

CITY OF IOWA CITY
UNESCO CITY OF LITERATURE

Equity Impact Review Tool

SOURCE MATERIAL FROM KING COUNTY EQUITY IMPACT REVIEW TOOL 2010.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Historically, government has played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequity. With the advent of the civil rights movement, government began to take on a new identity.

However, despite progress in addressing explicit discrimination, racial inequities continue to be deep, pervasive and persistent across the country. Racial inequities exist across all indicators for success, including in education, criminal justice, jobs, housing, public infrastructure, and health, regardless of region. Clearly, addressing individual acts of discrimination is not sufficient.

A focus on racial equity in local government is critically important to getting to different outcomes in our communities. The goal must be beyond closing the gap; we must establish appropriate benchmarks that lift up all populations while paying close attention to those often excluded. Advancing equity moves us beyond just focusing on disparities. Deeply racialized systems are costly and depress outcomes and life chances for all groups. A focus on racial equity means strategies are targeted based on the needs of a particular group, but there are improvements for all groups. Systems that are failing communities of color are actually failing all of us. Racial equity increases our collective success *and* is cost effective.

Local government has the ability to implement policy change at multiple levels and across multiple sectors to drive larger systemic change. For example, many local jurisdictions have worked to reduce recidivism and racial inequity by implementing “ban the box” legislation for use of criminal background checks in employment decisions. This has led to adoption of this policy by the state of Minnesota, and as a result, a major corporation headquartered in Minneapolis, Target, changed their policy not only at the state level but nationally.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GOVERNMENT

Lessons learned can help to inform our collective work on equity, including the following:

- **Analysis:** Jurisdictions need to use a racial equity framework that clearly articulates the differences between individual, institutional, and structural racism, as well as implicit and explicit bias.
- **Capacity:** Jurisdictions need to be committed to the breadth and depth of institutional transformation so that impacts are sustainable. While the leadership of elected officials is critical, changes take place on the ground, and infrastructure that creates racial equity experts and teams throughout local government is necessary.
- **Tools:** Racial inequities are not random; they have been created and sustained over time. These inequities will not disappear on their own. Tools must be used to change the policies, programs, and practices that are perpetuating inequities.
- **Data and metrics:** Measurement must take place at two levels – first, to measure the success of specific programmatic and policy changes, and second, to develop baselines, set goals, and measure progress towards goals. Use of data in this manner is necessary for accountability.
- **Partnering:** The work of local government on racial equity is necessary, but it is not sufficient. To achieve racial equity in the community, local government must be working in partnership with community and other institutions to achieve meaningful results.
- **Urgency:** While there is often a belief that change is hard and takes time, we have seen repeatedly that when change is a priority and urgency is felt, change is embraced and can take place quickly. Collectively, we must create greater urgency and public will to achieve racial equity.

Racial Equity: The Responsibility and Opportunity for Local Governments by Julie Nelson, 2014. Julie Nelson is the, Senior Vice-President, Race Forward / Center for Social Inclusion Director, Government Alliance on Race and Equity Senior Fellow, Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, University of California, Berkeley.

Equity Impact Review Toolkit

This tool, which consists of 3 Stages, will offer a systematic way of gathering information to inform planning and decision-making about public policies, services and programs which impact equity in Iowa City. The 3 Stages are as follows:

Stage I What is the impact of the proposal on determinants of equity?

The aim of the first stage is to determine whether the proposal will have an impact on equity or not.

Stage II Assessment: Who is affected?

This stage identifies who is likely to be affected by the proposal.

Stage III Impact review: Opportunities for action.

The third stage involves identifying the impacts of the proposal from an equity perspective. The goal is to develop a list of likely impacts and actions to ensure that negative impacts are mitigated and positive impacts are enhanced.

The Equity Impact Review (EIR) tool is both a process and a tool to identify, evaluate, and communicate the potential impact - both positive and negative - of a policy or program on equity. Prior to beginning the process, City staff should be familiar with relevant definitions and proper language and terms.

"Equity" means all people have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to attain their full potential. Equity differs from equality in that the latter gives each person the same thing to achieve fairness, whereas equity gives each person what they need to achieve fairness.

Relevant definitions include:

Bias, attitudes or preferences that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions.

Community, a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.

Culture, the embodiment of an individual's identity, way of life, shared history, practices, experiences and world view.

Determinants of equity, the social, economic, geographic, political and physical environment conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age that lead to the creation of a fair and just society. Access to the determinants of equity is necessary to have equity for all people regardless of race, class, gender or language spoken. Inequities are created when barriers exist that prevent individuals and communities from accessing these conditions and reaching their full potential.

