



Racial Equity in Government Decision-Making: Lessons from the Field

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Racial Equity in Government Decision-Making

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Summary: This report describes promising practices for advancing racial equity in government decision-making based on a review of the research and local practices. Four findings emerge from OLO’s review:

- Racial disparities are pervasive, creating burdens for communities and people of color.
- Narrowing racial disparities requires focused attention on race, addressing institutional racism, and public policies and practices targeting institutions and systems rather than individuals
- Best practices for advancing racial equity suggest that local governments jurisdictions should focus on three goals: normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing for racial equity.
- Leading jurisdictions have taken multi-pronged approaches to advancing racial equity that align with best practices. However, there is no one way for jurisdictions to advance racial equity.

Based on these findings, OLO offers a list of short-to-medium-term and long-term recommendations for County action to prioritize racial equity in government decision-making in Montgomery County.

Racial Disparities and Their Costs

Racial disparities are pervasive across systems, characterizing most measures of wellbeing and risk. As noted by the Racial Equity Institute, measures of disproportionality reflecting the over-representation of people of color on measures of disadvantage occur in child welfare, health, juvenile justice, education, and economic development. A review of local data demonstrates disparities by race and ethnicity on measures of education, employment, housing, and income as summarized in the table below.

**Relative Risk Index of Asian, Black, and Latino Residents Experiencing an Outcome
Relative to a White Resident in Montgomery County, 2011-2015**

System	Outcomes	White	Asian	Black	Latino
Education	High school completion rate = 98%	100%	94%	94%	70%
	Some college education = 88%	100%	92%	82%	51%
Employment	Employment rate = 78%	100%	97%	94%	99%
	Unemployment rate = 4%	100%	125%	250%	200%
Housing and Income	Households owned their own home = 74%	100%	99%	59%	67%
	Average Household Income = \$160,000	100%	82%	55%	55%
	Residents living in poverty = 4%	100%	150%	275%	300%
	Children living in poverty = 2%	100%	300%	800%	700%

Sources: OLO analysis of 2011-15 Census Data compiled by L. Hendey and L. Posey, [Racial Inequities in Montgomery County, 2011-15](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/95386/2017.12.28_montgomery_county_finalized_6.pdf) (The Urban Institute, 2017); https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/95386/2017.12.28_montgomery_county_finalized_6.pdf

Local data shows that despite high rates of high school completion (70%-98%) and employment (73%-78%) among all groups, Blacks and Latinos were more than twice as likely as Whites to be unemployed and have household incomes below the federal poverty level. Blacks and Latinos were also 33-41% less likely to own their homes and Black and Latino children were 6-7 times more likely to live in poverty.

The Urban Institute estimates that a more equitable Montgomery County would have increased the numbers of Latino, African American, and Asian residents with high school degrees, college educations, and higher incomes. Research also suggests that increasing equitable outcomes among communities of color stimulates economic growth that benefits communities overall. For example, PolicyLink’s Equitable Growth Profile for Fairfax County estimates that eliminating disparities in incomes by race and ethnicity would have increased their County’s gross domestic product by \$26.2 billion in 2012.¹

Focusing on Institutional Racism to Advance Racial Equity

The Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE) finds that racial disparities evident across measures are often “explained by blaming individual people - promoting “hard work” as the way to get ahead.”² They note that hard work can help, but because underlying systems are the force driving racial inequities, they encourage localities to focus on structural transformation to reduce racial disparities.

Focusing on structural transformation requires understanding the difference between *individual racism* (racism occurring between individuals) and *institutional racism* (biases within and across institutions that advantage White people over people of color). It also requires understanding how *implicit bias* (unconscious beliefs about race) is replicated through collective decisions and actions within institutions. GARE’s matrix offers a reference for considering the distinction between implicit and explicit racism among individuals and institutions. It also offers context for why GARE focuses on institutional implicit bias – “the hidden forces at work in our institutions ... where structural transformation must happen.”³

Matrix of Explicit and Implicit Bias and Individual and Institutional Racism

	Individual Racism/Bias	Institutional Racism/Bias
Explicit Bias	When people think of racism, they often think of individual, explicit racism.	After instituting explicitly racist laws and policies, government has focused on fixing explicitly racist laws and policies.
Implicit Bias	When many people think about how to fix racism, they think we need to change minds, one by one, getting rid of implicit bias.	GARE focuses efforts on the hidden forces at work in our institutions – this is where structural transformation is necessary to end racial disparities.

Best Practices for Advancing Racial Equity

Based on their work to advance racial equity in more than 100 local jurisdictions, GARE offers three sets of best practices for local jurisdictions advancing racial equity as a priority:

- **Normalize** conversations about race equity by **(1) using racial equity frameworks** that describe the history of government in creating racial disparities, envision a new role for government, and use clear definitions of racial equity and inequity; and **(2) communicating and acting with urgency** by having local leaders agree on the value of prioritizing racial equity, develop a vision, and communicate their commitment, vision, and actions to the community.

¹ <https://nationalequityatlas.org/sites/default/files/Fairfax-Profile-6June2015-final.pdf>

² <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/1-052018-GARE-Comms-Guide-v1-1.pdf>

³ *Ibid* p. 39

- **Organize** for racial equity by **(1) building organizational capacity** to advance equity by training staff to understand institutional racism and how to use racial equity tools, and organizing staff to develop expertise at applying a racial equity lens to local decision-making; and **(2) engaging communities** to advance racial equity, particularly among communities of color.
- **Operationalize** for racial equity by **(1) using racial equity tools** that enable decision-makers to evaluate current and proposed policies, programs, and practices using a racial equity lens; and **(2) using data via measurement frameworks** to establish baseline data on indicators of disparities and evaluate the success of local efforts to advance racial equity.

Promising Practices in Other Jurisdictions

OLO reviewed efforts among seven jurisdictions for advancing racial equity in government:

- Seattle and King County, Washington;
- Portland and Multnomah County, Oregon;
- Madison and Dane County, Wisconsin; and
- Fairfax County, Virginia.

<u>What Have Leading Jurisdictions Done to Advance Racial Equity in Decision-Making?</u>	
<p><u>Normalize</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Act with Urgency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train employees to create a shared understanding using racial equity frameworks (<i>Madison, Seattle, Portland</i>) • Develop public education campaign and website on equity efforts (<i>Seattle</i>) • Issue annual report on racial equity work (<i>Portland</i>) • Collaborate on racial equity with national and regional communities of practice (<i>Seattle, King County, Fairfax County</i>)
<p><u>Organize</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing • Planning • Community Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire/Designate Chief Equity Officer (<i>Fairfax County</i>) • Create jurisdiction-wide, departmental, and topical racial equity action teams (<i>Seattle, Madison, King County, Dane County</i>) • Designate/create lead department for racial equity work (<i>Dane County, King County, Seattle, Portland, Multnomah County</i>) • Develop jurisdiction-wide strategic plan for racial equity (<i>Seattle, King County, Dane County, and Portland</i>) • Identify equity target areas and policies (<i>Seattle, King County, Portland</i>) • Develop racial equity plans by department (<i>Portland, King County, Madison</i>) • Develop tools to enhance community engagement (<i>Madison, Seattle</i>) • Host community conversations/town halls on racial equity (<i>King County, Fairfax County, Multnomah County</i>) • Engage underrepresented communities (<i>Seattle</i>) • Create Racial Equity Funds for community-based organizations (<i>Seattle</i>)
<p><u>Operationalize</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity Tools • Data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop racial equity impact assessments and racial equity toolkits (<i>Seattle, Multnomah County, Portland, and Madison</i>) • Require use of equity tools in governmental decision-making (<i>Portland, Dane County, Madison</i>) • Compile data on racial and social disparities (<i>Fairfax County</i>) • Develop performance measures for improving equity (<i>Dane County</i>)

The seven jurisdictions' combined efforts align with GARE's recommended best practices. Several jurisdictions have also developed strategic plans for racial equity and require local departments to develop and implement **racial equity action plans**. To support their work, several localities rely on lead agencies (e.g. Offices of Civil Rights and Equity) to coordinate their equity efforts. Together, they demonstrate that there is no one way for jurisdictions to advance racial equity.

OLO Recommendations

OLO offers a list of recommendations for Council and Executive Branch action for prioritizing racial equity in government decision-making based on this report's findings. OLO's recommendations reflect a menu of approaches rather than a prescription. Beyond initial training for elected officials and staff leaders to create a common vision for racial equity locally, OLO recommends the formation of Legislative and Executive Branch Racial Equity Action Teams to determine next steps.

Recommendations for County Action in the Short-Term to Medium-Term (6 Months to Two Years)

- Leadership Training on Racial Equity
- Join Communities of Practice (Government Alliance for Race and Equity, regional network)
- Hire/Designate Equity Chief and Coordinating Department
- Develop Racial Equity Action Teams
- Develop Vision, Mission, and Goals
- Identify Racial Equity Focus Areas (e.g. policy areas, neighborhoods)
- Develop and Pilot Racial Equity Tools
- Compile Data on Disparities and Performance Metrics
- Develop Departmental Racial Equity Action Teams
- Develop Countywide Racial Equity Strategic Plan
- Develop and Implement Strategies to Promote Community Engagement
- Launch Public Education Campaign
- Review Policies for Racial Equity
- Develop Process for Evaluating Equity Efforts

Recommendations for County Action in the Long-Term (Two or More Years)

- Mandate Training for Racial Equity Teams, Managers, and Supervisors
- Require Departmental Racial Equity Action Plans
- Require Use of Equity Tools
- Expand Public Education Campaign
- Launch Community Engagement Committee
- Advance Equitable Policies
- Evaluate Data for Accountability

For a complete copy of OLO-Report 2018-8, go to:
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Reports/CurrentOLOReports.html>

Office of Legislative Oversight Report 2018-8

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Chapter 1. Authority, Scope, and Organization

A. Authority

Council Resolution 18-882, FY 2018 Work Program of the Office of Legislative Oversight, adopted July 25, 2017.

B. Scope, Purpose, and Methodology

Racial equity is achieved when race no longer predicts life outcomes. On most measures of wellbeing, however, racial equity remains elusive. Despite civil rights gains making explicit discrimination illegal by race, people of color continue to fare worse than their White counterparts in housing, employment, education, justice, health, and other measures of wellbeing and prosperity.

Racial disparities today reflect both our country's past and present: the government's historical promotion of slavery and Jim Crow and the differential treatment of people of color that continues to persist as a result of implicit and explicit bias. Recognizing the role government has played in creating racial disparities and the moral and economic benefits of reducing disparities, many states and local jurisdictions are working to investigate how their systems, unintentionally or not, continue to maintain racial inequities and have committed to changing those systems.

The County Council tasked the Office of Legislative Oversight with describing lessons learned from other jurisdictions that have made racial equity an explicit goal of local government. These local governments have adopted systems designed to eliminate racial disparities in both opportunities and outcomes. For the past decade, the philanthropic community has advanced the idea of racial equity as a best practice for improving opportunities and outcomes in communities of color. Dozens of local jurisdictions have joined the Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE) in adopting racial equity as a priority of local government with the use of a racial equity tools in local decision-making.

This OLO report serves as a primer on best practices for advancing racial equity by describing what other jurisdictions have done to advance equity and counter institutional racism in their decision-making. Institutional racism refers to biases in policies and practices among institutions that enable them to work better for White people than for people of color. The research literature is replete with examples of institutional racism ranging from different experiences in the housing and labor markets by race among individuals with identical backgrounds to the differential treatment of children and adults of color in both the child welfare and criminal justice systems.¹

This report also responds to the County Council's recent resolution to develop and implement an equity policy framework that uses equity tools to advance racial equity.² Adopted on April 24, 2018, the Council's resolution states that:

¹ Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*. (New York, NY: The New Press, 2012). Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law*. (New York, NY: Liverlight Publishing Corporation, 2017).

² Montgomery County Council, Resolution No. 18-1095, [Resolution to Develop an Equity Policy Framework in County Government](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/Resources/Files/res/2018/20180424_18-1095.pdf). Adopted April 24, 2018; https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/Resources/Files/res/2018/20180424_18-1095.pdf

“Equity analyses should be a part of capital and operating budget reviews, appropriation requests and legislation. Programs and process oversight should be undertaken viewing programs and processes through an equity lens. Equity targets and measures of progress must be put in place.”

Finally, this report follows up a community conversation convened by Councilmember Nancy Navarro in 2014. The ***Ready for Tomorrow Education and Workforce Summit*** set the stage for the Council’s current focus on racial equity by making the case that closing employment and academic achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, language, and income were moral and economic imperatives.³

To provide context for racial equity efforts in other jurisdictions and to describe lessons learned among those jurisdictions, this report is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 2, Background on Racial Disparities and the Costs of Racism**, describes racial disparities across several measures of wellbeing, the benefits of reducing racial disparities and the different facets of racism. This chapter also describes the racialization of public policies that foster inequities.
- **Chapter 3, Racial Equity Best Practices**, provides an overview of best practices for promoting racial equity in government decision-making based on the work of the Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE) and other organizations with subject matter expertise.
- **Chapter 4, Promising Practices in Other Jurisdictions**, describes how other jurisdictions have focused on promoting racial equity, lessons learned from their experiences, and how their efforts aligned with best practices.
- **Chapter 5, Project Findings and Recommendations** describes this report’s major findings and recommendations for County Council and Executive Branch action.

This report also includes an **Appendix** that provides background information for this report. Five broad sets of findings emerge from the information reviewed for this report:

- Racial disparities are pervasive across systems and create burdens for people of color and communities at large.
- Narrowing racial disparities requires focused attention on race, addressing institutional racism, and changing institutions and systems rather than changing individuals.
- Best practices in advancing racial equity among local governments focus on normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing practices in government to advance racial equity.
- Several jurisdictions have taken multi-pronged approaches to prioritizing racial equity that align with best practices for advancing racial equity. The most experienced jurisdictions have developed jurisdiction-wide racial equity initiatives that require departments to develop racial equity plans and to apply equity tools to decision-making.

³ <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/OLOMemorandumReport2015-4.pdf>

- There is no one way for jurisdictions to advance racial equity. However, advancing racial equity requires both processes (transformational changes to organizations, staff training, honest discussions about race) and products (specific plans with measurable goals, data reports on racial equity, written assessments of current and proposed policies and resource allocations).

Based on these findings, OLO offers a list of recommendations for Council and Executive Branch action for prioritizing racial equity in government decision-making in the short-to-medium-term and in the long-term. This list aligns with best practices for advancing racial equity and reflects the combined approaches used in the seven jurisdictions reviewed for this report.⁴ This list, however, reflects a menu of approaches rather than a prescription. OLO recommends that racial equity action teams at the countywide and departmental levels determine the scope and sequencing of action steps aimed at prioritizing racial equity in government decision-making.

C. Acknowledgements

OLO staff interviewed a number of persons on background to understand different jurisdictions experiences in prioritizing racial equity. We also spoke with a number of subject matter experts regarding best practices for advancing racial equity locally and nationally. We recognize and appreciate the following persons for their assistance in completing this project:

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- Shawn Stokes, Director of Human Resources, Montgomery County, Maryland
- Bruce Adams, Director, Office of Community Partnerships, Montgomery County, Maryland
- Phillip L. Lee, President, Clear Impact

⁴ Seattle, WA; King County, WA, Portland, OR; Multnomah County, OR; Madison, WI; Dane County, WI, and Fairfax County, VA.

Chapter 2. Background on Racial Disparities and the Costs of Racism

This chapter provides an overview of racial disparities on several indicators of wellbeing and describes the benefits of reducing racial disparities. This chapter also describes the importance of race when focusing on racial disparities, insights on how to communicate about race, the different types of racism that shape disparities, and the racialization of public policies that can foster racial disparities.

This chapter is presented in four parts:

- A. Racial Disparities and Their Consequences** describes racial disparities across systems and estimated cost of disparities by race, ethnicity, and nativity in Montgomery County;
- B. Focusing on Race to Eliminate Disparities** describes strategies to encourage direct discussions about race and racial disparities;
- C. Understanding Racist ideas and Systemic Racism** presents a framework for defining racism vs. antiracism, defines four common forms of racism, explains implicit and explicit bias, and offers a research-informed approach to countering myths about race and racism;
- D. Racialized Public Policies** provides a brief history of public policies that have institutionalized racial hierarchy and describes the features of equitable and inequitable public policies.

Several findings emerge from the information reviewed in this chapter:

- Racial disparities are evident across most measures of wellbeing both nationally and locally.
- Eliminating racial disparities in education, employment, earnings, and housing in Montgomery County would benefit residents of color and the county overall with increased economic activity.
- Talking about race can be difficult but eliminating racial disparities requires a focus on race and ending institutional racism. It also requires countering implicit bias rather than advancing approaches that are color-blind and/or promote the assimilation of people of color.
- Public policies that allow for the segregation of resources and risks, inherited group advantage, differential valuation of human life by race and limited self-determination for certain groups of people (i.e. racialized public policies) foster racial disparities.
- The cumulative impact of racialized policies systematically disadvantages people of color despite the economic and social advancement that many people of color have experienced.

A. Racial Disparities and Their Consequences

This section describes national and local patterns of racial disparities in social and economic outcomes and what equity would like look if Montgomery County eliminated its disparities in income, educational attainment, employment and homeownership rates. This section relies on three primary sources of information:

- A 2016 presentation from the **Racial Equity Institute** delivered at the Clear Impact racial equity training for Montgomery County Executive Branch Leaders from February 22-23, 2018⁵
- A 2018 report by Equity in the Center entitled **Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture**⁶ which describes racial disparities in outcomes at the national level; and
- A 2017 report by the Urban Institute commissioned by the Consumer Health Foundation and Meyer Foundation entitled **Racial Inequities in Montgomery County: 2011-2015**⁷ that describes racial disparities locally and the impact of a more equitable county on educational attainment, employment, income, and home ownership.

Racial Disparities Across Systems. The Racial Equity Institute uses a “groundwater” analogy to describe how disparities by race are consistent across systems in the United States. Using the analogy of why some fish die in a pond while others do not, they note that rather than blaming the fish (the individuals or the group), it makes more sense to consider the groundwater (system) as the source of the problem, particularly if it is the same set of fish that die in every pond. To illustrate this point further, they demonstrate how racial inequity looks the same across systems when considering disparities in outcomes by race. Chart 1 on the next page describes how different systems each offer their own terms to characterize the same dilemma: racial disparities in outcomes.

REI also compiled data across several systems to compare the relative risk of a White person experiencing a bad outcome compared to a Black person. Using data compiled across systems in North Carolina, REI found that a White person has only a 25% to 60% chance of experiencing a bad outcome as compared to a Black person. Table 1, also on the next page, shows an index of the lower relative risk of White people in experiencing these outcomes. REI refers to the difference in the relative risk between White and Black people experiencing these adverse outcomes as “White Advantage.”

⁵ Deena Hayes-Greene and Bayard Love of the Racial Equity Institute. “Measuring Racial Equity: A Groundwater Approach” (Cleveland, Ohio, 2016). <https://docplayer.net/53000067-Measuring-racial-equity-a-groundwater-approach.html>

⁶ [Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture. \(Equity in the Center, 2018\);
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56b910ccb6aa60c971d5f98a/t/5ae20e22562fa7ff776a49e9/1524764255184/ProInspire-Equity-in-Center-publication.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56b910ccb6aa60c971d5f98a/t/5ae20e22562fa7ff776a49e9/1524764255184/ProInspire-Equity-in-Center-publication.pdf)

⁷ Leah Hendey and Lily Posey, [Racial Inequities in Montgomery County: 2011-2015](https://www.urban.org/research/publicatio/racial-inequities-montgomery-county-2011-15). (Urban Institute, 2017);
<https://www.urban.org/research/publicatio/racial-inequities-montgomery-county-2011-15>

Chart 1: Measures of Racial Inequities Across Systems

System	Term	Definition
Child Welfare	Disproportionality	Refers to the proportion of ethnic or racial groups of children in child welfare compared to those groups in the general population.
Health	Health Disparity	Healthcare disparities refer to differences in access to or availability of facilities and services. Health status disparities refer to the variation in rates of disease occurrence and disabilities between defined population groups.
Juvenile Justice	Disproportionate Minority Contact	Refers to the disproportionate number of minority youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system.
Education	Achievement Gap	When one group of students (such as, students grouped by race/ethnicity, gender) outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant.
	Disproportionate Representation	Refers to the “overrepresentation” and “underrepresentation” of a particular demographic group in special education programs relative to the presence of this group in the overall student population.
Economic Development	Historically Underutilized Businesses	Businesses that are disadvantaged and are deemed in need of assistance to compete successfully in the marketplace.

Table 1: Relative Risk Index of a White Person Having a Bad Outcome Relative to a Black Person

System	Outcomes	Black	White
Health	Death from Diabetes	100%	40%
	Infant death	100%	40%
Education	3 rd grade students below grade level	100%	50%
	Long-term suspensions	100%	25%
Criminal Justice	Incarceration rate	100%	25%
	Searched on a routine traffic stop	100%	33%
Child Protective Services	Children in foster care	100%	60%
Economic	Children below 200% of federal poverty level	100%	50%
	Unemployment	100%	20%

Sources: NC State Center for Health Statistics at www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/pdf/NCPopHealthDataByRaceEthOct2014.pdf; NC Department of Public Instruction at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/src/> and www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/research/discipline/reports/consolidated/2012-13/consolidated-report.pdf; NC Department of Public Safety at webapps6.doc.state.nc.us/apps/asqExt/ASQ; Baumgartner, F and D Epp, “Final Report To The North Carolina Advocates For Justice Task Force On Racial and Ethnic Bias,” at www.unc.edu/~fbaum/papers/Baumgartner-Traffic-Stops-Statistics-1-Feb-2012.pdf; National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, at www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Disproportionality%20TAB1_0.pdf; National Center for Children in Poverty, at www.nccp.org/profiles/NC_profile_6.html

National Data. Similar to the Racial Equity Institute’s review of North Carolina data, Equity in the Center finds based on its review of national data that people of color (African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and many Asian subgroups) “fare worse than their white counterparts across every age and income level when it comes to societal outcomes.”⁸ They further note that people of color “experience significant disadvantages in education, economic stability, health, life expectancy, and rates of incarceration.”⁹ At the national level, they find the following disparities in education:

- Children of color from immigrant families are nearly seven times less likely to be proficient in math by 8th grade than their U.S.-born and primarily White peers.
- Black students entering kindergarten for the first time scored lower than their White counterparts across every category tested, including reading, mathematics, science, cognitive flexibility, and approaches to learning.
- Black students also had lower mean SAT scores for critical reading (428 vs. 527 for White students) and math (428 vs. 536 for White students).

Regarding disparities in wealth and economic stability, Equity in the Center finds that:

- Black children under the age of six are almost three times more likely to live in poverty than non-Black children.
- The net worth of Black families was \$4,900, compared to \$97,000 for their White counterparts at the end of the Great Recession.¹⁰
- By 2020, White American households are projected to own 86 times more wealth than African American households, and 68 times more wealth than Latino households.

And regarding incarceration rates, they observe the following disparities:

- African Americans are incarcerated in state prisons at an average rate of 5.1 times that of White Americans, and in some states that rate is 10 times or more.
- Native Americans are sent to prison at over four times the rate of White Americans.
- Latinos are incarcerated at an average rate of 1.4 times that of White Americans, with average rates in some states going up to between three and four times that of Whites.

⁸[Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture, \(Equity in the Center, 2018\) \(p. 2\);
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56b910ccb6aa60c971d5f98a/t/5b508d9a2b6a2853e2d07b9f/1532005799212/ProInspire-Equity-in-Center-publication-digital-v6.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56b910ccb6aa60c971d5f98a/t/5b508d9a2b6a2853e2d07b9f/1532005799212/ProInspire-Equity-in-Center-publication-digital-v6.pdf)

⁹ Ibid (p. 2)

¹⁰ In 2013, the national average net worth of White people has risen to \$144,200 compared to \$14,000 for Latinos and \$12,200 for African Americans – see Pew Social Trends referenced in GARE Communications Guide, May 2018.

Racial gaps in measures of wellbeing generate burdens and costs to individuals and communities. In turn, narrowing such gaps generates benefits to individuals and communities. For example, researchers at PolicyLink have found that racial inequality affects economic growth, and improved equity is positively associated with a variety of economic indicators. According to a report by PolicyLink:

Closing racial and ethnic gaps would yield concrete economic gains for the nation. [E]liminating racial inequities would increase earnings, gross domestic product, and tax revenue while reducing poverty and improving the solvency of Social Security. If racial and ethnic differences were eliminated, the average total personal yearly income in the United States in 2011 would have been 8.1 percent higher; [...] the average earnings of African Americans would have been 37.6 percent higher, [...]; the earnings of Hispanics would have been 45.7 percent higher.¹¹

Local Data. 2011-15 Census Data compiled by the Urban Institute for Montgomery County demonstrates wide racial disparities by race and ethnicity on several measures of educational and economic well-being. Further, the Urban Institutes analysis of data by local council districts demonstrates wide disparities in outcomes by geography as well, with a concentration of lower-income, educational attainment, and homeownership in District 5 compared to District 1.¹²

More specifically at the local level, they found disparities by race, ethnicity, and immigration status in:

- **High school completion** where 92-98% of Black, Asian, native-born, and White adults age 25 or older held a diploma compared to 69% of Latino adults and 83% of immigrants. They also found geographic disparities by council district where 98% of adult residents in District 1 had a high school diploma compared to 87-92% in other districts.
- **College education** where 86-88% of native-born and White adults had some college compared to 81% of Asian adults, 72% of Black adults, 45% of Latino adults and 65% of immigrant adults.
- **Household income** where White households' average income was \$160,000 compared to \$88,000 for Black and Latino households and \$131,000 for Asian households. They also found geographic disparities by council districts: the average household income in District 1 (\$206,000) was double that of District 5 (\$103,000).
- **The share of residents and children living in poverty** where among all residents 9-12% of immigrants, African Americans, and Latinos lived below the federal poverty level compared to 6% of Asian residents and 4% of White residents; and among children, 14-16% of Latino and Black children lived in poverty compared to 6% of Asian children and 2% of White children.
- **Homeownership rates** where 74-75% of White and Asian households owned their homes as compared to 44-50% of Black and Latino households. They also found geographic disparities by council districts with District 2 having the highest homeownership rate at 75% and District 5 having the lowest rate at 53%.

