



# TXI Research Summary



“To deliver the best solutions, we need positive, inclusive, diverse environments where we are able to learn from each other. We also know that to be seen for who you are—and to feel a sense of belonging—is a universal human need. We believe it is our responsibility to create a space where every team member can bring their authentic selves to work.”

—2021 TXI DEIB Vision Statement

# Overview

## Data Breakdown

To conduct this audit, we engaged with collecting, researching, and analyzing data across various areas. By the numbers, we engaged with:

- **42** Total Survey Responses
- **27** Cultural Artifact Documents
- **14** Research Interviews
- **5** Community Interviews
- **4** Meeting Shadows
- **14** Slack Channel Shadows

Based on this analysis, we conducted an overall assessment of the organization, which informed our strategic recommendations. We have summarized key themes by audit type in this document, and we created an overview of the assessment and recommendations that are more digestible.

## Survey Dashboards

- TXI CultureAmp Link
  - While this link is only available to registered users at TXI, we want to ensure that a report is generated from CultureAmp containing survey dashboards that can be shared with the company more broadly (if TXI decides to do so).
  - We did not generate this report on our own to ensure that nothing is shared preemptively from Ethos to the organization from within CultureAmp.

## Data Breakdown

- **42** Total Responses
- **100%** Completion Rate
  - Of the 42 respondents who answered the survey's questions, none skipped questions.
- **69%** Participation Rate
  - The industry average for employee engagement surveys is between 30-35%.
  - Ethos' average participation rate is between 80-85%. Because we did not reach that percentage we want to include these additional details about our survey:
    - Issued to 61 people at TXI.
    - The survey was open for 9 days (from 7/7 to 7/16).
    - TXI's last independently issued Engagement Survey was completed on January 19th, 2021.
      - This survey had 42 responses (the same as ours) but was issued to 45 people at TXI.

## Key Themes

### General

- **Enablement:** Employees responded positively when asked about their work, purpose, resources, and readiness for the future of TXI.
- **Evaluation, Feedback, and Growth:** Employees responded most negatively when asked about how they are evaluated, the feedback they receive, and the opportunities they have to grow within their role.
- **Clarity (Making the Implicit, Explicit):** Employees expressed the most uncertainty when asked about the specificity of their role, including how pay, responsibilities, and opportunities related to other employees at TXI.

## Strengths

- **Enablement**

- I know how my work contributes to the goals of TXI.
  - **91%** agree (43% strongly agree, 48% agree)
  - **0%** disagree
  - **7%** neither agree nor disagree
  - **2%** other
- I have access to the things I need to do my job well.
  - **91%** agree (36% strongly agree, 55% agree)
  - **0%** disagree
  - **9%** neither agree nor disagree.

- **Inclusion**

- TXI respects that everybody has a valid and useful perspective.
  - **91%** agree (55% strongly agree, 36% agree)
  - **2%** disagree (0% strongly agree, 2% disagree)
  - **7%** neither agree nor disagree

- **DEIB Readiness**

- **97%** of employees agreed that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is important to them personally
  - 64% strongly agree, 33% agree
  - 0% strongly disagree, 2% disagree
- **95%** of employees agreed that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is important to Leadership at TXI
  - 57% strongly agree, 38% agree
  - 2% disagree
  - 2% neither agree nor disagree
- **91%** of employees agreed that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are important to their peers at TXI.
  - 60% strongly agree, 31% agree
  - 5% neither agree nor disagree

- 5% other (both responses suggest a difference between peers)

## Areas to Improve

### ● Evaluation, Feedback, and Growth

- I receive clear, actionable feedback on how to improve in my job.
  - 45% agree (7% strongly agree, 38% agree)
  - 16% disagree (2% strongly disagree, 14% disagree)
  - 29% neither agree nor disagree
  - 10% other (most responses indicated being too new to have a perspective)
- My job performance is evaluated fairly.
  - 50% agree (17% strongly agree, 33% agree)
  - 7% disagree (0% strongly disagree, 7% disagree)
  - 31% neither agree nor disagree
  - 12% other (most responses indicated being too new to have a perspective)

### ● Clarity

- Informal power dynamics (i.e. seniority, social privilege, employment status) are defined, identified, and addressed.
  - This is the most disagreed with question among pooled data
  - 40% agree (2% strongly agree, 38% agree)
  - 23% disagree (5% strongly disagree, 17% disagree)
  - 33% neither agree nor disagree
  - 5% other
- Everyone at TXI knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization.

- **43%** agree (5% strongly agree, 38% agree)
  - **17%** disagree (5% strongly disagree, 12% disagree)
  - **36%** neither agree nor disagree
  - **5%** other
- I believe my total compensation (base salary+any bonuses+benefits+equity) is fair, relative to similar roles at other companies
    - **54%** agree (14% strongly agree, 40% agree)
    - **16%** disagree (2% strongly disagree, 14% disagree)
    - **24%** neither agree nor disagree
    - **5%** other
      - Both responses mentioned an awareness of accepting a lower salary for the sake of work culture

### DEIB: All Response Data

- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are important to me personally.
  - **97%** agree (64% strongly agree, 33% agree)
  - **2%** disagree
- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are important to my peers.
  - **91%** agree (60% strongly agree, 31% agree)
  - **0%** disagree
  - **5%** neither agree nor disagree
  - **5%** other
- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging is a priority for Leadership at TXI.
  - **95%** agree (57% strongly agree, 38% agree)
  - **2%** disagree (0% strongly disagree, 2% disagree)
  - **2%** neither agree nor disagree
- TXI hires people from diverse backgrounds.

- **83%** agree (33% strongly agree, 50% agree)
- **2%** disagree (0% strongly disagree, 2% disagree)
- **5%** neither agree nor disagree
- **10%** other (most responses said this is an area of improvement)

## DEIB Free Responses

- What are the biggest opportunities at TXI in diversity, equity, and inclusion?
  - *Free response mentions:*
    - **8/23 (35%)** Diversity in Leadership
    - **4/23 (17%)** Engage in Local/Global Communities
    - **3/23 (13%)** Global Employees
- What, if any, implicit things at TXI would you like made explicit (i.e. policies, procedures, access to information, etc.)?
  - *Free response mentions:*
    - **7/20 (35%)** Growth/Advancement
    - **4/20 (20%)** Leadership' Priorities
    - **3/20 (15%)** Hiring Pipeline
    - **3/20 (15%)** Logistics (time tracking/how projects are assigned/when to use company funds).
- Is there something else you would like to share that would improve TXI culture? (10 of 15 responses below)
  - "I see us trying in many areas, especially around transparency and fighting a sense of urgency. We are improving; yet, in stressful situations, can sometimes fall back into more negative patterns. I want to encourage us to keep trying and improving, although we aren't quite there yet."
  - "As the pandemic slows there's increasing chatter about Chicago—which is understandable and great—but also makes

non-Chicagoans feel outside of the 'core group.' That's not always true, but it's a trending theme that would be good to curb. Perhaps have a separate Chicago-focused Slack channel for some of the bonding and things that should happen for them but not leaving the rest of us out?"