Diversity, variation in groups based on any attribute people use to tell themselves that another person is different.

Equity, the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

Language, how we identify persons is another important factor to consider when discussing equity. Words are powerful and any language used should be conscious of this fact and respectful.

For example, using:

- Resident instead of citizen.
- Racially diverse groups, persons from historically underrepresented groups, persons of color, or racial, ethnic, and religious minorities instead of just minorities or diversity.
- Persons with disabilities instead of disabled.
- People living in poverty instead of poor people.
- People who are homeless instead of homeless people.
- Young people versus youth.
- LGBTQ people instead of gays or lesbians.

Special population, a term that is generally used to refer to a disadvantaged group. Depending on the context it may encompass single parents, race/ethnicity, income levels, limited English proficiency, medically vulnerable children, individuals who are homeless, and others.

Stage I: Selecting a policy, procedure, program or service.

To be effective, a policy, procedure, program or service should impact a determinant(s) of equity?

Department and/or division:

What is the policy, procedure, program or service?

A. Describe the proposal (include objectives and general geographic area of focus):

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B. Why is this being selected to evaluate?

C. What are the intended outcomes?

Stage I: Highlight or check the determinant(s) of equity that may be affected by the proposal.

If the proposal does not have any possible effect on a determinant of equity, another policy, procedure, program or service should be selected.

- Equity in City practices** that eliminates all forms of discrimination in city activities in order to provide fair treatment for all employees, contractors, clients, community partners, residents and others who interact with the City;
- Jobs** that provide all residents with the knowledge and skills to compete in a diverse workforce and with the ability to make sufficient income for the purchase of basic necessities to support them and their families;
- Community economic development** that supports local ownership of assets, including homes and businesses, and assures fair access for all to business development and retention opportunities;
- Housing** for all people that is safe, affordable, high quality and healthy;
- Education** that is high quality and culturally appropriate and allows each student to reach his or her full learning and career potential;
- Early childhood development** that supports nurturing relationships, high-quality affordable child care and early learning opportunities that promote optimal early childhood development and school readiness for all children;
- Healthy built and natural environments** for all people that includes mixes of land use that support: jobs, housing, amenities and services; trees and forest canopy; clean air, water, soil and sediment;
- Community and public safety** that includes services such as fire, police, emergency medical services and code enforcement that are responsive to all residents so that everyone feels safe to live, work and play in any neighborhood;
- A law and justice system** that provides equitable access and fair treatment for all;
- Neighborhoods that support all communities** and individuals through strong social networks, trust among neighbors and the ability to work together to achieve common goals that improve the quality of life for everyone in the neighborhood;
- Transportation** that provides everyone with safe, efficient, affordable, convenient and reliable mobility options including public transit, walking, carpooling and biking.
- Food systems** that support local food production and provide access to affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate foods for all people;
- Parks and natural resources** that provide access for all people to safe, clean and quality outdoor spaces, facilities and activities that appeal to the interests of all communities; and
- Health and human services** that are high quality, affordable and culturally appropriate and support the optimal well-being of all people;

Proceed to Stage II

Stage II: Equity Assessment.

This stage identifies who is likely to be affected by the proposal by using data to identify the population group(s) that may experience a differential impact. At the end of this stage, you will be able to identify which communities will benefit and which communities are burdened. For example, are the impacts disproportionately greater for communities of color, communities that are low income, or limited English proficiency? Detailed descriptions using maps, charts, tables, or graphs work best for this assessment.

Some of the following resources may assist in determining who may be impacted.

- Iowa City Census data;
- Geographic Information System Mapping Technology;
- Department or division specific data;
- Data on consumers of services;
- Data on community partners or contractors who provide services (they may also be a source of data);
- Surveying community members;
- Relevant research or literature.

Highlight or check the type of proposal:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A city-wide proposal | <i>If yes: Go to S.II.A.1</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A proposal focused on a specific geographic area | <i>If yes: Go to S.II.A.2</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A capital project | <i>If yes: Go to S.II.A.3</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A proposal focused on a special population | <i>If yes: Go to S.II.A.4</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> An internal city proposal | <i>If yes: Go to S.II.A.5</i> |

Stage II – A. Who is Affected?

S.II.A.1. IF CITY-WIDE PROPOSALS: identify population characteristics and maps relevant to the population most directly affected (attach maps or other data as necessary).

[When S.II.A.1 is complete, proceed to S.II.B.1]

S.II.A.2. IF SPECIFIC GEOGRAPHIC REGION(S): identify the demographics of the area, particularly by race/ethnicity, income level and limited English proficiency (attach maps or other data as necessary).

