

Survey Responses: How St. Petersburg Stakeholders Define the Term “Economic Equity”

Results of Pre-Event Survey by Registrants for Economic Equity Policy Dialogue with Mayor Ken Welch, January 11, 2022



About the Dialogue

On January 11, Mayor Ken Welch will join practitioners in the field of economic equity - including housing, commercial, business, workforce, and economic development - for a dialogue on “Equitable Development” as one of the mayor’s top policy priorities.

Mayor Welch will introduce priorities for his administration, and - along with panelists and attendees - lend insights to defining the field of equitable economic development.

The event is co-hosted by The 2020 Plan/One Community, St. Petersburg Branch NAACP, the St. Petersburg Area Chamber, Grow Smarter, Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg, Tampa Bay Black Business Investment Corporation, the University of South Florida - St. Petersburg, the St. Petersburg / Pinellas Higher Education for Race Equity (SPHERE) Consortium, Pinellas County Urban League, Mt. Zion Progressive Missionary Baptist Church, Pinellas Opportunity Council, People Empowering & Restoring

Communities, the St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership, YIMBY St. Pete, Pinellas County Economic Development, St. Petersburg College, and the Innovation District.

Event Registrants & Responses

As of January 9, 151 people had registered to take part in the dialogue. Of those 96 registered via Survey Monkey (originally to attend in-person before the event changed format to Zoom only).

Attendees who registered via Survey Monkey were asked to answer two questions:

1. Does your organization have a working definition and shared internal understanding of the term economic equity? (88 answers)
2. If so, please share your definition of the term economic equity. (37 answers)

The following pages offer a snapshot of survey results.

Dialogue Participants by Sector

The audience for this economic equity policy dialogue is diverse, by sector.

5 Largest Groups

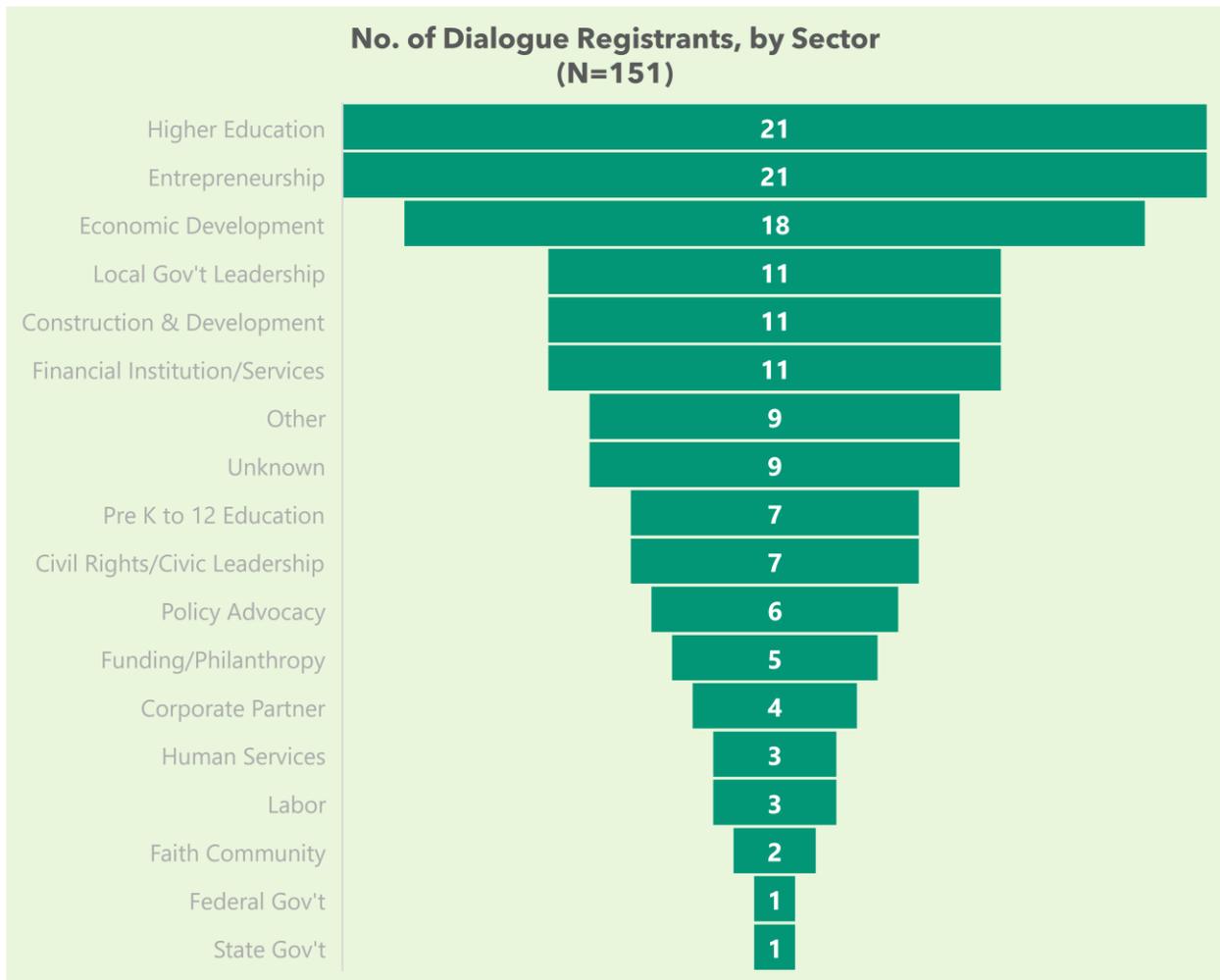
The top 5 largest groups registered to attend the session are:

1. Higher education (many with target sector workforce development programs)
2. Entrepreneurship (business owners)
3. Economic development practitioners
4. Local government leaders

5. Firms in construction & development (including architectural and engineering services)*

*Not duplicated among Entrepreneurs

Other sectors represented include the funder community, corporate partners to equity initiatives, the faith community, civil rights and civic engagement organizations, human services agencies (that also manage workforce development programs), educators in Pre-K through grade 12, labor unions, and financial institutions and financial services firms.



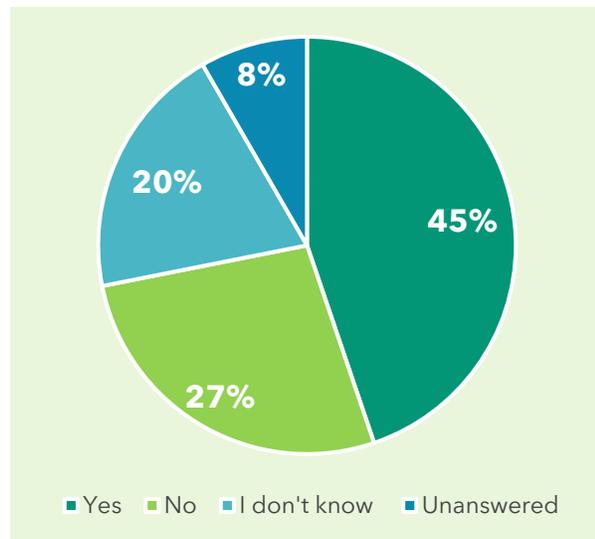
Organizations With & Without a Working, Shared Definition of “Economic Equity”

Survey Question 1:

Does your organization have a working definition and shared internal understanding of the term economic equity?

Answers:

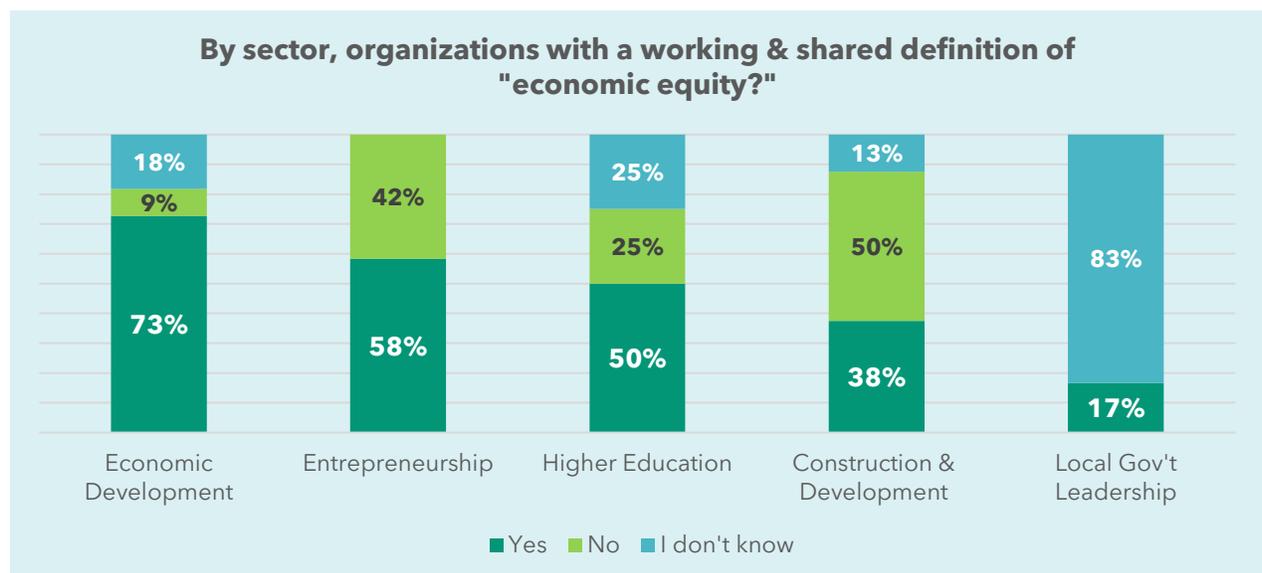
- Fewer than half said Yes (45%)
- A larger share said “No” or “I don’t know” (47%)



Interesting Insights & Indications:

- All 5 respondents who work in management with the City of St. Petersburg answered “I don’t know,” indicating an opportunity for Mayor Welch to cultivate widespread understanding among the City’s 3,200 employees, about his priorities for equity in development & business opportunities.
- Virtually all who said “No” or “I don’t know” work for organizations that have economic equity initiatives in operation or under development; this fact suggests that a) though more and more organizations are involved in closing race-based economic gaps, relatively few have created a working or shared understanding of the field within their organizations; and b) some respondents may use specialized and related terms such as educational equity.
- Among the 5 largest groups represented at the dialogue with Mayor Welch (by sector), economic development practitioners were most likely to have a working definition of economic equity (73%); local government leaders were the least likely to have a shared definition (17%).

By sector, organizations with a working & shared definition of “economic equity?”



How Local Stakeholders Define the Term Economic Equity

Survey Question 2:

Please share your definition of the term economic equity.

See next page for word-for-word responses.

Dominant Themes:

Three concepts dominated the definitions offered by respondents*:

- **Access to opportunities and resources** - Over three-fourths (76%) of responses included the words “access” and “opportunities.”
- **Fairness, in access to opportunity and economic outcomes** - Over half (54%) of responses used the terms fairness, fair, equal and equitable
- **Inclusion, including intentional inclusion of historically excluded groups and communities** - Just over one third (35%) of responses emphasized these themes

