



“The city of Seattle’s Racial Equity Toolkit takes the city from aspiration to implementation. City departments are using racial equity tools and strategies to develop and implement programs, policies, and procedures that move the needle towards racial equity for all.”

Patricia Lally
Director, Seattle Office of Civil Rights

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3. IMPLEMENT RACIAL EQUITY TOOLS

GIVEN THE RESEARCH THAT SHOWS we are all subject to implicit bias and behave in ways that reflect our biases, even without intention, it is not enough to set a shared goal of addressing equity and build teams dedicated to that goal.

Government must also create and implement tools that mechanize the practice of considering racial impact when making and implementing policy. Racial equity tools developed in Seattle, Multnomah County, and other jurisdictions have served as national models for embedding analysis of a policy's impact on racial disparities into the routine process of policy review. Use of a racial equity tool may begin with a particular government process, such as budget review, as occurred in Seattle. Once there is sufficient training around shared analysis and capacity built across departments, tools can be implemented as routine throughout all policy decisions and processes, such as new public works projects or changes to juvenile justice programs. In Seattle, the City Council passed a resolution in 2009 that directed all City departments to use the Racial Equity Toolkit, including in all budget proposals made to the Budget Office. This directive was reaffirmed by an executive order by Mayor Ed Murray in 2014. (See appendix for an example of a Racial Equity Tool used in Seattle.)

A Racial Equity Tool (or Impact Assessment) proactively identifies opportunities to advance equity via consideration of expanded policies, practices, programs or partnerships. To achieve maximum benefit, racial equity tools identify clear goals and objectives to set mea-

asurable outcomes and develop mechanisms for successful implementation.

While each decision analyzed using a racial equity tool may only result in small changes, the cumulative impact of using a racial equity tool repeatedly over time can result in significant changes.

Government units have strong habits and practices that are difficult to interrupt, and bureaucratic institutions are in fact designed to stand the test of time. The initial resistance to and eventual acceptance of Environmental Impact Statements since the passage of the National Environmental Protection Act in 1970 can serve as a helpful example of how such a policy analysis tool can evolve over time to have significant impact (Kershner, 2011). Just as with Environmental Impact Statements, implementing racial equity tools requires consistent monitoring, assessment, and support to staff tasked with conducting the analysis. For example, in Minneapolis, city officials have set out not only to develop a Racial Equity Assessment and training for staff, but also to implement a

Components of a Racial Equity Tool

- Proactively seeks to eliminate inequities and advance equity
- Identifies clear goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes
- Poses questions about who would benefit or be burdened by a given decision, what are the potential unintended consequences of the decision, and who has been involved with developing the proposal and will be involved with implementation.
- Develops mechanisms for successful implementation

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customer service help-line, tutorials, a speakers bureau, examples of racial equity assessments, FAQs, data, and directories (Minneapolis 2014 Report).

GARE has identified common elements across racial equity tools. These elements can help inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies, programs, and practices that advance racial equity. Using a racial equity tool should incorporate each of the following:

1. Inclusion and Engagement—Promote racially inclusive collaboration and engagement.

- Engage people most deeply affected in developing and implementing strategies, both within government and in the community
- Develop long-term relationships for inclusion and engagement efforts to sustain results over time.
- Support and/or develop leadership, infrastructure and networks for racial equity, both in government and in the community.

2. Be data-driven and accountable—Use data.

- Set and monitor goals for achieving racial equity
- Clearly document and track community conditions over time, including racial inequities.
- Set goals for improving results and eliminating racial inequities, along with mechanisms for tracking progress towards goals over time.

3. Integrate program and policy strategies—Develop and implement program and policy strategies for eliminating racial inequity.

- Develop specific strategies, programs, and policies that should be explicit about addressing institutional racism, as well as expanding opportunity and access for individuals.
- Implement strategies and monitor routinely for effectiveness.

4. Structural change—Develop cross-sector, cross-jurisdictional partnerships to achieve systemic change.

- Build partnerships across institutions and organizations to address structural racism, in collaboration with community.

5. Educate and communicate about racial equity—Educate on racial issues and raise racial awareness.

- Integrate education about the history and current realities regarding race and racism into the strategy.
- Make clear connections between individual experiences and institutional and structural issues.

WITHIN GOVERNMENT, the aim is to create learning cultures that operate in accordance with a value for racial equity, celebrate success, recognize progress, and operate with urgency. Across jurisdictions, GARE is sharing lessons learned, and lifting up policies, practices and programs that advance racial equity.

Visit racialequityalliance.org for examples of racial equity tools that have been implemented in government. If your jurisdiction does not yet use a racial equity tool, consider piloting one that has been put into place elsewhere. Your experience during the pilot will help inform your thinking about any local customization that would be beneficial.

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