- "I've had severe imposter syndrome since I started, and while it has lessened as the weeks pass, I still feel anxious about it. I've spoken to several TXIers at different levels who have all shared that they too had imposter syndrome when they started here, some stating it lasted up to a year. I know that this is not TXI's fault by any means, however, I wonder if there is a way to address or dispel some of the fears (maybe even baggage from previous toxic environments) that come with starting a new job at what most of us consider an amazing company. This is more of a question to you all vs a complaint on TXI."
- "I would like to see the company become active in changing the communities we live in. We currently are very inward-focused."
- "The cohesion of our client work to what our company strives to become a more diverse, equitable, inclusive company sometimes misses a leap. Perhaps with due time, I can understand the connection more. But for now, it's 'do lots of client work, and chisel off a bit of time per week to do better.'"
- "The only reason I've put agree here a couple of times is that there have been a couple of occasions where it's felt like a conversation that was being asked for was swept aside without allowing room for it to happen; the discussion about whether or not we should have an office with WeWork being an example. I don't believe that this was a deliberate tactic, but I do think it might be a blind spot worth exploring."

- “We are a very progressive organization that has gone sharply left-leaning over the last couple of years where people who are more middle-of-the-road might not be as comfortable sharing their viewpoints. Several people are consistently loud in expressing their political or values (generally very left-leaning) that can drown out others or make others not want to engage.”
- “TXI is a wonderful organization that's also experiencing growing pains as it transforms into the next level. I think we have a ‘buddy’ problem in that people with the most influence and power often get the benefit of the doubt by virtue of proximity to leadership. It feels much harder for people outside that circle to get the same opportunities to grow, including leveling up. I don't think this is necessarily intentional, but the effects cause a lot of ripples. I'm also concerned about what I perceive as a potentially different set of rules for demand/leadership. For example, we recently hired 2 Directors—a title (level?) that isn't documented or advertised anywhere in our rubric. We also seem to generously grant the level of principal to people interviewing for Demand or referred by Leadership and appear to have much more rigorous checks for existing teammates. I find it disheartening that among our principal level colleagues, almost all are white males, including the last 2 hires. No females at the principal level were hired at all in 2021.”
- “I think that TXI could be a lot more transparent about people's levels and compensation. We have already made strides toward that with the first DEIB report. However, I noticed there was not a lot of promotion or discussion about it. That makes me think not many people have looked at the data at the appropriate level of depth, and I wonder if that was intentional in order to keep salary information difficult to find. When I was first hired, for the first 6

months I didn't actually know what my level was or why I was placed there. That information would've been really helpful to how I navigate my professional growth. To be totally honest, I also felt like I was constantly being underestimated in my first year regarding my capabilities, and sometimes it felt condescending (even though I know that wasn't the intent). I think that points to a general idea I've been picking up where associates and consultants are generally placed in a 'junior' level and seniors and principles generally placed in an 'experienced' level, and that juniors need to learn from experienced people. That feels inaccurate to me because I think learning can happen at all levels from anyone. I myself and constantly educating people who are above my level and salary band. I think we need to build in more explicit processes and opportunities for people to grow."

- "We need to learn how to handle conflict and disagreement more. I don't think we do it enough, or well, for that matter."

### Findings By Social Identity Type

- Young people (between 25-34) are more likely to disagree with the statement: "I believe my total compensation (base salary + any bonuses + benefits + equity) is fair, relative to similar roles at other companies."
  - **53%** agree (15% strongly agree, 38% agree)
  - **31%** disagree (8% strongly disagree, 23% disagree)
  - **8%** neither agree nor disagree
  - **8%** other
- Women were more likely to neither agree nor disagree with the statement: "My job performance is evaluated fairly."

- **29%** agree (0% strongly agree, 29 % agree)
  - **6%** disagree (0% strongly disagree, 6% disagree)
  - **59%** neither agree nor disagree
  - **6%** other
- Women were less likely to agree with the statement, “I receive clear, actionable feedback on how to improve in my job.”
    - **29%** agree (0% strongly agree, 29 % agree)
    - **29%** disagree (0% strongly disagree, 29% disagree)
    - **41%** neither agree nor disagree
    - **0%** other
- Women were more likely to neither agree nor disagree with the statement: “Everyone at TXI knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization.”
    - **35%** agree (6% strongly agree, 29% agree)
    - **6%** disagree (0% strongly disagree, 6% disagree)
    - **59%** neither agree nor disagree
    - **0%** other
- While there were no significant trends related to racial identity in the data, White employees were 9+% more likely to agree with, “I feel like I belong at TXI.”
    - **46%** strongly agree
    - **46%** agree
    - **8%** neither agree nor disagree

### White Supremacy Audit

We included nine questions in our survey that correlated to The Centre for Community Organization’s tenets of [White Supremacy Culture in Organizations](#).

Across our survey, these three questions (related to “Power Hoarding” and “Paternalism”) were among the most disagreed with:

- **Power Hoarding:** Informal power dynamics (i.e. seniority, social privilege, employment status) are defined, identified, and addressed. *This is the most disagreed with question among pooled data.*
  - **40%** agree (2% strongly agree, 38% agree)
  - **23%** disagree (5% strongly disagree, 17% disagree)
  - **33%** neither agree nor disagree
  - **5%** other
- **Paternalism:** Everyone at TXI knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization.
  - **43%** agree (5% strongly agree, 38% agree)
  - **17%** disagree (5% strongly disagree, 12% disagree)
  - **36%** neither agree nor disagree
  - **5%** other
- **Paternalism:** Decision-making is a shared process that takes place amongst all employees.
  - **50%** agree (12% strongly agree, 38% agree)
  - **10%** disagree (0% strongly disagree, 10% disagree)
  - **29%** neither agree nor disagree
  - **14%** other (this question may have been phrased in a way that is confusing to some - answers pondered the necessity of “all employees” being involved in decision-making).

There were no statistically relevant trends related to the remaining six questions below:

- **Worship of the Written Word:** Employees are given the time to read important documents, and also to engage with and ask questions about them.