**Figures above combine the percentage of responses for the individual words or phrases indicated.*

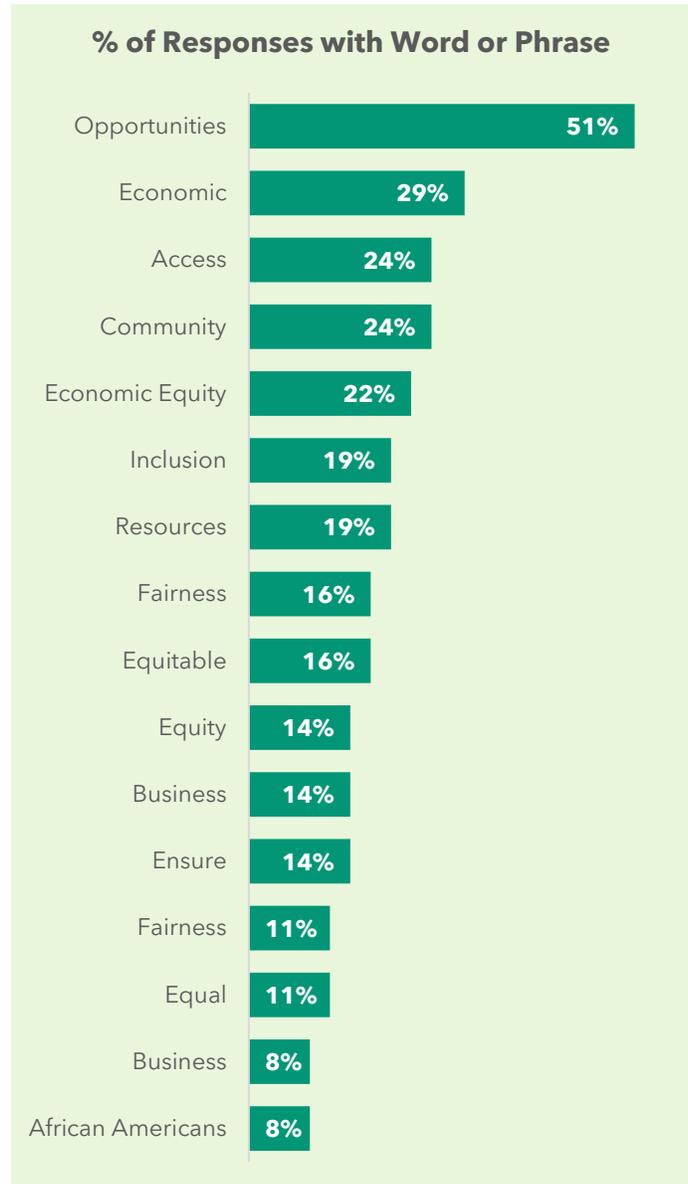
Alignment with New Mayor’s Agenda

Working definitions of economic equity align well with Mayor Welch’s priorities, including his focus on an “Opportunity Agenda,” as announced in his inaugural address on January 6.

Most Commonly-Used Words:

The top 5 most frequently used words or terms were:

1. Opportunity
2. Economic
3. Access
4. Community
5. Economic Equity



Definitions Offered by Respondents

Mayor Ken Welch is the first chief executive of the City of St. Petersburg to name **equitable development and business opportunities** as a “day one” priority.

At the city-level, equitable development is an inclusive approach to engaging diverse, often under-represented, people and groups in the traditional realm of economic development, in areas such as zoning, planning, real estate development, capital improvements, etc., while at the same time, **expanding the opportunity pathways** that include those

individuals in economic value chains **across systems** (e.g., workforce development and business development systems), and **investing across sectors to achieve inclusion** – in both high-growth sectors and in sectors that make St. Petersburg unique, such as harnessing the potential of the arts as an engine of economic growth.

Below are the definitions of economic equity offered by participants in the January 11 Economic Equity Dialogue with Mayor Welch.

Access to Opportunity & Resources

“Access to the process, a real chance to compete for business opportunities.”

“Fostering an equitable community where all business owners have access to the resources necessary to start, grow and thrive.”

“Access, opportunities, and resources are available to all and prioritized for those who have been denied or underserved historically.”

“The ability of all persons to utilize, for their benefit, present and future economic opportunities; based on merit and talent; taking into consideration and accounting for past discrimination; to ensure equal and fair entitlement to all pathways to economic advancement.”

“Fairness in economic opportunities, including opportunities for development and access to capital.” DOUBLE LISTED

“Economic equity would mean fair and impartial access to economic opportunities (as well as educational access).” DOUBLE LISTED

“Providing opportunities and resources for minority businesses to achieve success in the respected fields that are normally dominated by generational businesses.”

Fairness

“Fairness in the sharing of wealth and economic opportunities.”

“Economic equality and fairness for all.”

“The concept of fairness in economics, regarding but not limited to taxation or welfare economics.”

