



## Racial Equity Toolkit Summary Sheet

Department:	Finance and Administrative Services (FAS)
Division (if applicable):	Seattle Animal Shelter (SAS)
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RET Title:	Fee Waiver Policy
RET Team:	Jocelyn Bouchard, Caryn Cantu and Ken Haymon
Start Date for RET Process:	Fall 2019
End Date for RET Process: <i>If applicable</i>	February 2024

This Summary Sheet should be completed by those who worked on this RET, with input from Change Team members and department leadership. Representatives from these different groups should review the final version so that there is consensus on content before it is submitted. For questions about the Summary Sheet, please contact [RSJI@seattle.gov](mailto:RSJI@seattle.gov).

Please respond to the following questions below. Brevity is appreciated. **When finished, this whole document should be 5 or less pages.**

1. What issue area (project, program, policy, or budgetary decision) did you apply the RET on? Why did you choose this issue area and RET topic?
2. What was your north star? What racial equity outcomes guided your thinking (RET Step 1)? How did you design and facilitate a process that was rooted in [relational culture](#)?
3. What data, stories, and communities did you engage with? What relationships did you develop, sustain, or deepen during this process? (RET Step 2)
4. How did these relationships help you to identify the burdens and benefits of your proposed work? What are the burdens? What are the benefits? (RET Step 3)

5. Please identify how the [four types of racism](#) (internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural) influenced your RET process and what you learned. (RET Step 3)
  6. As a result of the above analysis, how will you increase opportunity and/or minimize harm for the impacted community? (RET Step 4)
  7. What steps will the RET team take to ensure that department leadership will implement the recommendations from the RET?
  8. How will you become/remains accountable to the relationships developed during the RET process? How will you report back to your stakeholders?
  9. What additional racial equity issues did this RET reveal outside the scope of the RET project? How do these unresolved issues present opportunities for further structural transformation, including building a [relational culture](#)?
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### Enter Your Responses Below

1. What issue area (project, program, policy, or budgetary decision) did you apply the RET on? Why did you choose this issue area and RET topic?

The project we took on was looking at our fee waiver policy. This document allows for the waiving or reduction of fees associated with adoptions and redemptions and we wanted to ensure that it was equitable and removed barriers for pet owners trying to redeem lost or impounded pets.

2. What was your north star? What racial equity outcomes guided your thinking (RET Step 1)? How did you design and facilitate a process that was rooted in [relational culture](#)?

When we considered who we wanted to engage in this project we faced two challenges, determining how to reach and collect input from users or potential users, and wanting to reach additional potential stakeholders-- people that really may need the services who may not even be aware of them to begin with. We came up with a plan that relied on direct mail from existing contacts and direct contacts through outreach activities.

Budget, the onset of COVID 19 and the hiring freeze resulted in several strategy shifts. Ultimately, we determined that much of this could be accomplished through leveraging existing activities (Field contacts, petfood banks and other existing outreach) and creating new partnerships. We reached out to partners to help us distribute a survey that asked some initial questions and enabled a contact list that we could use to create a stakeholder panel. Between their connections and ours we distributed a survey that resulted in 173 responses.

The survey closed at the end of December 2021, and we planned to identify people from the survey who can serve on a stakeholder panel. We lacked success with that endeavor and spent most of the next two years trying to get together a stakeholder panel. As it became clear that this was going to continue to be a challenge, we looked at other avenues to determine ways to create more equitable policies for the fee waiver process.

These avenues included reaching out to other organizations and individuals that were already doing work in this space.

**3. What data, stories, and communities did you engage with? What relationships did you develop, sustain, or deepen during this process? (RET Step 2)**

Animal Welfare groups and organizations doing work in this area, Seattle’s Department of Neighborhoods (DON), Ken Haymon’s relationships within the FAS change team. SAS’s own work in outreach and expanded efforts in BIPOC communities.

**4. How did these relationships help you to identify the burdens and benefits of your proposed work? What are the burdens? What are the benefits? (Step 3)**

Many of our discussions with groups like DON provided real life examples and differing perspectives. We were also able to identify areas of success other animal welfare groups had in this space. The burdens of our work include ensuring that we are able to lead and support the community in keeping pets and their families together, healthy and safe. The benefits are the opportunities to be able to promote the humane and compassionate treatment of people and animals through equity, innovation and collaboration.

**5. Please identify how the [four types of racism](#) (internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural) influenced your RET process and what you learned. (RET Step 3)**

Our RET had many conversations about how SAS in general has contributed to these four areas of racism and our goal was to create a document that eliminated or at least greatly decreased the ability for any one of these influences to impact the fee waiver process.

We created some parameters so staff responsible for applying and/or approving waivers would be less able to use personal judgements in their decisions.

We allowed for multiple opportunities for people to obtain fee waivers, recognizing that financial challenges are often ongoing and not stagnant or one-time situations for many of our citizens.

One of the biggest changes we made was no longer requiring spay/neuter to obtain a fee waiver. This was a long-standing practice in animal welfare that disrespected people’s personal beliefs and practices and typically fractured relationships and trust within segments of our community.

**6. As a result of the above analysis, how will you increase opportunity and/or minimize harm for the impacted community? (RET Step 4)**

We did this by updating the policy to eliminate and/or change rigid requirements and open eligibility however, discussion held in staff meetings and beyond have helped to open up these conversations and create awareness of our own judgements and personal responsibilities in the four types of racism. |

**7. What steps will the RET team take to ensure that department leadership will implement the recommendations from the RET?**

The new SOP was implemented April 1, 2024. |

**8. How will you become/remain accountable to the relationships developed during the RET process? How will you report back to your stakeholders?**

This work continues through the SAS ASSET team (similar to the FAS change team) who, among other activities, now regularly join leadership meetings and also have a standing agenda item at all staff meetings. |

**9. What additional racial equity issues did this RET reveal outside the scope of the RET project? How do these unresolved issues present opportunities for further structural transformation, including building a [relational culture](#)?**

Our ASSET team at SAS really carries on this work for our division however as we continue our work towards being more community-centric these issues are constantly being identified and create ongoing opportunities for transformation at all levels of the work we do. |