

Renton Equity Lens

What is an equity lens?

A systematic examination of how different social identity groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision. An equity lens is used to minimize unanticipated adverse consequences in a variety of contexts, including the analysis of proposed policies, institutional practices, programs, plans and budgetary decisions. The equity lens is a vital tool for preventing adverse and / or disparate outcomes and for identifying new options to remedy long-standing inequities. An equity lens process is an analysis conducted by a decision-making group.

Why is an equity lens needed?

Equity lens are used to reduce, eliminate and prevent discrimination and inequities. The persistence of deep disparities and divisions across social identity groups is the routine, often invisible and unintentional, production of inequitable social opportunities and outcomes.

What are social identity groups?

A social identity is the portion of an individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership in a relevant social group. Examples of social identity groups include but are not limited to: gender identification, class, language, sexual orientation, religion / spiritual beliefs, physical / developmental / mental abilities, race, ethnicity, age, etc.

When should an equity lens be used?

An equity lens analysis is best conducted during the decision-making process, by the decision-making group, prior to enacting new proposals. It is used to inform decisions, much like environmental impact statements, fiscal impact reports and workplace risk assessments.

Renton Equity Lens Process



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1. Set Outcomes (Clarifying the Purpose)

- a. What does this policy / program analysis seek to accomplish? Will it reduce disparities or discrimination? Will it advance equity and inclusion?

2. Identify and Involve Stakeholders

- a. Which social identity groups may be most affected by and concerned with the policy / program being analyzed? Have stakeholders from different social identity groups – especially those most adversely impacted – been informed, meaningfully involved and authentically represented in this analysis? Who's missing and how can they be engaged?

3. Determine Benefit and / or Burden (Data Analysis)

- a. Gather and analyze data: Which social identity groups are currently most advantaged and most disadvantaged by the policy / program this analysis seeks to address? How are they affected differently? What quantitative and qualitative evidence of inequity exists? What evidence is missing or needed?
- b. Examining the Causes: What factors may be producing and perpetuating inequities associated with this policy / program? How did the inequities arise? Are they expanding or narrowing? Does this analysis address root causes? If not, how could it?

4. Advance Opportunity or Minimize Harm (Policy, Program or Decision Analysis and/or Action)

- a. Advance Opportunity: What positive impacts on equity and inclusion, if any, could result from this policy / program? Which social identity groups could benefit?
- b. Minimize Harm: What adverse impacts or unintended consequences could result from this policy? How could adverse impacts be prevented or minimized? Are there better ways to reduce disparities and advance opportunity?
- c. What action will be taken to prevent or minimize adverse impact?

5. Evaluate. Raise Equity Awareness. Be Accountable.

- a. What are the success indicators and progress benchmarks? How will impacts be documented and evaluated? How will the level, diversity and quality of ongoing stakeholder engagement be assessed? How will unresolved issues be documented?

6. Report Back

- a. At what point in time should an evaluation and report take place? What will be reported? To whom? How will we act on the report information?

Renton Equity Lens Examples of Use:

- **Human Resources:** Renton Equity Lens was used to engage stakeholders in providing feedback on their experience with the City's recruitment and hiring process. NeoGov data was disaggregated by gender and race to analyze applicant flow through the hiring process. Based on findings of this analysis, research was conducted to find ways to make the hiring process even more inclusive and equitable. Findings were reported in the HR Inclusion Tactical Plan recommending adoption of sixteen strategies fostering inclusion and equity. Strategies were affirmed by the Mayor's staff and City Council.
- **Administrative Services:** ASD will be using the Renton Equity Lens in exploring how to incorporate inclusion into the City's Purchasing, Bidding and Contracting Policy (250-02) by examining current status and future possibilities for greater utilization of Minority / Women Owned and Disadvantaged Small Businesses in doing business with the City. ASD engaged internal stakeholders in decisions and to form a core group of influencers. They identified the lack of a tracking system to collect M/WBE data among current vendors and contractors; so beginning in 2018, ASD implemented a system for vendors / contractors to self-identify as M/WBE on vendor forms and business license applications. They will be developing strategies to further inclusion and equity in working with these businesses through outreach, vendor open houses and disseminating opportunities for bidding for work. Plans are for training and tools to be provided to city staff to reduce implicit bias in vendor selection, enhance inclusion and consistently provide inclusive competitive bidding processes.
- **Community and Economic Development:** CED has a long-standing record of using an Equity Lens to insure resident input in planning as evidenced by strategies used in creating the Benson Hill Community Plan in 2013 and the Renton Downtown Civic Core Vision and Action Plan in 2018. The Renton Equity Lens has helped fine-tune ongoing processes to engage stakeholders in providing input in the design and implementation process of economic development endeavors, and to enhance this process in current and future opportunities such as affordable housing.
- **City Attorney:** The Chief Prosecuting Attorney uses the Equity Lens to gather data on inclusion and equity strategies to insure equitable outcomes for victims and defendants.
- **Public Works:** Used the Renton Equity Lens to surface the need to outreach to non-traditional applicants for intern positions. As a result, resources have been allocated for intern positions.
- **Renton Police:** The Equity Lens was used to partner with Renton School District to expand outreach and participation in the Summer Teen Academy. This resulted in the largest and most diverse group of student participants in 2018. The Equity Lens has also helped the department identify specific community groups with whom to work on

relationship building and alleviating fear of law enforcement in order to serve these communities equitably.

- **Community Services:** They have used the Equity Lens to identify opportunities to provide more inclusive services in the community. This has resulted in targeting outreach for applicants for summer jobs, development of Meadow Crest Playground (an inclusive playground for kids, families and their caretakers), and establishing a women's swim time at Henry Moses Pool to create equity for certain faith-based groups. They have also used the Equity Lens to engage community in decision-making at the Senior Activity Center and in the Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas Plan process. Human Services used the Equity Lens to create several processes for targeted outreach in communities that have not always been aware of or accessed needed services.
- **Executive:** The Mayor used the Equity Lens to engage partners in building a community center in an underserved part of the City in collaboration with Community Services. Partners include Seattle Seahawk Doug Baldwin and Renton School District to bring to fruition the Family First Center in the Cascade neighborhood. Emergency Management used the Equity Lens to engage community in identifying the needs of the most vulnerable communities in the event of a disaster.
- **Municipal Court:** Used Equity Lens to partner with Executive in creating processes to create a uniform City-wide process for translation of documents and interpreters at City events.