

2016 **RACE** AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE ANNUAL REPORT



SEATTLE OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE



A message from Director Patricia Lally

The Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) is the City's ongoing commitment to eliminate racial disparities and achieve racial equity in Seattle.

When RSJI began ten years ago, no U.S. city had ever undertaken an effort that focused explicitly on institutional and structural racism. Since that time, local governments and jurisdictions across the United States are acknowledging that race matters: Minneapolis, Madison WI, Portland OR and King County, among others, have all established racial equity initiatives to address racial disparities in their communities.

In 2016, the City of Seattle made significant strides to incorporate RSJI in our programs, initiatives, and planning.

Across City government, departments now use the **Racial Equity Toolkit** on a regular basis to evaluate the burdens and benefits associated with City programs, policies, budget decisions and service delivery through a racial equity lens. RSJI, in partnership with the communities most affected, is developing strategies to remediate criminal justice inequities for youth and the formerly incarcerated. Additionally, RSJI has added new trainings to build the capacity of City employees to lead with racial justice.

I am very proud of the work that the RSJI team and community - both in the Office for Civil Rights, and across all City Departments - have accomplished. Ours is a city and community that strives to innovate, to learn, move, grow and push toward justice and equity.

The close of 2016 witnessed a shift in our political landscape that calls for even greater urgency in advancing racial and social justice to ensure that the City of Seattle is an inclusive city where everyone belongs.



Patricia Lally



WORKING TO ACHIEVE RACIAL JUSTICE IN CITY GOVERNMENT

RACIAL EQUITY ANALYSIS ON PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

In 2015, Mayor Murray began requiring all City of Seattle departments to apply **at least four Racial Equity Toolkits** every year. Since that time, RSJI staff have conducted dozens of Toolkit trainings and worked closely with individual City departments to improve their Toolkit use and ensure better racial equity outcomes. RSJI supports departments to create principled and accountable community relationships, calculate the benefits and burdens on communities of color, and change the decision-making process to improve opportunities and decrease harm for communities of color.

How does using the
Racial Equity Toolkit ?
bring equity to City programs and services ■

City Language Bank

The Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) used its toolkit process to revamp the City’s list of multi-lingual employees and increase departments’ translation and interpretation services for customers with limited English proficiency. The toolkit helped guide OIRA staff to include Language Access tools and strategies as an essential component to serve the unique needs of immigrants and refugees.

Community engagement across city neighborhoods.

In 2016, the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) began developing a new citywide, racially-equitable, accountable community engagement framework. The goal is to replace the City’s longstanding neighborhood-based system of Advisory Councils, which often lacked representation by communities of color, with a more broadly representative system that builds racially-equitable, accountable community relationships. The process will conclude by the end of 2017.

NEW WORKSHOPS FOR CITY EMPLOYEES

- RSJI’S *Implicit Bias* training shows how unconscious bias influences our decisions, and offers strategies for interrupting those biases.
- RSJI’S *Leading With Race* training explains why the City of Seattle centers race and racism to achieve equity.

In 2016, RSJI staff also provided customized Racial Equity Toolkit training to City departments, focusing on departments’ specific projects, budget decisions, policies, and programs. City employees also signed up for regularly scheduled Toolkit trainings in record numbers. For the first time ever, RSJI also conducted training for all City Council members, legislative aides and Central Staff.

RSJI continued to present new City of Seattle employees with the foundational “Race: The Power of an Illusion” training. RSJI also reinvested in community and institutional partnerships across King County, providing training to UW Law School, UW Evans School, Washington State, and Leadership Tomorrow.



TURNING COMMITMENT TO ACTION

In partnership with the Office of Arts & Culture, RSJI helped Seattle arts groups turn their racial equity commitment into actions for real change. Participating organizations – including the Pacific Northwest Ballet, Seattle Art Museum and a host of smaller arts organizations – used the training to develop racial equity plans within their own organizations, as well as with other artists, their audiences and partners.

CHANGE TEAM SUPPORT

Change Teams are committees of employees within every City department who support their fellow employees to incorporate racial equity in their department’s lines of business. In 2016, RSJI provided more direct services to Change Teams, including technical assistance, training and facilitation.

- RSJI attended monthly meetings of Change Team leads across the City to learn about specific issues and share strategies.
- RSJI staff worked with individual Change Teams to develop departments’ RSJI annual work plans, improve use of the Racial Equity Toolkit, and strengthen their roles within their own departments.