¹¹ Robert Lynch and Patrick Oakford, "All-In Nation, Chapter Two: Charting New Trends and Imagining an All-In Nation" (PolicyLink)(p. 26); <https://allinnation.org/ms-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/10/Chapter2.pdf>

¹² District 1 includes Bethesda, Poolesville and Potomac. District 2 includes Clarksburg, Damascus, and Germantown. District 3 includes Gaithersburg and Rockville. District 4 includes Laytonsville, Olney, and Wheaton. District 5 includes Burtonsville, Silver Spring, and Takoma Park.

The Urban Institute also compared outcomes between White residents and people of color to estimate the costs of racial disparities and the benefits of eliminating them. They estimate that closing disparities to create an equitable Montgomery County would confer increases in:

- **High school completions** for an additional 42,700 immigrants, 31,800 Latinos, 6,500 Asians, and 6,200 African Americans;
- **Some college attendance** for an additional 64,800 immigrants, 46,500 Latinos, 17,500 African Americans, and 7,300 Asians;
- **The number of households with incomes above \$75,000** for an additional 16,000 Latino, 14,000 Black, and 5,000 Asian families;
- **The number of households with incomes above the federal poverty line** for an additional 17,500 immigrant families, 14,800 Latino families, 13,100 African American families, and 3,500 Asian families; and
- **Homeownership** for an additional 19,600 African Americans, 12,000 Latinos, and 800 Asians with the most gains in homeownership occurring in District 5.

B. Focusing on Race to Address Disparities

Those concerned about racial disparities often look to drivers other than race as the underlying culprit of such disparities. They often cite ignorance, lack of knowledge on how systems work, poverty, and “a culture of poverty” as the root causes of racial disparities. In turn, they advance strategies that target these “root causes” as solutions for ameliorating racial disparities rather than strategies that target race.

Conversely, the **Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE)** finds that those seeking to eliminate racial disparities must focus explicitly on race, normalizing conversations about race, and operationalizing new behaviors that diminish racial disparities. Toward this end, they have developed several commonly asked questions when working on racial equity. A summary of these questions and their responses follows:¹³

- **Isn't this just about class, why are we talking about race?** GARE acknowledges the overlap between race and income in the U.S. and the need to reduce income inequality. They note, however, that when controlling for income, racial disparities remain in education, health, employment, incarceration, and housing. This points to the need to focus on both race and class to reduce disparities by race.

¹³ Handout: “Commonly Asked Questions When Working on Racial Equity.” (Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity and Center for Social Inclusion); <https://www.dcyf.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=4984>

- ***Shouldn't we use a "colorblind" approach? I don't see race or, I don't see color.*** GARE acknowledges that race is a social construct but that we nevertheless live in a highly racialized society with differential access to opportunities based on race. GARE contends that "(i)f we don't see color, we don't see important characteristics about people, and we limit our own ability to develop strategies to address racial equity." They note that while it is now illegal to explicitly discriminate against people of color, systems, policies, and procedures still work to favor White people. Because of this, it is important that we talk about race, even though it can be challenging.
- ***Why do we need to focus on race and racial equity if we have diverse staff or elected officials?*** GARE notes that while jurisdictions can be proud of having diverse staff and leadership, these accomplishments alone are not enough to ensure racial equity. They note the pervasiveness of racial inequities across measures and the need to look at how all systems, policies, and procedures can work to advance racial equity.
- ***What is the role of White people in doing work for racial equity?*** GARE finds that there is not a one-size-fits-all answer to this question. Sometimes what is most helpful is for White people promoting racial equity to be quiet and to listen to people of color; other times, it may mean speaking up. GARE notes that it can be helpful for White people to think about the ways they have benefited from systems and policies that have harmed people of color and to acknowledge that when governments and other institutions transform their systems to work well for the "least of these" they often generate benefits for all us.
- ***What about gender and sexual orientation: aren't there institutional problems around those issues as well?*** GARE recognizes that there are problems and inequities around gender, sexual orientation, and other areas of marginalization, and that there are some similarities between racism, heterosexism, and sexism in that they have been built into institutions. At the same time, they contend that focus and specificity are necessary for achieving racial equity and that strategies toward this end differ from those focused on achieving equity in other areas. GARE also notes, however, that focusing on racial equity provides an opportunity to develop framework, tools, and resources that can also be applied to other areas of marginalization.
- ***Don't ALL lives matter? Why do people say that only Black lives matter?*** GARE acknowledges that all lives matter, but not all lives have been affected by the criminal justice system in the way that Black lives have. They note that Black Lives Matter calls out a particular struggle that African Americans face with the criminal justice system. GARE also notes that it is important not to co-opt or change the message – but rather to support it when asked. They note that all lives will matter when Black lives actually matter – and when our systems, policies, and outcomes reflect that.

Finally, GARE in their May 2018 Communications Guide notes that people often explain the profound racial disparities evident across measures of well-being and life outcomes "by blaming individual people - promoting "hard work" as the way to get ahead."¹⁴ They note that hard work can help, but because underlying systems are the force driving racial inequities, they encourage local jurisdictions to focus on structural transformation to reduce racial disparities.

¹⁴GARE Communications Guide (2018); <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/1-052018-GARE-Comms-Guide-v1-1.pdf>

Effectively Talking About Race. Recognizing the difficulty that many experience in having conversations about race that keep race at the forefront rather than falling back to poverty, language or other constructs, the **Opportunity Agenda** also offers ten lessons for talking about race, racism, and racial justice that can inform conversations and actions targeting racial equity. A summary of these lessons based on the Opportunity Agenda’s research, experience, and input from their partners, follows:¹⁵

- **Consider audience and goals.** The Opportunity Agenda recommends that in strategizing about audience, the goal is to energize the base and persuade the undecided.
- **Know the counter narratives.** The Opportunity Agenda recommends becoming familiar with counter narrative themes as context for beginning conversation on race and racial equity. Some common themes include:
 - The idea that racism is “largely” over or dying out over time
 - People of color are obsessed with race
 - Alleging discrimination is itself racist and divisive
 - Claiming discrimination is “playing the race card,” opportunistic, hypocritical demagoguery
 - Civil rights are a crutch for those who lack merit or drive
 - If we can address class inequality, racial inequity will take care of itself
 - Racism will always be with us, so it’s a waste of time to talk about it
- **Lead with shared values: Opportunity, Community, Equity.** According to the Opportunity Agenda, “encouraging people to think about shared values encourages aspirational, hopeful thinking – a better place to start when entering tough conversations than with fear or anxiety.”
- **Use values as a bridge, not a bypass.** The Opportunity Agenda suggests bridging from shared values to the role of racial equity in fulfilling those values. This can move audiences into a frame of mind that is more solution-oriented and less skeptical about the pervasiveness of discrimination.
- **Be rigorously solution-oriented and forward-looking.** After laying the groundwork for how the problem has developed, the Opportunity Agenda recommends moving to solutions quickly. Wherever possible, they advocate linking a description of the problem to a clear, positive solution and action, and point out who is responsible for taking that action.
- **Talk about the systemic obstacles to equal opportunity and equal justice.** The Opportunity Agenda notes that our culture often views social problems through an individual lens rather than as reflections of history, policies, and other societal factors. When articulating that racial disparities result from discrimination, the Opportunity Agenda states “it’s particularly important to tell a full story that links cause (history) and effect (outcome).” Without this link, people may believe that our systems work fine and that racial gaps exist because of deficiencies among people of color and African Americans in particular.

¹⁵ [Ten Lessons for Talking About Race, Racism and Racial Justice. \(The Opportunity Agenda, 2017\);
https://opportunityagenda.org/explore/resources-publications/ten-lessons-talking-about-race-racism-and-racial-justice](https://opportunityagenda.org/explore/resources-publications/ten-lessons-talking-about-race-racism-and-racial-justice)

- **Be explicit about the different causes of racial vs. socioeconomic disparities.** The Opportunity Agenda, like GARE, notes the need to make a case that racism causes different problems than poverty, high-crime neighborhoods or challenged educational systems do. They are interrelated, but studies show that even after adjusting for socioeconomic factors, racial inequity persists.
- **Describe how racial bias and discrimination hold us all back.** The Opportunity Agenda notes that equal opportunity is in our shared economic and social interests in part by citing research that shows that the vast majority of Americans believe that society functions better when all groups have an equal chance in life. Tapping into peoples' personal experience with discrimination can also enhance their empathy for other groups and the efficacy of conversations to support racial equity.
- **Acknowledge the progress we've made.** According to the Opportunity Agenda, **doing** this helps persuade skeptics to lower their defenses and have a reasoned discussion rooted in nuanced reality rather than rhetoric. Moreover, giving a nod to progress may remind people of some things they are proud of in our history, and then motivate them to want to continue that legacy.
- **Embrace and communicate our racial and ethnic diversity.** The Opportunity Agenda recommends avoiding Black-White or other binary descriptions of racial equity, recognizing that different people and communities encounter differing types of stereotypes and discrimination based on diverse and intersectional identities. This may mean, for example, explaining the sovereign status of tribal nations, the unique challenges posed by treaty violations, and the specific solutions necessary.

C. Understanding Racist Ideas and Systemic Racism

When describing racism, people often refer to bias exhibited by individuals to other individuals. This is known as interpersonal racism. Many instances of inter-personal racism – like denying African Americans entry into restaurants and other public accommodations – are now illegal. But inter-personal racism is one of several types of racism that work together to limit opportunities for people of color.

This subsection describes implicit bias and systemic forms of racism and how they contribute to racial disparities. It begins with a description of Ibram Kendi's framework for understanding racists versus antiracists to understand how racist ideas contribute to racial bias and racial disparities.¹⁶

1. Racists vs. Antiracists

Ibram Kendi lays out compelling definitions of racists versus antiracists in his book, [Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America](#) (2016). Kendi's framework is useful for understanding the complexity of racist ideas and their impact on racial disparities.

Kendi defines anti-Black racists as people who believe that there is something wrong with Black people. Anti-Black racists can be of any race or ethnicity. He states that anti-Black racists, commonly referred to as **racists**, fall into two types:

¹⁶ This understanding is based on a book by Ibram X. Kendi, [Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America](#). (New York, NY: Nation Books, 2016)

- **Segregationists** who solely attribute racial disparities to Black inferiority (i.e., believing that there is something wrong/inferior about Black people as a group); and
- **Assimilationists** who attribute racial disparities to Black inferiority **and** racial discrimination.

Most people who think of themselves as assimilationists probably do not view themselves as racists; instead they would place that “label” on segregationists who dismiss discrimination as a driver of disparities. Kendi, however, argues that assimilationists are indeed racists because one of their core beliefs is that there is something wrong with Black people. The assimilationist’s view, that a combination of racial discrimination and Black inferiority accounts for racial disparities, is likely the prevailing perspective held across the country among people of all races and ethnicities. Indeed, Kendi acknowledges that this was his initial perspective before he began his research.

Conversely, **antiracists** value diversity and reject the idea that there is anything wrong or inferior about Black people as a group that contributes to racial disparities. Antiracists reject the notion that differences in behavior, culture, motivation, parental engagement, deference to authority, commitment to education, or anything else contribute to racial disparities. Instead, antiracists attribute all racial disparities to racial discrimination. Kendi notes that antiracist ideas (e.g., valuing diversity), lead to non-racist policies (e.g., affirmative action) while racist ideas lead to racist policies (e.g., segregation).

Kendi further finds that racist ideas and policies advance self-interest for a limited few. He finds that racist ideas and racism –both historically and currently–have helped the top one percent in the country hoard wealth and power. He also finds that three popular strategies aimed at eliminating racists ideas and discrimination – self-sacrifice, uplift suasion, and educational persuasion – have not worked. More specifically, he finds that:

- Asking White people to **self-sacrifice their privilege for the betterment of Black people** fails because it is based on the myth that racism materially benefits most White people. Kendi contends that equality of opportunity by race would benefit middle- and low-income White people more than White privilege. Similarly, it would benefit most other racial and ethnic groups. He believes that the only people who need to demonstrate some self-sacrifice is a tiny group of wealthy people (e.g. the one percenters).
- Asking Black Americans to be **“twice as good”** to demonstrate their worth to racist people also has failed as strategy and instead has engendered contempt for “uppity Black folks.” This “uplift suasion” strategy, derived from the notion that Black people can reduce disparities through their own achievement and assimilated behavior, is unsustainable and denies Black people the opportunity to be human like other racial groups.
- Asking racists to learn scientific facts about **race**, that race **is not a biological construct**, also has its limitations because people are not racist due to ignorance – their racism is based on self-interest and the desire to be better than someone else. The “educational suasion” strategy, derived from the notion that racism can be persuaded away by presenting the facts, fails because it does not counter self-interest. Moreover, the voluntary rolling back of racist policies reflects self-interest as well – e.g., the myth that abolitionists and the civil rights movement has ended racism.

At the end of his book, Kendi opines that when there is sustained activism so that people are embarrassed and appalled by persistent disparities by race, or when there is an economic consequence to racial discrimination, then racist ideas that support the continuation of these disparities will end.

2. The Facets of Racism

Powell, Heller, and Bundalli compare race and racism to a diamond.¹⁷ They contend that it has many facets and shining a light on it reveals its complexity. Race is a social construct rather than a biological one, yet the assignment of value and meaning to race directly impacts lives. Racism manifests itself in at least four forms:¹⁸

- **Internalized racism** refers to our private beliefs and biases about race and racism that are influenced by our culture. Internalized racism can manifest as prejudice toward others, internalized sense of inferiority experienced by people of color (e.g., stereotype threat) and beliefs about superiority or entitlement by White people (i.e., White privilege).
- **Interpersonal racism** occurs between individuals when we interact with others and our private racial beliefs affect our interactions with others. For example, a high-performing Latina is discouraged by her counselor from pursuing AP-level STEM courses that are “too hard”, but her White peers are not. Most people think about this level of racism - a problem between two or more individuals – when they consider racism and its impact. Together, internalized racism and interpersonal racism refer to individual racism that GARE refers to as “the room we are all sitting in, our immediate context.”
- **Institutional racism** refers to biases in policies and practices that occur within institutions and organizations such as schools, businesses and government agencies that work better for White people than for people of color. For example, a school system that concentrates students of color in the most high-poverty schools and the least-challenging classes results in higher dropout rates and disciplinary rates for students of color while the concentration of White students in the low-poverty schools and the most challenging classes results in higher college readiness rates for them. GARE describes institutional racism as “the building this room is in, the policies and practices that dictate how we live our lives.”
- **Structural racism** is racial bias among institutions and across society, causing cumulative and compounding effects that systematically advantage White people and disadvantage people of color. Structural racism encompasses a history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color. For example, the legacy of housing segregation impacts housing opportunities by race today that in turn impact schooling and employment opportunities today and future outcomes for people of color and African Americans specifically. GARE describes institutional racism as “the skyline of buildings around us, all of which interact to dictate our outcomes.”

¹⁷ John A. Powell, Connie Cagampang, Heller Fayza Bundalli, [Systems Thinking and Race: Workshop Summary](#) (The California Endowment, 2011);

http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/Powell_Systems_Thinking_Structural_Race_Overview.pdf

¹⁸ Julie Nelson, Lauren Spokane, Lauren Ross, and Nan Deng, [Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas Into Action](#) (Haas Institute and Center for Social Inclusion, 2016) (pp.16-17); https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf

Understanding the four types of racism is key to understanding how racism fosters in individual and institutional inequities that lead to racial disparities. According to John A. Powell et al., “from a systems perspective, different facets of racism work interactively to reinforce a system that racializes outcomes.”¹⁹ More specifically, interactions between individuals are shaped by and reflect underlying and often hidden structures that shape biases and create disparate outcomes even in the absence of racist actors or racist intentions. They note that consistent differences in outcomes by race across systems demonstrate the presence of structural racism.

Implicit and Explicit Bias. Implicit bias among individuals and institutions also undergirds all facets of racism. Implicit bias refers to biased thoughts and feelings that exist outside of our conscious awareness or conscious control. Implicit bias differs from explicit bias that is expressed directly and consciously. Implicit biases are pervasive: people are often unaware of their implicit bias, or how they use implicit bias to predict behavior by others, and people differ in their levels of implicit bias.²⁰ Specific examples of implicit bias noted by researchers include the following:²¹

- Doctors are less likely to prescribe life-saving care to African Americans
- Managers are less likely to call back or hire members of a different ethnic group
- NBA referees are more likely to subtly favor players with whom they share a racial identity
- Teachers call on boys more often than girls

Implicit bias helps to explain how racial disparities often occur without intention or malice. As described by Terry Keleher, implicit bias helps explain how racism can be subtle in appearance but significant in impact. In institutions, the bias of individuals is routinely replicated through collective decisions and actions. Moreover, Keleher contends that the impact of implicit bias becomes compounded unless it is counteracted. Table 2 below describes the differences between explicit and implicit bias.

Table 2: Differences between Explicit and Implicit Bias

Explicit Bias	Implicit Bias
Expressed directly	Expressed indirectly
Aware of bias	Unaware of bias
Operates consciously	Operates unconsciously
<i>E.g., Sign in the window of an apartment building “We don’t rent to _____”</i>	<i>E.g., A property manager doing more criminal background checks on African Americans than on Whites.</i>

Individuals and institutions can also manifest implicit and explicit bias. GARE’s matrix on the next page (Figure 1) offers a visual reference for considering the distinction between implicit and explicit racism among individuals and institutions. It also offers context for why GARE focuses its efforts on institutional implicit bias – “the hidden forces at work in our institutions ... where structural transformation must happen.”²²

¹⁹ John A. Powell, Connie Cagampang, Heller Fayza Bundalli, *Systems Thinking and Race: Workshop Summary* (The California Endowment, 2011);

http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/Powell_Systems_Thinking_Structural_Race_Overview.pdf

²⁰ See Project Implicit (www.projectimplicit.net)

²¹ From <http://writers.unconsciousbias.org/unconsciousbias/>

²² GARE Communications Guide (May 2018) p. 39; <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/1-052018-GARE-Comms-Guide-v1-1.pdf>

Figure 1: Matrix of Explicit and Implicit Bias and Individual and Institutional Racism

	Individual Racism/Bias	Institutional Racism/Bias
Explicit Bias	When people think of racism, they often think of individual, explicit racism.	After instituting explicitly racist laws and policies, since the Civil Rights era government has focused on fixing explicitly racist laws and policies.
Implicit Bias	When many people think about how to fix racism, they think we need to change minds, one by one, getting rid of implicit bias.	GARE focuses efforts on the hidden forces at work in our institutions – this is where structural transformation is necessary to end racial disparities.

Dog Whistle Racism and Countering the Four Dominant Race Frames. Researchers at the Center for Social Inclusion and the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity offer additional insights for understanding racism in the U.S.²³ They note that the use of “dog whistle” racism can elicit racist responses even when there is no mention of race.

Dog-whistle racism refers to the combination of implicit bias and symbolic racism that relies on images, code words, and metaphors to implicitly signal race (e.g., urban youth). Dog-whistle racism can trigger unconscious racism that pushes people toward policies that support and facilitate inequity. This occurs in part because there are four dominant race frames among White Americans born from 1940 - 1980:

- Racism and inequality are things of the past
- Culture/behavior cause disparities
- Disparities are inevitable and/or natural
- Programs helping people of color are unfair to Whites

In response to these race frames, CSI and GARE have developed a research-informed approach to countering these frames that focuses on race in a way that can move people on policy. CSI and GARE use this model, based on research called ACT (which stands for affirm, counter, transform), to train people on how to communicate about race in a way that can move people toward better outcomes.

- “Affirm” means to start with the heart and engage the audience with emotional appeals and explain how people are in this together
- “Counter” means to explain the problem and take on race directly; and
- “Transform” involves reframing winners and losers, concluding with a message that “binds the heart” and “a transformative solution” that people want to support.

GARE recommends the use of the ACT model to counter common myths about race and racism as summarized in Chart 2 on the next page.

²³ Institutionalizing Racial Equity – Framing the Dialogue on Race and Ethnicity to Advance Health Equity

Chart 2: Countering Common Myths About Race and Racism

Myth	Fact	Sample ACT Responses by GARE
<i>Race is biological</i>	Race is a social construct	<p>Affirm: Yes, people often identify race by ancestry and physical features</p> <p>Counter: White people categorized people of color by physical traits to create a racial system that justified slavery and colonialism. It is a social construct rather than a biological construct, but a reality.</p> <p>Transform: Race can be a powerful part of identity, creating solidarity and community. We need to talk about race to right both historical and current wrongs. But it is still a social construct.</p>
<i>Disparities reflect differences in cultural values by race and/or ethnicity</i>	Hard work is insufficient to overcome structural racism	<p>Affirm: Yes, hard work can help individuals make some gains.</p> <p>Counter: Research shows that people of color (POC) have to work harder to attain the same – or often worse – outcomes than White people. This is unfair. Moreover, hard work is not nearly enough to overcome the many layered structural disadvantages faced by POC.</p> <p>Transform: Race can be a powerful part of identity, creating solidarity and community. We need to talk about race explicitly to right historical wrongs. But it is still a social construct.</p>
<i>It's about class, not race</i>	Wealth drives outcomes for all people, but research shows that race is the strongest predictor of outcomes	<p>Affirm: Yes, financial resources are incredibly important</p> <p>Counter: However, attempting to ignore race while talking about wealth ignores our nation's history of using laws, policies and practices to generate wealth for White people at the expense of POC. Moreover, attempts to focus only on economic justice often inadvertently harm POC.</p> <p>Transform: Class issues, wealth disparities, and economic justice are inherently a part of the creation of racial disparities, and they must be a part of our solutions.</p>
<i>I don't see color</i>	It is not possible to be colorblind, and attempting it is harmful, not helpful	<p>Affirm: It is tempting to believe that if we believe in equality for all, we can become "post-racial" or colorblind.</p> <p>Counter: Attempting to ignore race often does more harm than good: it can create feelings of invisibility among POC, willful ignorance of ongoing racial disparities, and an inappropriate shift from race to class. It is also not possible to not see race although it is a social construct.</p> <p>Transform: Being explicit about race is one of the most important skills we need to advance racial equity.</p>
<i>Hierarchies are natural: some group has to be on the bottom</i>	Inequities result from long-term efforts to disadvantage POC.	<p>Affirm: Yes, there are plenty of examples of hierarchy in the natural world.</p> <p>Counter: Yet, there is no scientific basis for racial hierarchy; there is no modern scientific validity to assertions of racial hierarchy. Moreover, in a country as wealthy as the US, racial inequities should be intolerable.</p> <p>Transform: Our current social and economic realities were created by those who benefited from the distribution of resources. Everyone should have access to resources, power, and opportunity and when we center our efforts on those most burdened – POC – everyone benefits.</p>

The Problem with Color-Blindness. Members of the public, policymakers and officials often contend that they are “color-blind” and that race is not a part of their decision-making. They often argue that public policies are neutral and that the disproportionate impact of policies on racial disparities neither reflects racial intent or animus. Moreover, they may also argue that choosing to see race or take race into account encourages discrimination (e.g., reverse discrimination) and that assuring that policies and institutions do not consider race will end discrimination. This is a perspective that has been supported by scholars and courts, including the Supreme Court.

Kennedy, Sonnad, and Hing argue, however, that “(t)he intent doctrine is simply outdated.”²⁴ They note that the intent doctrine requiring that those alleging discrimination show that the decision-makers intended to discriminate against people of color arose when civil rights plaintiffs were focused on dismantling Jim Crow. The intent doctrine “presumes that racial prejudice is an aberration perpetuated by those who possess an animus and intent to visit it upon others.”²⁵ But we know from the work of cognitive scientists that implicit bias and, more specifically, in-group preference, are the norms of human behavior and that they often exist without the intentional animus that the law requires.

According to Kennedy, Sonnad, and Hing, those interested in narrowing racial disparities and promoting racial equity must expand their thinking about racial discrimination “beyond the traditional analytical dichotomy of a perpetrator and a victim.” To move beyond the myth that color-blindness promotes racial equity and instead achieve real progress in narrowing racial disparities, they collectively recommend that policymakers:

- Develop an understanding of how racial disparities exist, their root causes, and that neutral language can produce disparate outcomes;
- Move their focus from intentional language, policies or decisions to analyzing the outcomes of those policies or decisions;
- Consider how people are differentially situated in the development of policies and institutions and recognize that treating people who are differentially situated the same is not fair. On this final point, they reference John A. Powell who offers this example: “(I)t would make little sense to provide the same protections against hurricanes to mid-western communities as to coastal communities.”²⁶

D. Racialization of Public Policies

Racialization of public policies refers to the formation of public policies that help to create or sustain a racial hierarchy. This subsection is presented in four parts to describe:

- A brief history of the racialization of public policies in the U.S.
- Racial hierarchy in the U.S.
- State and local policies that have fostered or diminished racialization
- Key features of equitable and inequitable public policies

²⁴ From Kennedy, William, Sonnad, Gillian, and Hing, Sharon “**Putting race back on the table: Racial impact statements**” Clearinghouse REVIEW Journal of Poverty Law and Policy, September/October 2013

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

Racialization of Public Policies in U.S. History. The Grassroots Policy Project defines *racialization* as “*The process by which racial understandings are formed, re-formed, and assigned to groups of people and to social institutions and practices, and to the consequences of such understandings.*”²⁷ For example, they note the categorization of Africans from diverse nations under the label ‘Negro’ – a racial category - during the 17th century and the racialization of different forms of labor so that ‘workers’ were White and ‘slaves’ were Black. They also recognize the assigning of different groups of immigrants to the broad categories of White (European immigrants) or ‘of color’ (Latino, African, Asian-Pacific Islander and more recently, Middle Eastern immigrants) in U.S. history.

