

Racial Equity Toolkit

To assess policies, initiatives, services, programs, and budget issues

Step by Step Instructions:

Before you begin your Racial Equity Toolkit, please respond to the following questions. Knowing your purpose and intention for this process will help you set outcomes and weigh potential impacts on racial inequity later in the analysis.

- Describe the policy, initiative, service, program, or budget issue you will be evaluating.
- Why is your issue area and the decision you will make significant to communities of color? More specifically, which communities will be impacted by this decision?
- Why is it necessary that you, as public servants, evaluate this decision using an explicit racial equity analysis?
- How will you push back on white supremacy culture and center racial equity as a practice by cultivating relational culture (e.g., transparency, listening, both/and thinking, open-heartedness, shared leadership and other qualities that promote collaborative, informed and connected decision-making) throughout this process?

Step 1. Set racial equity outcomes for those most harmed by racism using an intersectional framework.

Goal: Create "Racial Equity Outcome" statements that will serve as the goals of the RET. Example: Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community-based organizations are prioritized in community funding/grants processes.

- A. Be specific about which populations your decision will impact. You will want to center and prioritize these folks throughout the RET process. Pay special attention to those that are most harmed by racism particularly communities experiencing intersectional harm existing at the intersections of racism and other forms of oppression such as colonization, sexism, heterosexism, agism, ableism, capitalism, nationalism, Christian dominance, and xenophobia.
 - Why? Facing any form of oppression is compounded when racism is added.
 - i. *National statistics show that Black communities are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and are dying at higher rates¹. Of note is the fact that Black and Indigenous communities face systemic barriers to healthcare which are reflected in other walks of life, like access to education, employment, housing, and other means*

¹ See What the Racial Data Show The pandemic seems to be hitting people of color the hardest. By Ibram Kendi <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/04/coronavirus-exposing-our-racial-divides/609526/>

of well-being. Initial King County data showed 41.2% of those infected are people of color in our region even though they make up less of the population proportionally. Additional data shows increasingly disproportionate impact in Latinx communities specifically.² If social cohesion and community health is to be addressed comprehensively, race and the systemic barriers to healthcare it creates cannot be ignored as to do so threatens our entire social fabric.

- B. Determine the racial equity issue you are planning to address.
 - Ask what racial equity impact you are seeking?
- C. Adopt a two-prong approach: a short-term strategy that allows for creativity, flexibility and innovation as you face this crisis; and a long-term strategy that centers and strengthens your community relationships with an eye towards solidarity.
- D. Collaborate strategically with your department's leadership and seek out support of your departmental Racial Equity Leads, Change Teams, CORE team (Citywide Organizing for Racial Equity), and the rest of RSJI network to ensure that your racial equity outcome is aligned with the citywide RSJI analysis and strategic goals.

Step 2. Involve stakeholders + analyze data.

Goal: Gather information from community partners and RSJI networked city staff that are familiar with the issue. Their support will be critical in determining how the issue benefits or burdens communities in terms of racial equity. Engagement is the heart of the RET process -most planning and resources are devoted to this step.

- A. Research if there have been community engagements or RETs on this topic in the past:
 - What prior information has your department gathered? What does your department level data tell you about the issue?
 - What lessons from past community engagements have been learned? How can these lessons contribute to a more nuanced approach?
- B. Develop engagement plans with specific targets, goals, and timelines that intentionally seek feedback from these, in addition to traditional stakeholders:
 - Community-centered press & journalism, (<https://southseattleemerald.com/>)
 - Anti-racist community organizations, and
 - Racial-equity experts tied to the issue and accountable to their communities working in inclusive and racially equitable and intersectional ways

² See <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/king-county-has-big-racial-disparities-in-coronavirus-cases-and-deaths-according-to-public-health-data/> & <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/data/race-ethnicity.aspx>

- *Many BIPOC community organizations, journalists, and experts are reporting disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 and are sounding a call to action so that past systemic mistakes need not be repeated.*

C. Continue your collaborative research, create an atmosphere of bold inclusivity, and work with your department’s leadership, racial equity leads, CORE (Citywide Organizers for Racial Equity) Teams, and Change Teams or other colleagues in the RSJI Network to gather data and information on both internal and external racialized impacts.

