



# Racial Equity Toolkit

## to Assess Policies, Initiatives, Programs, and Budget Issues

The vision of the Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative is to eliminate racial inequity in the community. To do this requires ending [individual racism](#), [institutional racism](#) and [structural racism](#). The Racial Equity Toolkit lays out a process and a set of questions to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, initiatives, programs, and budget issues to address the impacts on racial equity.

### When Do I Use This Toolkit?

**Early.** Apply the toolkit early for alignment with departmental racial equity goals and desired outcomes.

### How Do I Use This Toolkit?

**With Inclusion.** The analysis should be completed by people with different racial perspectives.

**Step by step.** The Racial Equity Analysis is made up of six steps from beginning to completion:



# Racial Equity Toolkit Assessment Worksheet

**Title of policy, initiative, program, budget issue:**

**Description:**

**Department:**

**Contact:**

☐ Policy    ☐ Initiative    ☐ Program    ☐ Budget Issue

## Step 1. Set outcomes.

**1a. What does your department define as the most important racially equitable **community outcomes** related to the issue?** *(Response should be completed by department leadership in consultation with RSJI Executive Sponsor, Change Team Leads, and Change Team.)*

**1b. Which racial equity **opportunity area(s)** will the issue primarily impact?**

☐ Education  
☐ Community Development  
☐ Health  
☐ Environment

☐ Criminal Justice  
☐ Jobs  
☐ Housing

**1c. Are there impacts on:**

☐ Contracting Equity  
☐ Workforce Equity

☐ Immigrant and Refugee Access to Services  
☐ Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement

Please describe:

## Step 2. Involve stakeholders. Analyze data.

**2a. Are there impacts on geographic areas?** ☐ Yes    ☐ No

Check all neighborhoods that apply *(see map on p.5)*:

☐ All Seattle neighborhoods  
☐ Ballard  
☐ North  
☐ NE  
☐ Central

☐ Lake Union  
☐ Southwest  
☐ Southeast  
☐ Delridge  
☐ Greater Duwamish

☐ East District  
☐ King County (outside Seattle)  
☐ Outside King County

Please describe:

**2b. What are the racial demographics of those living in the area or impacted by the issue?**

(See Stakeholder and Data Resources pages 5 and 6)

**2c. How have you involved community members and stakeholders?**

(See page 5 for questions to ask community/staff to ensure their concerns and expertise are part of analysis.)

**2d. What does data and your conversations with stakeholders tell you about existing racial inequities that influence people's lives and should be taken into consideration?**

**2e. What are the root causes or factors creating these racial inequities?**

*Examples: Bias in process; Lack of access or barriers; Lack of racially inclusive engagement*

**Step 3. Determine benefit or burden.**

Given what you have learned from data and from stakeholder involvement...

**3. How will the policy, initiative, program, or budget issue increase or decrease racial equity?** What are potential unintended consequences? What benefits may result? Are the impacts aligned with your department's community outcomes that were defined in Step 1?

**Step 4. Advance opportunity or minimize harm.**

**4. How will you address the impacts (including unintended consequences) on racial equity?**

- What strategies address immediate impacts?
- What strategies address root causes of inequity listed in Question 6?
- How will you partner with stakeholders for long-term positive change?
- If impacts are not aligned with desired community outcomes, how will you re-align your work?

Program Strategies

Policy Strategies

Partnership Strategies

## Step 5. Evaluate. Raise racial awareness. Be accountable.

**5a. How will you evaluate and be accountable?** How will you evaluate and report impacts on racial equity? What is your goal and timeline for eliminating racial inequity? How will you retain stakeholder participation and ensure internal and public accountability? How will you raise awareness about this issue?

**5b. What is unresolved?** What resources/partnerships do you still need to make changes?

## Step 6. Report back.

Share analysis and report responses from Question 5a and Question 5b with Department Leadership, Change Team Leads, and Change Team members involved in Step 1.

## Creating Effective Community Outcomes

**Outcome = the result that you seek to achieve through your actions.**

**Racially equitable community outcomes = the specific result you are seeking to achieve that advances racial equity in the community.**

When creating outcomes think about:

- What are the greatest opportunities for creating change in the next year?
- What strengths does the department have that it can build on?
- What challenges, if met, will help move the department closer to racial equity goals?

Keep in mind that the City is committed to creating racial equity in seven key opportunity areas: **Education, Community Development, Health, Criminal Justice, Jobs, Housing, and the Environment.**

**Examples of community outcomes that increase racial equity:**

OUTCOME	OPPORTUNITY AREA
Increase transit and pedestrian mobility options in communities of color.	Community Development
Decrease racial disparity in the unemployment rat.	Jobs
Ensure greater access to technology by communities of color.	Community Development, Education, Jobs
Improve access to community center programs for immigrants, refugees, and people of color.	Health, Community Development
Communities of color are represented in the City's outreach activities.	Education, Health, Jobs, Environment, Housing, Criminal Justice
The racial diversity of the Seattle community is reflected in the City's workforce.	Jobs
Access to City contracts for Minority Business Enterprises is increased.	Jobs
Decrease racial disparity in high school graduation rates.	Education

# Identifying Stakeholders + Listening to Communities of Color

## Identify Stakeholders

Find out who are the **stakeholders** most affected by, concerned with, or have experience relating to the policy, program or initiative? Identify racial demographics of neighborhood or those impacted by issue.