The Grassroots Policy Project finds that the effects of racialized public policies accumulate over time. Some of the effects are altered, as in the case of the passage of civil rights legislation, but they are not fully erased, in part due to differences in situatedness among racial groups. Their brief timeline of racialization in U.S. History below shows how institutional policies, interactions among institutions, and differences in resources or investments over time, produce and reproduce racially unequal outcomes.²⁸

- **1676. Bacon’s Rebellion.** Poor Whites and Blacks joined together to gain more economic control. Colonial authorities responded to the rebellion by driving a wedge between Black and White servants. They argue that colonial authorities took this step to create “Black” slaves and “White” workers, and to associate the working class with “White.”
- **1789. The Constitution.** The political economy of slavery was expressed in many aspects of the Constitution, not just the 3/5ths provision. The Constitution racialized citizenship: one had to be legally defined as White to be a citizen. In practice, one also had to own property to vote.
- **1846-48. Annexation of Texas, the Southwest Territories and California.** The U.S. granted citizenship to Mexicans who remained in the annexed territories, but it did not treat these new citizens the same as White settlers from the East and the South. Mexicans and other Latin Americans, Native Americans and Chinese immigrants posed a challenge to the Black/White color line to which the White settlers were accustomed. Over several decades, White Americans lumped Mexican-Americans and other Latin Americans together as ‘brown’ or ‘colored’ people.
- **1935-1955. New Deal through the GI Bill.** Racialization shaped and constrained the National Labor Relations Act, Social Security, the Federal Housing Administration, the GI Bill, and other progressive reforms. To solicit the support of Southern Democrats who supported segregation, the federal reforms that helped expand the middle class often excluded people of color. These government programs constituted what many have called ‘Affirmative Action for White people.’

²⁷ Sandra Hinson, Richard Healey, and Nathaniel Weisenberg. *Race, Power and Policy: Dismantling Structural Racism* (prepared for National People’s Action by the Grassroots Policy Project, undated) (p. 5); https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/race_power_policy_workbook.pdf

²⁸ Ibid, (pp.9-10)

- 1960s to the present. **Law and Order.** A racialized picture of crime emerged as a backlash against civil rights, the War on Poverty, and organized action in communities of color.²⁹ This “moral panic” led to the war on crime and mandatory minimums for crack cocaine that targeted men and youth of color although drug use and trade were higher among Whites. The racialized “war on crime” has torn communities of color apart and created the largest prison population of any advanced industrialized nation.

These examples of racialized public policies highlight structural racism at play by illustrating the racialized consequences of seemingly race-neutral laws and events. Moreover, the cumulative impact of these racialized policies has disadvantaged people of color despite the economic and social advancement that many people of color have experienced: structural racism continues to adversely impact people of color.

GARE notes that³⁰ other seemingly “race-neutral” policies from the New Deal Era, aimed at generating benefits for all Americans, favored White people and families, often at the expense of people of color; the legacy of these “race-neutral” policies continue. For example:

- **The National Housing Act of 1934**, which was aimed at improving home affordability but undermined lending in communities of color that were labeled as unstable, further entrenched segregation and largely benefited White families. The legacy of the National Housing Act includes the racialized housing patterns and segregation that persist today.
- **The National Labor Relations Act of 1935** that created disparities in the labor market by excluding two occupational groups whose workers were Black: agricultural and domestic employees. The disparities in the labor market persist, as does the preponderance of people of color in agriculture and domestic worker positions.

Racial Hierarchy. According to the Racial Equity Institute, racialized public policies are designed to create and sustain racial hierarchy in the United States. Chart 3 on the next page describes this country’s racial hierarchy: it places White people at the top, Black people at the bottom, and other people of color in the middle.³¹ This racial hierarchy is reflected in racial disparities where the gap between Whites and Asians is usually smaller than the Black/White gap and the Latino/White gap.

²⁹ See: Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*. (New York, NY: The New Press, 2012)

³⁰ Julie Nelson, Lauren Spokane, Lauren Ross, and Nan Deng, [Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas Into Action](https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf) (Haas Institute and Center for Social Inclusion, 2016) (pp.13-14); https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf

³¹ “Racial Equity Workshop,” training conducted by Deena Hayes-Greene and Bayard Love of the Racial Equity Institute (July 2018) for Leadership Montgomery, Montgomery County, Maryland

Chart 3: Racial Hierarchy in the United States

Ranking	Racial and Ethnic Groups
Top	White/Caucasians
Near Top	Asians
Middle	Latinos/Hispanics
Near Bottom	Native Americans, non-White immigrants, Muslims and people from the Middle East
Bottom	African Americans

State and Local Policies. The Consumer Health Foundation recently compiled equity timelines for Maryland³² and Montgomery County³³ to describe the racialization of state and local policies since the Colonial Era and policy action to enhance racial and social equity since the Civil Rights Era. The next three pages in four tables synthesize these equity timelines:

- **Colonial and Early Maryland Policies that Fostered Racial Inequities, 1608-1832** (Table 3);
- **State and Local Policies in Maryland and Montgomery County that Exacerbated Racial Disparities during the Jim Crow Era, 1860 – 1927** (Table 4);
- **State and Local Policies in Maryland and Montgomery County to Narrow Racial and Social Inequities, the Civil Rights to Post-Civil Rights Era, 1935-1990’s** (Table 5); and
- **Recent State and Local Policies in Maryland and Montgomery County to Narrow Social Inequities, 2004-2017** (Table 6).

A review of the equity timelines shows that few policies were enacted to explicitly reverse racial inequities after the 1960s. Instead, policies to narrow social inequities have been the focus of Maryland and Montgomery County efforts since the Civil Rights Era, ranging from increasing affordable housing (e.g. Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit Program) to increasing the minimum wage. Of note, the Montgomery County Police Department affirmed its policy of not inquiring about the immigration status of residents or conducting immigration enforcement or investigations in the 1990s. The County also affirmed during the 1990s that it is not a “sanctuary” jurisdiction.

³² “History of Maryland” (Consumer Health Foundation); <http://www.consumerhealthfdn.org/focus-on-equity/montgomery-county-color/history/>

³³ “History of Montgomery County” (Consumer Health Foundation); <http://www.consumerhealthfdn.org/focus-on-equity/montgomery-county-color/history-montgomery-county/>

Table 3: Colonial and Early Maryland Policies that Fostered Racial Inequities, 1608- 1832

Years	Maryland Timeline
1608	American Indians. The Algonquin-speaking tribes, along with the Iroquois and Sioux, lived in Maryland Settlements. Due to wars led by European settlers and emigration, their population decreased significantly in the 1700s.
1638	Bill of Rights. Maryland passed the Bill of Rights that excluded people who are enslaved – the first legal distinction between Whites (even servants) and Blacks.
1663	Slavery. Maryland passed an “Act Concerning Negroes and other Slaves” which stated that free White women who entered marriage with a Black slave were declared slaves for the duration of the life of their spouse. Enslaved Africans were given the status of slaves for life.
1681	Free Blacks. Maryland passed a law that children born to free Black women and Black children of White women would be free.
1777	Slavery. Maryland replaces its poll tax with “ad valorem” property taxes. Maryland considers people who are enslaved taxable property for the people who enslave them.
1783	Slavery. Maryland prohibits the importation of enslaved Africans.
1832	Free Blacks. In response to the Nat Turner Revolt, Maryland’s legislature prohibits free Blacks from entering the state, bars free Blacks from owning firearms without a certificate from county official, and bars Black churches from holding religious meetings without a White minister.

Table 4: State and Local Policies in Maryland and Montgomery County that Exacerbated Racial Disparities during the Jim Crow Era, 1860 – 1927

Years	Maryland Timeline	Montgomery County Timeline
1860 1865	Education, 1865. Maryland shifts from local to state control of schools in selecting textbooks and curriculum, certification of teachers, approval of school designs, distribution of state funds and segregation of schools.	Education, 1860. A free Montgomery County Public School System was established for White children. In 1872, a segregated Montgomery County Public School System began.
1870 1902 1904 1921	Right to Vote, 1879. In 1870, the U.S. Congress ratified the 15 th Amendment granting voting rights to all Black men. Maryland did not vote to ratify. The Maryland Senate ratified it in 1973. Racial Segregation, 1904. Maryland passed legislation that required separate areas for Whites and Blacks on vehicles of public transport, including steamboats and railroads.	Housing, 1902. From 1902 to 1948, Silver Spring enacted more than 50 racially restrictive covenants that prohibited African Americans from owning or renting properties. Housing, 1921. Colonel Edward Brooke Lee, Maryland politician and local private developer, attached racially restrictive covenants to all his suburban properties prohibiting Blacks from buying or renting in the subdivision.
1925 1927	Education, 1925. The incipient segregation of education between White and Black schools was formalized in 1924 when the state code was changed that required racially segregated schools.	Education, 1927. The first county secondary school for African American students, Rockville Colored High School, opened for students in Grades 8-11. Prior to this, students who wanted to continue their education beyond Grade 7 had to go to another jurisdiction.

Table 5: State and Local Policies in Maryland and Montgomery County to Narrow Racial and Social Inequities, the Civil Rights to Post-Civil Rights Era, 1935-1990s

Years	Maryland Timeline	Montgomery County Timeline
1935 1944 1954	<p>Education, 1935. Donald Murray, an African American student, applied to the University of Maryland Law School. The Law School denied him admission based on his race. The NAACP filed a lawsuit led by Thurgood Marshall and Charles Hamilton Houston and won the case. As a result, Blacks were allowed to attend the law school.</p>	<p>Education, 1944. The first group of African American students completed Grade 12 at Lincoln High School. Previously, the County offered education only through Grade 11 for African American students.</p> <p>Education, 1954. The Montgomery County Public School System began to desegregate. In 1955, the Montgomery County Board of Education adopted an integration policy.</p>
	Montgomery County Timeline	
1960s	<p>Community Organizing. The NAACP Montgomery County Chapter boycotted two Rockville restaurants that refused to serve African Americans. The Montgomery County Council formed a “Council on Human Rights” which addressed cases of discrimination in response to a petition from concerned citizens.</p> <p>Racial Desegregation, 1961. Park managers desegregated Glen Echo Park .</p> <p>Racial and Religious Discrimination, 1962. Montgomery County Council outlawed racial and religious discrimination in places of public accommodations, the first Maryland county to prohibit discrimination in public places and two years ahead of the federal government.</p> <p>Housing, 1966. The Action Coordinating Committee to End Segregation in the Suburbs protested against segregated apartment complexes around the Beltway.</p> <p>Housing, 1967. Montgomery County passed an open housing law that outlawed discrimination in the sale or rental of all housing, except owner-occupied housing of two rental units or less. Montgomery County also passed a new open housing law. Federal authorities state that it was “the most comprehensive fair housing measure in the United States,” stronger than the recently enacted federal legislation against housing discrimination.</p>	
1974	<p>Housing, Montgomery County established the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program, which pioneered inclusionary zoning practices by requiring any developer applying for subdivision approval, site plan approval, or building permits for the construction of 50 or more dwelling units at one location to ensure that 15 percent were MPDU’s.</p>	
1990s	<p>Immigrant Communities. Montgomery County affirmed that it is not a “sanctuary” jurisdiction. However, the Montgomery County Police Department affirmed its policy of not inquiring about the immigration status of residents or conducting immigration enforcement or investigations.</p>	

Table 6: State and Local Policies in Maryland and Montgomery County to Narrow Social Inequities, 2004-2017

Years	Maryland Timeline	Montgomery County Timeline
2004 2007	Apology for Slavery, 2007. Maryland approved resolutions apologizing for slavery.	Health, 2004. Montgomery County launched the Montgomery Cares program, which included a network of community-based health care providers that provided medical care to uninsured adults in the County.
2009 2011	State Tax Revenue, 2011. Maryland approved a 10-cent per drink alcohol tax that raised additional revenue.	Social Services, 2009. Montgomery County transformed the social service eligibility systems to be centered at the neighborhood level and included the formation of Neighborhood Opportunity Networks.
2013	Wage Theft. Maryland implemented the Unpaid Wage Lien Law that provided workers a process for putting a hold on the property of an employer until the worker received wages owed to them.	Minimum Wage. The District of Columbia, Montgomery County, and Prince George’s County raised the minimum wage to \$11.50 per hour by 2017. Income. Montgomery County Council increased the County’s Working Families Income Supplement for low-income households to 90% of the Maryland refundable credit beginning in Fiscal Year 2015, 95% in FY16, and 100% in FY17 and beyond.
2016 2017	Hunger and Food Insecurity, 2016. Maryland increased the minimum food stamp program benefit for households with a member 62 years and older to \$30 per month. It also reformed the Law Enforcement Bill of Rights, which allowed the filing of anonymous complaints and required trial board hearings to be open to the public. Health, 2017. Maryland enacted the Prescription Drug Affordability Initiative that is the country’s first prescription drug price gouging law.	Minimum Wage, 2017. Montgomery County approved a \$15 per hour minimum wage effective 2021. Inclusion, 2017. Montgomery County launched Communities United against Hate, a nonpartisan organization which combats bigotry, supports victims of hate, and promotes inclusiveness in the County.

Features of Equitable and Inequitable Policies. A key feature of equitable public policies is a focus on institutions and systems rather than on individuals. Having policymakers “ask the right questions” can shift their attention from focusing on individuals to institutions and systems in policymaking aimed at reducing racial disparities. According to ISAIAH and the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, to transform racialized public policies into more equitable policies, policymakers:

“(N)eed to be grounded in our values and start with a set of questions that citizens, organizational, and elected officials can use to understand why we can still get unacceptable outcomes, even with good intentions.”³⁴

Asking the right questions helps to match problems reflecting racial disparities with interventions that target institutions and systems rather than individuals. For example, John A. Powell et al. offers an equity framework that helps to match problems with the appropriate level of intervention.³⁵ They offer two examples for matching problems to level of interventions as summarized in Chart 4 below. Policy responses to racial disparities based on individual deficits differ from those based on structural deficits. Moreover, interventions targeting institutions and structures are likely to have greater impacts on reducing inequities and disparities than those focused on individuals because they better address the root causes of disparities: institutional racism.

Chart 4: Matching Problem Analysis with Intervention Crisis

Challenge	Level of Analysis	Problem Definition	Possible Interventions
Housing and the Foreclosure Crisis	Individual	Individuals sign loan documents that they do not understand	Borrower education
	Institutional	A particular bank will not make loans in historically red-lined neighborhoods	Organize a local, regional or state action, file a law suit, force the bank to change its lending policies
	Structural	All of the major lenders in the area have stopped giving loans or will only give subprime loans in historically red-lined neighborhoods	Work with national alliances working to increase and enforce fair lending practices, community reinvestment act through community organizing at the state and national level
	Global	Loans are no longer held by local or even national banks, but are owned by foreign governments	Work with national and transnational organizations to increase regulation of multinational corporations

³⁴ Shining the Light: A Practical Guide to Co-Creating Healthy Communities. (ISAIAH and the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, 2010) (p. 13); retrieved from <http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/isaiah1.pdf>

³⁵ John A. Powell, Connie Cagampang, Heller Fayza Bundalli, Systems Thinking and Race: Workshop Summary (The California Endowment, 2011) (pp. 18 and 26); http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/Powell_Systems_Thinking_Structural_Race_Overview.pdf

Chart 4: Matching Problem Analysis with Intervention Crisis, Continued

Challenge	Level of Analysis	Problem Definition	Possible Interventions
School to Prison Pipeline	Individual	Students of color lack self-confidence, parents lack knowledge about navigating school system, teachers lack cross cultural competency	Develop programs to develop student self-confidence, parental knowledge about education system, cross cultural competency among teachers
	Institutional	A particular school or school district has particularly biased teachers and/or biased enforcement of school discipline policies, and/or a particular school is under-resourced	Organize a local action, or file a law suit to force the particular school or school district to require cultural competency training for teachers, change its school discipline policies, and fundraise within the community to supplement financial resources
	Structural	The way that financial resources are allocated and teacher school assignments are made results in fewer dollars and the least experienced teachers being assigned to schools in neighborhoods with fewest external resources, higher concentrations of poverty, parents working multiple jobs results in higher dropout rates, fewer continuing to college, etc.	Through an inside-outside strategy, including community organizing and leadership development, work with school district to redesign how funds are allocated and how teacher school assignments are decided district wide to ensure that resources and teachers are assigned with the goal of providing all communities with the support that they need for educational success

Additionally, the Grassroot Policy Project suggests that to begin dismantling the system of structural racism, policymakers and organizations committed to racial justice must identify policies that perpetuate the system and develop new policies that will have positive racial impacts.³⁶ They find that public policies, practices, and decisions that perpetuate structural racism exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- **They allow for the segregation of resources and risks.** These include redlining, subprime lending (reverse redlining), certain zoning policies, toxic dumping policies, and the use of property taxes to fund public education.

³⁶ Sandra Hinson, Richard Healey, and Nathaniel Weisenberg. *Race, Power and Policy: Dismantling Structural Racism* (prepared for National People’s Action by the Grassroots Policy Project, n.d.); https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/race_power_policy_workbook.pdf

- **They create inherited group disadvantage or advantage.** These include the intergenerational transfer of wealth through estate inheritance, lack of reparations for historical injustices (e.g., restitution to Native Americans for lands taken by European settlers), and admissions procedures at universities that consider legacy.
- **They allow for the differential valuation in human life by race.** This includes the use of curriculum policies that teach certain histories and not others, as well as racial profiling and discretionary sentencing.
- **They limit the self-determination of certain groups of people.** This includes policies that result in disproportionate incarceration rates for people of color and their subsequent disenfranchisement, and lack of proportional representation in elections and governmental decision-making.

PolicyLink's All-in-Cities Initiative offers several recommendations for policymakers seeking to advance equity and inclusiveness in policymaking.³⁷ First, they recommend the adoption of the following set of equity-focused practices that cut across policy areas:

- Integrate a focus on people, place and the economy
- Embrace equity as an economic imperative
- Focus on the most vulnerable
- Embed antiracism throughout government by applying a racial equity lens to decision-making
- Strengthen the public realm: public action, public space, and public institutions
- Ensure meaningful community participation, leadership, and ownership
- Take on the challenge of achieving equity results at scale

Second, they recommend the adoption of a policy agenda that counters unequal growth and advances racial and economic equity by advancing the following eight policy goals as a framework:

- Grow good, accessible jobs that provide pathways to the middle class
- Increase the economic security and mobility of vulnerable families and workers
- Cultivate homegrown talent through a strong cradle-to-career pipeline
- Create healthy, opportunity-rich neighborhoods for all
- Increase access to high-quality affordable homes and prevent displacement
- Expand democracy and the right to the city
- Ensure just policing and court systems

³⁷ <http://www.policylink.org/resources-tools/all-in-cities-framing>

Chapter 3. Racial Equity Best Practices

This chapter synthesizes best practices for promoting racial equity compiled from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), the Center for Social Inclusion, Equity in the Center, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. This chapter is presented in three parts to align with the three sets of best practices recognized by GARE:

- A. Normalize Racial Equity** describes two strategies for normalizing racial equity as a core goal of local government: understanding racial equity frameworks and acting with urgency;
- B. Organizing for Racial Equity** describes two strategies for building organizational capacity to advance racial equity: organizing internal governmental staff and partnerships to promote meaningful community engagement in local decision-making; and
- C. Operationalizing for Racial Equity** describes two sets of practices for creating structures to advance racial equity in decision-making: using racial equity tools to apply a racial equity lens to decision-making and use of data to establish baselines and track progress on racial disparities.

Several findings emerge from the information reviewed in this chapter:

- Local leaders play a critical role in prioritizing racial equity with focused and sustained attention. In turn, local leaders must agree to prioritize racial equity, develop a common vision for it, and communicate their ongoing support for it.
- Adopting a racial equity framework creates common definitions of racism that enable more productive conversations about racism and commitments to ending institutional racism.
- Organizations tend to default to maintaining the status quo, which is based on implicit racial bias and institutional racism; therefore, to advance racial equity local governments must actively train and organize staff and shift to a culture of organizational transformation.
- Community engagement, and especially engagement from communities of color, in racial equity action planning yields greater equity improvements by taking advantage of the subject matter expertise in the community, increasing organizational momentum, and holding a jurisdiction accountable for sustained and measurable progress.
- There is no one way for jurisdictions to advance racial equity. However, advancing racial equity requires both processes (transformational changes to organizations, staff training, honest discussions about race) and products (specific plans with measurable goals, data reports on racial equity, written assessments of current and proposed policies and resource allocations)

A. Normalize Racial Equity

The first racial equity best practice recognized by GARE is to normalize racial equity as an essential value. GARE identifies two key components of normalization:

- 1. Using Racial Equity Frameworks** to establish a common language and understanding of equity and inclusion principles, including shared definitions of racism and racial equity.

2. Communicating and Acting with Urgency to advance racial equity by building institutional accountability mechanisms.

A third component to the best practice of normalizing racial equity recommended by Equity in the Center is **creating a race equity culture** where the organization is “focused on proactively counteracting race inequities inside and outside of an organization.”³⁸

This subsection describes these three sets of strategies for normalizing jurisdictions work: (1) racial equity frameworks, (2) communicating and acting with urgency, and (3) creating race equity cultures.

1. Racial Equity Frameworks

The Annie E. Casey Foundation finds that “often race-focused conversations derail because people are using the same terms in different ways. One of the challenges of communicating effectively about race is to move people from the narrow and individualized definition of racism to a more comprehensive and system awareness.”³⁹ Use of racial equity frameworks that convey equity and inclusion principles can help stakeholders have more productive conversations.

Racial equity frameworks establish a common language about race and racism that helps to make conversations around race and racial equity a normal condition. Racial equity frameworks also set the stage for government and community action. As noted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation,⁴⁰ a racial equity framework should:

- Describe the history of government in creating and maintaining racial inequities;
- Envision and operationalize a new role for government; and
- Use clear and easily understood definitions of racial equity and inequity.

Similarly, GARE states that racial equity frameworks should describe:⁴¹

- The historical role of government laws, policies, and practices in creating and maintaining racial inequities (i.e., the transition from explicitly racist government policies to “race-neutral” government policies that perpetuate inequity to the current opportunity to establish government policies that advance racial equity)
- A definition of race equity and inequity
- The differences between explicit and implicit bias
- The differences between individual, institutional, and structural racism

³⁸ [Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture. \(Equity in the Center, 2018\) \(p.9\);](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56b910ccb6aa60c971d5f98a/t/5b508d9a2b6a2853e2d07b9f/1532005799212/ProInspire-Equity-in-Center-publication-digital-v6.pdf)
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56b910ccb6aa60c971d5f98a/t/5b508d9a2b6a2853e2d07b9f/1532005799212/ProInspire-Equity-in-Center-publication-digital-v6.pdf>

³⁹ Race Equity and Action Guide, p. 4 - https://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF_EmbracingEquity7Steps-2014.pdf

⁴⁰ http://www.aecf.org/m/rresourceguideesourcedoc/AECF_EmbracingEquity7Steps-2014.pdf

⁴¹ Julie Nelson, Lauren Spokane, Lauren Ross, and Nan Deng, [Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas Into Action](#) (Haas Institute and Center for Social Inclusion, 2016) (p.13)

The Casey Foundation further notes that “(e)stablishing a shared language to present data, describe conditions and outcomes and identify root causes inequities” helps to “create a narrative that makes it easier to communicate the commitment to racial equity, both internally and externally, and it creates a platform for coordinated work toward equitable outcomes.” Additional core concepts for racial equity frameworks advanced by Casey (also described in Chapter 2) include defining:

- **Equity** as “the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair.”
- **Racial justice** as the “systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone.”
- **Race** as a socially constructed system of categorizing humans largely based on phenotype (observable looks) with no scientific basis for or discernible distinction between racial categories. At the same time, this definition of race acknowledges that the “ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture and is used as a basis for discrimination and domination.”
- **Racism** by four types. At the micro-level, there is (1) internalized racism and privilege and (2) interpersonal racism when people act on their racial biases; at the macro-level, there is (3) institutional racism (racial inequities within institutions and systems of power) and (4) structural racism (racial biases across institutions and society).
- **Systemic racialization** as a dynamic system that produces and replicates racial ideologies, identities and inequities but does not require intentionally racist actors because of implicit bias.

A glossary of key terms compiled by Equity in the Center on racial equity framework is in the appendix.

2. Communicate and Act with Urgency

GARE’s resource guide for local jurisdictions notes that racial equity is a long-term goal and, for many, may feel like an overwhelming vision to achieve.⁴² They note, however, that when stakeholders feel urgency about an issue and prioritize action on it, significant changes can happen quickly. From marriage equality to recycling, GARE recognizes that the use of a shared vision with specific priorities and strategic actions and organizing has resulted in great success unimaginable before changes were made. They advocate that local governments and stakeholders do the same in communicating and acting with urgency about racial equity.

What lessons for communicating and acting with urgency can be gleaned from the success of campaigns promoting marriage equality and recycling for racial equity? At least three lessons emerge:

⁴² Julie Nelson, Lauren Spokane, Lauren Ross, and Nan Deng, [Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas Into Action](#) (Haas Institute and Center for Social Inclusion, 2016) (p.47)

- First, **local leadership in government must agree on valuing and prioritizing racial equity.** Getting agreement among leaders will likely require a facilitated process led by highly skilled subject matter experts. Some jurisdictions will rely on external subject matter experts for such training, while others will rely on internal subject matter experts who have already prioritized racial equity in their departments.
- Second, **local leaders should develop a vision for racial equity** that is informed by community stakeholders and communities of color impacted by racial disparities. Promulgating resolutions and policies, directing local agencies to engage in this work, and allocating resources for racial equity work, are critical steps to local leaders acting with urgency. These efforts contribute to institutional accountability; they also serve to motivate and inspire internal and external stakeholders to work collectively toward racial equity.
- Third, **local leaders must communicate their commitment, vision, and actions to achieving racial equity** internally and externally. This may include the development of a website describing racial equity efforts and commitments as well as regular updates to the public on priorities and progress. Sharing trainings for racial equity frameworks and developing a set of FAQ's on racial equity are additional steps that local governments can take to communicate their commitment to racial equity.

In jurisdictions with centralized power held by the executive, leaders can more easily influence internal stakeholders to commit to do their part to achieve racial equity. Legislative support of executive action will also make it easier to communicate and act with urgency on racial equity. Additionally, the Center for Social Inclusion recommends careful consideration of how to communicate urgency to internal and external stakeholders who may not see racial equity as a priority for their work.⁴³

Research by the Haas Institute and the Center for Social Inclusion suggests that using messages that explicitly evoke race rather than using “color-blind” frames more effectively garners support for equity-promoting policies. Furthermore, talking about race in a productive way requires understanding what frames people carry and what kind of messages will be received positively given those frames. As noted in Chapter 2, there are four common “race frames” which overlap with common myths regarding race:

- 1) Racism and racial inequality are things of the past
- 2) Disparities are caused by culture/behavior
- 3) Disparities are inevitable and/or natural
- 4) Programs helping people of color are unfair to Whites

In response to these common race frames and based on their research on effective messaging, the Center for Social Inclusion has developed the “ACT: Affirm, Counter, Transform” framework for communication strategies that help others embrace racial equity goals without triggering further bias and resistance. The following is an example of how the Center has used the ACT framework to communicate the value of pursuing racial equity for environmental justice:

⁴³ Julie Nelson, Lauren Spokane, Lauren Ross, and Nan Deng, [Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas Into Action](#) (Haas Institute and Center for Social Inclusion, 2016) (p.47)

Affirm

- **Start with the heart.** The health of our children, families, and loved ones depends on the environments in which we live.
- **Tell us how we got here in simple terms.** For decades, low-income communities of color have been the dumping ground for environmental hazards.