- **Quantity Over Quality:** TXI values processes as much as final products.
- **Fear of Open Conflict:** Leaders at TXI make space for emotions and think expansively about how problems are flagged in the organization.
- **Objectivity:** TXI respects that everybody has a valid and useful perspective. (This was a strength!)
- **Only One Right Way:** TXI accepts that there are many ways to get to the same goal and are open to alternative routes.
- **Perfectionism:** Mistakes are not seen as personal or do not reflect badly on the person making them.

## Research Interviews

### Data Breakdown

In total, we conducted **14** employee interviews and 5 community interviews

### Key Themes

We identified several themes that emerged across interviews. The excerpts below were selected if they appeared three or more times across different interviews.

#### General (Neutral)

- **Roles and Responsibilities**
  - Between our research interviews and survey results employees expressed uncertainty about the scope of roles and responsibilities at TXI.
  - **36%** of research interviewees brought up TXI's transition from a "flat organization" when asked about the culture.
    - This was most often discussed in relation to current changes towards a management structure.

- **Investment in Growth**

- **42%** of interviewees mentioned employee career growth when asked about opportunities for improvement in DEIB at TXI.
  - This was most often discussed as finding ways to give employees feedback, career pathing advice, and lateral growth opportunities.
  - Employees who mentioned “growth” were also likely to mention wanting more clarity on how projects are assigned.
    - **36%** of interviewees mentioned project assignments
    - All of these interviewees mentioned that they did not know how employees were paired with specific clients.

- **Capacity to Invest in DEIB**

- **36%** of interviewees said that their billable hours were often an obstacle to investing in DEIB because they had to prioritize their client work and monitor their time on other work more closely. This was the most common answer in our Research Interviews when we asked employees to rate their “readiness to invest in diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

## Strengths

- **Support**

- **86%** of interviewees used the word “supportive” when asked to describe culture at TXI. This was always used positively and interviewees were likely to share specific experiences of receiving support when they asked for it.
  - These interviewees often explained that an employee may even be over-accommodated if they voice a need or struggle.
  - Half of these interviewees worried whether an employee would receive the support they need if they didn’t ask for it explicitly.

- **Social Wellness**

- **78%** of interviewees spoke about a social culture at TXI of people bringing their whole selves to work. These interviewees said that opinions and personal interests are often shared and valued.
  - **50%** of interviewees mentioned that pre-COVID in-office activities and interactions were a pillar of TXI culture.
- **Work/Life Balance**
  - **64%** of interviewees used the word “Balance” in a positive way when describing working culture at TXI.
    - Interviewees made it clear that while their work schedules might be more strenuous at times than they would like, their home lives have been consistently respected.

## Areas for Improvement

- **Racial Diversity at the Board and Leadership Levels**
  - **64%** (the highest trend) of research interviewees mentioned increasing diversity at the leadership level as an opportunity for progress in DEIB at TXI.
  - **57%** of interviewees mentioned the size of the organization (and the time it takes for change at the leadership level) as the largest obstacle to increasing racial diversity at TXI.
- **Problem and Conflict Resolution**
  - Across our research, TXIers expressed that leaders are eager to help with problem resolution. While this was generally mentioned as a positive, **three** interviewees used the word “swarm” when asked how the company responds “when things go wrong.”
    - Employees felt that sometimes problems and issues may require more time to ask questions and digest information before taking action.
  - Including different personality styles.

- **50%** of interviewees referenced personality styles when asked “what kind of people succeed at TXI?”
  - Interviewees most commonly mentioned being outspoken, eager to contribute, and generally extroverted as rewarded traits at TXI.
- **Capacity**
  - Interviewees expressed that their desire to be involved in DEIB and extracurricular activities exceeded their capacity to do so. This was the most common answer in our research interviews when we asked employees to rate their “readiness to invest in diversity, equity, and inclusion.”
    - **36%** of employees referenced their billable hours capacity as the primary reason they are not more invested in DEIB.

## Excerpts

These excerpts were chosen based on representing a large group of similar responses from different interview subjects.

## Support

- When we asked employees to describe the culture, or why people stay with TXI:
  - “It’s a really supportive place. It is a place that I’ve been very fortunate to feel supported.”
  - “We care more about our employees and TXI than we do our clients, but we respect our clients. Ultimately we look out for our employees more than not.”
  - “It’s been wonderful to be constantly challenged but supported in those challenges.”
  - “People know they can get help. If they need to check out, they can check out for a while.”
  - “If eventually you get bored with a thing, which is very natural in our world, you can just do something different. And the company, I think,

does a good job of supporting that and facilitating that at the right times to keep people engaged and interested.”

### Racial Diversity at the Board and Leadership Levels

- “I’d like to see better representation of women and minorities in leadership roles in our organization. I would like to see some equity in hiring. We often bring people in at a super high level, but once you’re in, in the organization, it’s incredibly, incredibly difficult to like work your way up the ladder. I’d like to see some normalization about what that path looks like.”
- “The leadership team is all White and I think the owners are or mostly white. So I think diversifying the leadership and the ownership as well as a significant effort in leveling.”
- “I would hope that the composition of our team members would begin to shift from the majority that it is today to something that feels much more representative of the kind of place that we talk about wanting to have; that we actually begin to look that way. I hope that the leadership is less white and male and that it is more intersectional.”
- “It feels unusual that we can hire two or three principals in a given year, but in the last 48 months only one person made principal, and it was a man.”

### Problem and Conflict Resolution

- “[In response to COVID,] we just tried a whole smattering of things and it comes from a good place of caring, but it’s actually just a little overwhelming and scattershot. It wasn’t the most thoughtful. I think that’s fairly emblematic of the way TXI deals with things.”
- “I think sometimes the leadership will tend to swarm.”  
“We might do better by staying in our position a little bit more and letting the people in another position go solve an issue.”

- “Leadership often makes judgments about whether or not things went wrong without actually talking to people. And so, there's a shadow fight you may have with leadership that you don't even know is happening, and only find out later whether they thought something went wrong and who they thought might've been at fault.”
- “Although we are working on being more deliberate in some of our changes, the pace of change here is still fast and expedient. Fast can often outweigh thinking broader. So, hey, could we step back and have a moment to include more voices in this?”

### Inclusion

- “There's often a few voices that come very strong and then their points of view drown out the rest. And so if you're not part of that viewpoint, or you're not comfortable speaking up, it's easy for you to probably check out or just kind of go quiet and do your own thing. So, I do think we have to I think we have to help...I don't think we do as good of a job trying to suss that out; I don't even think we do try.”
- “If you are a Trump supporter, if you're a hardcore Christian, if you're religious, you're not going to fit in in this organization. And is that okay? It started to become where I think even people that tend to be more conservative are starting to feel like they don't fit into this organization. And I don't know how to have that dialogue, but I'd be really curious to figure out: can we have a perspective on that?”
- When we asked, “What kind of people succeed at TXI?”
  - “People who can actually reach out and talk to people and be willing to think of different approaches and different ways of doing things will do quite well here.”
  - “Self-motivated and to some degree be able to advocate for yourself.”

