

# Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI)

## Introduction

This chapter provides background and context for [Race and Social Justice Initiative \(RSJI\)](#)-related budget additions throughout the 2019-2020 Adopted Budget.

RSJI is a Citywide effort to end institutionalized racism and race-based gaps in City government. A key component of achieving this goal is the examination of City policies, projects, initiatives and budget decisions to determine how each item impacts different demographic groups in Seattle. Launched in 2004, Seattle was the first U.S. city to undertake an effort that focused explicitly on institutional racism. Since then, King County, and other cities – including Minneapolis, Madison, and Portland – have all established their own equity initiatives. RSJI’s long-term goals are to change the underlying system that creates race-based disparities and to achieve racial equity, as well as to:

- End racial disparities within City government so there is fairness in hiring and promotions, greater opportunities in contracting, and equitable services to all residents;
- Strengthen outreach and public engagement, changing existing services using Race and Social Justice best practices, and improving immigrant and refugee access to City services; and
- Lead a collaborative, community-wide effort to eliminate racial inequity in education, criminal justice, environmental justice, health and economic success.

RSJI works to eliminate racial and social disparities across key indicators of success in Seattle, including: arts and culture, criminal justice, education, environment, equitable development, health, housing, jobs, and service equity.

## Mayoral Direction

Soon after her inauguration, Mayor Jenny A. Durkan signed an [Executive Order](#) reaffirming the City's commitment to RSJI and a focus to apply a racial equity lens on actions relating to: 1) affordability, 2) education, 3) criminal justice, 4) environmental justice, 5) transportation equity, 6) labor equity, 7) women and minority business contracting equity, 8) removing internal structural and institutional barriers for City employees, and 9) arts and culture equity. The Executive Order also charged the Mayor’s Office to oversee and coordinate a review of the City’s current implementation of the RSJI and directed department directors, personnel within the Mayor’s Office, as well as the Mayor herself, to participate in implicit bias training.

## Consideration of Race and Social Justice in the Mayor’s Office

Each City department has a “Change Team” – a group of employees that supports RSJI activities and strengthens a department’s capacity to get more employees involved. The team facilitates and participates in discussions on race and racism. The Mayor’s Office and the City Budget Office (CBO) created a combined Change Team in 2015. This team offers staff an opportunity to engage all levels of the Mayor’s Office in discussions around how to more consistently and effectively use an equity lens in policy and budget decision-making. These discussions increase individual and group understanding of how racism and other marginalizing factors affect equity and service provision.

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Consistent with established practice since the launch of RSJI, all 2019 budget adjustments were screened for RSJ impacts. Departments used the City's Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) or other tools to assess direct and indirect results of their proposals, and this analysis was then utilized in the decision-making process within CBO and the Mayor's Office.

### **Race and Social Justice Impacts in the 2019 Adopted Budget**

This section highlights specific examples of RSJI considerations in the 2019-2020 Adopted Budget and budget decision-making processes.

#### **Seattle Fire Department Workforce Diversity and Professional Development**

The Seattle Fire Department (SFD) embraces the goal of full participation in the workplace by a diverse workforce. Toward that end, SFD will have a dedicated staff member who will help the department first identify areas of improvement in the recruitment of those from underrepresented groups and the professional development of group members at SFD, and then develop strategies that improve equity and help build a workforce that better reflects the City it serves.

The budget also adds ongoing funding for the translation of key fire prevention documents. SFD will use the RSJ Toolkit or a similar analytical tool to prioritize the documents to be translated. The department anticipates translating five documents into five languages annually, for a total of 25 new translations beginning in 2019.