Counter

- **Explain “shared fates” in racially-explicit terms.** People of all races want to live in clean environments with decent housing, good jobs, and high-quality schools.
- **Take on race directly.** Having access to neighborhoods that support success should not be determined by your race.

Transform

- **Reframe winners and losers.** We need to hold corporations that contaminate our environments accountable. For our collective good, we need to value the quality of all neighborhoods above the profits of a few.
- **End with heart and a solution.** Join me in supporting legislation that will bring accountability to corporations. They need to pay their fair share so that all of us can have healthy environments in our communities.

3. Envisioning a Race Equity Culture that Normalizes Equity

Equity in the Center’s recent report [AWAKE to WOKE to WORK: Building a Race Equity Culture](#) offers additional insight on how organizations can normalize their pursuit of racial equity by building a race equity culture. Equity in the Center defines organizations that have fully committed to a race equity culture as fully integrating race equity into “every aspect of its operations and programs.”⁴⁴ They find that organizations that have adopted race equity cultures share these characteristics:

- Leadership ranks hold a critical mass of people of color
- Staff, stakeholders, and leaders are skilled at talking about race, racism, and their implications
- Programs are culturally responsive and explicit about race, racism, and race equity
- Communities are treated as stakeholders, leaders, and assets to the work
- Evaluation efforts incorporate the disaggregation of data by race/ethnicity
- Expenditures reflect organizational values and a commitment to race equity
- Continuous improvement in race equity work is prioritized

⁴⁴ [Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture, \(Equity in the Center, 2018\) \(p. 22\);](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56b910ccb6aa60c971d5f98a/t/5b508d9a2b6a2853e2d07b9f/1532005799212/ProInspire-Equity-in-Center-publication-digital-v6.pdf)
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56b910ccb6aa60c971d5f98a/t/5b508d9a2b6a2853e2d07b9f/1532005799212/ProInspire-Equity-in-Center-publication-digital-v6.pdf>

Equity in the Center further characterizes organization with race equity cultures as “focused on proactively counteracting race inequities inside and outside of an organization.” They note that adopting a race equity culture requires an adaptive and transformational approach among organizations affecting behaviors and mindsets as well as practices, programs, and processes. They also note that there is no one approach for organizations creating a race equity culture:

“Each organization has to chart its own path and define its own success using a combination of tools and tactics mixed with personal and organizational culture changes that make sense for the individual context.”⁴⁵

Despite the varying approaches that organizations can take to build a race equity culture, Equity in the Center finds similar dynamics among organizations that have adopted a race equity culture. These changes, referred to as the Race Equity Cycle, include increased representation of people of color, a stronger culture of inclusion, and the application of a race equity lens in organizations and operations. They note that this journey of change pushes organizations to become more committed, more knowledgeable, and more skilled in analyzing race, racism, and race equity, and in placing these issues at the forefront of organizational and operational strategy.

Equity in the Center offers three strategies for organizations striving to adopt a race equity culture that overlap with GARE’s recommended best practice to normalize racial equity:

- **Establish a shared vocabulary.** Equity in the Center recommends that organizations ground themselves in shared meaning around race equity and structural racism. Equity in the Center offers a glossary for developing a shared vocabulary on racial equity and structural racism among organizational leadership and staff. This OLO report includes a copy of their glossary in the appendix.
- **Name race equity work as a strategic imperative.** Equity in the Center recommends holding “race equity as a north star” for organizations. They recommend defining and communicating how race equity work helps organizations achieve their missions. They contend that the more organizational leaders connect the reasons for prioritizing racial work to their mission, vision, organizational values, and strategies, “the more critically important it will feel to everyone in the organization, at every level.”
- **Open a continuous dialogue about race equity work.** Equity in the Center finds that there are numerous ways to engage in effective conversations on race equity. These include hosting brown-bag lunches about race equity efforts elsewhere and using these stories to start the conversation about race equity within organizations to discuss how the approaches of others might apply to and/or work in their own organizations.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 9

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 20

B. Organizing for Racial Equity

Organizing staff within local government and partnerships with external organizations comprises GARE's third set of best practice for advancing racial equity. GARE notes that organizing staff and relationships with external partners are essential to mobilizing people to prioritize racial equity in local government. The two core components of this best practice are:

1. **Build Organizational Capacity** within government for institutional transformations. GARE notes that while leadership by government officials is critical, change is also needed among staff to create racial equity experts and teams throughout local government to pursue this work; and
2. **Foster Community Engagement**, especially among partners and institutions representing communities of color impacted by racial disparities, to inform planning and decision-making.

These two components of organizing for racial equity are described in turn.

1. Build Organizational Capacity

According to GARE, institutions are designed, by intention or perpetuation of the status quo, to maintain racial disparities.⁴⁷ After the Civil Rights victories of the 1960s, GARE finds that instead of redesigning government to advance racial equity, the status quo remained with the persistence of implicit bias and institutionalized racism.

For local governments to advance racial equity, GARE recommends that they build their organizational capacity for racial equity by focusing on:

- a) **Training** to increase staff understanding of institutional and structural racism and the use of racial equity tools to inform local decision-making; and
- b) **Building Infrastructure** that organizes staff to develop expertise at applying a racial equity lens to local decision-making.

Additionally, Equity in the Center finds that organizations that organize staff and partnerships to advance racial equity follow a pathway they term the "race equity cycle" as they experience a culture change that enables them to place racial equity at the forefront of the organizational strategy. These three subsets of best practices for organizing for racial equity – staff training, staff organization, and organizational culture shift, are described in this section.

⁴⁷ Julie Nelson, Lauren Spokane, Lauren Ross, and Nan Deng, [Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas Into Action](https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf) (Haas Institute and Center for Social Inclusion, 2016) (p.21); https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf

a) Training

Training increases staff understanding of the different types of racism and the use of racial equity tools that are essential to advancing racial equity. GARE finds that effective training teaches employees about racism and builds their skills to implement strategies that promote racial equity in their daily work. For example, effective training to advance workforce diversity includes task forces that engage managers from across departments in seeking solutions to advance diversity in recruitment, retention, and promotion. GARE finds that effective training both meets participants where they are and engages them in developing solutions. Equity in the Center further notes that investing in staff capacity creates the learning environment essential for transforming organizations.

GARE has observed that some jurisdictions have required racial equity training for all employees while others have begun with voluntary programs, developing a core of natural allies to help grow buy-in across the jurisdiction. Both approaches can be effective at enhancing the capacity of staff to apply a racial-equity lens to decision-making. Researchers note, however, that the most effective approaches seek solutions to enhancing workforce diversity, whereas problem-focused diversity training approaches can increase resistance from participants rather than encourage them to work toward workplace diversity.⁴⁸

b) Building Infrastructure.

GARE notes that building organizational infrastructure to advance racial equity will not occur if just one person or department is assigned the duties of advancing racial equity. Transforming institutions requires a combination of staff leads with knowledge on racial equity within every department, tools for applying a racial equity lens into decision making, and delegation of responsibility for incorporating racial equity policies and processes into employees' regular job duties.

Local jurisdictions can build their capacity for advancing racial equity by organizing staff toward this end. Specific actions to develop organizational capacity can include:

- **Hiring a chief equity officer** to coordinate and oversee local efforts
- **Establishing leadership and lead agencies** with missions to advance racial equity
- **Developing a leadership team** among department leads to advocate for racial equity and hold staff accountable for executing racial equity plans and other equity tools
- **Establishing racial equity action teams** within each department to provide internal resources to support the mission of the government's equity program or strategy

The remainder of this section is presented in three parts to describe the: 1) Role of Leadership, 2) Staff Leads and Racial Equity Action Teams, and 3) Changing Organizational Culture to Advance Racial Equity.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 22

1) Role of Leadership. Equity in the Center describes senior leadership, management, and the board of directors as essential levers in advancing racial equity among organizations. They note the importance of identifying race equity champions at the board and senior leadership levels. While recognizing that race equity work only succeeds as an organization-wide effort, Equity in the Center notes that a critical component for advancing organizational support for racial equity is buy-in from board members and senior leaders who can set race equity priorities and communicate them throughout the organization.

Equity in the Center further notes that it is imperative that senior leadership, management, and board members independently demonstrate a firm commitment to race equity. Ideally, senior leaders will encourage others in the organization to engage in the work, influence the speed and depth at which race equity is embedded in the organization, and continuously drive progress and accountability.

GARE also notes that engaging a jurisdiction's leadership team is critical regardless of their racial equity expertise. They will need to engage in both managing the process and providing substantive input in all phases. Engaging the top-level managers could be done as a group and/or with each manager participating in the engagement of their division or program staff. Managers of color and/or with racial equity expertise could also be considered for individual interviews to provide candid feedback.

2) Staff Leads and Racial Equity Teams. GARE recommends that local leadership at the executive level identify a lead or two co-leads who will oversee the development of their racial equity work and, in particular, their racial equity action planning. They further recommend that co-leads work with their executive and/or leadership team to recruit staff to form a Racial Equity Action Team, which is a small group to shepherd the jurisdiction through the entire process.

GARE suggests that the form and composition of the racial equity team depend on the size and structure of the jurisdiction. However, they recommend a common set of functions among racial equity teams:

- **A racial equity focus** throughout the planning process, working with any resistance that arises, and providing racial equity resources for participants who lack the skills needed to participate.
- **Project Design** that addresses the scope, structure, and timeline of the process.
- **Project Management** to coordinate meetings and communications and to produce materials.
- **Research and Systems Change Analysis Skills** to design information-gathering instruments and facilitate discussions that solicit qualitative information on racial equity. Further, racial equity teams should be able to analyze their jurisdiction's systems (including policies, practices and procedures), how they are working, and opportunities for change that will advance racial equity.
- **Strategic Planning** to design exercises and facilitating discussions to develop the content for racial equity action plans (outcomes, actions, and performance measures).
- **Communications** about the purpose of the racial equity action planning process, updates on the process, results of the process, and being a point of contact for anyone with questions.

GARE also offers the following considerations for jurisdictions assembling racial equity action teams:

- **Authority**—The Racial Equity Action Team will need to ask staff in different divisions, programs, and departments to provide information and to take various actions. They must have sufficient authority to make these requests. This could be accomplished by having upper management staff as members of the team or by executive or director giving explicit and clear authorization to the team to oversee the project.
- **Expertise**—Every team member must possess a robust set of skills to fulfill the functions listed above. People with lived experiences bring important expertise. People with strong skills in racial equity analysis, strategic planning, and project management are especially important.
- **Familiarity**—Team members should be familiar with the jurisdiction’s racial equity terminology. They also need familiarity with the jurisdiction’s decision-making structure and processes.
- **Time**—The Racial Equity Action Team should be given sufficient and dedicated time for this project. The time commitment will vary dramatically depending on the capacity of the Team, the size of the jurisdiction, and the scale and depth of the process.
- **Composition**—Each Racial Equity Action Team will look different and be a different size. Ideally, team members represent the demographic diversity of the jurisdiction. Racial diversity is especially important. Ideally, team members also represent the different divisions or programs across the jurisdiction. Representation across the jurisdiction’s hierarchy is also ideal. Tenure and union representation are also important considerations. Representativeness is something to strive for but should be balanced with the need to recruit members with the skills sets needed.

GARE finds that engaging entire divisions or large programs in organizational change to advance racial equity may prove challenging. They recommend the Racial Equity Action Team work with managers of larger divisions or programs to recruit a smaller team of representative staff. These staff should have the most familiarity and experience with the concepts of racial equity in addition to being familiar with the work of the division or program. The Racial Equity Action Team should consider creating a graphic of the agreed upon jurisdictional structure as a communications tool. Finally, GARE observes that while there is no single model for what shape racial equity infrastructure takes, taking on ambitious equity goals effectively will require jurisdictions to carefully consider how they will build the necessary capacity.

3) Change Organizational Culture. Fundamental changes in culture are typically required for organizations to meaningfully apply a racial equity lens in decision-making. Equity in the Center terms this change in organizational culture – defined as a change in shared values, assumptions, and beliefs – as the Race Equity Cycle where organizations transform from a White dominant culture to a race equity culture.⁴⁹ The changes in organizational culture they have found in their research include the following:

- Increased representation of people of color;
- A stronger culture of inclusion; and
- The application of a race equity lens to how organizations and programs operate.

⁴⁹ [Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture. \(Equity in the Center, 2018\) \(pp.10-11\)](#)

Equity in the Center finds that the Race Equity Cycle journey of change pushes organizations to become more committed, more knowledgeable, and more skilled in analyzing race, racism, and race equity, and in placing these issues at the forefront of organizational and operational strategy.

Because each organization is comprised of different people, systems, and histories, individual organizations will enter the Race Equity Cycle at different stages and will approach their race equity work with varying levels of organizational readiness. And while the impact will look and feel different at each stage of the Race Equity Cycle, we believe that all three stages mutually reinforce each other.

- At the **AWAKE** stage, organizations focus on *people* and on building a workforce and boards comprised of individuals from different race backgrounds. The primary goal is *representation*, with efforts aimed at increasing the number of people of different race backgrounds.
- At the **WOKE** stage, organizations focus on *culture* and on creating an environment where everyone is comfortable sharing their experiences and is equipped to talk about racial equity. The primary goal is *inclusion* and internal change in behaviors, policies, and practices.
- At the **WORK** stage, organizations focus on *systems* to improve racial equity. The primary goal is *integration of a race equity lens* into all aspects of an organization. This involves systems change and regularly administering REIAs to evaluate processes, programs, and operations.

Equity in the Center, like GARE, finds that there is no singular or ‘right’ way to engage in race equity work. They contend that even if you don’t yet know the precise path your organization will take towards developing a race equity culture, there are actionable steps to get started:

- **Identify race equity champions** at the board and senior leadership levels. Equity in the Center recommends selecting those who can set race equity priorities, communicate them broadly, drive which race equity is embedded in the organization.
- **Name race equity work as a strategic imperative** for your organization. Equity in the Center recommends defining and communicating how race equity connects to your mission, vision, organizational values, and strategies.
- **Open a continuous dialogue about race equity work.** Equity in the Center advocates for using research and lessons from other organizations to start the conversation with internal teams and/or individuals who are invested in racial equity and your organizational cause.

2. Foster Community Engagement

In local efforts to organize staff and partnerships to advance racial equity, GARE finds fostering community engagement, particularly with communities of color, to be especially important. This section describes the benefits of fostering community engagement in racial equity planning efforts, strategies for promoting community engagement, and ways for determining the sufficiency of community engagement efforts.

Overall, GARE finds that local government efforts to engage communities of color in racial equity planning yield benefits greater than the risk of facing criticisms for their own institutional racism. Using communities of color as subject matter experts holds the potential for greatly enhancing the success of racial equity planning efforts.

Benefits of community engagement. GARE articulates two benefits of community engagement in racial equity action planning, particularly with communities of color, as summarized below.

- ***Community engagement increases the momentum of racial equity action planning efforts.***
GARE finds that jurisdictions that have forged relationships with external partners are essential to mobilizing people in government to prioritize racial equity in decision making. Without the external buy-in and pressure from community members, it can be difficult for localities to maintain their commitment to racial equity planning and execution. Community engagement also enhances accountability for local government action.
- ***Engaging communities of color enhances the quality of racial equity action planning efforts.***
As recognized by GARE, communities of color have borne the burdens of inequitable policies, practices, and investments, and in turn, they hold deep expertise on those impacts. Thus, communities of color, along with employees of color, can bring subject matter expertise and ownership to racial equity action planning, increasing the plan's odds of success. GARE notes that some jurisdictions may feel vulnerable to criticism as they examine their own institutional racism with people of color. Nevertheless, GARE recommends that jurisdictions overcome their tendency to conduct an internally focused racial equity planning process and at minimum, engage people of color most impacted by racial disparities to establish the jurisdiction's vision for racial equity and theory of action. Ideally, local jurisdictions should engage the community in reviewing their draft racial equity plan and to take an active role in implementing the plan and regularly reporting on its progress.

Community engagement strategies. GARE notes that inclusive engagement and community capacity building will yield the biggest impact on racial equity when they engage communities of color in ways that increase their capacity for self-determination. Specific activities include:

- Community conversations,
- Establishing a community racial equity survey,
- Establishing an inclusive engagement action team,
- Assessing current efforts, and
- Expanding advisory groups (e.g. Inclusive Dubuque, Twin Cities Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute, Seattle's Racial Equity Fund)

GARE acknowledges the power of community groups with decision-making authority to advance racial equity goals and the challenge of including diverse community members as volunteers in such groups. GARE advocates that people of color recruited for these committees based on their lived experiences with institutional racism should be compensated for their expertise like the governmental staff serving on these committees and/or the consultants hired to facilitate the committee's work.

Another strategy advanced by GARE to increase the representation of people of color in racial equity planning and decision-making is contracting with community-based organizations (CBOs) already working on issues of racial equity to host community events at different points in the process. They note that research methods conducted by CBOs - such as focus groups, surveys, and interviews - can elicit information that government could not and builds the capacity of these CBOs to do future work.

Community engagement assessments and standards. To help local jurisdictions gauge the sufficiency of their community engagement efforts for racial equity action planning, the Annie E. Casey Foundation recommends that they use the following set of questions to analyze their stakeholder involvement:

1. Who is the most adversely affected by the issue being addressed? Who faces racial barriers or bias, or exclusion from power, related to this issue?
2. How are people of different racial groups differently situated or affected by the issue?
3. Ideally, what would the racial composition of the leadership look like?
4. In what ways are stakeholders most affected by the issue already involved in addressing it? How can these efforts be supported and expanded?
5. What are ways stakeholders adversely affected by the issue can be further engaged?
6. How can diverse communities and leaders be engaged from the outset so they have real opportunity to shape the solutions and strategies?
7. How can community engagement be inclusive, representative, and authentic?
8. How will stakeholders exercise real leadership and power?
9. Who can be allies and supporters and how can they be engaged?
10. Who needs to be recruited or invited to join the effort to address this issue? Who will approach them? How? When? What will they be asked to do to get involved?

C. Operationalize Racial Equity

Operationalizing racial equity through the use of racial equity tools and data is another best practice recognized by GARE for advancing racial equity. This best practice entails giving staff and leadership tools that enable them to apply a racial equity lens to policies and institutional practices that disparately impact people of color. Two components comprise this racial equity best practice:

1. **Racial Equity Tools** that enable decision makers to evaluate current and proposed policies, programs, and practices using a racial equity lens.
2. **Data via Measurement Frameworks** to establish baseline data on indicators of racial disparities and evaluate the success of local efforts to advance racial equity based on changes to those indicators.

GARE describes these two components of operationalizing racial equity in turn followed by a discussion of logistical concerns jurisdictions often address as they operationalize the use of racial equity tools and measure frameworks to gauge the efficacy of their racial equity efforts.

1. Racial Equity Tools

Racial equity tools are analytical approaches for applying a racial equity lens to decision-making. Generally, there are two types of racial equity tools in practice:

- a) **Racial Equity Impact Assessments** (REIAs) are formal documents designed to evaluate the current or predicted impact of policies, programs, and budget decisions on racial disparities (also known as racial impact statements and sometimes referred to as racial equity tools).^{50,51}
- b) **Racial Equity Action Plans** (REAPs) are formal documents created by specific departments with timelines for implementation and accountability aimed at advancing racial equity by reducing disparities.

Of the two sets of racial equity tools, racial equity impact assessments (REIAs) offer a more passive approach to advancing racial equity because they are prepared for new proposals, while racial equity action plans (REAPs) offer a more active approach to advancing racial equity by considering all policies, programs, and/or budget decisions, not just new proposals. REAPs also require more buy-in and support from governmental and community stakeholders than REIAs. A more detailed description of each approach follows.

a) **Racial Equity Impact Assessments**

Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIAs) are a type of racial equity tool that brings formal and systematic consideration of racial equity into the decision-making process, including decisions about policies, practices, programs, and budgets. GARE notes that too often, organizations develop and implement policies and programs without considering racial equity. GARE has found that when racial equity is not explicitly brought into operations and decision-making, racial inequities persist.

REIAs provide a structure for institutionalizing the consideration of racial equity. According to GARE, they are both a product and a process because they produce a forecast (i.e. a product) of the anticipated impact of impending decisions using an analytical process that engages the communities impacted by racial disparities.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation defines REIAs as systematic examinations of how a proposed action or decision will likely affect different racial and ethnic groups. Like GARE, they also note that REIAs are useful for assessing the actual or anticipated impacts of proposed practices, programs, plans and budgetary decisions. According to Terry Keleher with Race Forward, REIAs add value when they:⁵²

- Engage stakeholders in decision-making, especially those most adversely affected by current conditions.
- Bring conscious attention to racial inequities and impacts before decisions get made.
- Seek to avoid and minimize adverse impacts and unintended consequences.

⁵⁰ GARE and a few jurisdictions like Dane County, WI and Seattle, WA refer to racial equity impact assessments as “racial equity tools.” However, OLO considers racial equity action plans to be tools for promoting racial equity as well. As such, OLO includes both racial equity impact statements and racial equity action plans in this project’s working definition of “racial equity tools.”

⁵¹ REIAs may have some similarities to other types of formal impact assessments such as environmental impact statements, cost estimates, or health impact assessments.

⁵² Terry Keleher, An Introduction to Racial Equity Assessment Tools: Governing for Racial Equity (Race Forward, 2014) p.24; retrieved from <https://racc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/An-Introduction-to-Racial-Equity-Assessment-Tools.pdf>

- Seek to prevent racism from occurring in the first place by getting ahead of the curve of “rapidly replicating racism.”
- Affirmatively advance racial equity, inclusion and unity.

The Casey Foundation recommends that all jurisdictions committed to enhancing racial equity should conduct REIAs for all policies and decision-making. Toward this end, they offer five grounding questions that jurisdictions should answer to begin a REIA:

1. Are all racial and ethnic groups who would be affected by the proposed policy, practice or decision at the table?
2. How would the proposed policy, practice, or decision affect each group?
3. How would the proposed policy, practice, or decision be perceived by each group?
4. Would implementing the policy, practice, or decision worsen or leave unchanged existing disparities?
5. Based on the above responses, what revisions are needed to the proposed policy, practice, or decision under discussion?

Sharon Hing also recommends that for REIAs to achieve their dual goals of informed policy analysis with continued community engagement, timing is a key attribute as is the use of a community facilitated process to engage those most affected and concerned with the issues within a proposal. More specifically, Hing states that a racial impact statement is *“likely most effective prior to the enactment of new proposals, when there is a greater opportunity for stakeholders (via proactive engagement of community members) to influence policy as it is being considered and developed.”*

For jurisdictions seeking to implement REIAs, Race Forward offers the following sample questions to anticipate, assess, and prevent potential adverse consequences of proposed actions on different groups:

- **Identifying stakeholders:** Which racial/ethnic groups may be most affected by and concerned with the issues related to this proposal?
- **Engaging stakeholders:** Have stakeholders from different racial/ethnic groups – especially those most adversely affected – been informed, meaningfully involved, and authentically represented in the development of this proposal? Who’s missing and how can they be engaged?
- **Identifying and documenting current racial inequities:** Which racial/ethnic groups are currently most advantaged and most disadvantaged by the issues this proposal seeks to address? What quantitative and qualitative evidence of current inequality exists? What evidence is missing or needed? How would implementing the proposal affect these groups differently?
- **Examining the causes:** What factors may be producing and perpetuating racial inequities associated with this issue? How did the inequities arise? Are they expanding or narrowing? Does the proposal address the root causes? If not, how could it?
- **Clarifying the purpose:** What does the proposal seek to accomplish? Will it reduce disparities or discrimination?

- **Considering adverse impacts:** What adverse impacts or unintended consequences could result from this proposed policy change? Which racial/ethnic groups could be negatively affected? How could adverse impacts be prevented or minimized?
- **Advancing equitable impacts:** What positive impacts on equality and inclusion, if any, could result from this proposal? Which racial/ethnic groups could benefit? Are there further ways to maximize equitable opportunities and impacts?
- **Examining alternatives or improvements:** Are there better ways to reduce racial disparities and advance racial equity? What provisions could be changed or added to ensure positive impacts on racial equity and inclusion?
- **Ensuring viability and sustainability:** Is the proposal realistic, adequately funded, with mechanisms to ensure successful implementation and enforcement? Are there provisions to ensure ongoing data collection, public reporting, stakeholder participation, and public accountability?
- **Identifying success indicators:** What are the success indicators and progress benchmarks? How will impacts be documented and evaluated? How will we assess the level, diversity, and quality of ongoing stakeholder engagement be assessed?

b) Racial Equity Action Plans

Racial Equity Action Plans (REAPs) are department specific plans for advancing racial equity within each department's lines of business. With timelines for implementation and designation of accountability, racial equity action plans align with efforts that apply a results accountability framework for reaching specific performance goals. Rather than seeking to "do no harm" or to mitigate the harm to racial equity from proposed actions, REAPs take a proactive approach by reviewing how current policies affect racial disparities and implementing strategies to narrow those racial disparities.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation recognizes that "(i)t is easy to get overwhelmed by the magnitude of systemic racism and all of its daily manifestations." To address this concern, the Casey Foundation recommends that local jurisdictions conduct systems analysis of root causes of inequities to inform their racial equity action planning. They note that examining the root causes of differential outcomes takes into account the convergence of race, place, class, and history and that this type of analysis often yields a structural perspective that focuses on policies and practices that may unintentionally (and in early times, intentionally) reproduce racial inequities.

The Casey Foundation recommends the use of the questions below to guide organizations through a basic systems analysis to identify the root causes of inequities.

1. What are the racial inequities, barriers, or negative outcomes involved in the problem being examined? Who is most burdened and who is benefitting most?
2. What institutions are involved? What unfair policies and/or practices are involved?
3. What social conditions or determinants contribute to the problem (such housing segregation)?
4. What other compounding (or intersectional) dynamics are involved (such as income inequities)?
5. What cultural norms, myths, or popular ideas justify or maintain the problem?
6. How did things get this way and what are some of the cumulative impacts?