### Once you have identified your stakeholders ....

#### Involve them in the issue.

Describe how historically underrepresented community stakeholders can take a leadership role in this policy, program, initiative or budget issue.

#### Listen to the community. Ask:

1. What do we need to know about this issue? How will the policy, program, initiative or budget issue burden or benefit the community? (*concerns, facts, potential impacts*)
2. What factors produce or perpetuate racial inequity related to this issue?
3. What are ways to minimize any negative impacts (harm to communities of color, increased racial disparities, etc) that may result? What opportunities exist for increasing racial equity?



#### Tip: Gather Community Input Through...

- Community meetings
- Focus groups
- Consulting with City commissions and advisory boards
- Consulting with Change Team

#### Examples of what this step looks like in practice:

- A reduction of hours at a community center includes conversations with those who use the community center as well as staff who work there.
- Before implementing a new penalty fee, people from the demographic most represented in those fined are surveyed to learn the best ways to minimize negative impacts.

## Glossary

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**Accountable:** Responsive to the needs and concerns of those most impacted by the issues you are working on, particularly to communities of color and those historically underrepresented in the civic process.

**Community outcomes:** The specific result you are seeking to achieve that advances racial equity.

**Contracting equity:** Efforts to achieve equitable racial outcomes in the way the City spends resources, including goods and services, consultants and contracting.

**Immigrant and refugee access to services:** Government services and resources are easily available and understandable to all Seattle residents, including non-native English speakers. Full and active participation of immigrant and refugee communities exists in Seattle's civic, economic and cultural life.

**Inclusive outreach and public engagement:** Processes inclusive of people of diverse races, cultures, gender identities, sexual orientations and socio-economic status. Access to information, resources and civic processes so community members can effectively engage in the design and delivery of public services.

**Individual racism:** Pre-judgment, bias, stereotypes about an individual or group based on race. The impacts of racism on individuals including white people internalizing privilege and people of color internalizing oppression.

**Institutional racism:** Organizational programs, policies or procedures that work to the benefit of white people and to the detriment of people of color, usually unintentionally or inadvertently.

**Opportunity areas:** One of seven issue areas the City of Seattle is working on in partnership with the community to eliminate racial disparities and create racial equity. They include: Education, Health, Community Development, Criminal Justice, Jobs, Housing and the Environment.

**Racial equity:** When social, economic and political opportunities are not predicted based upon a person's race.

**Racial inequity:** When a person's race can predict their social, economic, and political opportunities and outcomes.

**Stakeholders:** Those impacted by proposed policy, program or budget issue who have potential concerns or issue expertise. Examples might include: specific racial/ethnic groups, other institutions like Seattle Housing Authority, schools, community-based organizations, Change Teams, City employees, unions, etc.

**Structural racism:** The interplay of policies, practices and programs of multiple institutions which leads to adverse outcomes and conditions for communities of color compared to white communities that occurs within the context of racialized historical and cultural conditions.

**Workforce equity:** Ensure the City's workforce diversity reflects the diversity of Seattle and can predict their social, economic and political opportunities and outcomes.

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Racial Equity Toolkit Assessment Worksheet – LCLIP

**Description:** The LCLIP was created to allow the city to receive funding for infrastructure investments from future property tax revenues in areas that are designated to receive regional transfer of development to protect designated farm and forest land in rural areas. The South Lake Union and Downtown area designated to receive this funding was chosen because of its appropriateness and capacity to carry the additional development. This program will provide 25 years of funding for infrastructure improvements to parks and open spaces within the designated area. When the program was approved in 2013, the City proposed to stage the projects such that the first the first 10 years of funding would go toward streetscape and transportation projects managed by the Department of Transportation, the second 10 years of revenue would go to park projects managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the last 5 years again would go to streetscape projects managed by the Department of Transportation.

**Step 1. Set outcomes**

**1a. What does your department define as the most important racially equitable community outcomes related to the issue?**

The most important racially equitable community outcome is to ensure that systemic and historical racist practices and investment do not prevent participation of frontline community members in park and recreation programs, facilities, or assets funded by this program.

**1c. Impacts on Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement**

The LCLIP dictates that all funding be used within a Local Infrastructure Project Area (LIPA). The residents, workers, and visitors in the LIPA have been and will continue to be a key resource in the development of the Open Space Investments project list for SPR properties within the LIPA. However, frontline communities (those most affected by racism, oppression, and colonization) in all areas of our city have experienced inequitable public investment, exclusion from participatory city processes, and disregard when it comes to decision-making. This disinvestment and disregard often result in these individuals and groups experiencing displacement and/or a loss of their neighborhood and cultural identity, especially in rapidly densifying and redeveloping neighborhoods like South Lake Union, Belltown, Downtown and the Chinatown-International District where open space opportunities are already limited. The LIPA's population is comprised of 30% Asian and 8% Black or African American residents (compared to 17% and 6% citywide). Our intent is to ensure that all engagement throughout the implementation of this program allocates resources to adequately support meaningful inclusion of members of these frontline

communities in decision-making with reliable and consistent communication within a transparent and tailored engagement process. If these efforts are not successfully undertaken, the systemic and historical racism governments have practiced in the past will be perpetuated and further deterioration will occur to the frontline community members' and city's overall quality of life.

