



# ADVANCE OPPORTUNITY. ACHIEVE EQUITY.

## IMAGINE A CITY WHERE ...

- Every schoolchild, regardless of language and cultural differences, receives a quality education and feels safe and included.
- Race does not predict how much you earn or your chance of being homeless or going to prison.
- African American, Latinos and Native Americans can expect to live as long as white people.

## AN INITIATIVE TO LEAD US

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The Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) is a citywide effort to realize the vision of racial equity. The Initiative works within City government and with community leaders to get to the root cause of racial inequity: institutional racism. RSJI is led by the Seattle Office of Civil Rights and an interdepartmental team of City staff. All elected officials in the City of Seattle have endorsed and are promoting RSJI.

## WHY FOCUS ON INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

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Institutional racism is when organizational programs or policies work to the benefit of white people and to the detriment of people of color, usually unintentionally. Until the Civil Rights Movement, housing and employment policies in Seattle, like elsewhere in the U.S., were explicitly racist. We have made progress in addressing individual discrimination, but the effects of institutional racism still shape public policies and create race-based inequity across our community.

To challenge racism, we have to look beyond individual acts of prejudice to the systemic biases that are built into our institutions. We are not to blame for what happened in the past, but we are responsible for eliminating racism today.

We can end this legacy of inequity. The Initiative is working to eliminate institutional racism and create a community where equity in opportunity exists for everyone.

# TOGETHER, WE CAN ACHIEVE RACIAL JUSTICE IN SEATTLE.



## THE WORK SO FAR

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RSJI has begun to create fundamental changes to achieve racial equity in the City's services, operations, and the broader community. For example:

- The RSJ Community Roundtable is working for racial equity across the region. Members from community organizations and public institutions have joined together to end racial inequities in education and address institutional racism within their own organizations.
- The City has doubled its contracts with women and minority-owned businesses in non-construction goods and services. Targeted outreach and other strategies have helped small businesses compete for contracts more effectively. A 2010 Mayor's Executive Order strengthened the City's commitment to utilize women and minority owned businesses, and outlined specific steps for departments to ensure more equitable contracting results.
- To update neighborhood plans in Southeast Seattle, City staff dramatically expanded outreach to historically underrepresented communities. Hundreds of residents who had never attended a public meeting helped write new development plans for their communities. The effort received the Governor's Smart Communities Award for outstanding achievement in creating livable and vibrant communities.
- All City departments now provide essential translation and interpretation services for non-English speaking customers, strengthening immigrant and refugee communities' access to government.
- Across City government, over 7,000 employees (more than three quarters of the workforce) have received training on ending institutional racism. Departments are using a Racial Equity Toolkit to conduct comprehensive reviews of their programs, policies and budgets, resulting in hundreds of changes to increase racial equity.

## THE WORK AHEAD

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- We will end racial disparities within City government, so there is fairness in hiring and promotions, greater opportunities in contracting, and equitable services to all residents.
- We will strengthen outreach and public engagement, change existing services using Race and Social Justice best practices, and improve immigrants' and refugees' access to City government.
- We will lead a collaborative, community-wide effort to eliminate racial inequity in education, criminal justice, environmental justice, health and economic success.

### ➔ LEARN MORE ABOUT RSJI

Visit [www.seattle.gov/rsji](http://www.seattle.gov/rsji) or call the Seattle Office for Civil Rights at 206.684.4500

### ➔ RESOURCES AND FUNDING FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

The Department of Neighborhoods provides funding for Race and Social Justice projects. Visit [www.seattle.gov/neighborhood/nmf](http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhood/nmf)