- "I think it is true that people have to deal with a high level of ambiguity."
- "We've always probably been in somewhat of a state of flux."
- "I think the ambiguity is somewhat stressful for everybody. It's just that some people are able to metabolize stress in a more productive way than others."

## Capacity

- "My personal desire (to invest in DEIB) is probably like a 9 out of 10, but with my workload, it's probably at like a 3 out of 10."
- "Desire to (invest in DEIB) is very, very high. The bandwidth that we're given to manage our billable expectations and participate in a meaningful way is often very hard to reconcile."
- "It's a consulting company and like, what can you do with five hours extra a week? We have 35 client hours. So you can either take lunch and log off at a reasonable hour or you can get involved in all these working groups and then not have time for other things. Or, you can really focus on doing extra for your team, but you can't do all of them. If you do, you'll make yourself go a little mad."
- "As an organization, I think that everyone is at almost a five out of five in wanting to consume and learn and improve, but in terms of investing their time and making more of a push effort forward, I would put them at a three out of five."

## Cultural Interviews

We conducted **5** interviews with members of the TXI community.

This section contains quotes from those community members that trended across multiple interviews.

## Strengths

- **Inclusivity**

- "I would describe it as incredibly inclusive, incredibly open. There are lots of voices at the table in our meetings and in our discussions."
- "It's a very inclusive culture—very respectful of one another. You don't get a sense of a real strong hierarchy, but rather individual experts who collaborate very well."
- "A company that wants to educate and help all those around them."
- "They are very, very open to listening - very open to one another's ideas and the ideas of our team as well."
- "Diversity and inclusion are on the forefront from what I see as part of their brain and their culture."
- "There seems to be a high level of just empathy within the team."
- "There is a very open and transparent sort of dialogue. The ability to share where things could go, how folks are feeling, what things we think could be improved upon, and that kind of thing."
- "There's a culture of nurturing, um, professional development."

- **Alignment**

- "They're all on the same page with who they are as a brand and the goal of where they want to go as a company."
- "They have people that are kind of aligned to what they're trying to get accomplished."
- "Working at TXI, there must be a lot of communication between the leadership and just the everyday team members, because they are all in sync with who they are, who they want to be and where the company is going as a whole."

## Areas to Improve

- **Homogenous**

- "They have a very White leadership team."

- “A lot of the folks that have been there a long time are White cisgender and male.”
- “It’s an interesting dichotomy of where do I belong inside of the company as opposed to where do I belong inside of the community as a whole.”
- “There is so much like-mindedness and the folks that I’ve met in TXI it feels almost like they’re matching for personality rather than necessarily a culture add. So, it’s a ‘culture match’ versus ‘culture add’ sort of component.”
- **Problem Resolution**
  - “I know that there is occasionally frustration and being able to come to a common decision because you’ve got a lot of different voices to the next, and sometimes it’s hard to get them all to align on things.”
  - “I think there are some pain points and struggles to hit around like individual development and how that’s done and how does one grow in their capacity relative to the full industry rather than inside of the company.”
  - “They’ve been working really hard at rebranding who they are and sometimes when you try to make too many changes at once or tackle too many initiatives within a company that can hinder growth and direction.”

## Cultural Artifacts

### Data Breakdown

In total, we reviewed **18** internal documents and **9** external resources. These included:

Internal:

- TXI Employee Handbook (Updated and effective December 11, 2019)

- TXI Employee Handbook Research (Generated by Ethos with collaboration comments from TXI)
- 2021 Delivery Hiring Plan
- TXI's 2021 Benefits Overview
- Compensation Data - Benchmarks
- Current Client List
- DEIB Vendor List
- Structured Coaching Program Details
- Structured Coaching Program Guide & Research Synthesis
- TXI Apprenticeship Program 2021
- TXI Values Decoded
- The TXI Experience: Our Balance
- TXI Vision/Traction Organizer
- TXI Engagement - January 2021 Insights
- TXI Engagement Survey - January 2021 - All Results
- TXI Levels Fall 2019
- 8th Light Career Grid
- Sticky Note Game

#### External:

- TXI website
- Podcast - Meetings Done Right - Episode 12: "How to Create a Safe Space for Conflict and Feedback"
- Podcast - Tech Done Right - Episode 71: "Supporting Innovation with Mike Todasco"
- TXI online job descriptions
- TXI DEIB web page
- TXI DEIB Vision Statement
- TXI DEIB 2021 Roadmap
- TXI Annual Diversity Report
- TXI DEIB History

## General (Neutral)

- **Organized Business Strategy**
  - **Vision/Traction Organizer**
    - The organization uses a clear and organized system for Vision (including “Who we are, why we do it, & where we’re going”; Core Values, Core Focus, 3 Year Vision, Target Market Strategy, Capabilities, Service Offerings, and Priorities) and Traction (including “How we get there”; the 2021 Plan and Quarterly Goals).
  - **Detailed Levels Architecture**
    - The organization has a detailed Levels Architecture that includes 4 levels of skill (Associate, Consultant, Senior, and Principal) for competencies “Across all Practices,” in addition to within silos (“Project Strategists,” “Product Designers,” and “Developers”). It’s unclear to what extent the Levels are adhered to and used as a developmental tool.
    - **We suggest revisiting the Levels architecture and making any needed adjustments; adhering to the Levels in making hires and promotions, and using the Levels architecture actively as an assessment and developmental tool.**
- **Experimental People Development Programs**
  - **Structured Coaching Program**
    - The organization maintains a structured coaching program for “TXIers who are struggling with success on their delivery work” (Structured Coaching Program Details, p. 1). This could be very positive and supportive of DEIB or it may create vulnerabilities for bias since the document cites subjective factors in connection with the program
      - “It may seem like there are still a lot of individual details and judgment involved in this. That’s true. I’m not sure how to completely remove that when it comes to the

creative, custom work that each of us does every day. If we were building widgets, I'd just set a number of widgets to be completed to X specification each week. But given the nature of our work, I don't have the ability to pre-set exact criteria for when people begin and complete this process" (Structured Coaching Program Details, p. 2).

