



**EQUITY & INCLUSION OFFICE
IMPACT REPORT
September 2021 to October 2022**

Municipalities are the level of government closest to people, where decisions have profound impacts on everyday community life as well as policy, service delivery, and civic engagement. We have the responsibility to provide services that create a sense of equity, inclusion, and belonging for community members of diverse backgrounds and those who have been historically excluded from decisions, leadership, processes, and resources. Our office is invested in creating an inclusive community through access, communication, and trust-building.

The Equity and Inclusion Office guides and empowers departments in developing and applying an equity lens to their work. Equity work is everyone’s work and we need equitable practices to achieve equitable outcomes for the community. Everyone has a role to play, so it is vital that we all understand why equity is important and how our everyday decision-making can work towards providing equitable services and cultivating inclusive work and community environments for all.

How we work and relate to one another within the organization reflects on how we work and are inclusive of all identities and recognize the systems of oppression in the way of achieving equitable outcomes in the community. We are committed to investing in relationships with staff and building internal capacity to do equity work so we can co-create a more inclusive Fort Collins.

BUILDING THE EQUITY OFFICE

- August 2021 Claudia Menendez, Equity officer hired
- January 2022 Rachael Johnson, Sr. Equity Specialist hired
- May 2022 Jeni Kohles, Employee Relations & Compliance Lead Specialist hired
- November 2022 (hiring pending)- Native American Community Relations Specialist

EQUITY INDICATORS PROJECT

In 2019, City Council adopted equity and inclusion as a Council priority and supported the funding of the Equity Indicators Project. In 2020, the City partnered with CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance to start the work and the final report was issued in March 2021.

Since then, the Equity Office and team of collaborators created an indicators dashboard to display 3 out of 10 equity domains. The first three domains we are digging deeper into are: criminal justice & public safety, economic health & opportunity, and housing.

The purpose of the dashboard is to provide a place where the public can learn about the inequities affecting communities of color in Fort Collins. The dashboard is one way to share information and track progress being made to increase equity within and across the 10 domains.

You can see the three published domains to date here: <https://ftcollinscap.clearpointstrategy.com/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/>

All domains and indicators can be found in the full [Equity Indicators Report](#).

Equity Indicators Project Activities to Date:

- April 28- Criminal Justice and Housing Community Forum
 - 110 attendees (including community and staff)
 - Collaboration between Equity Indicators team, Fort Collins Police Services (Jeff Swoboda and team), and Housing and Homelessness team (Brittany Depew, Meaghan Overton)
- July 21- Economic Opportunity Community Forum
 - 50 attendees (including community and staff)
 - Collaboration between Equity Indicators team and City of Fort Collins Economic Health team (SeonAh Kendall, Shannon Hein, Edgar Ramos, bilingual community panel)
- October 26 – Community Conversation on Affordable Housing with Elevation Land Trust
 - Moving the needle on equity and exploring root causes and offering solutions: Digging into housing data, equity indicators, and possibilities of homeownership with the Housing team and Elevation Community Land Trust- <https://www.elevationclt.org/>

Equity Indicators team: Nick Heimann, Rachael Johnson, Javier Echeverria, Adelle McDaniel, Jill Marx, Leo Escalante, Sarah Thomaz

Fort Collins Police Services: Jeff Swoboda and team, Mental Health Response Team, Kate Kimble

Housing and Homelessness team: Brittany Depew, Meaghan Overton, Sue Beck-Ferkiss

Economic Health team: SeonAh Kendall, Shannon Hein, Edgar Ramos

Next Steps:

- The Equity Office has been working with the Economic Health Team and the Equity and Opportunity Assessment data and maps project. This work is focused on using census data to understand stages of vulnerability and areas of opportunity for investment and prioritizing projects and services at the neighborhood level. This work was shared with ELT on October 14
- Additional qualitative and quantitative details will be added to the dashboard as they are identified, collected, and built for publishing.
- Build implementation plans with appropriate departments that commit the City to addressing the disparities shown in the data and creating systems of accountability to ensure progress.
- Create a community advisory circle to the Equity Office- we value community engagement, civic participation and community input to shape the next steps of the equity indicator projects

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Equity & Inclusion Office takes great pride in building trust through strong relationships with community groups, institutions, and agencies working with the community. These partnerships are essential to advancing equity for all and creating a city where all identities are included and experience a sense of belonging. Equitable support is offered to match the needs of each group and can include services such as interpretation and

translation services, space for community to gather and organize, celebrations, and spaces for learning, growing, and thriving. Since the creation of Equity Office in August of 2021, many community-led events have been supported by the City. Some events are not new, but the city collaboration and support is newly established. Some events are new collaborations altogether.