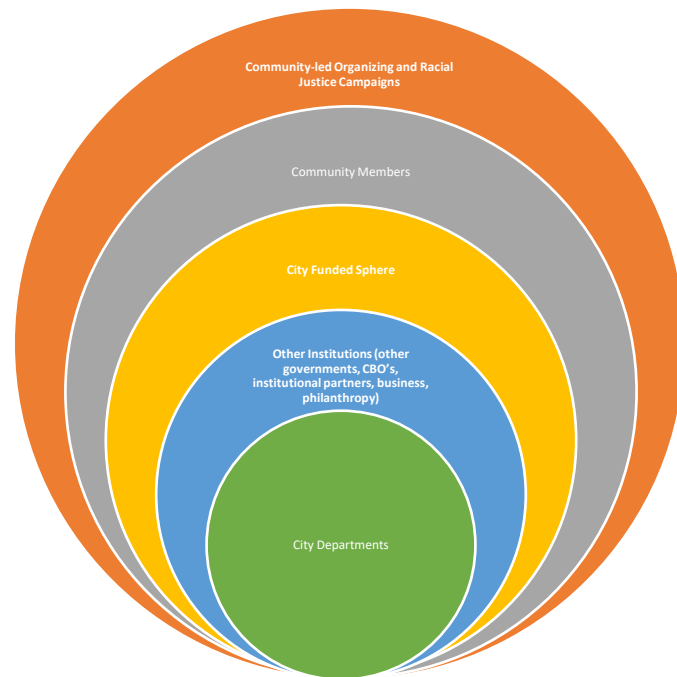
- Identify and assess how each stakeholder will be affected by the decisions that will be made.
- It is very important that RET teams work collaboratively with all levels of City government, particularly City leadership, to gain the collective momentum needed to achieve racial equity outcomes.

- *During the COVID-19 pandemic, communities may expectedly be weary of engagement that focuses on some issue other than the pandemic response and addressing resource needs of communities affected. However, honesty and transparency in engagement, as well as knowledge of city resources and services available for the response will prove useful in creating transformative rather than transactional relationships. Also, be aware of communication and technology access needs.*

Start identifying how each of your stakeholders fit in these spheres and the type of relationship your department has with them.

Types of relationships:

- Fund/Receive funding
- Reporting
- Information-sharing
- Accountable



D. Document the engagement process and reflect on breakthroughs achieved and obstacles faced in order to improve the community-centered engagement process for future RETs and make reporting back to community (in Step. 6.) more efficient.

- *During the COVID-19 pandemic every reasonable effort should be made to communicate any specific pandemic resource needs that can be addressed by City government to the appropriate service department or departmental liaison so that engagement serves not only to help address RET questions but also help communities fight the outbreak and while deepening our relationships with community stakeholders in the long-term by not ignoring their immediate needs and concerns whenever we engage while the pandemic is a grave community health concern.*

Step 3. Determine benefit and/or burden.

Goal: Analyze issue for impacts and alignment with racial equity outcomes. Step 3 is at the heart of the racial equity analysis.

- A. Combine quantitative data collected with qualitative information from conversations with stakeholder groups, your department's leadership, racial equity leads, CORE team (Citywide Organizers for Racial Equity), and Change Teams or other colleagues in the RSJI Network.
 - a. Document your results and develop an analysis of the racial equity issue area.
 - b. Be clear about impacts on racial equity and any unintended consequences. Analyze how unforeseen or unexpected results could be mitigated.
 - B. Reflect on the intended racially equitable outcomes set at the outset of your analysis.
 - a. Is there alignment? Use the iterative process to update racially equitable outcomes to reflect data garnered from engagement.
 - b. For racially equitable outcomes that cannot be achieved in the current iteration of the RET, strategize to arrive at outcomes that minimize harm (in Step 4.) rather than move forward in ways that create greater racial inequity.
- *During crisis or emergencies, such as the COVID-19 response, Step 3. will be fast-paced, and it will be more difficult to avoid perpetuating harm. However, obstacles, limitations, or disorganization documented serve not only to inform Step 4, but to improve the community-centered engagement process.*
 - *Avoid falling back on easy or familiar solutions that do not fully consider the communities being centered in engagement. It is more important to implement decisions that minimize harm instead of being overwhelmed by institutional inadequacies or unavoidable systematic harm. It may look like only one or few problems are being addressed at a time, but the RET is a process that builds a foundation for long-term community-centered engagement in relational and transformative ways is being laid for future planning.*

"Never a failure, always a lesson."

- Adrienne Brown

Step 4. Advance Opportunity or Minimize Harm.

Goal: Develop strategies to create greater racial equity and/or minimize unintended consequences.

A. Make recommendations on how to mitigate direct, unintentional or inadvertent negative impacts of your proposal.

- a. Develop strategies to reach your desired racially equitable outcomes and promote partnerships for long term systemic change.
- b. Set specific targets, goals, and timelines. Describe resources needed to make changes and next steps.
- c. Summarize your strategies to maximize opportunities for racial equity or minimize harm at three levels: program, policy and relationships.