- Further, the "DEIB Resources" in the "Look out for potential bias" section of the "Tips for Coaches" (Structured Coaching Program Guide & Research Synthesis, p. 1) lists 3 links to individual employees' grievances, rather than foundational knowledge in DEIB.
  - **We recommend incorporating a more balanced and thorough foundation of DEIB resources for coaches (such as ensuring they are familiar with "White Supremacy Culture in Organizations") or engaging coaches with the existing DEIB training and orientation TXI already offers.**
- **Apprenticeship Program (Pilot/Proposal)**
    - TXI has run two apprenticeship programs in the last five years and appears to be weighing whether to continue such programs. In the proposal, the source of the apprentices is not disclosed (either planned or historical). However, the Goals section states, "We're able to hire people who would likely otherwise not make it through our process . . . We have a wider range of people to choose from and thus more opportunity to increase our diversity," while also stating, "We have to be very thoughtful about this, and not assume hires from underrepresented groups are going to be less skilled, among other considerations" (TXI Apprenticeship Program 2021

- **Balanced and Considered Approach to all Stakeholders**

- In the “TXI Experience” deck, the organization’s four primary user groups are identified (employees, clients, owners, and community), along with Guiding Statements on numerous categories of experience, listing “Benefits” and “Expectations” for each.
- For example, for the employee user group, there is a category of “Culture of Feedback” with a Benefit of: “You will get actionable, timely, constructive, well-delivered feedback during your time at TXI,” and an Expectation of: “You provide, seek out, and receive feedback with an open mind, courage, and patience.” This degree of thoroughness, thoughtfulness, clarity, and expectations setting (both on what you can expect from others and will be expected to give to others) conveys a strong cultural message of balance and consideration.
- **We recommend ensuring all employee touchpoints are audited and unified for clarity and cohesion, including performance and promotion evaluation procedures/documents.**

## Strengths

- **Innovation**

- The organization actively evolves, tries new approaches, and collaborates on better solutions. For example, TXI’s values don’t stand on their own for vague interpretation—the organization developed a “Values Decoded” document that bullets examples of what to “Rarely practice” and, conversely, “Practices most of the time.” Further, the organization develops novel and engaging tools for professional development that can appeal to individuals with varied learning styles, such as the “Meetings Done Right” podcast and “Sticky Note Game.”

## ■ Levels

- As noted above, the organization has a detailed Levels Architecture that includes 4 levels of skill (Associate, Consultant, Senior, and Principal) for competencies “Across all Practices,” in addition to within silos (“Project Strategists,” “Product Designers,” and “Developers”). TXI employs a system that appears to be a modification of the 8th Light [Career Grid](#). Within a role, an employee can be rated at different “levels” for a variety of competencies, which both recognize the value employees contribute in specific ways and also enables employees to easily identify self-development opportunities.
- **Generally High Levels of Clarity, Transparency, and Cohesion**
  - The organization’s job descriptions are compelling, exciting, philosophical, and pragmatic. Clear expectations are set, success in the role is clearly defined, and milestones are outlined (for 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years). The job descriptions are aligned to the organization’s values documents and send clear cultural messages. For example, a job description for the “Delivery Lead (Agile Project Manager)” states in the “Here’s what we expect from you” section: “You think holistically about project needs. You help solve problems and drive project success, including making hard decisions and trade-offs. You foresee risks and mitigate them calmly.” This both conveys cultural information and sets expectations for culturally appropriate behavior. While there are areas of the company’s Cultural Artifacts that seem uncoordinated (such as the Coaching Program documents), it appears that most of the organization’s important employee touchpoints are culturally symbiotic and aligned. **We suggest auditing all employee touchpoints and revising documents and systems that aren’t strongly reinforcing the company’s culture.**

- The Sexual Harassment Policy is set forth clearly in the Employee Handbook (pp. 3-4), with examples, and with clear reporting procedures (which include alternative reporting paths, providing choice in how a violation is reported). The primary option of reporting directly to the CEO for both this policy and the Discriminatory Harassment sends a strong message of seriousness that the policies are not merely boilerplate and that handling violation of these policies is of the highest priority.
- The Workplace Violence and Threats of the Employee Handbook (pp. 5-6) section explicitly states, “[workplace violence] also includes any such acts or threats that are later claimed to have been made in jest.” This is a good standard to include in this section and also may send a (positive) message that “joking” violations of other policies also will not be tolerated (for example, in connection with discriminatory “jokes”).
- The Social Media Policy in the Employee Handbook (p. 19) is detailed and clear, which means employees understand what they can and cannot post, leading to higher levels of self-regulation and accountability. This section also details the “why” behind TXI’s Social Media Policy and gives employees a sense of connection to the success of the organization. **We recommend including a statement on anti-racism and/or anti-discrimination as it exists on social media. For example, how would TXI handle an employee publicly sharing statements or jokes about social identity on their social media?**
- **Employee Consideration/Orientation**
  - The Employee Handbook (pp. i, 1) includes positive/preemptive acknowledgment of legalese in the document and frames it in a positive light. The language feels genuine and affirming.

- The company sets forth a very intentionally constructed and humanistic “Philosophy in Dealing with Our Employees” in the Employee Handbook (p. 2), which tends to send a positive message of organized people management, ethical leadership, and care. **We recommend putting this policy before the policy, “Philosophy in Dealing with Our Clients.”**
  
- The company conducts regular performance reviews and provides more regular feedback during the Introductory Period (per Employee Handbook pp. 15-16). The CEXO provides feedback, enabling consistency of input and moderation between people managers and employees (which can provide an exceptional opportunity for DEIB infusion at critical points in the people management process). Further, employees have access to biweekly career mentor meetings. **We are aware TXI no longer has a “CEXO” position. Who is currently assuming this position? The new process should be outlined in the new handbook. We are also aware that TXI is transitioning to a different Management structure. We recommend outlining any new processes for performance reviews and employee feedback (and where an employee can go for clarity on these processes).**
  
- **Generous/Flexible Policies**
  - The company allows for three types of remote work (as provided in Employee Handbook pp. 23-24). Offering multiple options for remote work is an equitable practice so that employees with different social and personal identities have the flexibility they need to thrive. Some identities that are likely to benefit from varying work-from-home arrangements are those who identify as caregivers, neurodiverse, having a disability, or some socio-economic statuses (considering factors like commute, home location).
    - **We suggest considering an expansion of explicit policies (and making them also available during the recruiting process) to**

attract and retain employees with diverse needs (such as caregiving).

