

RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE



2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan



The **Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI)** is a citywide effort to end institutionalized racism and race-based disparities in the City of Seattle government. The RSJI Strategy Team is a division of the Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR).

Who We Are

We are a small team of race and social justice organizers who believe that the institution of government should serve the people.

We lead with race because we believe that dismantling racism will create a more equitable world for everyone.

We draw strength from our shared identities and honor the ways in which we are unique.

We learn from the history of organizing that preceded us and draw inspiration from the collective wisdom of the community today.

Background



The COVID-19 pandemic arrived less than a year into the 2019-2021 RSJI Strategic Plan. Like the rest of the world, our focus shifted to survival. We prioritized the urgent needs of our colleagues, families, and friends.

And then George Floyd was murdered, and the ground moved underneath us once again. RSJI and SOCR were suddenly tasked with holding the collective racial trauma of the City of Seattle as we struggled to survive ourselves.

These events changed RSJI deeply. Our work and our team look very different than they did in early 2020. Meetings that were once face-to-face are now virtual. Human connections, the foundation of anti-racism work, are harder to build than ever.

And yet, there is opportunity. The pandemic further exposed the racial disparities in our society. We see more conversations about racism happening in the open, instead of behind closed doors. We see more colleagues speaking out for racial justice. We see a trickle of resources re-distributed toward communities impacted by historical harm.

So we carry on, building on the efforts of the many organizers who came before us in the City, and the community members who inform our work today.

As 2022 approached, we faced another difficult decision: move into the new year with an expired plan so we could incorporate more outside feedback, or develop a new plan ourselves. We chose a compromise.



This 2022-2026 Strategic Plan is a re-commitment to some of the work that we put on hold two years ago. It is also an acknowledgment that the work has changed. We will dedicate time to gathering more input from colleagues and community members, and this living document will continue adapting to the lessons we learn.

Guiding Anti-Racist Principles

RSJI grew out of seeds planted by anti-racist trainings from the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond. We honor that legacy today by adopting [the PISAB principles](#) as our own.

Analyzing power

Developing leadership

Gatekeeping

Identifying and analyzing manifestations of racism

Learning from history

Maintaining accountability

Networking

Sharing culture

Undoing internalized racial oppression

Undoing racism

Goal #1

Embed racial equity into City of Seattle policies and processes

Advocate for policies and processes that center the people most impacted by racism and other forms of oppression. Champion organizing by City of Seattle employees within departments. Organize with other interdepartmental groups for citywide anti-racist change.

Analyzing power

Identifying and analyzing manifestations of racism

Maintaining accountability

Strategies

1. **Support departmental Change Teams:** Support racial equity Change Teams in 28-30 Executive and non-Executive City departments. Offer consultation and guidance to help Change Teams advance racial equity within their own departments. Convene Change Team Co-Leads to ensure that Change Teams act collectively for citywide racial equity.
2. **Convene RSJI Sub-Cabinet:** Convene monthly meetings with Department Directors and Deputy Directors to address race and social justice projects, priority issues, and Citywide trends.
3. **Convene Directors Forums:** Facilitate quarterly race and social justice trainings for Department Directors.
4. **Convene Equity Leads:** Convene employees in the City of Seattle whose job responsibilities include race, social justice, or equity within a single department. Align departmental strategies with RSJI strategies.
5. **Co-facilitate Workforce Equity Planning & Advisory Committee (WEPAC):** As part of a long-time partnership between SOCR and SDHR, support interdepartmental teams to develop workforce equity strategies, policies, trainings, and investments that support a racially

just workplace environment.

6. **Advocate for equitable budgeting:** Continue collaborating with the Seattle City Budget Office to develop tools for equitable budgeting. Encourage collaboration between City leadership and racial equity advocates such as Change Teams and Equity Leads during budget processes.
7. **Strengthen Citywide use of the Racial Equity Toolkit (RET):** Build a practice of racial equity across City departments through regular learning courses and use of the RET, including implementing racially equitable community engagement tactics.
8. **Strengthen Citywide use of Racial Equity Action Plans:** Increase the use of annual Racial Equity Plans that outline race and social justice commitments of individual departments, and manage the public database of plans on the City Racial Equity Actions website.

Goal #2

Center racial justice, belonging, and wellbeing

Build a [relational culture](#) in the City of Seattle. Provide trainings that educate staff about racial equity. Host gatherings and special events that promote anti-racist values such as meaningful relationships, collaboration, and transparency. Use arts and mindfulness practices to address internalized racism.