#### **Equitable Development Initiative (EDI)**

The Equitable Development Initiative is coordinated by the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) and guided by an interdepartmental working group from the Office of Housing (OH), Department of Neighborhoods (DON), Office of Economic Development (OED), Mayor's Office (MO), and City Budget Office (CBO). It is also informed by an external community advisory board representing impacted communities. Under the existing funding structure, approximately \$15 million of one-time resource will pay for capital and capacity building grants that will be distributed to 15 projects over the next several years. The 2019 Adopted and 2020 Endorsed Budget expands this commitment by providing \$5 million per year in short-term rental tax funding along with \$430,000 in Community Development Block Grant funding for ongoing support of EDI. This includes approximately \$1 million per year to fund the staff needed to implement what will now be a sustainable, long-term program. EDI staff is anticipating releasing another RFP in 2020, the specifics of which will be worked out during 2019 in partnership with community stakeholders. This process will be encapsulated into a formal equity analysis that will help distill priorities for the initiative.

#### **Domestic Workers Ordinance**

The budget adds resources to support implementation of the Domestic Workers Ordinance, which provides protections for domestic workers and establishes a domestic workers standards board. The ordinance also requires outreach and enforcement related to the new rights it extends to domestic workers. A portion of this investment will be utilized to design an outreach plan; engage in business and worker outreach, including meeting with new parent groups; respond to questions from the community; and design educational materials such as pamphlets, posters, and handouts in multiple

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languages. Translation and interpretation support for board and stakeholder meetings will also be supported.

### **Housing Levy and Mandatory Housing Affordability Outreach, Engagement and Training**

To help the Office of Housing (OH) deliver on its capital investments, additional resources from the Housing Levy and Mandatory Housing Affordability will provide outreach and engagement efforts for the office's direct service programs, especially in underserved communities to better align with the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) and efforts to improve access to the City's services for those with limited English skills. In addition, funding will be provided for OH staff training with subject-matter experts on topics such as loan underwriting for affordable housing projects and creating housing-specific learning opportunities for RSJI.

### **Arts Equity**

The Office for Civil Rights and Office of Arts and Culture (ARTS) will partner and collaborate on racial equity arts and culture projects including RSJI Speaker Series, RSJI Summit and other special projects. The 2019-2020 Adopted Budget also deepens ARTS' commitment to protect and support cultural spaces throughout Seattle, particularly in communities experiencing high growth, unaffordability, and displacement. Since 2014, four Arts & Cultural Districts have been added (the Central Area, Uptown, Columbia City/Hillman City, and Capitol Hill) through a cooperative partnership across various City departments. These districts help to stabilize cultural communities in flux and increase affordable housing opportunities in the neighborhood. ARTS' Cultural Spaces program also brings equity to the current wave of property development. It has connected over 25 cultural organizations and developers to build incentives that have resulted in new and preserved cultural spaces. The budget adds funding to bolster initiatives within the existing cultural districts to ensure their long-term impacts on the community.

### **Wheelchair Accessible Services Fund**

The Department of Finance & Administrative Services (FAS) administers the Wheelchair Accessible Services (WAS) fund. This fund distributes its proceeds to taxi and for-hire drivers to equip their vehicles for the ease and comfort of those requiring wheelchairs. The budget adds support to review, process, coordinate, report and monitor the disbursement requests and payments of WAS funds as the number of reimbursements have increased since this fund was created in 2014.

### **Seattle Police Department Diverse Police Officer Recruitment and Hiring**

The budget supports the Seattle Police Department's ongoing efforts to recruit and hire quality, diverse police officers in 2019 and 2020 above current staffing levels. It is important to Chief Best and the Mayor to focus on building a department that represents the community it serves. Recognizing the importance of hiring diverse police officers, the budget includes continued funding in support of robust recruiting efforts, initiated in the 2017 and 2018 Adopted budgets.

### **Sidewalk Accessibility and Safety**

As part of an Americans with Disabilities Act consent decree, the City will invest in constructing 1,250 curb ramps annually, increasing accessibility to sidewalks and streets. In addition to curb ramps, the

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budget includes funding to address sidewalk defects across the City, which will make the sidewalks safer and more accessible. The budget also adds funding for design and construction of pedestrian street lighting on S King Street under I-5 as a part of the S King St Neighborhood Greenway project in the Chinatown/International District.