- Further, for each type of remote work, clarify: (a) who qualifies; (b) who approves; and (c) what happens if an employee has greater needs than outlined?
  - Finally, we suggest the new employee handbook clarifies COVID-period telecommuting and work-from-home policies and procedures (including transitions back to office).
- Employees are awarded sick leave on the first day of employment (per Employee Handbook p. 31); it may be used for a number of purposes, including domestic violence. This is especially generous as all states do not require it. **We suggest providing paid leave for employees affected by domestic violence.**

### Areas for Improvement

- **Clearer Policy and Communication Regarding Employee Protections and Benefits**
  - In the “Equal Employment Opportunity, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Harassment” section of the Employee Handbook (pp. 3-5), the “Discriminatory Harassment” section is less detailed than other portions of this policy. **We suggest expanding this section with specific details around Anti-Racist and Anti-Ableist policy.**
    - While this section provides clear policies around the legal language of a “Protected Characteristic,” TXI can be clearer about its perspective on issues facing different social identity categories.
    - Consider writing a cultural statement akin to those foregrounded in the document. Here are a few possibilities:
      - This is the Vision Statement from TXI’s DEIB Roadmap: “To deliver the best solutions, we need positive, inclusive, diverse environments where we are able to learn from each other. We also know that to be seen

for who you are—and to feel a sense of belonging—is a universal human need. We believe it is our responsibility to create a space where every team member can bring their authentic selves to work.”

- You can include a statement like the one above, but we also suggest including anti-racist and disability justice statements in this section. These statements should make it clear that TXI recognizes the disproportionate issues facing these communities and that the organization is committed to advocating for change.
  - This statement is on the TXI website:  
“We invite you to join us in challenging ourselves to actively live our anti-racist ideals, while listening, supporting, and standing in solidarity with our Black colleagues, clients, family, friends, and neighbors.”
- An expanded anti-racism statement for the employee handbook would answer these questions:
    - How does TXI define anti-racism? Is there a definition you prefer?
    - What does TXI do to not only discipline racism and discrimination, but actively advocate for the value of BIPOC employees?
    - [This Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination statement](#) is another great example.
  - The Employee Handbook (p. 6) does not clearly define what constitutes a “Conflict of Interest.” **We recommend very clear guidance on both the definitions for Conflict of Interest and procedures for disclosing and clearing potential conflicts of interest. The impacts of Conflicts of Interest can tend to favor the Dominant Group (for example, by way of contracts awarded through nepotism).**

- Under the current Employee Assistance policy (Employee Handbook, p. 10), employees are encouraged to contact the CEO to be referred to professional assistance at the employee's expense. Continued employment isn't guaranteed. Employees may not feel comfortable reaching out to their CEO for employee assistance programs (EAPs). **We recommend a more discrete and accessible procedure for seeking information about EAPs.**
  
- When referencing Offsite activities, the Employee Handbook (p. 15) states, "We may . . . ask you to make yourself available outside of regular business hours for business-related events or social events sponsored by TXI. We understand that this may present challenges to some employees."
  - **We recommend narrowing the scope of the challenges employees are expected to assume and/or including information on what employees can do in the event of such challenges.**
  - **For example, would the company reimburse for childcare? Under what circumstances? Does this need to be pre-approved?**
  
- In the "Standards of Conduct" section of the Employee Handbook (p. 26) "Insubordination" can be read as a vague, catch-all disciplinary category that can buttress dysfunctional power and be used as cover for biased or discriminatory disciplinary actions. Further, note these items are listed in the "Standards of Conduct" section alongside illegal and abusive behavior and seem awkwardly placed. In reality, virtually everyone can be deemed "guilty" to some degree of these failures, which also tends to de-stigmatize the less universal violations in this section.
  - **We recommend moving the line items "Insubordination or refusal to accept work assignments" and "Failure to complete work assignments, incompetence, or poor**

**performance of work assignments” to a general performance section within the Employee Handbook (for example, under “Performance Reviews/Compensation Reviews” in a section on general Performance Standards).**

- Further, TXI is transitioning its management structure and might be especially considerate of words related to power relations. **To avoid the sense of a catch-all disciplinary category, we recommend replacing the word “insubordination” with clarity on what an employee can do if they have an issue with a manager or another employee who assigns their work. Then, outline the escalation process for performance issues and breaches of the Standards of Conduct, in general.**

- Structurally, in the Employee Handbook (p. 27), the section “Disciplinary Action” defines this term and should thus come before any section in the handbook that uses it. The term “disciplinary action” is used eight times in this document before it is defined in this section. **We suggest either including a Table of Defined Terms, a glossary, or a global review of the Employee Handbook to ensure terms are defined before use, to increase accessibility and comprehension.**

- **Enhanced Work Day Policies**

- “Lactation Accommodation,” in the Employee Handbook (p. 5), provides: “If possible, the [lactation] break time should run concurrently with the employee’s break time that is already provided.” Nursing mothers often require three or more breaks per day to pump. If someone is lactating and unable to pump out excess milk, they become at high risk for Mastitis.

- **We recommend a more explicitly flexible Lactation Policy, as milk production and frequency vary by mother and by the feeding stage of the infant (and the number of nursing children).**
  - **We further recommend that this policy also outline that a private space will be provided for lactation and will contain necessary equipment; for example, breast pumps often require electrical outlets, a surface to place equipment on, as well as a place to sanitize parts.**
- Currently, “Performance Reviews/Compensation Reviews” is placed at the end of the “Day to Day Matters” section of the Employee Handbook (pp. 15-16).
  - **We recommend moving “Performance Reviews/Compensation Reviews” higher in this section, preferably before “Expense Reimbursement/Travel Expenses,” since all employees should read about their performance and compensation review process (whereas information about corporate credit cards and travel reimbursement are more contextually relevant).**
- The “Performance Reviews/Compensation Reviews” section of the Employee Handbook (pp. 15-16) briefly describes performance feedback processes. **We recommend a more in-depth description of performance reviews, with links to the performance review documentation, so employees have a clear sense of the objective measures by which they will be evaluated, have equitable access to resources, and know the steps (if any) TXI takes to improve pay equity.**
- Regarding the company’s “Attire/Appearance” standards, the Employee Handbook (p. 17) tells employees to “use common sense in selecting attire for the workday.” **We recommend avoiding**

**phrases like “common sense,” which are culturally variable (especially for remote and international employees), in favor of more specific language.**

- The organization’s Open Door Policy (Employee Handbook, p. 26) states, “We strive to provide a work environment that is free of conflict or disagreements.” **We recommend TXI consider replacing this with standards for constructive disagreement, which can be more realistic and supportive of both innovation and social justice.**
- The company’s Search Policy (Employee Handbook, p. 10) states “an employee who refuses to immediately submit to a search upon request from our CEO may be subject to disciplinary action.” This structure seems to place the CEO in a potentially awkward or even dangerous position. **We recommend changing this to an HR function.**
- **Cultural Enhancements to Leave and Time Off**

Certain provisions of the Employee Handbook could be improved, with respect to Leave and Time Off. For example:

  - P. 30—TXI could consider adding additional observed holidays. It would also be an equitable practice to add the option of Floating Holiday hours for employees who might celebrate those already observed by TXI differently. For example, the week that Ethos reviewed the Employee Handbook was the week of the Muslim holiday, Eid al-Adha. This is one of two annual Muslim holidays, and a Muslim employee may prefer to use a floating holiday to dedicate specific time to the practices of Eid (which often entails extra time spent cooking, engaging with family, praying, and more). **We recommend including one or more floating holidays to enable employees to separate their PTO and holiday time in a manner more equal to those participating in holidays already observed by**

## TXI.

- P. 31— The “Sick Leave” section does not include information on what happens if a sickness or illness lasts beyond the 60 hours of provided leave. What does an employee do if they have a long-term illness?
  