[When S.II.A.1 is complete, proceed to S.II.B.2]

S.II.A.3. IF CAPITAL PROJECT: identify both population characteristics and maps relevant to the entire City, as well as geographic areas or specific populations that are specifically targeted in this proposal (attach maps or other data as necessary).

[When S.II.A.3 is complete, proceed to S.II.B.3]

S.II.A.4. IF SPECIAL POPULATION(S) (not defined geographically): identify the demographics of the population, particularly by race/ethnicity, income level and limited English proficiency (attach maps or other data as necessary).

[When S.II.A.4 is complete, proceed to S.II.B.1]

S.II.A.5. IF INTERNAL CITY PROPOSAL: identify the demographics of the department, division, or area of focus for the proposal, particularly by race/ethnicity and income level as the data is available.

[When S.II.A.4 is complete, proceed to S.II.B.1]

Stage II - B. Analysis.

Using the assessment information above, review and interpret your findings to determine which population group(s) will benefit and which will not. (These are the groups identified above in responses to SII.A.1, 2, 3, or 4). Any research, data, analysis and community feedback would be placed here.

S.II.B.1. Please list race/ethnicity and low-income groups positively or negatively affected by the proposal.

S.II.B.2. If the proposal is not city-wide, provide information for why you selected this geographic area instead of other areas of the City where the impact on low-income communities, communities of color, and LEP communities may be equal or greater.

S.II.B.3. For capital projects, will this project have a negative or positive impact on the surrounding community or increase the current burdens to that community? (YES or NO) If yes, please describe.

Proceed to Stage III

Stage III: Actions to mitigate/enhance negative/positive impact.

This stage involves identifying the impacts of the proposal from an equity perspective. The goal is to develop a list of likely impacts and actions to ensure that negative impacts are mitigated and positive impacts are enhanced.

Complete Column 1 of the Stage III.A Worksheet by using the responses listed in Stage II.B.1, B.2, or B.3.

STAGE III.A. WORKSHEET

(1) Population(s) Affected Disproportionately <small>(populations from S.II.B.1 list)</small>	(2) Describe Potential Positive Impact (Beneficial)	(3) Describe Potential Negative Impact (Adverse)	(4) Actions to enhance positive or mitigate negative/other comments <small>(these responses also complete the first column of S.III.B worksheet)</small>

Proceed to Stage III.B

Columns 2 and 3 are a detailed discussion of the positive and negative impacts of the proposal on the identified population by groups, for example, race/ethnicity, or income and limited English speakers. In Column 4, describe any recommendations or actions which arise from your discussions about impact.

These might include:

- Ways in which the program/policy could be modified to enhance positive impacts, to reduce negative impacts for identified population groups;
- Ways in which benefits of modifying program/policy to remove differential impacts outweigh the costs or disadvantages of doing so;
- Ways in which existing partnerships could be strengthened to benefit the most affected.

Stage III.A. WORKSHEET

(1) Population(s) Affected Disproportionately (populations from S.II.B.1 list)	(2) Describe Potential Positive Impact (Beneficial)	(3) Describe Potential Negative Impact (Adverse)	(4) Actions to enhance positive or mitigate negative/other comments (these responses also complete the first column of S.III.B worksheet)

Proceed to Stage III.B

Stage III.B: Prioritization of Actions.

In this stage, participants are encouraged to prioritize or rank the actions based on the likelihood to impact equity. It may prove impossible to consider all potential impacts and identified actions.

For each of the actions the following should be considered:

- The costs of the action;
- Is the impact on equity high or low;
- What needs to happen to increase the feasibility of the action;
- What other resources are needed;
- Who will implement the action;
- The timing of the actions.

Proceed to Stage III.C

Stage III.C: Recommendation(s) and Rationale.

The goal of Stage III.C is to propose a set of recommendations for modifying the proposal. When modifications are not possible, the option of not proceeding with the proposal needs to be addressed. Occasionally, it is possible to find a single, clear solution which will provide the optimum impact. However, in most cases a series of options will be defined and presented. Recommendations should be prioritized as appropriate.

S.III.C.1. Based on your review of actions in Stage III.B, please list your recommendations for the policy/program and why you chose them. Please describe the next steps for implementation.

S.III.C.2. Who participated in the equity impact review process?

S.IV.C.3. Is the recommendation realistic, adequately funded, with mechanisms to ensure successful implementation? Are there provisions to ensure ongoing data collection, public reporting, and community participation?

S.V.C.4. What are the success indicators and progress benchmarks?

Additional information for this toolkit was taken from the Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit produced by the Better Bridges Institute.