

City of Seattle
Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) Summary Sheet
Cover Sheet and Questions

Department/Office: Office of Sustainability & Environment
Name of policy, program, etc. analyzed: Food Action Plan Community Engagement Strategy
Names and titles of key staff that led this RET process: Bridget Igoe, Chris Iberle, Seán Walsh
Dates of RET process: 09/2021 – 06/2022 (note: this work is ongoing)

(Important to know: the final RET Report will be available in Q3 2022)

Food Action Plan Community Engagement RET Summary Sheet Questions

1. Describe the project, program, policy or budgetary decision that you assessed using the Racial Equity Toolkit.

This RET was used to assess the community engagement plans associated with development of an updated Food Action Plan. Meeting with community stakeholders to understand their food system priorities is an important and foundational step in updating the Food Action Plan. Updating the Food Action Plan was started in 2019 but paused in March 2020 due to COVID.

2. List the racial equity outcome(s) that you set in Step 1 of the RET process.

Implement an inclusive and racially equitable community engagement strategy to inform the Food Action Plan (FAP) by ensuring:

- community leaders, stakeholders, and coalitions we engage *first* are those who authentically represent communities most impacted by the inequities the updated Food Action Plan intends to address; and
- the community engagement strategy is not extractive or transactional in nature and prevents future harms; this is done through accountability measures and structures that create transparency and opportunities for continued engagement, reduce engagement fatigue, and compensate participants for their time and expertise.

3. Which stakeholders (groups and/or key individuals) did you engage in this RET? In what ways did you engage them?

City staff: OSE and HSD are working with the Food Action Plan workgroup to compile and analyze previous community engagement findings, identify gaps in who has been engaged to date, review racial disparities data, understand COVID impacts on the food system, and prioritize community stakeholders for additional engagement. The Food Action Plan workgroup includes staff from a range of City departments (OSE, HSD, DON, SPR, OPCD, OCR, OED), as well as Public Health Seattle & King County.

Environmental Justice Committee (EJC): OSE and the Food Action Plan workgroup are collaborating with the EJC throughout the process to update the Food Action Plan. For example, with EJC's permission, the workgroup adopted the EJC's food justice values to help guide the process. The EJC is also providing input on the community engagement strategies, including who to prioritize, engagement formats, and discussion questions.

Engagement Participants: Engagements are ongoing. Between 9/2021 and 1/14/2022, we completed interviews and listening sessions with the following community stakeholders:

- Representatives from the following community-based organizations participated in key informant interviews: Black Farmers Collective, Cham Refugee Community, Ethiopian Community in Seattle, Hunger Intervention Program, Rainier Beach Action Coalition, Delridge Neighborhood Development Association, and United Indians of All Tribes
- BIPOC farmers participated in a half-day workshop/listening session: Clean Greens Farm & Market, Friendly Hmong Farms, Kamayan Farm, Local Color Farm and Fiber, Local Hearing Farm, One Leaf Farm, Organic Seed Alliance, Sariwa Farm, Sky Island Farm, Skylight Farms, Sovereignty Farm (at Chief Seattle Club), Sweet Hollow Farm and Groundwork Food Hub, The Common Acre (Wetmore Community Farm)

- The Lived Experience Coalition, a group of community members with lived experience of homelessness and food insecurity.

4. Please describe up to five key benefits and/or burdens for people of color of this policy, program, project, or other decision, which the RET process helped you to identify or confirm.

Benefits

- Opportunity to inform City food policy and programming
- A platform to advocate on behalf of their community
- Opportunity to review results and findings from all engagements
- Fair compensation reflecting participants' time and expertise
- Control over the interview format in terms of topics covered, day/time of interview

Burdens

- Not everyone had the time or capacity to participate
- Even with many interviews and listening sessions available, some perspectives will be missing
- *Potential burden:* power dynamics, since the engagements are led and/or attended by city staff

5. Please describe up to five key actions – things that you will do differently or begin to do now – of this policy, program, project, or other decision, which will increase opportunity and/or minimize harm for people of color.

- 1) Integrate ongoing community engagement and community feedback into the implementation of the update Food Action Plan to ensure the Plan remains responsive to changing/emerging community needs.
- 2) Use the findings from these community engagements to inform the strategies and actions of the updated Food Action Plan to ensure the Plan is responsive to the priorities and concerns of communities most impacted by food system inequities.
- 3) Identify and elevate community-identified solutions and ensure they are supported in the updated Food Action Plan.

6. How will leadership ensure implementation of the actions described in question 4?

These activities will be integrated into the overall process used to develop, finalize, and implement the Food Action Plan. They will be tracked through regular Food Action Plan workgroup meetings. Workgroup members will report progress on the implementation of the above actions to their departmental leadership. Likewise, OSE staff will report on the implementation of the above actions at monthly meetings with OSE leadership, and when appropriate, highlight critical accomplishments in updates to the Mayor's Office. (OSE and HSD will synchronize on reporting processes.)

7. How have/will you report back to your stakeholders? (This includes the people who were directly engaged in this RET process, those who will be affected by decisions made, and other departments or divisions impacted by the RET findings and the actions described in question 4.)

EJC and other Engagement Participants: We will prepare and share summaries of learnings and findings from community engagement activities. Additionally, we will follow-up with participants by Q2 2022 with draft strategies and actions (informed by community engagement) and opportunities for further input.

City staff: FAP workgroup members will receive the summaries of learnings and findings from the community engagement activities. If there is community feedback specific to a City program/policy that is not directly represented on the workgroup, we will do intentional and individualized follow-up with relevant department staff. The workgroup will also review and discuss a version of draft Food Action Plan strategies and actions marked-up to show community feedback and the source of that feedback.

8. What additional racial equity issues did this RET reveal? Consider how these unresolved issues present opportunities for structural transformation (i.e. working across departments, and with other institutions and sectors to achieve racial equity).

Our community engagements and associated planning revealed that many City departments conduct community engagement, often on similar or intersecting issues, but there isn't a platform or process to easily track and share findings across or within departments. For example, OPCD and SDOT are in the process of a coordinated community engagement process at the same time as the Food Action Plan, but this was unknown to us until later, even though we have OPCD staff sitting on the Food Action Plan workgroup.

The myriad overlapping yet distinct community engagement efforts has the potential to increase the risk of engagement fatigue or engender distrust in City processes as community stakeholders get multiple requests from different initiatives, or worse may be asked the same questions without seeing tangible results from previous engagement activities. An opportunity for "structural transformation" would be to develop a system for better cross-department sharing of this type of information which, in turn, could lead to more effective engagement citywide.