Equity and Inclusion Resource Guide

In this challenging time, staff seeking to embed equity and inclusion into their work can use this guide to strengthen understanding and capacity while also reviewing a concrete example of how these concepts were applied to a previous work project. With our current local, state and national reality, keeping equity considerations top of mind will help minimize impacts to historically under-represented and under-resourced community members.

If you choose to use this tool in your work, the Rapid Response team would love to hear about the experience and if/how it made an impact. Please contact Janet Freeman at jfreeman@fcgov.com.

"Just in Time" Equity Assessment

You and your team can utilize these questions and information to help you lead with race in your projects. The information below is specifically geared towards quickly addressing racial equity during this challenging time.

What are the desired results and outcomes of your project based on your proposal?

- What are the intended results for the community? What areas of the community could this impact?
  - Children and youth
  - Community engagement
  - Contracting equity
  - Criminal justice
  - Economic development
  - Education
  - Environment
  - Food access and affordability
  - Government practices
  - Health
  - Housing
  - Human services
  - Jobs
  - Planning and development
  - Transportation
  - Utilities
  - Workforce equity
- What are the outcomes for the organization?
  - Your performance measures should answer: how much did we do, how well did we do it, is anyone better off?

Proposal, Results, and Outcomes	Determine the major proposal of your project.	What areas of the community will this impact and how? (i.e. housing, health, jobs, economic development, etc)	What are the outcomes for the organization and your department? (should be able to answer: how much did you do, how well did you do it, and is anyone better off)

What about data?

Because of the current state of the world, the amount of time and resources you may have for data collection could be quite limited. While measurement is important in demonstrating outcomes and results, that does not need to limit the action that you take now. Consider:

- Do you have existing data on who you are serving and how that could benefit the racial equity of your project?

- Absence of data is data in itself! If you are missing communication with groups that city census data shows are present, that in itself could be informing you on who you are missing in your project.
- Think about real time material needs during this time of crisis as data as well (i.e. food supplies, personal protective equipment, shelter, internet access)
- Will specific areas of the city be impacted more than others?

How do (and should) we engage during this time?

Engagement, especially with the City of Fort Collins, can largely be an in-person, large group endeavor. Social distancing and Stay at Home orders can make connecting and collaborating with communities far more difficult. Again, do not let this stop you from pursuing racial equity within your projects.

- There are various online engagement platforms that work well for connecting with external stakeholders. Zoom, GoToMeetings, OurCity, and social media are all viable ways of involving communities in your project. If you do decide to do virtual engagement, consider how you can make the activity feel more personal, comfortable, and accessible for all.
  - **HOWEVER:** We need to recognize that online engagement is both an opportunity AND a barrier. Keep in mind that many people you are trying to engage with may not have access to a computer, internet, or a smart phone.
  - Consider if now is the appropriate time to be engaging on a deeper level for your project. Life has changed drastically and differently for every person.
- Understand historical relationships different communities have with the government.
  - The government has had a historical role in perpetuating racial inequities.
  - Some communities may not trust having conversations with government staff because of their citizenship status or historical interactions with the government.
- Engagement is just as much about collecting feedback as it is about building relationships and trust with historically underrepresented communities.

Engagement	How have you engaged with stakeholders previously? How has that/might that change based on current circumstances?	Utilize data to understand who the most impacted/influential stakeholders are. Who has historically been "left behind" in your work?	Are there ways to connect to your stakeholders online? Consider if now is an appropriate time to be communicating with stakeholders on this project.

Who is going to benefit or be burdened by your project?

Understanding who will be burdened or benefited from the results and outcomes of your project will give you the space to lead with race.

- What are some unintended consequences that could come from your project? How can your project be modified to enhance positive impacts and reduce negative impacts?

- Does your project align with other initiatives at the city? Utilizing existing knowledge of racial equity can increase the success of leading with race in your project, and can create opportunities in other areas.

Impact	What are some unintended consequences – especially to communities of color -- that could come from your project?	Who will disproportionately benefit or be burdened by the outcomes and results of this project? Why/how?	How can you adapt to enhance positive impacts and decrease negative impacts, especially to communities of color? Will these adaptations create other unintended impacts?

How are you planning to implement the project?

Consider the unintended consequences, existing data or gaps, and impacts of the project. This information will help you to create a thoughtful implementation that will help you to focus more on racial equity.

- Is the implementation plan you created realistic? Is it adequately funded and staffed?
- Are there other projects you can partner with in order to share resources?
- Are you reporting out about the project and how you are focusing on racial equity?

How are you ensuring accountability and communicating?

- Is what you are saying you are doing matching with what the community is saying or doing?
    - **EXAMPLE:** The Social Sustainability department's strategic plan stated that **all residents and visitors in Fort Collins should feel valued, safe and connected.** However in 2017, the immigrant community told staff they were feeling the exact opposite of this, and were experiencing persistent fear that was negatively impacting their quality of life. The department performed a root cause analysis to determine what the disparity between those who felt safe and those who didn't was. Staff worked to gain insights and perspectives from the community, meeting folks in spaces considered safe and working to mitigate barriers to participation by offering interpretation services, childcare, and providing food.

      During this process, we learned people were experiencing persistent fears around police interfacing, accessing city services, being out in the community, and more. The question then became:

      "How could the City alleviate fear and remove barriers to participation in City services?"

      Staff brought forward a resolution that was passed by Council, directing the City manager to create a task force to work on these issues. Critically, the task force was composed of participants who were directly impacted by immigration issues, or their advocates. The task force met for six months, and during that time, provided input on suggested policy changes in our police manuals, ways in which the City could work to strengthen mutual trust, and more.

To date, the work done in 2017 continues to guide our efforts to better serve members of our immigrant communities. The process by which this was accomplished was what we would now consider applying a racial equity lens, and the lessons learned about how to engage with historically under-represented populations can be applied to any marginalized group.

While not intended to be comprehensive, hopefully this resource guide can help equip staff with key concepts and tools for centering equity and inclusion in their work, especially as we move through this challenging time. That said, we know this is new for a lot of folks and SSA's Racial Equity Rapid Response team can help serve as thought partners for using the tool, much in the way staff currently deploys for Triple Bottom Line scans. **For more information, or assistance with using this tool, feel free to reach out to Janet Freeman at** jfreeman@fcgov.com.

Additional Resources

Definitions, Terms & Strategic Objectives: https://www.fcgov.com/socialsustainability/equity.php
GARE Racial Equity Toolkit: https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARE-Racial_Equity_Toolkit.pdf