

April, 2014



e-news

Mayor Murray expands Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative

On April 3, Seattle Mayor Ed Murray signed an Executive Order affirming the City's commitment to the Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI), and expanding the program to include measurable outcomes, greater accountability, and community-wide efforts to achieve racial equity throughout Seattle.



"I am signing an Executive Order that not only reaffirms but expands the reach of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative," said Murray. "This Executive Order now requires the City to take important steps to partner with the community to build racial equity."

To expand the scope and reach of the Race and Social Justice Initiative, the Mayor's Executive Order mandates measurable outcomes and greater accountability. The Executive Order requires the city to:

- Establish new goals, track outcomes over time and report on the City's progress
- towards achieving racial equity in nine equity areas: education, equitable development, criminal justice, jobs, housing, health, environment, service equity, and arts and culture.
- Use a Race and Social Justice Assessment Program to review programs, policies and practices.
 - Incorporate a racial equity lens for all Citywide initiatives, such as legislation to increase the minimum wage.
 - Continue promotion of full civic inclusion and participation, and apply the City's Racial Equity Toolkit on all budget proposals.
 - Ensure that all hiring and promotional activities are fair and equitable, train employees on racial equity as part of their day-to-day work, and develop new Citywide training to expand employees' knowledge and skills.

Beginning this year, the City of Seattle will prioritize racial equity work in education, equitable development and criminal justice – areas previously identified as top priorities by the community. The city also will partner with educational institutions, including two and four-year colleges, to create Cradle to Career Pathways for all Seattle residents, and work with community organizations to create a Community Institute for Racial Equity.

[Read the complete Executive Order here.](#)

Help us create the next RSJI 3-Year Plan!

Saturday, May 17 – save the date for our first public meeting!

Help us create the next RSJI 3-year plan! Between May and September, the Seattle Office for Civil Rights will hold a series of discussions and community meetings to assess the Race and Social Justice Initiative and chart the Initiative's future direction in 2015-17.

The process begins with a **public meeting on Saturday, May 17 from 10 am – 1 pm at the Eritrean Association Center, 1954 S. Massachusetts St. in Southeast Seattle.** [Click here to RSVP for the meeting.](#)

Throughout the summer, we also will hold discussions with key stakeholder groups, including RSJ Community Roundtable member organizations, faith-based groups, Seattle Public Schools, community groups, businesses, government agencies, and Seattle City departments and interdepartmental teams.

In October, we will share a broad outline of the Initiative's 2015-17 Plan in order to solicit additional comments and ideas from the community. We will present the final Plan in late 2014.



3-Year Plan timetable

Saturday, May 17: **Public meeting**

May-September: **Discussions with key stakeholders**

October: **Public presentation of draft RSJI 2015-17 Plan for additional comments**

Late 2014: **Plan finalized for implementation in January 2015**

Questions about RSJI's planning process and how you and your group can be involved? Please contact Diana Falchuk at 206-684-5282 or diana.falchuk@seattle.gov.

Can you help facilitate stakeholder discussions?

RSJI is looking for experienced RSJI volunteers to facilitate meetings with stakeholder groups about the 2015-17 Plan. Up to 40 volunteers will be provided with a one-hour facilitation training and lunch on Saturday, May 17 from 1 – 2 pm at the Eritrean Association Center, right after the public meeting. [Click here to register for facilitation training.](#) Volunteers are strongly encouraged to participate in the public meeting from 10 am – 1 pm, to observe the facilitation and discussion format.

RSJI Community Survey tracks community on race and equity

Seattle residents want government to address racial equity, according to results of a citywide survey on racial equity. Earlier this month, the Seattle Office for Civil Rights released a detailed report on the first biennial RSJI survey to track Seattle community perspectives on race and equity. ([Click here to read the survey report](#) and [here for the appendix.](#))

SOCR conducted the survey in November 2013. It included a random phone sampling of 400 residents, as well as a web-based survey that reached more than 3,100 people who live, work or go to school in Seattle. The survey asked questions about the community's satisfaction with various city services and neighborhood quality, people's feelings about the state of racial justice in the city, and the role of government in addressing racial inequities. Outreach efforts for the survey included visiting homeless shelters and community centers; posting information at libraries; placing ads on King County Metro buses; and linking from a Seattle Times web blog about race.