7. What are the key causes or contributing factors?
8. What solutions or interventions could eliminate the inequities?
9. What can be learned from prior efforts to solve the problem or change the system?
10. What strategies could result in systemic change and advance equitable solutions?

After conducting systems analysis to identify the root causes of inequities, the Casey Foundation recommends that jurisdictions identify strategies and target resources to address the root causes of racial disparities. They note that through thoughtful planning and engagement of key stakeholders and partners, jurisdictions can begin to shift their investments and resources to “move solutions forward that have transformative impacts on systems and communities.” They offer the following questions for jurisdictions seeking to develop racially equitable solutions:

1. What racial disparities do you want to eliminate, reduce, or prevent?
2. What groups most adversely affected by the current problem do you want to benefit?
3. How can those most adversely affected by the issue be actively involved in solving it?
4. What is a specific change in policy that could help produce more equitable outcomes?
5. How will your proposed solution address root causes and advance systemic change?
6. What change do you ideally want (not just what you would settle for)?
7. What positive principles or shared values are reflected in this proposed reform?
8. Does the proposal have clear goals, plans and timetables for implementation, with sufficient funding, staffing, public reporting, accountability, and evaluation?
9. Who can be allies and supporters and how can they be engaged?

Finally, GARE advises that jurisdictions seeking to implement a racial equity action plan should begin by establishing a vision for racial equity. More explicitly, they state, “the vision should be heavily informed by communities of color impacted by institutional and structural racism – those with the real expertise.”⁵³ Elected officials may articulate this vision by resolution or executive proclamation or through a Racial Equity Action Plan, as noted in the summary of Portland’s Racial Equity Action Plan described in Chapter 4.

2. Data via Measurement Frameworks

Outcome data disaggregated by race, income, and other social factors are critical to completing equity impact assessments and to developing racial equity action plans. Moreover, to track and monitor the efficacy of racial equity efforts, disaggregated data are needed for two ends:

- Data on community indicators are needed to benchmark the scope of racial disparities
- Data on performance measures are needed to track the effectiveness of departmental efforts aimed at promoting racial equity

⁵³ [Dwayne S. Marsh](#), [Simran Noor](#), [Julie Nelson](#), [Ryan Curren](#), [Nora Liu](#), [Racial Equity Action Plans: A How-to Manual](#) (Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race & Equity, 2016) p.6

GARE finds that excellent measurement frameworks for racial equity include community indicators that measure impact in the community and performance measures at the departmental or program level that enable the monitoring of local actions that influence community indicators. They encourage local governments to track community-level data disaggregated by race in housing, jobs, education, criminal justice, health, and other policy areas. They also recognize that while local government touches each of these areas, they ultimately do not control the entire system. Therefore, they recommend that local governments supplement their data analysis with assessment conversations with local staff and community stakeholders to determine the key leverage points and opportunities for jurisdictions to influence each area of inequity.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation offers similar recommendations on the use of data, stating that “data in all focus areas or organizations and systems should be broken apart by race, gender, and other demographic variables whenever the data are available.”⁵⁴ They acknowledge, however, that often times data are not reported for disaggregated populations. Nevertheless, they encourage organizations and jurisdictions to launch their race equity work even if disaggregated data are not yet available. Equity in the Center recommends that organizations collect, disaggregate, and report relevant data on staff engagement, performance, and compensation data by race, at all staff levels.

Finally, GARE also notes that a deeper examination is often needed to look at how service-level demographic data and data documenting disparities are used to prioritize and develop criteria for decision-making. They note that this will provide valuable insight into whether investments and resource distribution are likely serving to achieve the jurisdiction’s racial equity goals.

Racial Equity Scorecard. To assist jurisdictions in their use of data, GARE has launched the Racial Equity Scorecard with eight jurisdictions. The purpose of this pilot is to develop a model of tracking equity metrics that facilitates learning across jurisdictions. Table 7 describes the metrics being tracked.

⁵⁴ Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide https://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF_EmbracingEquity7Steps-2014.pdf

Table 7: Race Equity Scorecard Metrics

Policy Area	Desired Outcomes	Community Indicators
Youth success and education	Equity across race in access and success for children and youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early education/K-readiness • Third grade reading level • Connection to a caring adult • On time graduation
Health	Equity across race in health and healthy life outcomes – no racial disproportionality in access to quality care, resources, and illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant mortality rates • Life expectancy
Housing	Equity across race in housing – no racial disproportionality in home ownership and access to safe and affordable rental housing, or temporary and transitional housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing cost burden by race (paying < 30% income) • Home ownership across race/ethnicity
Jobs and economic justice	Equity across race in employment – no racial disproportionality in access to living wage jobs, unemployment, career advancement and barriers to employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household income • Unemployment rates • Jurisdiction workforce, contracting, and purchasing reflects demographics of the community
Criminal justice	Equity across race in public safety – no racial disproportionality in arrests, sentencing and incarceration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrest and conviction rates, sentencing, and prison population
Commitment to achieving equity	Increased urgency and commitment to achieving racial equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of population who think government should prioritize addressing racial equity gaps in jobs, health, housing, and other areas • Percent of government employees promoting racial equity at work

Chapter 4: Promising Practices in Other Jurisdictions

There are racial implications to almost every governmental policy, program, and practice. As noted in the Portland Equity Strategy Guide, “(a)ny policy, program, or project can have a racial impact on distribution of benefits or burdens.”⁵⁵ These include:

- Infrastructure projects that affect property value;
- Policies that affect access to services;
- Hiring and contracting policies and practices;
- The public involvement process that affects who provides input; and
- The creation of high-level program goals and levels of service.

Recognizing this, several local jurisdictions have been intentional in their attempts to ensure that government action does not widen racial disparities and, whenever possible, narrows them. This chapter describes efforts among the following seven jurisdictions for advancing racial equity in governmental decision-making:

- Seattle, Washington;
- King County, Washington;
- Portland, Oregon;
- Multnomah County, Oregon;
- Madison, Wisconsin;
- Dane County, Wisconsin; and
- Fairfax County, Virginia.

This chapter synthesizes information from documents and interviews to describe the policies, actions, and practices these jurisdictions have implemented to counter institutional racism in government decision-making, services, and community engagement. This chapter is organized in four parts:

- A. Strategic Plans for Racial Equity** describes jurisdiction-wide strategic plans for advancing racial equity in four jurisdictions: Seattle, King County, Dane County and Portland. Strategic plans for racial equity usually articulate a vision and a theory of action for promoting equity that guides a jurisdiction’s efforts to promote racial equity.
- B. Racial Equity Impact Assessments** describes how four jurisdictions have used these to assess the potential impact of budget and policy decisions on racial disparities and social justice outcomes: Seattle, Multnomah County, Portland and Madison.
- C. Other Strategies for Advancing Racial Equity** describes five additional set of strategies used in two or more of the seven jurisdictions reviewed to advance racial equity: training, racial equity action plans, measurement frameworks, racial equity teams, and community engagement.
- D. Resolutions, Ordinances, and Policies** summarizes the resolutions, policies, and ordinances each of the seven jurisdictions have passed to promote racial equity in government practices.

⁵⁵ Racial Equity Strategy Guide: Presented by Portland’s Partnership for Racial Equity, (Urban League of Portland, n.d.) p.8; <https://ulpdx.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/RACIAL-EQUITY-STRATEGY-GUIDE-FINAL.pdf>

Several findings emerge among the jurisdictions reviewed in this chapter:

- Most jurisdictions began their racial equity efforts with training for leaders and staff to create a common language among stakeholders for planning.
- Most jurisdictions have taken a multi-pronged approach to advancing racial equity over several years that have extended across administrations.
- Rather than implement racial equity impact assessments in isolation, most localities have developed jurisdiction-wide and departmental racial equity action plans aimed at achieving racially equitable outcomes across several systems and performance measures.
- Coordinating the engagement of staff and community has been a critical feature of jurisdictions seeking to achieve systemic racial equity. Leadership teams, inter-departmental teams, and intra-departmental racial equity teams have all been critical to moving the work forward and changing the focus of equity work from changing individuals to changing systems.
- Several jurisdictions have developed new departments or expanded the scope of existing departments to support equity work in their jurisdictions. These departments coordinate jurisdiction-wide equity efforts, train staff, help departments utilize racial equity tools and develop departmental racial equity plans that align with jurisdiction-wide strategic plans.
- Use of data, surveys, and partnerships with communities, other jurisdictions, and regional communities of practice with GARE are common practices that have fostered momentum and accountability for racial equity work among several jurisdictions.
- Executive and legislative branches have often collaboratively developed and implemented ordinances to advance racial equity across jurisdictions.

A. Strategic Plans for Racial Equity

Jurisdictions that have taken a lead in advancing racial equity often adopt strategic plans to guide their efforts. This section describes jurisdiction-wide strategic plans for racial equity in the following jurisdictions:

1. Seattle, Washington
2. King County, Washington
3. Dane County, Wisconsin
4. Portland, Oregon

Descriptions of each jurisdiction's distinct strategic plans for advancing racial equity follow.

1. Seattle, Washington

Seattle's 2015-17 racial equity strategic plan is their third strategic plan.⁵⁶ It lists three priority areas:

- **Equitable Development** to increase people of color's access to living wage jobs, housing and business development;
- **Education** to reduce racial disparities in school discipline, increase the cultural competency and diversity of staff, and enhance access to career pathways for students of color; and
- **Criminal Justice** to end the school-to-prison pipeline and ensure that the criminal justice systems serve all residents well.

To achieve equitable outcomes in these three areas, Seattle's plan articulates internal and external strategies to continue the direction first articulated in their 2012-14 strategic plan, as follows:

- **Ensure racial equity in City programs and services to make tangible differences in people's lives** by: establishing goals, tracking outcomes, and reporting on progress; applying a racial equity lens to the City's work via the use of a racial equity toolkit and outreach and public engagement guide; establishing and strengthening equity teams in the three priority areas; supporting departments' racial equity teams; supporting leadership, and establishing an assessment program to review city efforts to implement the racial and social equity initiative.
- **Work with community-based organizations to support the movement to end structural racism** by: using the Racial Equity Fund to fund community groups addressing structural racism, leading the Racial and Social Justice Community Roundtable; providing training to all City boards, commissions, and advisory groups; expanding the Community Institute for Racial Equity; and building public will for racial equity through partnerships and special projects.
- **Help lead regional and national networks for racial equity** by: strengthening Seattle's relationship with other cities to promote government's role in the racial justice movement; partnering with the business community to raise awareness of the benefits of racial equity; and supporting philanthropic investments in systems change work led by people of color.

Seattle's racial equity strategic plan also requires each city department to complete annual racial equity action plans.

⁵⁶ Race & Social Justice Initiative: Vision & Strategy 2015–2017 (Seattle Office for Civil Rights, n.d.); <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/rsji-2015-2017-plan.pdf>

Background:⁵⁷ Seattle began its work on racial and social justice in 2004 with a focus on internal programs and operations. In 2005, the mayor (Greg Nickels) created the Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) – making Seattle the first city in the country to create an initiative focused on institutional racism. According to GARE, this initiative emerged from community pressure and demand among city staff that had already started to work on institutional and structural racism. Seattle officials began by developing a common language to describe institutional racism and creating structures, tools, and training to apply a racial equity lens to their work.

In 2009, Seattle broadened its equity work to partner with other institutions and community members to advance racial equity. As noted by the City Council in Resolution 31164, the City focused on achieving racial equity in education, criminal justice, and development.⁵⁸ Seattle’s current strategic plan continues to focus on these three goals. Seattle also began to track their impact and developed a regional network to advance racial equity. Seattle’s Office for Civil Rights led this effort, providing technical assistance, training and support to departments, and also leading an initiative subcommittee to provide guidance.

With changes in administration, Seattle continued and deepened its racial equity work. In 2014, the mayor (Edward Murray) approved a racial equity tool for departments to use when considering new policies, programs, and budget decisions. From 2015-17, the mayor required departments to carry out four uses of the racial equity toolkit annually. Every department was also required to submit an annual racial and social justice initiative plan to both the mayor and city council and to report on their accomplishments annually.

Lessons Learned: Based on their racial equity work, Seattle offers the following accomplishments and lessons learned for other jurisdictions:⁵⁹

a) Apply racial equity lens to City programs and projects.

- **Use the Racial Equity Toolkit.** The City’s budget office requires departments to conduct a racial equity analysis for all budget requests. As a result, over time more city departments and interdepartmental teams have used the toolkit. Key lessons learned include requiring more consistent use of their toolkit and offering more technical assistance to departments.
- **Publicize racial justice work plans.** Seattle’s Office of Civil Rights found that posting department equity work plans online improved accountability for departmental action.
- **Make outreach and public engagement more inclusive.** City departments targeted their outreach to under-represented communities, including immigrants and refugees. The RSJI Community Survey, however, reveals that not all residents feel that their input is valued.

b) Build racial equity into citywide policies and initiatives.

⁵⁷ Website of the Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity, profile of Seattle, WA; <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/jurisdictions/seattle-washington/>

⁵⁸ Resolution No. 31164, “Affirming the City’s race and social justice work [...]”, Adopted by City Council on Nov. 30, 2009; http://clerk.seattle.gov/~archives/Resolutions/Resn_31164.pdf

⁵⁹ Race & Social Justice Initiative: Vision & Strategy 2015–2017 (Seattle Office for Civil Rights, n.d.) pp.3-4; <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/rsji-2015-2017-plan.pdf>

- **Equitable development.** The principles of racial and social equity are embedded in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan.⁶⁰
- **Education.** RSJI developed a racial equity toolkit for the Seattle Preschool Program. RSJI also helped the school district create its own toolkit and train administrators and teachers.
- **Criminal Justice.** RSJI partnered with the Seattle Police Department to hold a series of community workshops on improving community and police relations.

c) Partner with Other Institutions and the Community.

- **Racial Equity Fund.** The City awarded funding to community organizations in 2013 and 2014 and offered racial equity training to more than 80 community organizations.
- **Governing for Racial Equity.** Seattle hosts a regional network of local governments, including Portland and San Francisco, to share strategies and measures of progress.
- **Government Alliance for Race and Equity.** Seattle joined other cities in GARE's national alliance to promote government's role in the racial justice movement.

2. King County, Washington

King County, Washington, which encompasses the City of Seattle, developed its first strategic plan for racial equity in 2016. Entitled the *King County Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan, 2016-2022*,⁶¹ the six-year plan offers a blueprint for the County to guide pro-equity policy development, decision-making, planning, operations, and workplace practices that advance equity and social justice. Co-created with employees and community partners, the King County Strategic Plan:

- Articulates a vision, strategies, shared values, and a common language for guiding their work;
- Applies a theory of change that recognizes how race and place shape opportunity and shifts the focus to addressing the root causes of inequities.
- Balances a vision for equity and social justice with actionable and measurable objectives.
- Allows for innovation and adaptability across county government toward the goal of racial justice, both internally and in the community.

The ESL Strategic Plan relies on four goals – invest upstream where needs are greatest, invest in employees, invest in partnerships, and demonstrate accountable and transparent leadership – to advances three core strategies – a pro-equity policy agenda, pro-equity governance framework, and participate in a regional equity compact. These three core strategies are described in detail below.

⁶⁰ *City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan: A Plan for Managing Growth 2015-2035* (City of Seattle Department of Planning & Development, 2005 with annual updates); <http://www.seattle.gov/opcd/ongoing-initiatives/comprehensive-plan#projectdocuments>

⁶¹ King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, 2016-2022 (Office of Equity and Social Justice, Office of King County Executive, n.d.); <https://aqua.kingcounty.gov/dnrc/library/dnrc-directors-office/equity-social-justice/201609-ESJ-SP-FULL.pdf>

- a. **Adopt a Pro-Equity Policy Agenda.** King County’s ESJ Strategic Plan articulates immediate and near-term actions and policies to improve equity across eight policy areas:
- **Child and youth development.** Actions within this area invest in early childhood, sustain gains from early childhood investments, and develop “Communities of Opportunity.”⁶²
 - **Economic development and jobs.** Actions within this area focus on making private and government employee opportunities assessable to all groups, expanding and building skills among disadvantaged populations, leveraging the County’s role as a large employer and contractors, and supporting entrepreneurship and small business growth.
 - **Environment and climate.** Actions within this area seek to increase diversity in contracting and environment, drive equity considerations into long-term improvements, and ensure that investments benefit populations most impacted by climate change.
 - **Health and human services.** Actions within this area seek to amplify community voices, contract for equity and outcomes, invest in partnerships, expand the use of data to address inequities, and prioritize the public’s health.
 - **Housing.** Actions within this area target resources, seek innovative partnerships and housing models, increase housing funding and stability, and analyze housing and population trends to address changing housing needs.
 - **Information and technology.** Actions within this area will develop a Digital Equity Plan in collaboration with regional partners and increase residents’ opportunities for digital access.
 - **The justice system.** Actions within this area will forge partnerships with community, schools and the justice system to end the school-to-prison pipeline, work to prevent criminal system involvement by addressing underlying needs and enhance community safety by providing trauma-informed responses.
 - **Transportation and mobility.** Actions within this area include investing in service improvements, investing in community partnerships, investing in the people and places with the greatest needs, and leveraging the County’s role as a major employer.
- b. **Invest in Governance to Promote Equity.** To achieve progress in these eight policy areas, the ESJ Strategic Plan calls for King County to invest in the following six governance areas:
- **Leadership, operations and services** to develop an effective and accountable organization where employees are change agents, progress is visible, and county operations, programs, and services reflect equity and social justice.
 - **Plans, policies and budgets** where department and agency business plans include equity impact analyses, policy guidance incorporates ESJ values and analysis, and budget decisions, rates, and allocations reflect the values and strategies of the strategic plan.

⁶² Ibid, p. 13.

- **Workforce and workplace** that requires an equitable, engaged, and racially just workplace culture, equitable employee development at all levels, and shared decision-making.
 - **Community partnerships** that provide research support to community-based groups to leverage their expertise to advance equity and social justice outcomes, create pro-equity contracting processes that are visible and accessible to contractors, and provide non-monetary support to community-based partners to build their capacity.
 - **Communication and education** tools updated to: align with demographic changes; promote better engagement and access to services; and increase collaboration and language-related resources for employees to include all residents in decision-making.
 - **Facility and system improvements** where Master and Line of Business plans include clear objectives to advance equity and social justice, develop pro-equity capital policies, budgets, portfolios, and programs, and make agencies, departments, divisions, and section levels accountable for progress on pro-equity goals.
- c. **Collaborate on Equity as a Region.** Within its strategic plan, King County’s final core strategy is to collaborate with other jurisdictions and public and private institutions to increase coordination and cross-sector solutions that sustain the change necessary to match the scale of the challenge. An explicit goal of their strategic plan is to develop a “Regional Equity Compact” to be adopted by governing bodies of public and private institutions throughout the County.

Background:⁶³ King County’s Executive led the focus on racial equity in 2008 by incorporating equity and social justice into the County’s strategic plan. This was followed by a public education campaign to advance a common understanding of equity and social justice with a search for solutions. Three town hall meetings were convened with elected officials and community leaders. Additionally, community members and County employees held dialogues aimed at understanding the underlying causes of inequities and creating a more fair and just society. King County also established an inter-departmental team to champion this work and formed a community advisory group to help guide its efforts.

In 2010, a new County Executive and the Council passed an Equity and Social Justice ordinance that named a coordinator and facilitators for the County’s equity work and formalized systems and frameworks for advancing equity.⁶⁴ Then, in 2015, King County created the Office of Equity and Social Justice and launched its strategic planning process for equity and social justice. The Office of Equity and Social Justice works with the Inter-Branch Team to support the work of all County employees and agencies. That office also coordinates key efforts to advance equity in the organization and community and assists County agencies and employees in advancing and being accountable for executing equity and social justice strategic plan activities and deliverables.

⁶³ See: website of Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity, profile of King County (<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/jurisdictions/king-county-washington/>), and King County Equity & Social Justice Initiative January 2009 Update Report (<https://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/~media/E60DED75EE224903A92FDED05D741A2C.ashx?la=en>)

⁶⁴ Ordinance No. 16948, “[E]stablishing definitions and directing implementation steps related to the fair and just principle of the adopted 2010-2014 countywide strategic plan” (2010); retrieved from <https://mkcclegisearch.kingcounty.gov/legislation.aspx>

3. Dane County, Wisconsin

In contrast to Seattle and King County, Dane County contracted with external experts – the Center for Social Innovation and the Government Alliance for Race and Equity - to develop its jurisdiction-wide strategic plan for advancing racial equity. Entitled *Dane County Wisconsin Racial Equity Analysis & Recommendations*,⁶⁵ this 2015 report offers a four-year plan to increase racial equity in Dane County. Each recommendation offers short-term (Phase I) and longer-term (Phase II) strategies, as follows:

- **Recommendation 1: Develop infrastructure and tools to ensure employees and residents understand and are committed to achieving racial equity.** Phase I recommended strategies include strengthening equity teams by strengthening the RESJ strategic leadership team, launching a capacity building action team, developing department racial equity action plans, designating department staff to develop and implement racial equity tools, and providing racial equity training for all employees. Phase II recommended strategies include customization of racial equity tools, community conversations, and establishing a racial equity fund.
- **Recommendation 2: Implement strategies to ensure residents view the County as an effective and inclusive government that engages community.** Phase I recommended strategies include expanding the charge of the Community Connections Team to develop a countywide policy and approach to community engagement, training employees that engage with the public, collecting baseline data on advisory groups, and identifying a cross-department pilot project for new community engagement approach. The Phase II recommended strategy is to assess the effectiveness of new engagement efforts.
- **Recommendation 3: Ensure communities of color share in the County’s economic prosperity.** Phase I recommended strategies include creating RESJ workforce equity action and contracting equity action teams, improving data collection to identify disparities among specific positions, targeting strategies for job classifications, using racial equity as a core competency in job descriptions, and compensating bilingual staff with external responsibilities. Phase II recommended strategies include increasing the pipeline of candidates of color for local employment and building on the existing local hire program to increase the diversity of the county employment pool.
- **Recommendation 4: Ensure all neighborhoods and people are safe and that racial disproportionalities in the criminal justice system are eliminated.** Phase I recommended strategies include ensuring that the existing Criminal Justice Council develops an action plan for operationalizing recommendations from the 2009 report, tasking the CJ Council with reviewing data and developing recommendations on data use, expanding racial equity training for employees in the criminal justice system, and ensuring criminal justice staff reflect the demographics of the community. The Phase II recommended strategy is to use the racial equity tool to assess the role that race plays in prosecutorial decisions and to develop recommendations to eliminate racial disparities in such decisions.

⁶⁵ *Dane County Wisconsin Racial Equity Analysis & Recommendations* (Center for Social Inclusion and Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity, n.d.); <https://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Dane-County-Wisconsin-Racial-Equity-Analysis-Recommendations.pdf>

- **Recommendation 5: Ensure that all residents have healthy life outcomes.** Phase I recommended strategies include launching a Healthy Equity Action Team, developing strategies to improve access to healthy food in underserved neighborhoods, and supporting community-led initiatives that address healthy life outcomes and build community capacity. The Phase II recommended strategy is to expand the Healthy Equity Action Team to focus on additional health indicators.

CSI and GARE state the above recommendations, if adopted, “would establish Dane County as a national leader in government’s role in addressing race and equity.”⁶⁶ CSI and GARE have advised that implementing these recommendations would require the following steps:

- The County Board pass a resolution that adopts these recommendations.
- The County Board, County Executive and Constitutional Officers convene an expanded Racial Equity Strategic Leadership Team.
- The County Board, County Executive, and departments prioritize funding for implementing and expanding infrastructure as outlined in their report.
- Departments and the Executive develop budgets informed by the use of racial equity tools.

In response to these CSI/GARE recommendations, Dane County created the Office for Equity and Inclusion (OEI) in 2015.⁶⁷ OEI is charged with meeting many of the goals and recommendations contained in the CSI/GARE report. OEI guides Dane County’s Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, Contract Compliance, and Civil Rights Compliance functions. OEI also serves as a resource for all County departments regarding equity, disparities, conflict resolution, staff development and best practices.⁶⁸ And recently, in March 2018, the County Board of Supervisors passed Resolution No. 249: *Incorporating Equity Questions into County Agendas*. This resolution implements the County’s existing equity plan goal to “incorporate a racial equity template into committee agendas and budgets.”⁶⁹

Background:⁷⁰ Dane County began its racial equity work by focusing on racial disparities in the criminal justice system. In 2008, a commission established by Governor Jim Doyle reported on racial disparities in criminal justice and directed each county in Wisconsin to form a task force to respond to the report’s findings. Dane County assembled a diverse task force that produced a 2009 report describing best practices for reducing disproportionalities in the criminal justice system. This report became a blueprint for the Racial Disparities Subcommittee of the Dane County Criminal Justice Council.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

⁶⁷ County of Dane 2016 Budget (2015 RES-254), retrieved from <https://dane.legistar.com/>

⁶⁸ Website of The Tamara D. Grigsby Office For Equity and Inclusion: <https://oei-exec.countyofdane.com/>

⁶⁹ <https://tinyurl.com/ybxpg3d7>; retrieved from <https://dane.legistar.com/Legislation.aspx>

⁷⁰ <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/jurisdictions/dane-county-wisconsin/>

In 2013, Dane County expanded its focus on racial disparities with the release of [Race to Equity: A Baseline Report on the State of Racial Disparities in Dane County](#), prepared by the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families.⁷¹ This report compared racial disparities between Black and White residents across eight indicators including poverty, juvenile justice, adults, adult criminal justice, policy, and education. As a result, in 2014 the Dane County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed the Dane County Equity Initiative designed to formalize the County's response to racial inequities.⁷²

Leading up to adoption of that resolution, Dane County also developed a Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) team at the request of the County Executive and the Chair of the County Board of Supervisors. Team members represented every department in County government. The overall RESJ team was comprised of four action teams: a data team, a tools and models team, a training team, and a community partnership team. Initially, the RESJ team reviewed equity in hiring and outreach utilizing a racial equity tool developed by GARE. The Dane County Board of Supervisors also chose racial equity as the area to focus the audit of County operations. This resulted in Dane County contracting with GARE and CSI to develop the Dane County Equity Analysis in 2015.

