

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

**Department/Office:** Seattle Public Utilities

**Name of policy, program, etc. analyzed:** SPU Damage Claims

**Names and titles of key staff that led this RET process:** Steve Hamai (Environmental Justice and Service Equity Advisor) and Elizabeth Brodeen-Kuo (Risk, Claims, and Litigation Advisor)

**Dates of RET process:** 8/2015 – 11/2015

**1. List the racial equity outcome(s) that you set in Step 1 of the RET process. (Max 300 characters)**

SPU mapped SPU damage claim incidents. Areas north of the Ship Canal and Downtown had higher numbers of claims filed (2011 – 2015). Staff determined there may be under-reporting (filing) from more racially-diverse and lower income communities. A more equitable outcome would be greater access-awareness of how to file a damage claim. (Note: This effort focused on access, and not the internal processing-handling of damage claims which is owned by FAS).

**2. Which stakeholders (groups and/or key individuals) did you engage in this RET? In what ways did you engage them? (Max 600 characters)**

Approval to go forward with the RET analysis of the damage claims process was provided by the SPU Risk and Quality Assurance (RQA) Board, comprised of the SPU Executive Team and City Attorney's Office. In addition to Steve Hamai and Elizabeth Brodeen-Kuo, the following were involved in applying the RET:

- SPU Risk and Quality Assurance Division Director
- SPU Senior Risk Analysts (2)
- SPU Communications Advisor
- City Assistant Attorney
- FAS Risk Management Division Director
- FAS Claims Processing Manager
- FAS Economist

Other City staff were contacted during this process (to gather information and receive feedback about customer awareness-accessibility to damage claims, and related information).

**3. 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. (Max 300 characters each)**

- The process to file a claim is not widely advertised or promoted
- Staff do not have standard messaging tools on how to describe the claim process
- The URL to access information about claims is cumbersome, and only advertised on the FAS website
- The damage claim form is somewhat technical in nature, and is only available in pdf format
- Staff have observed that lower income limited English speaking customers tend to struggle more in completing the process

**4. 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. (Max 300 characters each)**

- Link to damage claims on SPU's web homepage
- Provide annual refresher training to SPU field crews
- Shorten the URL and change/simplify the language within the Damage Claims form (FAS responsibility)
- Conduct deeper analysis of data to correlate race and other socio-economic indicators with claims (FAS responsibility)
- Apply RET to the handling/internal processing of claims (FAS responsibility)

**5. How will leadership ensure implementation of the actions described in question 4? (Max 800 characters)**

A summary memo listing specific follow up items was developed by the team and presented to the RQA Board in December 2015. A subsequent presentation to the FAS Chief of Staff and RSJI Change Team sponsor was conducted in January that also included the follow up items. For SPU staff, these deliverable items are listed in the Risk, Claims, and Litigation Advisor's 2016 work plan. FAS has also promised to apply the RET to the internal processing component of the damage claims process.

**6. 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.) (Max 800 characters)**

Final copies and a review of the Summary Memo was provided to all members who participated in the RET process, as well as key stakeholders within SPU and FAS. SPU staff will approach field crews to provide the messaging platform and refresher training. All departments partner with FAS in the damage claims process but a formal mechanism to report on this process and outcomes has not been scheduled.

**7. 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). (Max 800 characters)**

- Future need/opportunity to collect demographic data from claimants (would help create a customer baseline profile, determine whether racial inequity was occurring, and determine the effectiveness of future actions to address disparities)
- A need to obtain cross departmental executive initial buy-in and expectation-setting
- As appropriate, ability and prior agreement to expand (other) department participation in the RET process
- A mechanism (or time) to build minimum levels of RSJ competencies among all those participating in the RET process
- A clear pathway for cross department accountability on follow up items (after application of the RET)
- A established cross-department mechanism to report-out efforts and results