“Justice involves claiming a shared, mutual humanity.
- john a. powell



In response to community organizing in opposition to building the proposed King County Children and Family Center, which includes a youth jail, the Seattle Office for Civil Rights conducted a racial equity analysis of the proposed new facility, in 2015. Because of the Racial Equity Toolkit outcome and significant community interest in moving Seattle away from the use of youth incarceration, the Seattle City Council passed Resolution 31614, directing the Office for Civil Rights to develop strategies to achieve zero use of detention for young people in Seattle. Additionally, the resolution provided for a \$600,000 investment in anti-racist community-centered alternatives to detention.

Recognizing the obstacles and barriers created by detention and incarceration, Seattle City Council also passed Resolution 31637 to establish the Seattle Re-entry Workgroup, which aims to coordinate and strengthen the City's efforts to assist people transitioning from incarceration or living with criminal history.

EQUITY IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

THE GOAL: Zero Detention for youth in Seattle

- In 2016, OCR developed a curriculum and workplan for the City's new Criminal Justice Equity Team, which began meeting April, 2017;
- Worked with the Youth Opportunity Initiative and the Community Safety Work Group to align their programs with the goal of zero detention for youth; and
- Continued coordination with King County workgroups and steering committees aimed at reforming the local criminal justice system.

THE GOAL: Strengthen the City's support for people returning from incarceration & living with criminal histories.

In 2016, OCR created a Re-Entry Work Group to develop new re-entry strategies for people after incarceration. The Work Group is composed of individuals with experience transitioning from long-term incarceration, stakeholders who represent individuals impacted by the criminal justice system, and relevant City department leaders. The group's scope of work includes:

- Making an inventory of the City's current efforts to help people with criminal histories transition to stable housing and jobs.
- Assessing the impact on re-entry of the City's current system of collecting fines and fees for criminal infractions.
- Developing a set of additional policies, laws and programs for potential implementation by the City of Seattle to facilitate re-entry and remove barriers to jobs, housing and other benefits.

NATIONAL SPEAKER SERIES AND OTHER EVENTS



The annual **RSJI Speaker Series** brings powerful and provocative speakers from across the country to speak on racial equity. In 2016, RSJI welcomed two extraordinary figures to speak at events that were open to the community:

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY

Native American novelist and poet Sherman Alexie delivered a rousing address at the third annual Indigenous People's Day in the main lobby of City Hall. The City of Seattle declared the first Indigenous People's Day on the second Monday of October in 2014 to recognize that Seattle is built upon the homelands of the Indigenous Peoples of this region, and to acknowledge the many contributions made to our community through Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, labor, technology, science, philosophy, arts, and other cultural contributions.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Journalist and filmmaker Jose Antonio Vargas delivered the keynote address at the 17th annual Seattle Human Rights Day celebration. Human Rights Day commemorates the 67th anniversary of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted on December 10, 1948.

RSJI SUMMIT - APRIL 2016

Hundreds of City staff gathered at Seattle University to learn new ways to engage with RSJI. Keynote speaker Marcus Green, founder of the South Seattle Emerald newspaper, described the impacts of racism on the communities he works closely with, and emphasized the urgency of working to achieve racial equity.

DIRECTOR'S FORUM

RSJI held the first Forum for City Department Directors at the 2016 RSJI Summit. SOCR Director Patricia Lally convened two more quarterly meetings throughout 2016. The gatherings provided an opportunity for Directors to address specific opportunities and challenges that they experience, and to share solutions that advance RSJI across City government.

THE RACIAL EQUITY FUND WORKING WITH COMMUNITY

Seattle City Council approved funding in 2015/16 for grants to Seattle's community-based organizations to build capacity to address structural racism. In addition to the budgeted amount of \$60,000 for SOCR, the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture contributed \$15,000, for a total of \$75,000 in funds available in 2016.

Community groups were required to incorporate a structural analysis of racism, align with existing community anti-racist efforts, assess opportunities with the greatest impact for eliminating racial injustice, and model accountable practices.

ORGANIZATIONS WHO RECEIVED FUNDING IN 2016

- **180 Program:** To fund a new felony diversion program and employ formerly incarcerated individuals.
- **Integrity Solutions:** To fund educational workshops on entrepreneurship for young black men and women, and provide opportunities for economic independence.
- **Racial Equity Team:** To fund community internships that develop research skills and increase community awareness of policy issues that harm people of color.
- **Wing Luke Museum:** To fund a community-led process to curate an exhibit on environmental racism and its impact on Pacific Islander communities.
- **206Zulu:** To help support the expansion of the Roots and Rhythms program for at-risk youth of color in Seattle.
- **Seattle Globalist/South Emerald and International Examiner:** To fund anti-racism training for staff, develop an organizing network, and support a community conversation on racism in journalism.
- **Aki Kurose Elementary:** To fund anti-racism training for 14 staff and develop a long-term collaboration with an organizing network that includes Youth Undoing Institutional Racism.
- **Youth Undoing Institutional Racism and Freedom Ride Collective:** To support a youth-led anti-racist summer project that centers the experiences of black youth and builds collective analysis to organize for what they want for their lives. The project includes a road trip to St. Louis and/or Jackson, MS to learn about cooperative economic projects led by communities of color, to implement something similar in Seattle.
- **Circulo de Mamas:** To support a community-led effort to develop political skills and awareness for Latino immigrant women, to strengthen knowledge of local politics and participation in civic engagement.
- **Indigenous Showcase:** To highlight the diversity of voices and experiences within the Northwest Native community by bringing together local Native artists, filmmakers, and community members.