The survey results included the following findings:

- **There is overwhelming support for government to prioritize addressing racial equity gaps in jobs, health, housing and other areas.** A combined 70% of respondents feel this should be a high priority of government. White people and people of color alike share a consensus that it should be a priority of government to address racial equity gaps.
- **Seattle's economy is on the rise. Yet, the benefits of a strong economy are not felt equally by all.** Community members across all demographics spoke to the need for greater housing affordability. People of color rate economic opportunities lower than their white counterparts, even while the majority of people feel positive about the economy. Communities of color continue to experience racial inequities in economic opportunity, unemployment, income and poverty rates. Fifty-eight percent of youth of color who responded to the web survey rated opportunities as good or very good, compared to 71% of white youth.
- **A sizeable portion of Seattleites are distrustful of the Police Department.** Over 70% have only a little or just some confidence in their local police to treat blacks and whites equally. African Americans are the least likely to have confidence in police officers to do a good job enforcing the law, and the least likely to have confidence that police officers will treat blacks and whites equally. The data from survey respondents closely mirror the overall data found in recent surveys by the Seattle Police Department and the Seattle Community Police Commission.
- **Concern about the growth and economic development in Seattle is the most important issue facing community members.** Many respondents are concerned that Seattle is becoming a white,

wealthy city, inaccessible to the diverse populations who helped build it. People also expressed concern that City government is not doing an adequate job of keeping up with infrastructure and provision of services: from services for the homeless, to public transportation for those who live in the outer reaches and commute to the urban core.

- **Across Seattle, there is consensus that racial problems continue and we have more work to do.** Community attitudes and perceptions about racial equity matter. Ninety-



four percent of respondents agreed that we have more work to do to address racial inequities in Seattle.

The RSJI Community Survey provides the City with baseline data to measure our efforts to achieve racial equity and create opportunities for all. Information from the survey will help shape the 2015-17 RSJI Strategic Plan.

The RSJI Community Survey was the result of many months of collaboration between academics, community organizations and the City of Seattle. Thanks to the Steering Committee for guiding the development of the survey questions, outreach and analysis; for the incredible outreach efforts of our Community Survey Partners, students from University of Washington and City of Seattle employees who volunteered their time. Special thanks to Hannah Walker of the University of Washington Political Science Department. You can find a complete list of acknowledgements in the Report at <http://www.seattle.gov/rsji>.

Free trainings and workshops through the Campaign for Racial Equity

Building on the momentum of the 200+ groups who attended the RACE exhibit and the 120+ that signed the Commitment to Action for Racial Equity, RSJI is offering a new community training: ***Turning Commitment into Action***. Participants in this free, two-part training will learn about social position and advocating for change, and use a racial equity assessment to identify personal and organizational power to achieve racial equity. They will then outline a plan to create racial equity within their groups and communities.

The first workshop filled up in just four days, with nineteen groups each sending two representatives. RSJI will offer more trainings and workshops in the coming months. Check the [Campaign for Racial Equity web page](#) for more offerings as they are announced.

Mayor Ed Murray supports equity: news links

[April 8, 2014: Mayor Murray signs executive order strengthening equity in city contracting](#)

[April 2, 2014: Mayor Murray and Councilmembers support gender equity at the City of Seattle and throughout the region](#)

[March 26, 2014: Mayor Murray expands Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs](#)

Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative

The City of Seattle launched the Race and Social Justice Initiative in 2004 with the vision of achieving racial equity in the community and the mission of ending institutionalized racism in City government, promoting inclusion and full participation of all residents, and partnering with the community to achieve racial equity across Seattle. RSJI is led by the Seattle Office for Civil Rights.