COLLABORATIONS AND SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES:

- January 16: Dr. Martin Luther King Community Celebration (500 attendees)
- NEW January 25: Native American Community Meeting (30 attendees)
- NEW March 25: Native American Community Meeting (20 attendees)
- NEW March—June: Culture Classes led by NICPA- Northern CO Intertribal Powwow Association (100 attendees)
- April 8-10: Northern CO Intertribal Powwow Association (NICPA) Powwow (1000 attendees)
- NEW April 28: Equity Indicators Community Forum- Criminal Justice and Housing (110 attendees)
- NEW April 30: Día del Niño (400 attendees)
- June 14: Pride Proclamation and reception (75 attendees)
- NEW June 14: Hattie McDaniel Proclamation and reception (75 attendees)
- NEW June 17-19: Juneteenth Community Event; Proclamation reading and reception (75 attendees)
- NEW June 17-21: Summer Solstice Encampment at Hughes (100 attendees)
- NEW July 19: Pride Celebration (3000 attendees)
- NEW July 20- This Thing We Call Bias- Human Relations Commission Collaboration (80 attendees)
- NEW July 21: Equity Indicators Community Forum- Economic Opportunity Panel (50 attendees)
- July 28: Bias Training w Human Relations Commission (75 attendees)
- August 25: Juneteenth Planning Committee Retreat (20 attendees)
- NEW September 18: Hispanic Heritage Month Community Celebration (600 attendees)
- NEW October 4- Indigenous Peoples' Day Resolution and community reception ([view Flickr photo album here](#))
- NEW October 19- This Thing We Call Bias- Human Relations Commission Collaboration (90 attendees)

COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS AND CONNECTIONS

It has been a privilege and honor to present to various community groups over the last year. Community groups and individuals have a genuine interest in better understanding more about diversity, equity, and inclusion how it impacts them and how they can be supportive and contributing towards creating a more equitable Fort Collins. These presentations are an educational opportunity and a chance for community feedback, engagement and promotion of City services and programs.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larimer County Departments • Rotary Club • League of Women Voters • Commitment to Self and Society • Human Relations Commission • Senior Advisory Board • Youth Advisory Board • Disability Advisory Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Presbyterian Church • Poudre River Library Board of Directors • CSU Multicultural Staff • CSU College of Natural Resources • FCPS Community Advisory Committee • Alianza Norco • Latinx Community Network • Youth Celebrate Diversity |
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INTERNAL EQUITY & INCLUSION WORK

In the last year, our team has learned about the City organization systems and developed relationships with departments and teams across the organization. The Equity Office provides consultation and guidance to all service areas and departments on diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices. This work is not outwardly visible, but it's some of the most important work that we do. The Equity Office has contributed to many city-wide processes and given presentations to groups and at staff meetings, thus playing a role in embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion into day-to-day work across the City. Following are spaces where we have supported internal capacity-building and contributed to building a culture of equity, inclusion and belonging:

- Equity Rapid Response Team –
 - This team of dedicated staff members meet to advise the Equity Office on such things as looking over language and definitions, curating lists of resources, important topics to address, how to organize the work of the equity office, and general support for addressing DEI issues and next steps (DeAngelo Bowden, Angela Pena, Leo Escalante, Megan DeMasters, Kate Kimble, Nick Heimann, Lawrence Pollack, Claire Turney, Marisa Olivas, Jennifer Leija-Bonnart, Rachael Johnson, Claudia Menendez)
- Light and Power staff meeting
- Utilities Sr. staff meeting
- Parks Equity Team
- PDT Equity Team
- Human Resources Talent Development
- Sustainability Department: Our Climate Future, economic health, social sustainability
- Planning, Development, and Transportation: equity committee, traffic operations staff meeting, Transfort support
- Budgeting for Outcomes; updating sellers guide
- 2022 Strategic Plan process
- Employee Resource Groups support, strategic thinking, and collaboration
 - WomenFocus
 - ENCORE
 - PRIDE
 - Caregivers Alliance
- Executive Leadership Team
- City Attorney's Office DEI team meetings
- Community Services: Recreation, Natural Areas, Arts and Culture, Park Planning and Development, Parks equity committee
- Hughes Land Engagement process
- Managing at the City- Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2022
- All Managers Meeting- planning committee
- Racial Justice Curriculum – facilitator training; ongoing work with this team
- Mission, Vision, Values and Principles of Community Project
- Publishing Equity Office SharePoint Site (internal use; CPIO and Human Resources collaboration)