“Fairness in economic issues as it relates to income, welfare, and opportunities for inclusion, etc.”

“Fairness in economic opportunities, including opportunities for development and access to capital.” DOUBLE LISTED

“Economic equity would mean fair and impartial access to economic opportunities (as well as educational access).” DOUBLE LISTED

"Economic Justice."

"Economic Equity is the capability of practices and policies that allow for balancing the act of Equal Opportunities, across the table. This ensures those that are within a less than equitable experience/exposure/financial positional has opportunity of fair game."

"Every person has an equal opportunity to receive a good education which should lead to opportunities for good employment, investment, home ownership or stable housing, business creation, and a secure financial future for the family."

"Equity, or economic equality, is the concept or idea of fairness in economics, particularly in regard to taxation or welfare economics."

"The complete fair and transparent distribution of resources and assets in our community."

"We are committed to ensuring the Economic Equity of Hispanics and people of color. Hispanics have long been overlooked and invisible to the decision makers and service providers. The Hispanic community has traditionally not been included or had a voice; we were invisible. LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) Pinellas will promote the fairness, equity, and inclusion of our community by being their voice. We will work to fully integrate Economic Equity principles at all levels of governance, leadership, policies, programs, operations, and practices. We take actions to ensure that our community receives its fair share of resources."

"The art of creating an equitable and leveled playing field where all stakeholders (to include business owners, residents, etc.) have equal access to wealth building opportunities."

"The access to the same opportunities to decision makers and contracting opportunities that majority colleagues have daily."

More Broad-Based Prosperity

"The attempt or belief that diffuse economic benefits should have a broader reach and or impact than what is currently the case in the U.S. economy."

"Fairness with the distribution of wealth amongst all classes, races, and creeds, etc. With also a consideration to have the access and use of profitability as a homeowner, business owner, or person with sustainable financial health."

Inclusion (& Inclusion of Historically Excluded Groups)

"Intentional and Inclusive economic growth and development for minority populations."

"Inclusion."

"Economic equity is defined as inclusive opportunities for diverse individuals to receive fair and impartial profitable gains."

"Provide African Americans and others that the Pinellas County Urban League serve, the opportunity to be part of and the transfer of wealth to families and the community."

"Inclusion of essential resources for all in every area of life without prejudice or exclusion, for the empowerment and elevation of all, rising together as an equitable whole."

"Economic equity is a condition in which the resources, tax structures, and available assets associated with the economy of a community are considered to be balanced and allow all local minority businesses and residents to participate and experience economic gain."

"Equitable economic efforts including development or physical redevelopment "centers" racial equity and acknowledges the need to dismantle the historic injustices in communities. Equitable economic efforts create and design policies and practices that intentionally benefit and protect people who are BIPOC. This not only changes the usual approach to neighborhood investment, but it also changes the usual results."

Process Enforcement / Enforcement

"TOBA (Tampa Organization of Black Affairs) defines "Economic Equity" as fair and balanced hiring of African Americans (Blacks) and spending with Black owned businesses, among others. we believe this ideal is achievable when an organization(s) culture is committed through its institutional policies, procedures and practices. In addition, to better ensure success in this regard, organizations must enact heavily weighted goal oriented job performance evaluations of its leadership that is mandated, measurable, accountable and transparent and results in actual hiring of and spending with African Americans, among others to make diversity and inclusion (by race, gender, etc.) normal business. Organization leadership that fails to perform should face consequences that would affect them directly. Implementing this approach has been the most effective incentive always results in successful economic equity outcomes. While TOBA is laser focused on the special interest and inclusion of Blacks, we do so (not to exclude anyone) but instead to make sure that Blacks experience actual economic inclusion and shared prosperity toward the betterment of the entire communities in which we too live, work, play and pay taxes."

"Full and current enforcement of section 6 of the 1870 Federal Enforcement Act, as further supported and reinforced in SCOTUS 1968 ruling Jones v Mayer."

Other

"The absence of social disparities and ability of all residents to participate, prosper and reach their full potential."

"Focused on affordable housing for those earning 80% of AMI or less, reduce incarceration and school suspension."