### **Safe, Harassment-and Discrimination-Free Workplace**

In January 2018, Mayor Durkan launched a review of the City's harassment and discrimination policies. She convened an Anti-Harassment Inter-Departmental Team (AH IDT) that provided recommendations to transform the City's workplace culture to promote a safe, harassment- and discrimination-free workplace for all employees. The budget will implement a central hub in the Seattle Department of Human Resources to coordinate employee investigations and develop a consistent approach to investigations across the City.

The budget also establishes funding for the new Office of the Employee Ombud (OEO), which supports individual employees in executive departments who are experiencing a workplace that conflicts with the City of Seattle's workplace expectations. The OEO provides independent, impartial, and informal navigation to City employees in executive departments through the City's processes related to harassment and discrimination. The OEO also provides recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on Citywide policies and procedures related to harassment, discrimination, and creating an inclusive workplace environment.

### **Expand South Park Late Night Hours**

This budget enhances services at the South Park Community Center by adding ongoing Late-Night programming on Saturday evenings and adding public operating hours on Sundays. These expanded hours were piloted in the summer of 2018 based on strong community interest.

### **Dedicated Support for Departmentwide RSJI Efforts at Seattle Parks and Recreation**

The budget funds a new Strategic Advisor 1 position to staff the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) change team, support the RSJI Outcomes, Strategies, and Actions work plan, and contribute to other efforts build capacity for this work throughout the department.

### **Legal Assistance for Immigrants and Families**

The budget maintains and strengthens legal assistance for Seattle and King County's immigrants and their families. The Legal Defense Network (LDN) began in the fall of 2017 as a response to the federal government's increasingly aggressive immigration-related actions, affecting immigrants regardless of legal status. The budget increases the overall funding of this program and provides equal levels of ongoing funding by both the City and County, which includes increasing levels of funding for legal services for immigrants and refugees in its Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) to run from 2019-2023.

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## **Families, Education, Preschool and Promise Levy**

The Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise (FEPP) Levy was approved by voters on November 6, 2018. FEPP combines and continues the City's two previous education-related levies: 1) 2014 Seattle Preschool Services and 2) 2011 Families and Education Levies. The preschool, K-12, school health, and Seattle Promise investments contained in the package are intended to address opportunity gaps for historically underserved and highest need students, schools, and communities with a focus on college access and job readiness.

## **Expanded Nutrition, Food Access, and Education Programs**

The 2019-2020 Adopted Budget includes both continuation of the \$14 million added in 2018 and \$1.5 million of new and expanded programs to begin in 2019 supported by the Sweetened Beverage Tax. These include healthy food and beverage access programs, community-based meal providers and programs, community-based food, nutrition education and physical activity programs, birth-to-three services, and marketing campaigns led by community-based organizations, focused on people who have traditionally not had access to fresh, healthy food and access to early education services. The new and expanded programs in the 2019-2020 Adopted Budget include a Food Access Opportunity Fund, an expansion of the Fresh Bucks to Go program, physical activity incentives, and direct outreach support to connect difficult-to-reach populations with these important programs.

## **Facilitate Reentry and Coordinate with King County**

The budget includes \$250,000 to assess and pilot strategies to facilitate reentry and coordinate with King County. In 2015, the City Council passed [Resolution 31637](#), establishing a workgroup to strengthen the City's efforts to assist reentry, reduce recidivism, and alleviate the negative impact of incarceration on individuals, who are disproportionately people of color. The workgroup's final report is expected to be completed before the end of 2018. It is anticipated that the report will identify service gaps and potential new strategies and approaches to better facilitate reentry. Continuation of this work will require coordination and assessment of King County's existing portfolio of reentry services as well as deep alignment with multiple entities within the region's criminal justice system as the scope of this policy area reaches far beyond the direct authority of the City of Seattle. This funding will support further analysis and assessment of the region's approach and strategies for reentry, strengthen coordination and collaboration efforts with other criminal justice agencies, and pilot new and innovative strategies to help facilitate reentry for individuals with criminal history. The Mayor will work with the City Council to propose a spending plan in the first quarter of 2019 to appropriate these funds.