- Native American Community Work- Land Acknowledgement Project, Indigenous Peoples Day Resolution (Oct 4th at Council), Indigenous Community Relations Specialist and budget for community-led initiatives, Natural Areas consultation related to plant gathering and Soapstone excavation, community working groups
- GARE Conference support
- Title VI Language Access support
- Americans with Disabilities Act – compliance and project support
- Employee relations and protected classes community concerns

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The Equity Office act as staff liaisons to Disability Advisory Board (DAB) and Human Relations Commission (HRC). These are valued partnerships with community members who selflessly dedicate their time to build a more equitable and inclusive Fort Collins.

The Disability Advisory Board:

- Their focus on safety is to meet with Police Chief Jeff Swoboda and Fire Chief Derek Bergsten regarding staff training approaches and program procedures when interacting with people with disabilities.
- Transportation is continuously a key area of focus for the DAB to address the City’s initiatives and abilities to provide accessibility within local transportation systems, specifically Dial-a-Ride and Dial-a-Taxi Service Offerings
- To create a community of inclusivity takes planning and commitment. The DAB plans to partner with the City and other community advocates to review and discuss barriers in recruitment and hiring practices so that all can take part in the process. The DAB will recognize employers who hire people with disabilities through the annual Community Recognition Awards program in 2023.
- In 2023, additional focus will include providing a high-quality built environment, support quality, diverse neighborhoods and foster social health of the community, and to provide diverse cultural and recreational amenities through Culture and Recreation programs.

Human Relations Commission

- The Human Relations Commission was established by City Council to enhance the acceptance and respect for diversity through educational programs and activities, and to embrace inclusion of individuals reflective of characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, physical abilities/qualities, sex, sexual /affectional orientation, age, culture, different ideas and perspectives, familial status, immigration status, geographic background, marital status, national origin, religious and spiritual beliefs, socioeconomic status, and veteran status. The Commission often coordinates these efforts with other City boards and commissions, community groups and organizations.
- The Commission presents the annual Human Relations Award to recognize those citizens who have advanced the cause of human rights through their volunteer efforts.
- HRC and the Equity Office have partnered to host two community trainings (July 20 and Oct 19) titled “This thing we call Bias”. The training is focused on recognizing and combatting bias in our lives so we can fully see diversity, equity and inclusion in the community.

Upcoming Work October-December 2022:

The greatest challenge the Equity Office faces is distilling the broad concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion into a work plan that represents the diverse needs, hopes, and desires of the community. The equity team is writing an equity plan and will be sharing a draft with staff at the November equity retreat. This is an opportunity for staff to contribute to the plan. There will also be an opportunity for community to contribute and provide feedback towards building an equity plan that reflects the community's needs. The Equity Office will create a community advisory circle to form two-way communication between the equity office and community members.

- Equity & Inclusion Staff Retreat (November 3)
- Equity Workplan Draft for 2023-24
- Community Advisory Circle- share draft plan for community input; partnership with HRC
- Foundations of Equity & Inclusion (Oct, Nov, Dec 3 part series with Dr. Cori Wong for 100 employees)
- Racial Justice Curriculum – facilitator training and modules 2-5 pilot phase
- ADA Parks transition plan
- ADA IT transition plan
- Native American Community Relations- community working groups and development of an advisory circle in conjunction with Larimer County
- Collaboration between the Equity Office, CSU, and the National Western Center to bring the Fort Collins Native community to Denver to explore sustainable land practices including permaculture and Indigenous methods (inspired by the Summer Solstice Encampment at Hughes). This will serve as the kickoff for a Fort Collins Indigenous community garden, a collaboration with the Gardens on Spring Creek.
- Initial BIPOC community agencies group meeting with City Manager – exploring strategic outcome areas and other areas of interest.