4. Portland, Oregon

Based on lessons learned from other jurisdictions, in 2015 the City Council of Portland adopted a strategic plan for racial equity. The *Citywide Racial Equity Goals and Strategies* was passed as binding policy on July 8, 2015, and included the following components:⁷³

Equity Goal #1: We will end racial disparities within city government, so there is fairness in hiring and promotions, greater opportunities in contracting, and equitable services to all residents.

Equity Goal #2: We will strengthen outreach, public engagement, and access to City services for communities of color and immigrant and refugee communities, and support or change existing services using racial equity best practices.

Equity Goal #3: We will collaborate with communities and institutions to eliminate racial inequity in all areas of government, including education, criminal justice, environmental justice, health, housing, transportation, and economic success.

The Portland strategic plan identifies the following overall strategies to accomplish their equity goals:

- 1) Use a racial equity framework:** The framework should clearly articulate racial equity; implicit and explicit bias; and individual, institutional, and structural racism.

⁷¹ [Race to Equity: A Baseline Report on the State of Racial Disparities in Dane County](#) (Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, 2013); <https://racetoequity.net/baseline-report-state-racial-disparities-dane-county/>

⁷² Resolution No. 284 (RES-284), "Dane County Equity Initiative" (Adopted by County Board on April 1, 2014); <https://dane.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=3049786&GUID=232EDBA1-BB52-434B-B30B-73CA3B3026C4>

⁷³ Resolution No. 37144 as amended, "Adopting Citywide Racial Equity Goals and Strategies [...]", adopted by City Council on July 8, 2015; <https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/Record/7859814> and <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/537589>

- 2) **Build organizational capacity:** Commit to the breadth and depth of institutional transformation so that impacts are sustainable. While the leadership of elected and non-elected officials is critical, changes take place on the ground, through building infrastructure that creates racial equity experts and teams throughout City government.
- 3) **Implement a racial equity lens:** Racial inequities are not random; they have been created and sustained over time. Inequities will not disappear on their own. It is essential to use a racial equity lens when changing the policies, programs, and practices that perpetuate inequities, and when developing new policies and programs.
- 4) **Be data driven:** 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. Using data in this manner is necessary for accountability.
- 5) **Partner with other institutions and communities:** Government work on racial equity is necessary, but insufficient. To achieve racial equity in the community, government needs to work in partnership with communities and institutions to achieve meaningful results.
- 6) **Operate with urgency and accountability:** When change is a priority, urgency is felt and change is embraced. Building in institutional accountability mechanisms using a clear plan of action will allow accountability. Collectively, we must create greater urgency and public commitment to achieve racial equity.

Portland’s Office of Equity and Human Rights was established by City ordinance in 2011 to focus on racial equity and disability equity. OEHR has helped to shape the City’s racial equity goals and strategies and develop a strategic plan aimed at assisting city departments create their own five-year racial equity plans.⁷⁴ With OEHR support, each Portland department has developed racial equity plans that are posted online.⁷⁵ OEHR also delivers required “Equity 101 Training” to all City employees that focuses on the history of racial disparities in Oregon and the U.S. and why equity matters.⁷⁶ A description of OEHR’s strategic plan to assist Portland with its overall commitment to racial equity follows.

Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR) Strategic Plan

Vision: City services are administered and delivered to give all Portlanders access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being, and achieve their full potential.

Mission: OEHR provides education and technical support to City staff and elected officials, leading to recognition and removal of systemic barriers to fair and just distribution of resources, access and opportunity, starting with issues of race and disability.

⁷⁴ Ordinance No. 184880 as amended, “Creating the Office of Equity and Human Rights [...]”, passed by City Council on Sept, 21, 2011; <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/449202> and <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/448763>

⁷⁵ <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/70046>

⁷⁶ <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/627583>

What is Equity? From the Portland Plan: Equity is when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential. We have a shared fate as individuals within a community and as communities within society. All communities need the ability to shape their own present and future. Equity is both the means to healthy communities and an end that benefits us all.

OEHR Three-Year Goals: Citywide Equity Initiative

- 1) Establish and enhance a cross-bureau collaborative structure** to support citywide equity strategies and policies; compliance with federal law - Title II (Americans with Disabilities Act) and Title VI (Civil Rights Act); sharing of best practices; and technical assistance.
- 2) Develop a citywide training and professional development program** to address institutionalized racism, able-ism and disability awareness.
- 3) Establish data collection and assessment mechanisms for bureaus to identify, evaluate and report on equity impact measures** for hiring, contracting, budget expenditures, levels of service, and infrastructure conditions.
- 4) Coordinate community involvement and advisory structures** to strengthen the work of the Office and engage Portlanders as valued partners via the Bureau Advisory Committee, Portland Commission on Disability, New Portlander Advisory Council, and Human Rights Commission.

One-Year Outcomes for OEHR

- 1) Increased understanding of institutional barriers based on race and disability, resulting in changes in the culture of the City of Portland's government.
- 2) All bureaus accept responsibility to reduce disparities within their scope of influence.
- 3) Establish baseline assessment metrics.
- 4) Development of equity tools to measure individual bureau success and evaluate the reduction of disparities in the City of Portland.
- 5) Select bureaus are assisted in developing strategic plans to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of employees in the City of Portland.
- 6) Select bureaus are assisted in increasing the number of persons with disabilities as employees of the City of Portland.
- 7) Increased contracting opportunities for minority and women owned businesses.
- 8) Improved immigrant and refugee access to City services, jobs, and contracts.
- 9) Strengthened community outreach and public engagement of communities of color, immigrant and refugee communities, and communities with disabilities, to better inform City policies and services, including the work of the Office of Equity and Human Rights.

Background:⁷⁷ Portland’s racial equity work began in 2008, in response to a report on health disparities among racial and ethnic communities in Portland and Multnomah County. The Coalition of Communities of Color that sponsored the report used its findings to encourage city and county government to address the disparities revealed by the report. At the same time, Portland was engaged in a vision process to plan for the next 25 years of the city’s future. The visioning process actively incorporated the voices of marginalized communities that were often left out of the planning process.

The disability community also became actively engaged in building the Portland Plan. In response to community pressures, Portland created the Office of Equity and Human Rights to oversee the city’s racial equity and disability work. OEHR is modeled after Seattle’s Race and Social Justice Initiative.

B. Racial Equity Impact Assessments

This section describes the use of racial equity impact assessments in four jurisdictions:

1. Seattle, Washington;
2. Multnomah County, Oregon;
3. Portland, Oregon;
4. Madison, Wisconsin.

1. Seattle, Washington

Seattle has a long history of using racial equity tools to inform their decision-making in budget and policy. In 2008, the City launched a Race and Social Justice Budget and Policy Filter Supplemental Toolkit for conducting racial equity impact analyses.⁷⁸ In 2012, RSJI released its current Racial Equity Toolkit for assessing policies, initiatives, programs, and budget issues.

Seattle’s toolkit begins with a Racial Equity Analysis Worksheet comprised of six steps:⁷⁹

- **Set Outcomes.** Leadership communicates key outcomes for racial equity to guide analysis.
- **Involve Stakeholders and Analyze Data.** Gather information from community and staff on how the issue benefits or burdens the community in terms of racial equity.
- **Determine Benefits and/or Burden.** Analyze issues for impact and alignment with equity outcomes.
- **Advance Opportunity or Minimize Harm.** Develop strategies to create racial equity or minimize unintended consequences.
- **Evaluate. Raise Racial Awareness. Be Accountable.** Track impacts on communities of color. Continue to communicate with and involve stakeholders. Document unresolved issues.

⁷⁷ <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/jurisdictions/portland-oregon/>

⁷⁸ Memorandum From: Julie Nelson, Seattle Office for Civil Rights, To: Departmental Directors, Subject: Race and Social Justice Budget and Policy Filter Supplemental Toolkit, Date: March 31, 2008; <http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/nelson.pdf>

⁷⁹ https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/RacialEquityToolkit_FINAL_August2012.pdf

- **Report Back.** Share information learned from analysis and unresolved issues with the Department Leadership and Change Team.

City departments are encouraged to apply Seattle’s Racial Equity Toolkit early for alignment with racial equity goals and desired outcomes. They also encourage departments to complete racial equity analyses with people representing different racial perspectives and to consult with the Office for Civil Rights and RSJI Core Team for technical assistance.

Seattle’s Toolkit also includes RSJI best practices, instructions, guidance on identifying stakeholders and listening to communities of color, data sources for racial equity impact analyses, and glossary of key terms. As noted above, starting in 2015 the mayor required departments to carry out four uses of the racial equity toolkit annually. The City’s budget office also began requiring departments to conduct racial equity analysis for budget requests.

2. Multnomah County, Oregon.

Multnomah County, which encompasses the City of Portland, has utilized a racial equity tool since 2012 to examine whether County policies and practices support equity. Referred to as the Equity and Empowerment Lens (E&E Lens),⁸⁰ the County’s toolkit is designed to assist County staff and leadership in uncovering patterns of inequity, identifying systems of those inequities, and revealing how inequities affect communities. The initial E&E Lens toolkit included a worksheet with nine categories reflecting the interconnections between people, place, process, and power (4 Ps).⁸¹

In 2014, the E&E Lens was updated to align questions to examining the 4-Ps when considering an issue or decision-point and to reflect the value of purpose in applying the Lens (the fifth P). More specifically, the updated E&E Lens finds that *“in a purpose-driven system, all partners at all levels align around transformative values, relationships and goals moving towards racial equity, integrating an emphasis on doing less harm and supporting actions that heal and transform.”*⁸²

The following questions comprise Multnomah County’s current E&E Lens in six categories: people, place, process, power, individual purpose, and institution purpose.

1) People Questions:

- Who is positively and negatively affected (by this issue) and how?
- How are people differently situated in terms of the barriers they experience
- Are people traumatized/re-traumatized by your issue/decision area? Consider physical, spiritual, emotional, and contextual effects.

⁸⁰ <https://multco.us/diversity-equity/equity-and-empowerment-lens>

⁸¹ <https://multco.us/file/31829/download>

⁸² Equity and Empowerment Lens: Purpose Towards Racial Equity (Multnomah County Office of Diversity and Equity, revised March 24, 2014) P. 2; <https://multco.us/file/31827/download>

2) Place Questions:

- How are you/your issue or decision accounting for people's emotional and physical safety, and their need to be productive and feel valued?
- How are you considering environmental impacts as well as environmental justice?
- How are public resources and investments distributed geographically?

3) Process Questions:

- How are meaningfully are you including or excluding people (communities of color) who are affected?
- What policies, processes, and social relationships contribute to the exclusion of communities most affected by inequities?
- Are there empowering processes at every human touchpoint?
- What processes are traumatizing and how do we improve them?

4) Power Questions:

- What are the barriers to doing equity and racial justice work?
- What are the benefits and burdens that communities experience with this issue?
- Who is accountable?
- What is the decision-making structure?
- How is the current issue, policy, or program shifting power dynamics to better integrate voices and priorities of communities of color?

5) Individual Purpose Questions:

- What is my purpose towards achieving racial equity?
- What gets in the way of maintaining my purpose towards racial equity?
- What do I need to maintain my purpose?
- If you are a manager/leader with positional authority, how can you further clarify your purpose so that you are leveraging the power you have?
- If you are at a lower level in the organization, what do you need from leadership in order to feel valued and a key contributor to the organizational purpose?
- How does your role and your purpose influence and align with advancing racial equity?

6) Institution Purpose Questions:

- What is our institution's purpose towards racial equity?
- How are we clearly defining that purpose, and where and how do we communicate that?
- How can we ensure that our purpose is integrated into our policies, procedures, and practices?
- How can we give our employees a greater sense of meaning in what they do around racial equity, so they feel more enthusiastic and hopeful about their work?
- In what practical ways can our institution add more value around racial equity and do less harm?
- Is racial equity the central theme in your recruitment and retention efforts?

- Do you have the right people around you to achieve your purpose? If not, how can you move towards this reality?
- How do you ensure individuals work together with leaders to align to the institution's purpose towards racial equity?

Background:⁸³ Multnomah County's racial equity work began in its Health Department. Based on the findings of a health disparities report published in 2008,⁸⁴ the Multnomah County Health Department launched the Health Equity Initiative to facilitate conversations among County residents about inequities and their impacts on health. That initiative became a pilot for developing the broader equity and empowerment lens; in 2010, the County created the Office of Diversity and Equity to expand its equity work to other county agencies.

1. Portland, Oregon.

The City of Portland finds that racial inequities are not random, they have been created over time, and will not be eliminated on their own.⁸⁵ They note the importance of racial equity tools to consider racial equity in decision making as paramount because the policies, programs, and practices being considered often perpetuate racial inequities. They conclude that "(i)nstitutionalizing the use of the racial equity tools results in governance structures that are more equitable, accountable, and transparent; and produce racially equitable outcomes."⁸⁶

Since 2015, Portland has required the use of its Budget Equity Assessment Tool to consider proposed cuts or additions to its budget.⁸⁷ Racial equity assessments are reviewed as part of the city's budget process by the Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR) and the City Budget Office before being submitted as part of the city's budget work sessions with council members.

Portland also uses its Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) to help implement the following efforts:

- The Portland Plan,⁸⁸ a long-term plan focused on prosperity, education, health and equity
- Compliance with the Civil Rights Act Title VI prohibiting discrimination among programs receiving Federal assistance by race, color, or national origin
- Racial Equity Plans among bureaus (City departments)
- Citywide Principles of Public Involvement
- Citywide Racial Equity Goals and Strategies

The City of Portland notes that its Racial Equity Toolkit is designed to:⁸⁹

⁸³ <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/jurisdictions/multnomah-county-oregon/>

⁸⁴ https://multco.us/sites/default/files/health/documents/reportcard_health_disparities_2008.pdf

⁸⁵ City of Portland Racial Equity Toolkit (Office of Equity and Human Rights, n.d.)p. 3;

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/592297>

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.4.

⁸⁷ Budget Equity Assessment Tool: City Policy (Office of Equity and Human Rights, City of Portland, rev. 2015);

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/556892>

⁸⁸ The Portland Plan (2012); Adopted by the Portland City Council via [resolution #36918](#), as amended, on April 25, 2012; <http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/index.cfm?c=56527&>

⁸⁹ City of Portland Racial Equity Toolkit (Office of Equity and Human Rights, n.d.) p.4;

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/592297>

- Ensure that government actions and decisions are crafted to achieve equitable outcomes
- Engage communities of color in decision-making
- Use data to identify current racial disparities and those most impacted by our actions
- Identify inequitable consequences to ensure equity in government actions and decision-making
- Identify needed strategies and resources to ensure equity in governmental decision-making
- Encourage accountability for tracking and measuring progress on racial equity over time

Towards these ends, their Racial Equity Toolkit Worksheet offers questions and prompts aimed at understanding the specific consequences of proposed governmental actions on racial equity and mitigating any unintended consequences that could exacerbate racial inequities:⁹⁰

1) Set Racially Equitable Outcomes so that leadership can orient and commit the racial equity impact assessment process to equity-focused goals.

- What is your proposal and what are the desired results and outcomes?
- What community indicators measure those results?
- What performance measures will be monitored for success?

2) Collect and Analyze Data on racial disparities and identify those most impacted to identify disparities and change the information informing the proposal.

- What are the racial demographics of those living, working, or socializing in the area impacted by the proposal?
- What are the relative disparities for communities of color?
- What performance data do you have available for your proposal – is it disaggregated?
- Are there data gaps? What does the data tell us?

3) Understand Historical Context to inform that analyst's understanding of the root causes of disparities by researching the history of racial injustice relevant to the proposal.

- What past policies/programs contributed to inequities?
- How can they be improved?

4) Engage Those Most Impacted to change the analyst's relationship with those most impacted, to shift power and to change the information informing the proposal.

- How have the most impacted communities been engaged?
- Are there opportunities to expand engagement?

5) Develop Racially Equitable Strategies and Refine Outcomes to create a proposal for change.

- Given what you have learned, how will the proposal increase/decrease racial equity?
- Who will benefit or be burdened?
- Are there more equitable results to aim for than what was initially proposed?

⁹⁰ [Racial Equity Toolkit Worksheet](https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/592296) (Office of Equity and Human Rights, City of Portland, n.d.); <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/592296>

- How will you advance racial equity or mitigate unintended consequences?

6) Implement Changes by establishing commitment and support for changes with a plan.

- What changes do you recommend for your proposal?
- What is the plan for implementation?
- What support and authority do you need to make the changes?

7) Develop a System of Evaluation, Accountability, and Reporting Back to advance change.

- How will impacts and performance be documented, evaluated, and reported?
- What are your communication strategies that will help advance racial equity?
- How will you continue to partner and deepen relationships with communities of color to make sure your proposal is working and sustainable for the long haul?

4. Madison, Wisconsin

The City of Madison offers three racial equity tools for conducting analyses of the racial equity “to facilitate conscious consideration of equity and examine how communities of color and low-income populations will be affected by a proposed action/decision of the City.”⁹¹ Madison offers three tools toward this end which are described in greater detail below.

- **The Comprehensive Impact Analysis Tool** serves as the default tool in all areas other than hiring.
- **The Fast-Track Impact Analysis Tool** offers a short version of the comprehensive tool to use for projects with a short timeline or with a limited impact on legislation or the budget.
- **The Equitable Hiring Tool** is used to conduct racial equity analyses in hiring and personnel.

Comprehensive Impact Analysis Tool.⁹² Madison advises that departments and agencies should use this tool as early in deliberations as possible when developing City policies, plans, programs, and budgets. They recommend that racially and economically diverse teams develop the analysis and that when possible, staff teams involve those directly impacted by the issue. Madison notes that the “*What, Who, Why, and How*” questions of this tool “are designed to lead to strategies that prevent or mitigate adverse impacts and unintended consequences on marginalized populations.” Of note, these questions overlap with the Equity and Empowerment (E&E) Lens used in Multnomah County, Oregon, which is organized around people, place, process, and power questions.

1) Begin Analysis by naming the topic or issue to be analyzed, the main contact(s) for the analysis, and the names and affiliations of others participating in the analysis.

2) “What Questions”

- What is the policy, plan, or proposal being analyzed and what does it seek to accomplish?

⁹¹ Website for City of Madison Civil Rights: “City Projects Using RESJI Tools”; <https://www.cityofmadison.com/civil-rights/programs/racial-equity-social-justice-initiative/city-projects-using-resji-tools>

⁹² Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative RESJ Tool: Comprehensive Version (City of Madison, Wisconsin, 2015); <https://www.cityofmadison.com/civil-rights/programs/racial-equity-social-justice-initiative/tools-resources>

- What factors (including existing policies and structures) associated with this issue might be affecting communities of color and/or low-income populations differently?
- What do available data tell you about this issue?⁹³ What data are unavailable or missing?
- Which focus area(s) will the policy, plan or proposal primarily impact?⁹⁴

3) “Who Questions”

- Who (individuals or groups) could be impacted by the issues related to this proposal?
- What would benefit? Who would be burdened?
- Are there potential disproportionate impacts on communities of color or low-income communities?
- Have stakeholders from different racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups, especially those most affected, been informed and represented in the development of the proposal or plan?
- What input have you received from those who would be impacted and how did you gather this information?

4) “Why Questions”

- What are the root causes or factors creating any racial or social inequities associated with this issue? (E.g., bias in process, lack of access or barriers, lack of inclusive engagement)
- What are potential unintended consequences of the proposal?
- What identified community needs are being met or ignored in this issue or decision?

5) “Where Question”

- Are there impacts on geographic areas?

6) “How Questions” to revise and implement proposals to enhance equity

- Describe recommended strategies to address adverse impacts, prevent negative unintended consequences and advance racial equity.
- Address whether the recommended strategies, revised proposal or plan are realistic, adequately funded, and adequately resourced relative to funding, personnel, and mechanisms to ensure successful implementation, enforcement, stakeholder participation, and accountability? If the answer is no to any of the above, what actions are needed?
- Who is accountable for this decision?
- How will impacts be documented and evaluated? What are the success indicators and progress benchmarks?
- How will those impacted by the issue be informed of progress and impacts over time?

⁹³ Data resources available include neighborhood indicators (<http://madison.apl.wisc.edu>), open data portal (<https://data.cityofmadison.com>), Madison Measures (www.cityofmadison/finance/documents/madisonmeasures-2013.pdf), and Census reporter (<http://censusreporter/profiles/06000U5502548000-madison-city-dane-county-wi>). Other sources of data include Dane County, State of Wisconsin, and census data.

⁹⁴ Areas include community engagement, criminal justice, early childhood, economic development, education, employment, environment, food access, health, housing, planning and development, and transportation.

Fast-Track Impact Analysis Tool.⁹⁵ The City of Madison recommends using this tool for issues with a short timeline and without a widespread impact. Examples of this include a single piece of legislation that has been drafted and introduced and the development of a single budget item. As with the comprehensive tool, Madison recommends the use of multiple voices when using the fast-track impact analysis tool. They also recommend re-arranging the following questions and prompts in the fast-track tool to suit the department's situation:

- 1) **Begin Analysis** by naming the topic or issue to be analyzed, the main contact(s) for the analysis and the names and affiliations of others participating in the analysis.
- 2) **What** does the policy, plan, or proposal seek to accomplish? What do available data say about this?
- 3) **Who** (individuals or groups) could be impacted by the issues related to this policy, plan, or proposal? Who would benefit? Who would be burdened? Are there potential disproportionate impacts on communities of color or low-income communities?
- 4) **What** are the potential unintended consequences (social, economic, health, or other)?
- 5) **How/Recommendations:** Describe recommended strategies to address adverse impacts, prevent negative unintended consequences and advance racial equity.

Equitable Hiring Tool.⁹⁶ The City of Madison recommends that departments use the Equitable Hiring Tool when conducting racial impact analyses for hiring and personnel planning. The Equitable Hiring Tool expands departmental considerations of the steps for hiring beyond recruitment and interviewing to consider the equity implications of the entire hiring process. This tool offers a checklist for the following seven steps in the hiring process to enhance equity level at each level.

- **Department and Human Resources Knowledge.** Prompts for this step include confirming that the department has reviewed its equitable workforce plan, has a long-term plan for how the vacancy impacts future work, and whether departmental and human resources staff have built relationships with community members from diverse backgrounds for ongoing recruitment efforts.
- **Position Description Updating.** Prompts for this step include having the department list mandatory educational and experience requirements, developing a plan to mitigate any unintended consequences from these requirements, including language in the position description regarding working with multicultural communities, and updating the position description.
- **Exams.** If using exams, prompts for this step include confirming that the job position requires reading and writing skills as part of the position description, reviewing the exam to make needed changes and assure its relevancy, considering whether it would be appropriate to translate the exam into another language, and having a plan to mitigate any unintended consequences.

⁹⁵ [Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative RESJ Tool: Fast-Track Version \(City of Madison, Wisconsin, 2015\);](https://www.cityofmadison.com/civil-rights/programs/racial-equity-social-justice-initiative/tools-resources) <https://www.cityofmadison.com/civil-rights/programs/racial-equity-social-justice-initiative/tools-resources>

⁹⁶ [Equitable Hiring Tool: Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative \(City of Madison, Wisconsin, n.d.\);](https://www.cityofmadison.com/employeeenet/documents/human-resources/RESJequitableHiringTool.pdf) <https://www.cityofmadison.com/employeeenet/documents/human-resources/RESJequitableHiringTool.pdf>

- **Supplemental Questions.** If using supplemental questions, prompts for this step include confirming that the job position requires reading and writing skills as part of the position description, including supplemental questions regarding racial equity and social justice, having a diverse panel of people to review supplemental questions, having tangible benchmarks completed for the supplemental questions, and having a plan to mitigate any unintended consequences.
- **Recruiting and Advertising.** Prompts for this step include having a plan to post the position internally/externally to minimize unintended consequences and disproportionate impacts and having a plan to post the position with a wide variety of diverse stakeholders.
- **Interview Questions and Benchmark Development.** Prompts for this step include an interview question regarding racial equity and social justice and having tangible benchmarks completed for the interview questions.
- **Conducting Interviews and Making a Selection.** Prompts for this step include having a diverse interview panel based on race and gender, including a member of another department or organization on the interview panel, scheduling sufficient time in between interviewing candidates with breaks in between, and choosing a candidate that has demonstrated their ability to work with multicultural populations.

Background:⁹⁷ Madison began its focus on racial and social justice in 2013 with a focus on health equity within Dane County’s Public Health Department. County data had consistently shown a link between race and health problems, such as diabetes. The City’s Department of Civil Rights had also historically worked on workforce equity issues through its Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunities programs.

In the fall of 2013, Madison launched the Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative. More specifically, the City’s Departments of Health and Civil Rights drafted a resolution to lay the groundwork by reviewing what other cities had done. The resolution established three equity goals: Equity in City Operations, Equity in City Policy and Budget, and Equity in the Community. Utilizing tools, training, data, and the initial report on racial equity, City staff developed recommendations in April 2014. After that, staff drafted another resolution to formally adopt recommendations and begin chosen strategies. The City now requires all departments to complete at least three racial equity analyses or equitable hiring tools annually. Department staff have used Madison’s racial toolkit on at least 58 projects.⁹⁸

C. Other Strategies for Advancing Racial Equity

This section describes five additional sets of promising processes used by jurisdictions to create infrastructure and organizational changes that promote racial equity in local government:

1. **Trainings** to normalize the pursuit of racial equity as a goal of government by creating a shared understanding of racial equity frameworks and increasing staff skill at advancing equity.

⁹⁷ See website of the Local and Regional Government Alliance for Race and Equity, Profile of Madison, Wisconsin (<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/jurisdictions/madison-wisconsin/>) and website of the City of Madison Department of Civil Rights (<https://www.cityofmadison.com/employeeenet/dcr/documents/RESJstrategy.pdf>)

⁹⁸ Website for City of Madison Civil Rights: “City Projects Using RESJI Tools”; <https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/programs/racial-equity-social-justice-initiative/city-projects-using-resji-tools>

2. **Racial equity action plans** among local departments and agencies that enable jurisdictions to prioritize racial equity in department operations.
3. **Measurement frameworks** that enable jurisdictions to monitor and measure progress in achieving racial equity goals.
4. **Racial equity action teams** that enable jurisdictions to organize personnel and staff time to develop and support racial equity efforts.
5. **Inclusive engagement and community capacity building** that systematize structures and practices for local governments to partner and engage residents of color and community-based groups in governmental decision-making.

A description of these five sets of promising practices with examples of their implementation follow.