- *The goal is to apply an antiracist lens to all departmental operations so that changes are made to programs, policies, and relationships to achieve racially equitable outcomes. The strategy for COVID-19 RETs is to utilize this momentum for permanent racially equitable systematic changes by emphasizing how addressing targeted inequities will strengthen social cohesion universally.³*
- *The last economic crisis during the 2008 recession saw widespread detrimental effects to workers of color and specifically many City employees of color internally. Externally communities of color were under funded, under resourced which resulted in harm within housing, employment, education, access to healthcare and health insurance. Communities of color are either have minimally recovered or still have not bounced back.*
- The adoption of a "scarcity model" to make resource decisions ignores the opportunity to address the root causes of inequality in our community and chooses decision making processes that exacerbate existing harms and systemic oppression in the workforce and in communities of color. It did not result in fair outcomes that balanced power and access but perpetuated an outcome where workers of color and the communities they supported were hardest hit by measures designed to uphold our institutions and not our communities. The effects have reverberated in our communities with racial wealth

"And the reason I want to bring it up, because I couldn't help sitting there reflecting on how sometimes when you're in the middle of a crisis, like we are now with the coronavirus, it really does have, ultimately, shine a very bright light on some of the real weaknesses and foibles in our society."

- Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director
National Institute of Allergy
& Infectious Diseases

³ <https://www.businessinsider.com/fauci-covid-19-shows-unacceptable-disparities-for-african-americans-2020-4>

"Fauci says the coronavirus is 'shining a bright light' on 'unacceptable' health disparities for African Americans," Jake Lahut, April 7, 2020.

disparities in Seattle, Boston, and other cities.⁴ We are at turning point where with racially equitable planning we can marshal resources in a way that would not result in the same level of harm to employees and communities of color.

Step 5. Evaluate. Raise Racial Awareness. Be Accountable.

Goal: Track impacts on communities of color overtime. Continue to communicate with and involve stakeholders. Document unresolved issues.

- A. Evaluate the targets and goals your department have set over time. This includes:
 - a. How will your data collection and reporting be maintained?
 - b. How you will continue to deepen your community relationships? What mechanism can you create to be accountable to these communities?
- Think about the timeframe you have set for implementation of your policy, initiative, program or budget decision. When and how will you report back to department leadership and your stakeholders?
- B. Identify issues that you were unable to address during this iteration of the RET and think about how you might go about developing plans for future community-centered engagement and long-term root cause solutions.
 - *The City of Seattle leads with race. All points of an RET are an opportunity to raise racial awareness with all stakeholders within the city's spheres of influence. During a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic it is especially important to raise racial awareness in order to show the links between continuous disparate outcomes for communities of color and their vulnerabilities which are exacerbated during widespread crises of any sort. Every opportunity should be taken to "bring folks in" to our process to align with citywide RSJI principles and to build relationships which form the basis of our collective power to undo institutional racism.*

Step 6. Report Back.

*Goal: Share information learned from analysis and unresolved issues with department leadership, the RSJI network (including Change & CORE Teams), engaged stakeholders, and impacted communities in as transparent, democratic, and public facing a way as possible in order to hold us all accountable to the communities we serve and colleagues with us in this struggle. **This step is critical!***

⁴ <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/seattle-household-net-worth-ranks-among-top-in-nation-but-wealth-doesnt-reach-everyone/>; <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/12/11/that-was-typo-the-median-net-worth-black-bostonians-really/ze5kxC1jJelx24M3pugFFN/story.html>

- A. Share the analysis and strategies you have developed with your leadership, RSJI network, and potentially all employees in your department. This step informs the overall racial equity work of the department and ensures that specific policies, initiatives, programs and budget decisions are aligned with the racial equity outcomes the department seeks to achieve. Typically, this takes the form of an RET report, but sometimes may include presentations to the Mayor's Office, City Council, other City of Seattle departments, community organizations, and local and national organizations.

- B. Share your analysis, result and strategies developed with traditional stakeholders and stakeholders most impacted by systemic racism. This may take more creative and community-centered forms of engagement to best share what may be complex information in ways that our stakeholders understand and that allow them to hold us accountable as we work on our collective goal of undoing institutional racism. Reporting back often serves as a point of continued engagement and a way to build accountable community relationships for future neighborhood, policy, and strategic planning.

To learn more about the Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative and the Racial Equity Toolkit, visit www.seattle.gov/rsji or contact Tamar Zere at 206-684-0369, by email at tamar.zere@seattle.gov.