Developing leadership

Undoing internalized
racial oppression

Undoing racism

Strategies

1. **Design and facilitate citywide racial equity trainings:** Provide high-quality RSJI trainings to City employees through the Cornerstone system and department-specific requests. Build the racial justice knowledge of City

employees and deepen their understanding of intersectionality.

2. **Align our training with other City departments:** Partner with the Office of the Ombud and Seattle Department of Human Resources to center all City of Seattle trainings on race and social justice principles.
3. **Address internalized racial oppression:** Use caucusing, education, and facilitated dialogue to bring City employees together and explore how internalized racism affects our lives.
4. **Convene citywide caucus facilitators:** Bring facilitators together to develop caucus facilitation skills. Provide education about transformational anti-racist organizing practices.
5. **Build the organizing skills of City employees:** Promote anti-racist organizing through skill-building programs and communities of practice such as CORE Team, Shape of Trust, and Key Leaders.
6. **Navigate racialized conflicts within City Departments:** Facilitate healing circles, dialogues, and other restorative practices that help teams address patterns of behavior that get in the way of healthy, productive relationships.
7. **Implement the Creative Strategies Initiative (CSI):** With the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, use arts, culture, embodiment, and mindfulness practices to cultivate anti-racism within City policies and community engagement efforts.
8. **Host gatherings and special events:** Through the RSJI Summit and other events, engage city employees and community members to build community, increase collective organizing capacity, and promote anti-racist principles.
9. **Share our successes and challenges with City employees:** Use the RSJI website, InWeb, and internal email newsletters to share RSJI's work with City employees. Be transparent about our successes and challenges. Spotlight race and social justice issues that are important to local community organizing.

Goal #3

Align with community organizing

Build relationships with the local communities most impacted by structural racism and other forms of oppression, and invite their input on our work. Dismantle Seattle’s history of racism by following the lead of grassroots community members who are organizing for transformational change today.

Gatekeeping

Learning from history

Strategies

1. **Support community-led racial justice campaigns:** Use RSJI’s influence and network to uplift community demands. Spotlight community-led racial justice efforts that center those most directly affected by structural racism and other forms of oppression.
2. **Advocate for racially equitable community engagement:** Use the RET and other tools to support community engagement practices that restore past and current harms. Develop Community-Centered Engagement for Racial and Restorative Justice (CERJ) resource with the Department of Neighborhoods.
3. **Encourage collaboration between departments:** Facilitate partnerships that help City departments work together to address historical and ongoing structural racism.
4. **Guide departments in redirecting resources to communities most impacted by structural racism:** Advocate for equitable distribution of services, grants, career paths, commissions, and contracts.
5. **Humanize the use of data in the City of Seattle:** Challenge government practices that use data to justify structural harm. Collaborate with

communities impacted by structural racism to build data in ways that are consensual and reciprocal.

6. **Build citywide capacity for a Results-Based Accountability framework that centers racial equity:** Use data to identify the root causes of racial inequities and facilitate creative collaborations across systems and sectors.
7. **Share our successes and challenges with the Seattle community:** Use the RSJI website, SOCR website, SOCR blog, email newsletters, and social media to share RSJI's internal organizing work with the community. Be transparent about our successes and challenges.
8. **Adapt this strategic plan to align with grassroots organizing:** Dedicate time to gathering input on RSJI's work from City of Seattle employees and community members who organize for racial equity. Use the lessons learned to make updates to this strategic plan.

Goal #4

Collaborate with regional and national racial justice leaders

Share knowledge with other institutions and organizations working toward racial equity. Act as a model for government institutions by being honest about our successes and failures. Bring strategies and knowledge from national leaders to our work for the Seattle community.

Networking

Sharing culture

Strategies

1. **Collaborate with local groups:** Provide technical support to City of Seattle collaborators and partners to address local equity issues like homelessness, criminal justice, and transit-oriented development.



Continue work with City of Seattle/Sound Transit West Seattle Ballard Link Extension (WSBLE).

2. **Collaborate with regional groups:** Contribute to events and partner with organizations in the Pacific Northwest, such as the Governing for Racial Equity and Inclusion Group, King County Office of Equity and Social Justice, and more. Share resources and knowledge with other government agencies.
3. **Collaborate with national groups:** Contribute to events and partner with organizations nationwide, such as the Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE), Race Forward, PolicyLink, and National League of Cities. Share resources and knowledge with other government agencies.