1. Training

Racial equity trainings for employees can create shared understanding and increased skills among leadership and staff to advance racial equity. This section describes three jurisdictions that have used training to support their racial equity work: Madison, WI; Seattle, WA; and Portland, OR.

Madison, Wisconsin. Madison's Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative (RESJI) Strategy recommends that City departments use staff training to put racial equity and social justice principles into practice and advance equity in City operations by assessing staff and management for readiness and engaging staff in training on racial equity and social justice. More specifically they recommend:⁹⁹

- **Assessing staff and management for readiness** by offering several assessment tools, including a staff readiness survey and an organizational readiness reflection. Initial assessments can help identify strengths and concerns of staff and may identify areas of current racial equity work.
- **Engaging staff in training on racial equity and social justice** with the same level of importance as all other continuing education. They recommend that departments work with RESJI staff to identify and plan trainings based on the needs identified from their staff and organizational readiness assessments.

*Seattle, Washington.*¹⁰⁰ Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) offers a variety of training opportunities for its employees. Trainings range from 30-minutes to 8-hour long courses. Some trainings describe RSJI and provide "RSJI basic training" for all City employees. Other courses specialize in inclusive outreach and public engagement, anti-racism basics, and racial equity toolkit policies and programs for managers, supervisors, decision-makers, and change team members. RSJI also provides additional training opportunities on working for racial equity across cross-racial dynamics, cultural competence, communicating using a racial equity lens, and structural racism. All training opportunities are voluntary for City employees.

⁹⁹ <https://www.cityofmadison.com/employeenet/dcr/documents/RESJstrategy.pdf>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/RSJI-Training-and-Education.pdf>

Portland, Oregon. Like Seattle, Portland has developed its own equity coursework, but some courses are mandatory for all City personnel. For example, Portland’s Equity 101 course developed by its Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR) is mandatory for all City employees. According to OEHR, the course focuses on the history of racial disparities in Oregon and describes why equity matters. OEHR finds that among the 1,663 participants that completed the course in 2016, 78 percent “took away new approaches they will use in their bureaus.”¹⁰¹ OEHR also offers training to City employees on disability equity and use of their racial equity toolkit as well as technical assistance on equity tools, hiring practices, and language access.

2. Racial Equity Action Plans

Racial equity action plans differ from the racial equity impact assessments described earlier because racial equity action plans focus more explicitly on narrowing existing racial inequities, whereas racial equity impact analyses focus on minimizing the harm of new proposals on racial disparities.

Further, racial equity action plans differ from jurisdiction-wide strategic plans in that they target specific departments as their locus of action. A jurisdiction’s departments, lines of business, and staff are principally responsible for developing their racial equity action plans. In contrast, offices of civil rights and/or equity typically develop and implement jurisdiction-wide strategic plans targeting equity.

This section describes three approaches to advancing racial equity action plans as follows:

- Madison, Wisconsin’s profile describes guidance to city departments to develop racial equity action plans;
- Portland, Oregon’s profile summarizes specific goals included in its departmental racial equity action plans; and
- King County, Washington’s profile describes specific efforts undertaken by county agencies to implement their racial equity action plans.

Madison, Wisconsin. To achieve equity in city operations, policies, and budgets, Madison’s RESJ Strategy Guide recommends that agencies develop a workplan that includes racial equity and social justice goals.¹⁰² The RESJ guide recommends that each department begin by evaluating and, if needed, updating their department’s mission, vision, and core values. If already using work plans, the RESJ guide recommends that departments use the next planning cycle to integrate racial equity strategies into their mission. Toward this end, the guide recommends the inclusion of both internal (e.g. hiring) and external (e.g. contracting) strategies within their racial equity workplans that:

- **Update hiring practices.** The guide recommends that agencies start by looking at current hiring practices and states that it might be helpful to analyze the last few hires to note the following:
 - How was the position description developed? Who participated? Was a previous position used as the template?

¹⁰¹ [Equity 2016 Annual Report](https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/627583) (Office of Equity and Human Rights, City of Portland, 2017) p.4:
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/627583>

¹⁰² <https://www.cityofmadison.com/employeeenet/dcr/documents/RESJstrategy.pdf>

- What were the education and experience requirements? Are multicultural skills and experience valued as highly as academics? Are their groups that will be disproportionately excluded due to the requirements?
- Did recruitment strategies and job postings ensure adequate outreach and advertisement to underrepresented populations?
- Did the interview panel include at least one person of color and one woman? Was at least one person from another department on the panel?
- **Update purchasing and contracting practices.** To enhance equity in contracting, the guide recommends that departments consider adopting the following strategies:
 - Divide total project requirements into smaller tasks and/or quantities when feasible
 - Encourage a higher level of subcontracting
 - Regularly review directories of targeted businesses and identify firms from which to solicit bids/quotes
 - Refer prospective targeted businesses to the small business, minority-owned certification
 - Improve outreach and recruitment to ensure equitable access to information about contract opportunities, the work to be performed, and bid deadlines
 - Establish a Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) mentor/protégé and capacity building program
 - Begin and/or participate in a coordinated joint bonding program for MWBEs
 - Utilize the bid of a qualified and competent targeted business when the bid of such a business is deemed reasonable, although not necessarily low
 - Include targeted businesses utilization objectives in advertisements for bids/proposals
 - Assure that targeted businesses are solicited whenever they are potential sources
 - Provide targeted businesses with support regarding the notification of new bid opportunities, building business capacity, providing access to capital, business planning and financing, networking, and guaranteed loans

Portland, Oregon. As of 2016, every City of Portland department (referred to as bureaus) had developed five-year racial equity plans to achieve the city’s racial equity goals and their own bureau-specific racial equity goals.¹⁰³ Bureau teams developed their racial equity action plans with support from the City’s Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR) which serves as the lead for Portland’s racial equity efforts. These plans, which are currently posted online,¹⁰⁴ emerged from a two-phase process.

In the first phase, each bureau formed diverse teams of staff to research and assess their current culture, structures, and practices using an organizational assessment tool created by a dedicated team of City staff from across bureaus. The organizational assessment tool used the following categories: organizational commitment, workforce, leadership and management, contracting, community access and partnership, and use of data and quality improvement practices.

¹⁰³ [City of Portland Racial Equity Toolkit](https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/592297) (Office of Equity and Human Rights, n.d.); <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/592297>

¹⁰⁴ Website of City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights, “Bureau Racial Equity Plans”; <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/70046>

In the second phase, bureau teams received a series of trainings and underwent a planning process. Informed by the trainings and additional research on best practices, bureaus crafted actions and associated performance measures for their plans. The categories used in the organizational assessment tool, as well as feedback from staff surveys and focus groups, informed the development of bureau plans. Bureaus were also encouraged to research existing proposals from communities of color to include in their plans.

Each bureau's two-phase process for developing their racial equity action plans was facilitated by training, technical assistance, tools, and resources provided by OEHR. None of the bureaus' plan details were mandated, but OEHR did require each bureau to work toward achieving Portland's city-wide racial equity goals (i.e. end disparities in city government, improve access to services, and collaborate to eliminate racial inequities), develop quantifiable progress measures, and commit staff to a timeline for action. OEHR reviewed draft plans and made recommendations to strengthen bureau drafts.

For example, in developing its plan the Portland Housing Bureau created a community engagement team to serve organizations serving communities of color. It also set a goal of ensuring by 2021 that 30 percent of annual multi-family construction financing will go to certified minority-owned businesses. In another example, the Portland Parks and Recreation bureau began using equity scores for capital projects, and targeted land acquisitions in underserved areas. A full list of the plans of specific Portland bureaus is available from OEHR.¹⁰⁵

*King County, Washington.*¹⁰⁶ In its overview of King County, GARE has highlighted the work of specific county agencies to advance racial equity and social justice. These examples, listed below, illustrate the equity goals established in departmental race equity action plans.

- *Community & Human Services* has crafted and implemented strategies to mitigate inequities in early childhood services such as developing culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach materials for Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese families in response to data on utilization of birth to three prevention services for children with developmental disabilities.
- *Development and Environmental Services* began the process of rewriting the zoning code to allow for greater flexibility for developers and to encourage more mixed-use neighborhoods in return for providing public benefit such as mixed income housing, walkability and sustainability.
- The *Executive Office* coordinated the launch of Opportunity Greenway, offering court-involved young adult students the chance to learn about and train for high wage and high demand "green jobs." Approximately 50 high school students were introduced to green jobs in three six-week educational internship programs operated through Youth Source.

¹⁰⁵ [Equity 2016 Annual Report](https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/627583) (Office of Equity and Human Rights, City of Portland, 2017) p. 6 ; <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/627583>

¹⁰⁶ See website of the Local and Regional Government Alliance for Race and Equity, profile of King County, Washington (<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/jurisdictions/king-county-washington/>) and King County Equity & Social Justice Initiative January 2009 Update Report (<https://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/~media/E60DED75EE224903A92FDED05D741A2C.ashx?la=en>)

- *Executive Services* analyzed data to increase participation in its Healthy Incentives among employee groups lacking regular access to computers such as road crews, carpenters and maintenance workers. As a result, the benefits staff developed and implemented an outreach plan to those employees that was successful in increasing participation rates.
- *Management & Budget* engaged leadership from underrepresented groups in neighborhood revitalization activities by supporting the design and facilitation of an inclusive public process to create a community vision for Skyway Park through the county's inter-departmental Community Enhancement Initiative. This project has been expanded to produce a wider community agenda for neighborhood revitalization, addressing the root causes of long-standing inequities.
- *Natural Resources and Parks* conducted a GIS-based equity assessment that mapped benefits (e.g. proximity to a park or trail) and burdens (e.g. proximity to a wastewater regulator facility) to race, income and language. This analysis helped to identify and promote action on potential areas of disproportionality in the department's facility locations and service delivery.
- *Public Health* developed a translation policy and system to increase the availability of health information among English language learners. The system included language maps for King County, priority language tiers with 20 languages, translation vendors chosen in a competitive process, and a translation worksheet to guide the translation process.
- With key partners, *Transportation* engaged community organizations, schools, businesses, and residents about possible changes to bus routes in the southeast Seattle area and southwest King County. Activities have continued, including sounding board meetings, mailings, a multi-lingual hotline, questionnaires and other materials translated in seven languages, and numerous community discussions, public speaking engagements and other community outreach activities.

3. Measurement Frameworks

The use of data to benchmark the magnitude of racial disparities and monitor efforts to reduce those disparities have been critical to local jurisdiction's efforts to advance racial equity. Measurement frameworks used to track and describe progress include both **community indicators** that measure community outcomes and **performance measures** to monitor the implementation of actions (i.e. processes) that influence community indicators. For example, when aiming to eliminate disparities in the criminal justice system, arrest data by race and ethnicity could serve as a community indicator while measuring the number and percent of police personnel that complete an anti-bias training could serve as a relevant performance measure.

This section describes the use of measurement frameworks in two jurisdictions: Fairfax County, Virginia, and Dane County, Wisconsin.

Fairfax County, Virginia. The Equitable Growth Profile of Fairfax County¹⁰⁷ offers an example of how jurisdictions can use measurement frameworks to elicit support for their racial equity work. Based on PolicyLink's National Equity Analysis, Fairfax's Equitable Growth Profile synthesizes data across several community indicators to make the case for why narrowing racial disparities matter.

¹⁰⁷ Equitable Growth Profile of Fairfax County (PolicyLink and PERE, 2015); <https://nationalequityatlas.org/sites/default/files/Fairfax-Profile-6June2015-final.pdf>

Based on research finding the greatest economic growth in the most equitable jurisdictions, PolicyLink calculates that eliminating disparities in incomes by race and ethnicity would grow the Fairfax County economy by \$26.2 billion in 2012. Fairfax's focus on illustrating the economic consequences of inequality with the development of the Equitable Growth Profile helped to shape the inclusion of equity as a key objective of Fairfax's Economic Success Plan that was also released in 2015.¹⁰⁸

Overall, the Equitable Growth Profile teases out disparities by income and other measures of well-being across a dozen community measures to illustrate the racial and social disparities that undermine Fairfax's economic growth. The community indicators tracked include data describing:

- Trends in **population and demographics** to describe who lives in Fairfax and how this is changing. Specific data points tracked include:
 - Race/Ethnicity and Nativity, 2012
 - Growth Rates of Major Racial/Ethnic Groups, 2000 to 2012
 - Net Change in Population by County, 2000 to 2010
 - Racial/Ethnic Composition, 1980 to 2040
 - Racial Generation Gap: People of Color by Age Group, 1980 to 2010
 - Median Age by Race/Ethnicity, 2012
 - English-Speaking Ability Among Immigrants by Race/Ethnicity, 2000 and 2012
 - Linguistic Isolation by Census Tract, 2012
- Trends in **inclusive growth** to describe whether the economic growth is creating more jobs, decreasing income inequality, and improving incomes for all works. Data points tracked include:
 - Average Annual Growth in Jobs and GDP, 1990 to 2007 and 2009 to 2012
 - Growth in Jobs and Earnings by Industry Wage Level, 1990 to 2012
 - Income Inequality, 1979 to 2012
 - Real Earned Income Growth for Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers, 1979-2012
 - Median Hourly Wage by Race/Ethnicity, 2000 and 2012
 - Households by Income Level, 1979 and 2012
- Trends in **full employment** and access to **good jobs**. Data tracked for these measures include:
 - Unemployment Rate, February 2015
 - Unemployment Rate by Census Tract, 2012
 - Unemployment Rate by Race/Ethnicity and Nativity, 2012
 - Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment and Race/Ethnicity, 2012
 - Jobs Held by Workers with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Opportunity Level and Race/Ethnicity and Nativity, 2011
 - Median Hourly Wage by Educational Attainment and Race/Ethnicity, 2012
- Trends in **economic security** to describe trends in poverty. Data tracked for this area includes:

¹⁰⁸ The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County (Fairfax County, Virginia, 2015); <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/economic-success/sites/economic-success/files/assets/documents/pdf/strategic-plan-facilitate-economic-success-2015.pdf>

- Poverty Rate by Race/Ethnicity, 2000 and 2012
- Child Poverty Rate by Race/Ethnicity and Nativity, 2012
- Percent Population Below the Poverty Level by Census Tract, 2012
- Working Poor Rate by Race/Ethnicity, 2000 and 2012

- Trends among **industries and occupations** to identify opportunities for growth and whether workers will have the education and skills needed. Data points tracked in this area include:
 - Industry Employment Projections, 2010-2022
 - Occupational Employment Projections, 2012-2022
 - Working-Age Population with an A.A. Degree or Higher by Race/Ethnicity and Nativity, 2012
 - Projected Share of Jobs that Require an Associate Degree or Higher, 2020

- Trends in **youth preparedness** to discern whether youth are ready to enter the workforce. Data points tracked for this measure include:
 - Composite Child Opportunity Index by Census Tract
 - Share of 16-to-24-Year-Olds Not Enrolled in School and Without a High School Diploma by Race/Ethnicity, and Nativity and by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 1990 to 2012
 - Disconnected Youth: 16-to-24-Year-Olds Not in School or Work by Race/Ethnicity and by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 1980 to 2012

- Trends in residents' connectedness to **affordable housing** and **viable transportation** options. Data tracked for these two sets of measures include:
 - Percent of Rent-Burdened Households by Census Tract, 2012
 - Percent of Households Without a Vehicle by Census Tract, 2012
 - Means of Transportation to Work by Annual Earnings, 2012
 - Average Travel Time to Work in Minutes by Census Tract

In essence, the Equitable Growth Profile serves as baseline report for assessing the effectiveness of racial equity efforts undertaken to execute the One Fairfax Resolution also adopted in 2015¹⁰⁹ and the One Fairfax Policy adopted in 2017.¹¹⁰ Authorized by elected officials representing both Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools, the One Fairfax Policy identifies 17 areas on which to focus future racial and social equity efforts:

- Wealth Creation
- Housing
- Workforce Development

¹⁰⁹ One Fairfax Resolution (Action Item 5), "Adopting the One Fairfax Resolution for development of racial and social equity policy [...]", adopted by the County Board of Supervisors on July 12, 2016; <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/sites/topics/files/assets/documents/pdf/one-fairfax-resolution.pdf>

¹¹⁰ One Fairfax Policy (Policy A-6), "Adopting the One Fairfax Policy that defines expectations and processes for considering racial and social equity [...]", adopted jointly by County Board of Supervisors and County School Board on Nov. 21, 2017; <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/sites/topics/files/assets/documents/pdf/one-fairfax-policy.pdf>

- Early Childhood Education
- Public Education
- Public Safety
- Criminal Justice
- Strong Neighborhoods
- Food Systems
- Health and Human Services
- Sustainable Development
- Environmental Justice
- Parks and Recreation
- Transportation
- Digital Divide
- Human Resources
- Non-Discrimination in Government Services

As Fairfax County determines which of these 17 areas to focus on in future work, matching community indicators to focus areas and developing performance measures for tracking data in targeted areas will help enhance community accountability for implementing the One Fairfax Policy.

Background:¹¹¹ Fairfax County's initial foray into equity from the 1990s to the mid-2000s focused on disproportionate outcomes by race in human services, child welfare, juvenile justice, and health. The County's focus was on fixing families and individuals, rather than on fixing institutions. During this time, they used a state grant from the Center for the Study of Social Policy to generate the Institutional Analysis (IA) of the "front door" of Juvenile Justice report in 2012.¹¹² The IA report described the experiences of Black and Latino children and the pathways that led to involvement in the juvenile justice system (e.g., the School-to-Prison Pipeline).

After the IA report, the County shifted its focus from individuals to an institutional approach that recognized institutional biases. Staff leadership used the IA report to build awareness among the departments that participated in the project. More specifically, the Office of the County Executive hosted a monthly Dialogue with the Directors series where they took a topic within the study (e.g. truancy, domestic violence) and invited staff leaders to present on the topic to reveal how people should recognize racial inequities within each topic area as a larger pattern that spans topics. Facilitators advised directors to bring staff, to bring data, to look at the data, and share their findings.

Through the dialogues, participants realized that each agency often tracked data differently. Fairfax County staff leaders looked to Multnomah County (Oregon) for expertise on how to systemically collect and report data and through that relationship became involved with the Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE). As a result of attending a GARE meeting in Oregon, Fairfax County leaders were inspired to move their racial equity efforts out of human services and to move toward addressing the root causes of racial inequities in economic development, public schooling, and transportation.

¹¹¹ This section based on OLO interview with Karen Shaban and Karla Bruce of Fairfax County, April 4, 2018

¹¹² [Disproportionate Minority Contact for African American and Hispanic Youth: The Story Behind the Numbers and the Path to Action](https://www.cssp.org/publications/child-welfare/institutional-analysis/The-Story-Behind-the-Numbers_September-2012.pdf) (Institutional Analysis (IA) conducted by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2012); https://www.cssp.org/publications/child-welfare/institutional-analysis/The-Story-Behind-the-Numbers_September-2012.pdf

In 2014, Fairfax County developed the Successful Youth and Policy Team comprised of two members of the Board of Supervisors, two members of the School Board, two community leaders, and other school and community officials who served children. The members of this team were concerned with racial equity and decided to champion the idea. Toward this end, the Team lead the development of the Equitable Growth Profile, the adoption of racial equity as an overarching goal of the County's Economic Success Plan, and the development of the One Fairfax Resolution and Policy. The team, however, took a pragmatic approach in championing racial equity, noting that focusing on racial and social equity advanced consensus among key stakeholders who in turn advanced the resolution and policy.

Dane County, Wisconsin. Dane County has focused on eliminating racial disparities in the criminal justice system since 2008. The County broadened its racial equity efforts to address disparities in seven additional areas in 2014 with the passage of a racial equity resolution. To deepen their work, in 2015 Dane County contracted with GARE and CSI to develop the Dane County Wisconsin Racial Equity Analysis and Recommendations.¹¹³ This section describes the community indicators and performance measures recommended by GARE and CSI. These measures are described for each set of recommendations offered to Dane County to enhance their racial equity efforts.

1) Dane County employees understand and are committed to achieving racial equity.

The GARE/CSI report recommends that Dane County develop infrastructure and tools to ensure employees and residents understand and are committed to achieving racial equity. To track progress toward these ends, the GARE/CSI report recommends that Dane County track the following data points for Recommendation 1:

Community Indicators

- Percent of population who believe advancing racial equity should be a priority
- Percent of population who understand the County's commitment to racial equity

County Performance Measures

- Percent of Dane County departments that have:
 - A Racial Equity Team within their department
 - A Racial Equity Action Plan
- Percent of Dane County employees who:
 - Have attended racial equity training
 - Believe their department is making progress in advancing racial equity (by race)
 - Can identify examples of institutionalized racism
 - Are using a Racial Equity Tool
- Number of community members participating in Racial Equity training

¹¹³ Dane County Wisconsin Racial Equity Analysis & Recommendations (Center for Social Inclusion and Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity, n.d.); <http://wisprd.org/attachments/article/101/Dane%20County%20Racial%20Equity%20Analysis%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

2) Dane County is an effective and inclusive government that engages community and is responsive to its needs.

The GARE/CSI report recommends that Dane County implement strategies to ensure that residents view the County as an effective and inclusive government that engages community. To track progress toward these ends, the GARE/CSI report recommends that Dane County track the following data points for Recommendation 2:

Community Indicators

- Percent of population who believe Dane County values community participation
- Dane County services are well received by community members
- Voter turnout

County Performance Measures

- Percent of Dane County employees* who believe their department seeks input and assistance on decision making from communities of color
- Demographics of the County's advisory groups reflect community demographics
- Participants engaged in the project report that their engagement made a meaningful difference in the process
- Number of different methods Dane County is using to engage the community and their measured effectiveness and replicability

3) Dane County communities of color share in the County's economic prosperity.

The GARE/CSI report recommends that Dane County adopt as a policy goal a commitment to communities of color sharing in the County's economic prosperity. To track progress toward these ends, the GARE/CSI report recommends that Dane County track the following data points for Recommendation 3:

Community Indicators

- Unemployment rates
- Household income
- Number of businesses developed

County Performance Measures

- Demographics of Dane County workforce reflect demographics of the community across functions (positions) and hierarchy (supervisors, managers, and directors)
- Number of Minority Business Enterprise contracts
- Dane County contract and procurement decisions reflect community demographics

4) Neighborhoods and people are safe and racial disproportionality in the criminal justice system is eliminated.

The GARE/CSI report recommends that Dane County adopt as a policy goal safety for all neighborhoods and people and the elimination of racial disparities in the criminal justice system. To track progress toward these ends, the GARE/CSI report recommends that Dane County track the following data points for Recommendation 4:

Community Indicators

- Neighborhood crime rates
- Arrest rate for youth and adults
- Conviction rate for youth and adults
- Level of trust in the criminal justice system

County Performance Measures

- Criminal Justice Interdepartmental Team convened
- Tracking and reporting of disparate outcomes
- Racial representation of staff in the Dane County Sheriff's Office and courts, by position
- Number and percent of criminal justice system personnel trained
- Number of policy changes developed to eliminate racial disparities and their effectiveness

5) All people have healthy life outcomes.

The GARE/CSI report recommends that Dane County commit to ensuring that all people have healthy life outcomes. To track progress, the report recommends that Dane County track the following data points for Recommendation 5:

Community indicators

- Percent of population that is obese
- Percent of population with diabetes
- Average life expectancy
- Neighborhoods have access to affordable, healthy food retail, parks and other resources
- Percent of eligible children participating in federally-sponsored school meal programs
- Percent of childhood and adult day care providers carrying out new USDA changes
- Percent of those eligible to participate in FoodShare (SNAP) who use the benefit
- Rate of food insecurity in county
- Breastfeeding rates among county residents

County Performance Measures

- Healthy Equity Action Team (interdepartmental) convened
- Mapping system developed that identifies the accessibility of healthy food in neighborhoods
- Number and percent of child and adult day care personnel trained on new USDA standards
- Hours of technical assistance provided

- WIC, SNAP, and other federally-sponsored program caseloads remains steady or decline over time, as attributable to economic factors

4. Racial Equity Action Teams

Most jurisdictions have relied on racial equity action teams to advance their racial equity efforts or have recommended that their departments do so. As noted in Chapter 3, GARE recommends that local jurisdictions identify a lead or co-leads at the executive level to oversee the development of their racial equity work. GARE also recommends that the executive leads recruit staff to form racial equity action teams to lead their overarching efforts. This section describes Seattle’s use of racial equity teams to advance its Race and Social Justice Initiative and Madison’s Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative Strategy Guide recommendations for how city agencies should use racial equity teams.

Seattle, Washington. Seattle’s Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) organizational chart (depicted in Table 8) provides an example of how jurisdictions can organize their staff to advance racial equity.¹¹⁴ Their organizational working groups and department assignments to advance racial equity include:

- **RSJI Strategy Team**, the initiative managing team from the Seattle Office of Civil Rights;
- **Change Team**, employees in each department that help implement RSJI activities & workplans;
- **Core Team**, a Citywide leadership team of 25 people that work with inter-departmental teams by issue area to implement RSJI activities;
- **RSJI Subcabinet**, departmental directors or deputies who advise and review RSJI activities;
- **Inter-Departmental Equity Teams** convened by lead departments to develop and implement Citywide strategies and community partnerships to address racial equity; and
- **Racial and Social Justice Community Roundtable**, a coalition of 25 government and community-based organizations working for racial equity in King County.

Table 8. Seattle: Race and Social Justice Initiative Organizational Chart

Mayor – City Council			Racial and Social Justice Community Roundtable
City Departments	RSJI Strategy Team	RSJI Subcabinet	
Change Teams	Core Team	Inter-Departmental Equity Teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity in Education • Equitable Development • Equity in Criminal Justice • Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement • Workforce Equity • Contracting Equity • Campaign for Racial Equity 	

Seattle’s racial equity teams support several departmental and citywide efforts, including:

- Annual RSJI work plans among individual departments.

¹¹⁴ <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/RSJI-Org-Chart.pdf>

- Departmental Change Teams to implement their work plans.
- Five cross-cutting issues for departments: workforce equity, contracting equity, outreach and public engagement, immigrant and refugee access to services, and training and education.
- The RSJI Subcabinet to develop proposals to address systemic issues and share best practices.
- Coordinated training for all City of Seattle employees.