EQUITY IN ACTION: OTHER INITIATIVES

THE CITY OF SEATTLE HAS CENTERED RACE IN OTHER KEY INITIATIVES

EQUITY & ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE

Mayor Ed Murray launched Seattle’s Equity & Environment Initiative (EEI) on Earth Day in 2015 to deepen Seattle’s commitment to race and social justice in environmental work. On Earth Day one year later, the City released the Seattle Equity & Environment Agenda, a series of community-developed goals and strategies that address environmental inequities and create opportunities for communities of color, refugees, people with low incomes and limited-English proficiency individuals to become leaders in Seattle’s environmental movement.

PRIORITY HIRE

In 2015, the City of Seattle implemented a new law mandating that City construction projects of \$5 million or more include a percentage of workers living in economically distressed neighborhoods in Seattle and King County. Project Hire also mandates apprentice utilization rates and goals for hiring people of color and women. Following the program’s successful implementation in 2016, Mayor Murray introduced an Executive Order in early 2017 to expand Project Hire across all City departments.

A NEW MODEL FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2016, the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods and the Office for Civil Rights began to develop a new model for citywide community engagement – one that includes communities of color and immigrant and refugee communities. Implementation will continue in 2017.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2017

NEW RSJI MANAGER: LaMont Green

In late 2016, LaMont was named as the new Manager for the Race and Social Justice Initiative. LaMont has dedicated many years to dismantling racism and creating meaningful change in local government. Prior to joining the City of Seattle, LaMont managed the Familiar Faces Initiative, and was the Equity & Social Justice Leadership Lead for King County’s Department of Community and Human Services. He also worked in the City of Tacoma’s Office of Equity and Human Rights, as a senior policy analyst, where he developed training for City staff on racial equity and social justice.



CORE TEAM V

Core Team V is a year-long in-depth racial equity leadership development program. Participants from across most City departments will receive specially designed training to forge a new leadership team to end institutional racism in City government.

EQUITY LAB

Coming in 2017, the Equity Lab is an innovative racial justice multi-platform that will serve the City of Seattle by:

- Convening a racial equity Think Tank of departments’ equity leaders to develop Citywide racial equity outcomes, highlight promising practices and receive advance racial equity trainings.
- Creating an online public-facing information portal for the community and City staff to access RSJI tools, reports, and information about local and regional racial equity indicators.
- Creating an RSJI Incubator to provide departments with targeted racial equity support to nurture new projects.
- Building an Racial Equity Toolkit Center to support and strengthen departments’ use of racial equity analysis.

CONCLUSION

In 2016, RSJI achieved an important milestone: a critical mass of City of Seattle employees have now adopted racial equity as a goal, and have a basic understanding of how to use racial equity tools. 2017 finds Seattle city government in a different place than two years ago, when RSJI issued its most recent three-year plan. Thanks to Mayor Ed Murray's mandate for citywide use of the Racial Equity Toolkit, most City departments now conduct racial equity analyses on a variety of programs and services. It is a work-in-progress: departments are still learning to introduce their racial equity analysis at the beginning of the planning process rather than at the end, and to incorporate racial equity as an integral part of planning, rather than treat it as an add-on.

Put another way, the City of Seattle is performing powerful work – but it is not enough. Racial inequities are still pervasive in the City of Seattle. Every domain, including education, employment, housing, income, health and criminal justice, is testament to increasing disparities and diminished opportunities. The data only tell a small part of the story. Racism is deeply woven into the American fabric, making poverty and race inextricable. The City of Seattle will not be able to ameliorate these intractable social dilemmas without addressing racism through multi-sector inter-departmental collaboration and innovative solution making. To this end, we must continue to incorporate racial equity into our workplace culture, and increase the knowledge and ability of City employees to lead Race and Social Justice change efforts.

Historically, the United States of America's government played a leading role in the dehumanization and exploitation of certain groups to the benefits of White men. The United States has evolved but the racialized structures remain. Despite this reality, we know that government can leverage its influence to advance racial equity and social justice. In 2017, RSJI will foster creativity, transformation and innovation to build awareness and capacity for a more just Seattle.



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