proposer: _____

By:  _____
Signature Date

Address: _____

_____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone No.: _____

Email address: _____

M/WBE UTILIZATION PLAN

The *M/WBE Utilization Plan* must be completed and submitted by the time specified in the solicitation documents. If the goal was not achieved, good faith efforts documentation must be submitted with the *M/WBE Utilization Plan*. All questions in the Good Faith Efforts Checklist MUST be completed and submitted with the *M/WBE Utilization Plan* if the goal is not met. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

Section I — Project Identification and Goal

Project Name	
Solicitation Number	

Project Goal	
M/WBE	%

Section II — Prime Company Information

Name of Company	
Address	
City, State Zip	
Phone	
Name of Contact Person	
Email address for Contract Person	
Telephone number for Contract Person	
Is prime company M/WBE certified? (MBE/WBE, DBE, HUB, or 8(a))	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> MBE/WBE Joint Venture <input type="checkbox"/>

I certify that the information included in this *Utilization Plan* is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I further understand and agree that this *Utilization Plan* shall become a part of my contract with Harris County.

Name and Title of Authorized Representative



Signature

Date

For County Use Only:

I have reviewed this Utilization Plan and found that the Proposer **HAS** or **HAS NOT** complied as per the County M/WBE Policy.

Reviewer _____ Consuela Floyd _____ Date: 1/11/23

*Tips: Use the name of the firm as listed in the directory.
Ensure the firm is certified in the area in which they are participating on this project.
Ensure the firm's participation is in line with the scope and germane to the project.*

Section III — Utilization Plan Summary

Goals: Proposed Participation	
Proposer's own participation in project	%
M/WBE(s): (MBE/WBE, DBE, HUB, or 8(a))	%
Non-Certified Subcontractor(s)	%
Total Participation % w/ goals met	%

Is the stated M/WBE goal of the solicitation met? (If no, provide an explanation below, attach the Good Faith Efforts checklist, and documentation of good faith efforts)

Yes ☐

No ☐

Explanation for not meeting the M/WBE Goal:

For County Use Only:

Verified Goal Attainment:

M/WBE 100%

Section IV — Disclosure of M/WBE Participation

Please list all M/WBE subcontractors below & Duplicate as Needed

Tips: Use the name of the firm as listed in the directory.

Ensure the firm is certified in the area in which they are participating on this project.

Ensure the firm's participation is in line with the scope and germane to the project.

Name of MBE/WBE Certified Firm	
Certified by:	
Address/ City / State / Zip	
Name of Contact Person	
Email address for Contract Person	
Telephone number for Contract Person	
Percent of Subcontract	
Description of services	
6-digit NAICS code for work to be performed	

Name of MBE/WBE Certified Firm	
Certified by:	
Address/ City / State / Zip	
Name of Contact Person	
Email address for Contract Person	
Telephone number for Contract Person	
Percent of Subcontract	
Description of services	
6-digit NAICS code for work to be performed	

Name of MBE/WBE Certified Firm	
Certified by:	
Address/ City / State / Zip	
Name of Contact Person	
Email address for Contract Person	
Telephone number for Contract Person	
Percent of Subcontract	
Description of services	
6-digit NAICS code for work to be performed	

SECTION V — Disclosure of Non-Certified Sub-consultants
Duplicate As Needed

Name of Non-Certified Firm	
Address/ City / State / Zip	
Name of Contact Person	
Email address for Contract Person	
Telephone number for Contract Person	
Percent of Subcontract	
Description of services	
6-digit NAICS code for work to be performed	

Name of Non-Certified Firm	
Address/ City / State / Zip	
Name of Contact Person	
Email address for Contract Person	
Telephone number for Contract Person	
Percent of Subcontract	
Description of services	
6-digit NAICS code for work to be performed	

Name of Non-Certified Firm	
Address/ City / State / Zip	
Name of Contact Person	
Email address for Contract Person	
Telephone number for Contract Person	
Percent of Subcontract	
Description of services	
6-digit NAICS code for work to be performed	

SECTION VI—GOOD FAITH EFFORTS CHECKLIST

If the M/WBE goal was not achieved, this good faith efforts checklist and supporting documents must be submitted with the bid. Failure to do so will render the bid non-responsive and cause it to be rejected. Additional efforts after bid submission will not be considered in determining award of this contract. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

___ Attended pre-bid or pre-proposal meetings scheduled by the County to acquaint Contractors with M/WBEs available to provide relevant goods and services and to inform M/WBEs of subcontracting opportunities.

___ Solicited through reasonable and available means (e.g., written notices, advertisements) M/WBEs certified in the anticipated scopes of subcontracting of the contract, within sufficient time to allow them to respond. **Attach detailed Contacts Log, including date, method of contact, person contacted and contact information, and the result of the contact.**

___ Provided timely and adequate information about the plans, specifications and requirements of the contract. Followed up initial solicitations to answer questions and encourage M/WBEs to submit bids or proposals. **Attach evidence of information provided, including the date, e.g., letters, emails, telephone logs, etc.**

___ Negotiated in good faith with interested M/WBEs that have submitted bids or proposals and thoroughly investigated their capabilities. Evidence of such negotiations includes the names, addresses and telephone numbers of M/WBEs with whom the vendor negotiated; a description of the information provided to M/WBEs regarding the work selected for subcontracting; and explanations as to why agreements could not be reached with M/WBEs to perform the work.

___ Selected those portions of the contract consistent with the available M/WBEs, including, where appropriate, breaking out contract work items into economically feasible units to facilitate M/WBE participation even when the proposer would prefer to perform those scopes with its own forces. **Provide description of work selected.**

___ Made efforts to assist interested M/WBEs in obtaining bonding, lines of credit, or insurance as required by the County or the vendor for performance of the contract (if applicable).

___ Made efforts to assist interested M/WBEs obtain necessary equipment, supplies, materials, or access to manufacturer's pricing, where appropriate.

___ Effectively used the services of M/WBE assistance groups; local, state, and federal minority or women business assistance offices; and other organizations to provide assistance in the recruitment and placement of M/WBEs.

****This is not an exhaustive list. For additional information, please reference Section IX of the Harris County M/WBE Program Administrative Manual located on the DEEO's website at: <https://deeo.harriscountytexas.gov/Vendor-Diversity>**