**2b. What are the racial demographics of those living in the area or impacted by the issue?**

White alone	49.11%
Black or African American alone	8.09%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.88%
Asian alone	30.24%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.26%
Some Other Race alone	2.87%
Population of two or more races:	8.56%
Population of three races:	0.79%
Population of four races:	0.10%
Population of five races:	0.01%
Population of six races:	0.00%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	2.34%

**2c. How have you involved community members and stakeholders?**

To date, SPR has used data from the racial and social equity map, the US Census, historical investment practices from our asset management system, and guidance from comprehensive planning efforts to establish a baseline for identifying frontline community groups for additional engagement. Additionally, SPR has also worked with colleagues at the Department of Neighborhoods and our community councils to identify established community advocacy groups, community leaders, and to understand barriers that have historically prohibited deeper engagement with frontline communities for park and open space development and programming. We have learned of priorities for community groups within the South Lake Union neighborhood as they were more formally established at the time planning began, however, we are currently working to establish connections with similar groups for the Downtown and Chinatown-International District neighborhoods. For future years, we will continue these efforts utilizing a neighborhood-led engagement

process that relies on both virtual and in-person tools that have been tailored to the language, cultural, and lived experience of residents.

**2d. What does data and your conversations with stakeholders tell you about existing racial inequities that influence people’s lives and should be taken into consideration?**

In denser areas of the city like the LIPA, residents have less access to open space both at home and within reasonable walking distance of their home. More residents live in high rise residential buildings as opposed to single-family neighborhoods with yards. Public spaces are generally limited to areas along the right-of-way designed to get people in and out of these areas quickly and efficiently, that do not reflect the more pedestrian-oriented lifestyles of residents. This lack of open space reduces the opportunities for residents to have more emotionally and physically healthy lifestyles. These conditions mean that the parks and opens spaces within this area receive more pressure and use than other areas of the city, resulting in higher maintenance needs and requirements for more multi-use areas to support the needs of the more diverse population. Limited space also means that certain uses are not feasible within the LIPA that can be provided elsewhere in the city.

**2e. What are the root causes or factors creating these racial inequities?**

Racial inequities in the provision of recreational facilities and assets originated from constraints on where in the city people could historically live in the first 70 years of the city’s history. It is documented that deeds for residential properties included deed covenants not allowing ownership by non-whites or even some religious groups (primarily Jewish). This was allowed nationwide until the federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 was enacted. For example, up until passage of this law, the only “open” neighborhoods for people of color were in the Central District and Chinatown-International District. It is not known how SPR provided services to these “open” neighborhoods during this period.

The effects of this multi-decade public disinvestment in “open” areas resulted in them being targeted for redevelopment. These areas were upzoned and grew exponentially with limited provisions for parks and open space to support the growing population. This growth also resulted in the displacement of existing residents contributing to a loss of representation/identity and strong cultural institutions. Those who remained were further marginalized. These issues have only very recently been openly and directly addressed by government practices.

**3. How will the policy, initiative, program, or budget issue increase or decrease racial equity?**

This program will help increase racial equity by utilizing the program's funding for projects and work that are most important to frontline community members within the LIPA. Investments will need to be well-designed to allow for easier maintenance, meet multiple interest groups' needs and desires, maximize usage, and support the emotional and physical well-being of the community. While this will not undo all the previous inequity, it will help create open spaces and assets that are more meaningful to user groups and comparable in quality to other areas of the city.

#### **4. Program Strategies:**

SPR will work to provide consistent maintenance of existing park assets and facilities and look to locate future open space investments in underserved areas based on the 2023 racial and social equity mapping. We will also use community partners and other City of Seattle colleagues to have a greater reach to underserved communities during public engagement opportunities.

#### **Policy Strategies:**

SPR will work to ensure inclusiveness in all public outreach events, planning, and development of future open space investments utilizing LCLIP funding.

#### **Partnership Strategies:**

SPR will work to help form various community workgroups or taskforces made up of individuals in the community that represent frontline community groups. These workgroups will help ensure more voices are heard during the planning phases of this work.

#### **5a. How will you evaluate and be accountable?**

Satisfaction surveys will be distributed during years 3, 6 and 10 of the program to help determine and guide the effectiveness of the outreach and work being undertaken. As such, SPR will seek to develop and review ways to identify the use of parks and open spaces in the LIPA by various racial and ethnic groups. This information will be useful for future planning for LCLIP and citywide projects. SPR will work to consistently collect demographic data of park users to help identify where gaps may exist and use this data to map future potential projects where racial inequalities or high percentage of people of color reside or work.

#### **5b. What is unresolved?**

SPR does not have the funding within this program or elsewhere in its budget to acquire additional park and open space land within the LIPA.