- Page 33—The final two paragraphs of this section state that a mother must work for TXI for one full year (12 months) after taking parental leave, otherwise they may have to pay back any salary that was paid during the term of said leave. **We recommend considering a shorter and clearer policy that may attract expectant or potential mothers and caregivers; and if there are any exceptions or conditions to this rule, they should be clearly stated.**
  - As a point of reference, the federal government standard for paid parental leave is a 12-week work obligation following 12 weeks of paid leave (compared to TXI’s 12-month work obligation).
  - Federal government standards for repayment if an employee fails to complete their post-leave work obligation are as follows: “Failure to complete the 12-week work obligation will result in an employee being required to reimburse the Department unless, in the agency’s judgment, the employee is unable to return to work for the required 12 weeks because of 1) the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition of the employee (that is related to the applicable birth or placement) or the child whose birth or placement was the basis for the paid parental leave; or 2) any other circumstance beyond the employee's control (e.g., a situation where a parent chooses to stay home because a child has a serious health condition; an employee moves because the employee's spouse is unexpectedly transferred

to a job location more than 75 miles from the employee's worksite).”

- The above government policy details exceptions to the repayment requirement. Such a statement provides expecting parents with the context they need to plan ahead and alleviate worries about unforeseen circumstances.
- Page 34—Bereavement Leave of 5 days is currently provided for the death of an immediate family member. **We suggest extending Bereavement Leave to 10 business days for significant cultural enhancement and employee loyalty.**
- Page 35—Domestic or Sexual Violence Leave is currently provided at 8 weeks of unpaid leave. **We recommend changing this to 8 weeks of *paid* leave.**
- Pages 36-37—Family Military Leave currently provides 15 days of unpaid leave to TXI’s Illinois employees only. **We suggest considering a change to 15 days of *paid* leave for all employees with respect to Family Military Leave.**

- **Predictable and Equitable Benefits**

Certain provisions of the Employee Handbook could be improved, with respect to Benefits. For example:

- Page 28; Pages —The “Benefits and Leave” section states, “Benefits may change or be eliminated with or without advance notice, subject to applicable legal requirements”; and the “Insurance and Retirement Benefits” section states, “TXI may add, change, or eliminate benefits at any time, and such additions, changes, or eliminations may be without notice (subject to applicable legal requirements).” This creates uncertainty for employees and may make it hard for those using certain care

providers to rely on a stable future with TXI. **We recommend a period of advance notice about changes to benefits; for example, 60-days prior to a change.**

- Pages 37-38—**We recommend a Benefits Audit to enhance Recruitment and Retention.**
- Page 39—The “Civil Unions” section states that “This policy applies only to TXI’s Illinois employees . . . both same-sex and opposite-sex couples who enter into a civil union will have all of the obligations, protections, and rights that are afforded under Illinois law to married heterosexual couples.” **We suggest extending benefits to domestic partners residing in any state and adding language around employees living outside of the United States.**

## Ethnographic Shadows

### Data Breakdown

We shadowed a total of **4** meetings.

### Key Themes

#### Strengths

- **Accessible**
  - Every meeting was accommodating and accessible to attendees.
    - All meetings had agendas available to all attendees, and facilitators began meetings by referencing them.
    - Individual slides inside decks contained the name of the person who was presenting, or who was the primary facilitator.

- This makes it easier for all employees to follow along and know who to address if they have questions.
  - When dense topics were covered, or multiple departments were present, meeting facilitators took plenty of breaks to check-in for questions or clarification.
- **Interactive**
  - Facilitators engaged employees and employees were quick to interact with meeting materials.
  - Employees used the Chat function on Zoom often to ask questions, help direct attention to others, and share opinions.
  - Employees engaged in positive social interactions and banter with one another. Jokes and humor were light and appropriate.
  - Any time an employee was spoken about they were also included in the conversation.
- **Conflict**
  - Employees and leaders were quick to share their opinions, personal experiences, and contribute to difficult conversations.
  - Meetings often held room for employees to be vulnerable, and such vulnerability appeared to be contagious.

## Areas for Improvement

- **Leadership Meeting Structure**
  - The leadership meeting was the only meeting that we shadowed where multiple contributors (those expected to speak or provide updates) had not added notes to a collaborative agenda beforehand.
    - Attendees did work through a collaborative agenda. However, it was not used as intended since attendees had not contributed to the document beforehand.
    - This was the only meeting we attended where the group reconsidered the structure of the meeting itself.

- Leaders spent time considering the materials that they use to facilitate their meetings and came up with ideas for improvement. Most of these ideas were geared towards adding more steps (in this case columns) to their existing document.
- Simplifying meeting preparation steps may encourage leaders to have consistent material preparations.
  - These meetings would also benefit from clearly defined responsibilities and expectations around contribution and preparation.

## Slack Ethnography

### Data Breakdown

We monitored **14** of TXI's Slack channels. At the time of auditing, the organization currently stated its employee headcount as **62**.

### TXI Slack Channels

Listed chronologically by the most recent update to the Channel Description.

1. **Gut Check:** "A dedicated space to share ideas on how to improve something while getting a broad set of perspectives to help brainstorm, get encouraged if there is excitement to go forward, and find allies to support implementation (or delegate)" (2021)
  - a. **40** members
2. **Maintenance:** "Discussion with the maintenance team about maintenance-project-related work/concerns/questions" (2021)
  - a. **37** members
3. **DEIB:** "Discussions and work related to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging across TXI and our broader community." (2021)
  - a. **48** members

4. **General:** “The #txi-general channel is where everyone talks about everything. It is the general chit-chat, news, announcements, and witty banter channel.” (2021)
  - a. **72** members
5. **Sales:** “discuss pursuit opportunities including status, updates/changes, what help might be needed or potential staffing needs” (2021)
  - a. 43 members
6. **DEIB Tips Microgroup:** “Workspace for DEIB's Tip of the Week editorial. Gilad is lead on this micro-group.” (2020)
  - a. **11** members
7. **Wellness:** “Both within and without a pandemic, wellness is vital to our work and home lives. This channel is meant to provide resources, support, and connection to keep our mental and physical health in a good place.” (2020)
  - a. **32** members
8. **CCP:** “ccp project team” (2020)
  - a. **12** members
9. **Poetryfoundation\_tx:** “Internal channel for TXI communications” (2019)
  - a. **14** members
10. **Design:** “For conversation and questions related to user experience design and development.” (2016)
  - a. **40** members
11. **Dev:** “Coordinate the development practice group” (2016)
  - a. **47** members
12. **Marketing:** “Chat & discuss blogging opportunities at TableXI” (2015)
  - a. **32** members
13. **Github Internal:** N/A
  - a. **7** members
14. **Leadership:** N/A
  - a. **13** members

# Key Themes

## General (Neutral)

- **Inconsistent Maintenance**

- While some channels have recently updated and detailed descriptions, others do not. Some channels have no description or have not been updated in a number of years.
- Public Slack channels have between 14-72 employees in attendance. The fluctuation is not entirely clear based on publicly available channel details (those found within Slack).
  - Employees have had conversations in multiple Slack channels over the last quarter about joining and leaving Slack channels.

- **Lean**

- Limited banter took place in the primary threads of all channels. TXI employees make a habit of making comments on posts in order to engage with what one another shares.
- This results in larger channels at TXI (30+ employees) often receiving 2-5 new posts per week on average while smaller channels might only receive new posts every 1-3 weeks.

- **Channel Visibility**

- Channels at TXI receive shared engagement from employees and leaders alike. Most employees remain members of channels outside of their department and may do so for the benefit of interdepartmental communication and understanding. However, it is not clear if there are virtual spaces for teams to engage without the visibility of the rest of the company, and leaders.

## Strengths

### ● Engagement

- All of TXI's channels receive new posts at least every week and there do not appear to be any obsolete channels.
- Employees often displayed self-awareness and were reflective in their messaging. It is common for a TXI employee to add a follow-up message to clarify something they said.
  - Employees across departments also shout out one another in sincere ways multiple times per week in the #general channel.
  - However, we also noticed that there are traces of conversations being removed from Slack if they are particularly contentious.
- Project-related conversation is often considerate, thorough, curious, and not reactive.
  - Comment threads in #sales, #gutcheck, #dev, #design, #marketing were particularly active, often exceeding 10+ comments anytime an employee asked a question.

### ● DEIB

- Every team channel at TXI received recent posts from members that were related to DEIB: from improving accessibility, to trying to work with value-aligned clients, to discussing outdated vocabulary as it relates to race or gender. These kinds of posts also received common engagement from other channel members in the form of comments and reactions.

### ● Leadership

- People managers and leaders post channel appropriate content frequently and model what channel engagement looks like at TXI.
- Leaders are also quick to answer questions and join conversations where they can provide perspective.

## Areas for Improvement

- **TXI Virtual Representation**

- TXI Employees did not tend to have Slack bios.
- Where can virtual employees go to see more information about other TXIers?
  - If nothing currently exists, TXI Slack could dedicate a channel where every employee can post a brief introduction of themselves, their role, and basic information of their choice.

- **Slack Documentation**

- There were no examples of recent open conflict in any of TXI's Slack channels. However, there were instances of miscommunication, disagreement, or confusion about the direction of a comment (what it was replying to and what the intended tone was).
- Create a Slack Etiquette Guide/Code of Conduct with a focus on inclusivity:
  - Channel names and descriptions
    - Who can post?
    - Are there any roles and responsibilities in this channel?
    - What can be posted?
    - What cannot be posted?
    - What is the focus?
  - Create an inclusive language guide. This is particularly helpful for new employees during onboarding and for existing employees to further consider diversity (specifically neurodiversity) as it relates to virtual environments.
    - Define any channel-specific terms, emojis, or inside jokes.
    - Model ways of speaking to one another, acknowledging one another, and resolving conflict or disagreements on Slack.

- Outline how an employee can escalate an interpersonal issue that comes from Slack.

# Compensation Analysis

## Data Breakdown

We reviewed the results of TXI's preexisting compensation audit to understand how the organization currently addresses pay as it relates to level, function, and social identity.

## General Findings

- TXI salaries are most commonly matched to Median Market Rates.
- Discrepancies are common between employees with the same titles. However, we were able to learn more about why (and therefore not labeling this as an area for improvement):
  - From CFO Kelly Uhrer: "The compensation document that is being referenced was a compensation study performed by LTC Performance Strategies last year. The purpose was to get a sense check around market trends for compensation and see if our salary bands by level needed to be adjusted. We simplified the data inputs to reflect generic titles like Software Engineer, Senior Software Engineer with a broad description of activities performed, then LTC provided typically two different band ranges for the possible skill level of those roles that included a min/max and midpoint for the base along with variable compensation ranges. This wasn't a perfect science and didn't go incredibly deep into comparing unique roles or skillsets as the intention was to get a pulse of the market changes. For each of our levels, we have a range of min and max salary bands where the midpoint is targeted

- at around 50% of base pay within the Chicago market. This by itself is an art as there is no true validation of that.”
- Additionally from Kelly: “We should not expect people to make similar salaries within bands. We have a policy where no one makes less than the minimum of their band. In addition, if someone doesn't progress up to the next level, they could possibly exceed the max of their level. Our salary bands and levels incorporate different crafts (ie. front-end, back-end, polyskilled developers, delivery leads, designers). Within each of these levels, our people have different experiences and skills ranging from years of experience, years in the level, progress on their core craft skills, influencing skills, etc). We try our best to be equitable in salary based on all those factors.”
  - We have no way to know how TXI is calculating numbers for the column Total Cash Compensation or what those numbers are relevant for.
  - TXI is aware that they do not pay as highly as larger Software Consulting Firms or Custom Software Development companies. TXI employees are also commonly aware that they are paid less than larger organizations.
  - Software Developers occupy the lowest level within the organization and their Annualized Salaries are most likely to be below Median Market Rate.
  - The highest-paid salaried employee at every level is a Man in a dominant identity group.
  - The lowest-paid salaried employee at every level—except among Senior Software Developers—is a Woman or a person in a marginalized group.
  - Only 7 employees at the company are clearly being paid at or above the Median Market Rate.