Of note, all Seattle employees participate in a one-day training curriculum based on the public television series, “*RACE -- The Power of an Illusion*.”¹¹⁵ Racial equity team members receive additional in-depth training to support their racial equity work. Seattle also relies on a cross-jurisdictional racial equity team for learning opportunities as a member of the Governing for Racial Equity Network to understand and apply best practices for advancing racial equity. Other members of this regional network include government agencies in Washington, Oregon, and Northern California.

Madison, Wisconsin. Madison’s RESJ Guide recommends that city agencies use racial equity staff teams to advance equity in city operations, policies, and budgets.¹¹⁶ Their specific recommendations follow:

- **Develop a department equity team to advance equity in city operations.** The RESJ guide recognizes the importance in having a team of staff dedicated to leading the department’s application of racial equity strategies. They recommend that the equity team should reflect as many racial, social, gender, age, and job classification perspectives as possible and that the size of teams should vary by the size and structure of the agency, ranging from 4-10 persons. They recommend that larger agencies consider dividing the team into action groups to ensure integration across locations and job categories. They also encourage team members to participate in training to enhance their expertise.
- **Delegate staff to the citywide RESJ Core and Action Teams to advance equity in city policies and budgets.** The RESJ guide states that “involvement from all City departments and divisions will ensure that all perspectives are included and that the strengths of all agencies can be capitalized toward achieving racial equity.” They further note that “it will also ensure that communication can flow in both directions between RESJI and city agencies.” Towards this end, they recommend delegating department representatives to participate in the RESJI Core Team, a centralized hub of information sharing and planning and/or the RESJI Action Team focused on working in four areas – communication, community connections, data, and training and tools.

5. Inclusive Engagement and Community Capacity Building

To advance their racial equity work, most jurisdictions have expanded their community engagement, particularly with communities of color. GARE has found that enhancing community engagement increases the momentum of racial equity action planning efforts and the quality of such efforts. Specific activities toward this end include:

¹¹⁵ “RACE – The Power of an Illusion” (California Newsreel and ITVS, 2003);

https://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm

¹¹⁶ <https://www.cityofmadison.com/employeeenet/dcr/documents/RESJstrategy.pdf>

- Enacting executive orders to require inclusive outreach in planning among city departments,¹¹⁷
- Hosting community conversations,
- Developing an inclusive action team,
- Expanding advisory groups, and
- Utilizing racial equity funds to seed community-based efforts to expand racial equity.¹¹⁸

The following sections describe Madison’s recommendations to city agencies for improving community engagement and their model for assessing the quality of community engagement efforts and Seattle’s Inclusive Outreach and Community Engagement Guide.

Madison, Wisconsin. Madison’s RESJ Guide offers two recommendations for city agencies seeking to promote inclusive engagement and community capacity building in their efforts to advance equity:¹¹⁹

- **Delegate representation to Neighborhood Resource Teams.** Since the early 1990s, the City of Madison has used Neighborhood Resource Teams (NRTs) to focus on promoting racial equity and social justice. NRTs “focus on neighborhoods that have barriers to opportunity and bring City staff together with residents and other stakeholders to enhance communication, coordination, and relationship building.” The intent of the NRTs is to improve the quality of life in low-income neighborhoods by implementing an agenda that is developed by the neighborhood residents. The RESJ guide recommends that City departments delegate staff members to participate in NRTs to develop a deeper understanding of community issues and opportunities for departments to better orient themselves to address those issues.
- **Update community engagement practices.** The RESJ guide notes that community engagement should offer opportunities for people to easily obtain information, to express their views, and to have meaningful roles in decision-making. RESJ recommendations include the following:
 - Encourage City staff to build relationships with neighborhood and community leaders to ensure that there are points of contact for sharing of needs and concerns.
 - Find new ways to gather information from community members outside of showing up at City meetings. Use technology to your advantage.
 - Partner with community centers, libraries, churches, and other community servicing organizations to involve people in City decisions.
 - Hold meetings at locations and times that accommodate the needs of stakeholders. Consider parking costs, accessibility, transportation, scheduling concerns, child care, and providing food whenever possible.
 - Involve community members in decision-making bodies and ensure that they have real power to affect decisions that will impact their communities.
 - Plan to regularly communicate results and progress with the community. They note that this can build trust and help ensure that those involved and impacted know what was done with their input.

¹¹⁷ [Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide \(Seattle Office for Civil Rights, 2009\); \(https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/ParksAndRecreation/Business/RFPs/Attachment5%20_InclusiveOutreachandPublicEngagement.pdf\)](https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/ParksAndRecreation/Business/RFPs/Attachment5%20_InclusiveOutreachandPublicEngagement.pdf)

¹¹⁸ Website for Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative, “2016 Racial Equity Fund”; <https://www.seattle.gov/rsji/community/campaign-for-racial-equity/racial-equity-fund>

¹¹⁹ <https://www.cityofmadison.com/employeeenet/dcr/documents/RESJstrategy.pdf>

Further, Madison’s RESJ Community Engagement Continuum¹²⁰ offers a framework for constructing community engagement efforts that reflect best practices. The continuum, summarized in Table 9 on the next page, describes the practices, characteristics, and strategies associated with achieving increasing community engagement:

- **Level of engagement**, ranging from whether the City initiates the engagement effort to the community initiating the direct action with at most technical assistance from the City.
- **Characteristics of engagement**, ranging from one-way communication from the City to others, to multiple interactions where ultimately the community directs action.
- **Strategies for engagement**, ranging from media releases and outreach from the City to community led planning efforts on racial equity issues.

The continuum, adapted from a community engagement tool developed by King County,¹²¹ shows a range of actions that can be used for both simple and complex efforts. The introduction to the continuum notes that “as a project develops, the level of community engagement may need to change to meet changing needs and objectives.” The continuum notes that:

“There is no one right level of engagement but considering the range of engagement and its implications on your work is a key step in promoting community participation and building community trust. Regardless of the level of engagement, the role of both the City of Madison and community partners as part of the engagement process should always be clearly defined.”

Table 9: Madison – Racial Equity and Social Justice Community Engagement Continuum

	<u>City Informs</u>	<u>City Consults</u>	<u>City Engages in Dialogue</u>	<u>City and Community Work Together</u>	<u>Community Directs Action</u>
Levels of Engagement	City initiates an effort, coordinates with departments and uses a variety of channels to inform community to take action	City gathers information from the community to inform city led projects	City engages community members to shape city priorities and plans	Community and City of Madison share in decision-making to co-create solutions together	Community initiates and directs strategy and action with participation and technical assistance from the City

¹²⁰ Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative RESJ Tool: Comprehensive Version, “City of Madison Racial Equity and Social Justice Community Engagement Continuum” (City of Madison, Wisconsin, 2015) p. 12
https://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/documents/RESJ_Tool_BrittinghamPark.pdf

¹²¹ Community Engagement Guide (King County, Washington, 2011);
<http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/CommunityEngagementGuideContinuum2011-2.pdf>

Table 9: Madison – Racial Equity and Social Justice Community Engagement Continuum, Continued

	<u>City Informs</u>	<u>City Consults</u>	<u>City Engages in Dialogue</u>	<u>City and Community Work Together</u>	<u>Community Directs Action</u>
Characteristics of Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily 1-way communication One interaction Term-limited to event Addresses immediate need of City and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily one-way communication One to multiple interactions Short to medium-term Shapes and informs city projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-way channel of communication Multiple interactions Medium to long-term Advancement of solutions to complex problems 		
Strategies for Engagement	Media releases, brochures, pamphlets, outreach to vulnerable populations, ethnic media contacts, translated information, staff outreach to residents, new and social media	Focus groups, interviews, community surveys	Forums, advisory boards, stakeholder involvement, coalitions, policy development and advocacy, including legislative briefings and testimony, workshops, community-wide events	Co-led community meetings, advisory boards, coalitions and partnerships, policy development and advocacy, including legislative briefings and testimony	Community-led planning efforts, community hosted forums, collaborative partnerships, coalitions, policy development and advocacy, including legislative briefings and testimony

Seattle, Washington. In 2018, the mayor directed city departments to develop and implement processes for inclusive outreach and public engagement to include people from diverse backgrounds via Executive Order 05-08. This policy was designed to increase public access to city information, resources, and civic processes. In 2009, Seattle’s Office for Civil Rights published the Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide as a practical resource.¹²² The guide is organized to support three principles:

- Create trusting relationships and enhanced engagement through greater accessibility
- Enhance knowledge gathering by exchanging information rather than just collecting it, and

¹²²<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/ParksAndRecreation/Business/RFPs/Attachment5%20%20InclusiveOutreachandPublicEngagement.pdf>

- Embrace organizational changes that will respond to community insights and allow for shared power between communities and the organizations that serve them.

The guide offers a tool for assessing the cultural relevance of operational standards via its Cultural Competence Continuum across six competency levels ranging from “culturally destructive” to fully “culturally competent.” It also describes the kinds of assumptions and power dynamics observable at each level of competence. Finally, the guide offers four criteria for evaluating the effectiveness and inclusiveness of an agency’s public involvement process by considering the following:

- The public’s role in scoping the project
- The public’s involvement plan in developing the entire project
- The results of the public’s involvement are clear and have been incorporated into the project
- The public involvement process is deemed successful by stakeholders

To affirm and expand Seattle’s commitment to inclusive outreach and public engagement in governmental decision-making, the City Council and the Mayor enacted Ordinance No. 125192 to create a Community Involvement Commission (CIC). The charge of the CIC is to provide feedback on the community involvement plans developed by City departments, identify new ways to increase civic participation in City processes, and offer advice and recommendations to the Mayor and the City Council.¹²³ The ordinance requires that the 16 appointees to the CIC that represent the geographic and demographic diversity of the City of Seattle.

D. Resolutions, Ordinances and Policies

Each of the seven jurisdictions reviewed in this report have passed one or more resolutions, ordinances, or policies to advance their racial equity work. Table 10 offers a summary of these actions taken by elected officials to promote racial equity and social justice in government decision-making. They include combined legislative and executive actions to:

- Adopt resolutions and policies to advance racial equity (King County and Fairfax County),
- Develop equity initiatives (Dane County and Madison),
- Establish equity definitions, goals, and strategies (King County and Portland),
- Develop new departments to implement equity initiatives (Portland and Multnomah County),
- Implement racial equity tools (Dane County and Madison), and
- Adopt inclusive outreach and public engagement strategies and practices (Seattle)

¹²³ Seattle City Council Legislative Summary of Ord. No. 125192;
<http://seattle.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=4878401&GUID=865DF724-807F-43E5-86BD-7DED6401A742>

Table 10: Summary of Resolutions, Ordinances, and Policies Promoting Racial Equity

Jurisdiction	Public Action	Purpose	Action and Date(s)
Seattle, WA	Executive Order 05-08 (Clerk File No. 309282) ¹²⁴	Direct departments to perform outreach and public engagement in a manner that reflects the racial and cultural diversity of Seattle	Signed by Mayor, April 4, 2008
	Resolution No. 31164 ¹²⁵	Affirm the City's race and social justice work; direct departments to eliminate racial and social disparities across key indicators; etc.	Adopted by City Council, Nov. 30, 2009
	Ordinance No. 125192 (Council Bill 118834) ¹²⁶	Ordinance on public outreach and engagement; creating a Community Involvement Commission to advise the Mayor and City Council	Passed by City Council, Nov. 21, 2016; signed by Mayor, Nov. 28, 2016
King County, WA	Ordinance No. 16948 ¹²⁷	Equity and Social Justice: Establish definitions and direct implementation of the fair and just principle in the County strategic plan	Passed by County Council on Oct. 11, 2010; Approved by Executive Oct. 20, 2010
Portland, OR	Ordinance No. 184880 as amended ¹²⁸	Create Office of Equity and Human Rights and staffing of the Human Rights Commission	Passed by City Council, Sept. 21, 2011
	Resolution No. 36918 ¹²⁹	Adopting the Portland Plan as strategic plan to guide future City decisions	Adopted by City Council on April 25, 2012
	Resolution No. 37144 as amended ¹³⁰	Adopt Citywide Racial Equity Goals & Strategies to guide City policies, plans, and procedures	Adopted by City Council, July 8, 2015
Multnomah County, OR	Ordinance No. 1166 ¹³¹	Establish the Organization and Functions of the Office of Diversity and Equity	Adopted by Board of County Commissioners, July 8, 2010
Madison, WI	Resolution No. 13-00828 ¹³²	Declare the City's adoption of an Equity Impact Model	Enacted by City Common Council on Oct. 30, 2013
	Resolution No. 33869 ¹³³	Establish the City's Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative	Passed by Board of Health, June 12, 2014; final Apr. 29, 2016

¹²⁴ http://clerk.seattle.gov/~CFS/CF_309282.pdf

¹²⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/yb5dgdw9l>; retrieved from <http://clerk.seattle.gov/~public/RESN1.htm>

¹²⁶ <http://seattle.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=4878401&GUID=865DF724-807F-43E5-86BD-7DED6401A742>

¹²⁷ <https://tinyurl.com/ybq9vloh>; retrieved from <https://mkkclegisearch.kingcounty.gov/legislation.aspx>

¹²⁸ <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/449202>

¹²⁹ <http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/index.cfm?c=58776>

¹³⁰ <https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/Record/7859814/>

Table 10: Summary of Resolutions, Ordinances, and Policies Promoting Racial Equity, Continued

Jurisdiction	Public Action	Purpose	Action and Date(s)
Dane County, WI	Resolution No. 284 (2013 RES-284) ¹³⁴	Establish Dane County Equity Initiative	Adopted by County Board, Apr. 1, 2014; signed by County Executive, Apr. 5, 2014
	Resolution No. 249 (2017 RES-249) ¹³⁵	Incorporate Equity Questions into County Agendas	Final action by County Board on Mar. 19, 2018
Fairfax County, VA	Action Item 5: One Fairfax Resolution ¹³⁶	Adopt resolution for developing of racial and social equity policy and strategic actions to advance opportunities and achieve equity	Adopted by County Board of Supervisors, July 12, 2016
	Policy A-6: One Fairfax Policy ¹³⁷	Adopt policy that defines expectations and processes for considering racial and social equity in planning and implementation of policies, practices, and initiatives across county services and public schools	Adopted by County Board of Supervisors and County School Board, Nov. 21, 2017

¹³¹ <https://multco.us/file/23545/download>

¹³² <https://tinyurl.com/y753nssd>; retrieved from <http://www.cityofmadison.com/cityhall/legislativeinformation/>

¹³³ <https://tinyurl.com/yc8nqxeo>; retrieved from <https://dane.legistar.com/Legislation.aspx>

¹³⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/ycd2bry9>; retrieved from <https://dane.legistar.com/Legislation.aspx>

¹³⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/ybxpg3d7>; retrieved from <https://dane.legistar.com/Legislation.aspx>

¹³⁶ <https://tinyurl.com/y9eqtqw3> (Action 5 on p. 118)

¹³⁷ <https://tinyurl.com/ycomjxuw> (Item 17 on p. 14)

Chapter 5. Project Findings and Recommendations

The County Council tasked the Office of Legislative Oversight to develop this report to describe lessons learned from other jurisdictions that have made racial equity an explicit goal of local government. This OLO report serves as a primer on best practices for advancing racial equity among local jurisdiction by describing the impetus for local action (the prevalence of racial disparities and their costs) and promising strategies for advancing racial equity recommended by the Government Alliance on Race and Equity and other subject matter experts.

This report summarizes promising practices for advancing racial equity in government decision-making based on a review of the research and the practices of seven jurisdictions: Seattle and King County, Washington; Portland and Multnomah County, Oregon; Madison and Dane County, Wisconsin; and Fairfax County, Virginia. Interviews with subject matter experts locally and from several jurisdictions also helped informed the development of this report.

This chapter summarizes the five major findings that emerged from OLO’s review and offers recommendations for County Council and Executive Branch action to advance racial equity in government decision-making in Montgomery County.

Summary of Project Findings

1. Racial disparities are pervasive across systems and create burdens for people of color and communities at large.

Racial disparities are pervasive across systems, characterizing most measures of wellbeing and risk. As noted by the Racial Equity Institute, measures of disproportionality reflecting the over-representation of people of color on measures of disadvantage occur in child welfare, health, juvenile justice, education, and economic development. A review of local data demonstrates disparities by race and ethnicity on measures of education, employment, housing, and income as summarized in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Relative Risk Index of Asian, Black, and Latino Residents Experiencing an Outcome Relative to a White Residents in Montgomery County, 2011-2015

System	Outcomes	White	Asian	Black	Latino
Education	High school completion rate = 98%	100%	94%	94%	70%
	Some college education = 88%	100%	92%	82%	51%
Employment	Employment rate = 78%	100%	97%	94%	99%
	Unemployment rate = 4%	100%	125%	250%	200%
Housing and Income	Households owned their own home = 74%	100%	99%	59%	67%
	Average Household Income = \$160,000	100%	82%	55%	55%
	Residents living in poverty = 4%	100%	150%	275%	300%
	Children living in poverty = 2%	100%	300%	800%	700%
Sources: OLO analysis of 2011-15 Census Data compiled by L. Hendey and L. Posey, <u>Racial Inequities in Montgomery County, 2011-15</u> (The Urban Institute, 2017); https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/95386/2017.12.28_montgomery_county_finalized_6.pdf					

A review of local Census Data compiled by the Urban Institute shows that despite high rates of high school completion (70%-98%) and employment (73%-78%) among all groups, Blacks and Latinos were more than twice as likely as Whites to be unemployed and have household incomes below the federal poverty line. Blacks and Latinos were also 33-41% less likely to own their homes and their children were 6-7 times more likely to live in poverty.

The Urban Institute also noted disparities among measures of educational and economic wellbeing in Montgomery County by nativity and geography with native-born residents experiencing better outcomes than foreign-born residents, and District One residents evidencing average incomes that were twice as high as District Five incomes. The Urban Institute estimates that a more equitable Montgomery County would have increased the numbers of Latino, African American, Asian, and immigrant residents with high school degrees, college educations, and higher incomes.

Research also suggests that increasing equitable outcomes among communities of color stimulates economic growth that benefits communities overall. For example, PolicyLink’s Equitable Growth Profile for Fairfax County estimates that eliminating disparities in incomes by race and ethnicity would have increased their County’s gross domestic product by \$26.2 billion in 2012.¹³⁸

2. Narrowing racial disparities requires focused attention on race, addressing institutional racism, and policies and practices targeting institutions and systems rather than individuals

The Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE) finds that racial disparities evident across measures are often “explained by blaming individual people - promoting “hard work” as the way to get ahead.”¹³⁹ They note that hard work can help, but because underlying systems are the force driving racial inequities, they encourage localities to focus on structural transformation to reduce racial disparities.

Focusing on structural transformation requires understanding the difference between *individual racism* (racism occurring between individuals) and *institutional racism* (biases within and across institutions that advantage White people over people of color). It also requires understanding how *implicit bias* (unconscious beliefs about race) is replicated through collective decisions and actions within institutions. GARE’s matrix offers a reference for considering the distinction between implicit and explicit racism among individuals and institutions. It also offers context for why GARE focuses on institutional implicit bias – “the hidden forces at work in our institutions ... where structural transformation must happen.”¹⁴⁰

Matrix of Explicit and Implicit Bias and Individual and Institutional Racism

	Individual Racism/Bias	Institutional Racism/Bias
Explicit Bias	When people think of racism, they often think of individual, explicit racism.	After instituting explicitly racist laws and policies, government has focused on fixing explicitly racist laws and policies.
Implicit Bias	When many people think about how to fix racism, they think we need to change minds, one by one, getting rid of implicit bias.	GARE focuses efforts on the hidden forces at work in our institutions – this is where structural transformation is necessary to end racial disparities.

¹³⁸ <https://nationalequityatlas.org/sites/default/files/Fairfax-Profile-6June2015-final.pdf>

¹³⁹ <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/1-052018-GARE-Comms-Guide-v1-1.pdf>

¹⁴⁰ *ibid* p. 39

Recognizing the difficulty that many experience in having conversations about race that keep race at the forefront rather than falling back to poverty, language or other constructs, the Opportunity Agenda offers ten lessons for talking about race, racism, and racial justice that can inform conversations and actions targeting racial equity.¹⁴¹

- Consider audience and goals.
- Know the counter narratives.
- Lead with shared values: Opportunity, Community, Equity
- Use values as a bridge, not a bypass.
- Be rigorously solution-oriented and forward-looking.
- Talk about the systemic obstacles to equal opportunity and equal justice.
- Be explicit about the different causes of racial vs. socioeconomic disparities.
- Describe how racial bias and discrimination hold us all back.
- Acknowledge the progress we've made.
- Embrace and communicate our racial and ethnic diversity

3. Best practices by the Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE) suggest that local jurisdictions prioritizing racial equity should focus on three goals: normalize, organize, and operationalize for racial equity.

Based on their work to advance racial equity in more than 100 local jurisdictions, GARE offers three sets of best practices for local jurisdictions advancing racial equity as a priority:

- **Normalize** conversations about race equity by **(1) using racial equity frameworks** that describe the history of government in creating racial disparities, envision a new role for government, and use clear definitions of racial equity and inequity; and **(2) communicating and acting with urgency** by having local leaders agree on the value of prioritizing racial equity, develop a vision, and communicate their commitment, vision, and actions to the community.
- **Organize** for racial equity by **(1) building organizational capacity** to advance equity by training staff to understand institutional racism and how to use racial equity tools, and organizing staff to develop expertise at applying a racial equity lens to local decision-making; and **(2) engaging communities** to advance racial equity, particularly among communities of color.
- **Operationalize** for racial equity by **(1) using racial equity tools** that enable decision-makers to evaluate current and proposed policies, programs, and practices using a racial equity lens; and **(2) using data via measurement frameworks** to establish baseline data on indicators of disparities and evaluate the success of local efforts to advance racial equity.

Additionally, OLO identifies the use of **racial equity action plans** among local jurisdictions and departments as a best practice for building organizational capacity for advancing racial equity as a priority and for increasing accountability for local racial equity efforts.

¹⁴¹<https://opportunityagenda.org/explore/resources-publications/ten-lessons-talking-about-race-racism-and-racial-justice>

4. Leading jurisdictions have taken a multi-pronged approach to advancing racial equity that aligns with GARE’s recommended best practices. Several jurisdictions have also developed racial equity initiatives that require departments to develop racial equity plans and to apply equity tools to decision-making.

OLO reviewed efforts among seven jurisdictions for advancing racial equity in government:

- Seattle and King County, Washington;
- Portland and Multnomah County, Oregon;
- Madison and Dane County, Wisconsin; and
- Fairfax County, Virginia.

The chart below summarizes the specific actions these jurisdictions have taken to advance racial equity.

<u>What Have Leading Jurisdictions Done to Advance Racial Equity in Decision-Making?</u>	
<p><u>Normalize</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Act with Urgency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train employees to create a shared understanding (<i>Madison, Seattle & Portland</i>) • Develop public education campaign and website on equity efforts (<i>Seattle</i>) • Issue annual report on racial equity work (<i>Portland</i>) • Collaborate on racial equity with national and regional communities of practice (<i>Seattle, King County, Fairfax County</i>)
<p><u>Organize</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing • Planning • Community Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire/Designate Chief Equity Officer (<i>Fairfax County</i>) • Create jurisdiction-wide, departmental, and topical racial equity action teams (<i>Seattle, Madison, King County, Dane County</i>) • Designate/create lead department for racial equity work (<i>Dane County, King County, Seattle, Portland, Multnomah County</i>) • Develop jurisdiction-wide strategic plan for racial equity (<i>Seattle, King County, Dane County, and Portland</i>) • Identify equity target areas and policies (<i>Seattle, King County, Portland</i>) • Develop racial equity plans by department (<i>Portland, King County, Madison</i>) • Develop tools to enhance community engagement (<i>Madison, Seattle</i>) • Host community conversations/town halls on racial equity (<i>King County, Fairfax County, Multnomah County</i>) • Engage underrepresented communities (<i>Seattle</i>) • Create Racial Equity Funds for community-based organizations (<i>Seattle</i>)
<p><u>Operationalize</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity Tools • Data on Inequities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop racial equity impact assessments and racial equity toolkits (<i>Seattle, Multnomah County, Portland, and Madison</i>) • Require use of equity tools in governmental decision-making (<i>Portland, Dane County, Madison</i>) • Compile data on racial and social disparities (<i>Fairfax County</i>) • Develop performance measures for improving equity (<i>Dane County</i>)

The seven jurisdictions' combined efforts align with GARE's recommended best practices. Several jurisdictions have also developed strategic plans for racial equity and require local departments to develop and implement **racial equity action plans**. To support their work, several localities rely on lead agencies (e.g. Offices of Civil Rights and Equity) to coordinate their equity efforts. Together, they demonstrate that there is no one way for jurisdictions to advance racial equity.

5. There is no one way for jurisdictions to advance racial equity. However, advancing racial equity requires both processes and products.

Each of the seven jurisdictions reviewed in this report have passed one or more resolutions, ordinances, and/or policies to advance their racial equity work. They include legislative and executive actions to:

- Adopt resolutions and policies to advance racial equity (*King County and Fairfax County*);
- Develop equity initiatives (*Dane County and Madison*);
- Establish equity definitions, goals, and strategies (*King County and Portland*);
- Develop new city or county departments to implement equity initiatives (*Portland and Multnomah County*);
- Implement racial equity tools (*Dane County and Madison*); and
- Adopt inclusive outreach and public engagement strategies and practices (*Seattle*).

The chart on the next page offers a summary of the executive and legislative actions taken among these jurisdictions. The varied approaches among the seven jurisdictions shows that there is no one way for localities to advance racial equity. Yet, advancing racial equity requires both processes - transformational changes to organizations, staff training, honest discussions about race - and products - specific plans with measurable goals, data reports on racial equity, written assessments of current and proposed policies and resource allocations.

Summary of Ordinance, Resolutions, and Orders Advancing Racial Equity in Select Jurisdictions			
Jurisdiction	Ordinance	Purpose	Action and Date(s)
Seattle, WA	Executive Order 05-08 (Clerk File No. 309282)	Direct departments to perform outreach and public engagement in a manner that reflects the racial and cultural diversity of Seattle.	Signed by Mayor, April 4, 2008
	Resolution No. 31164	Affirm the City's race and social justice work; direct departments to eliminate racial and social disparities across key indicators; promoting equity in the City workplace and in services.	Adopted by City Council, Nov. 30, 2009
	Ordinance No. 125192 (Council Bill 118834)	Ordinance on public outreach and engagement; creating a Community Involvement Commission to advise the Mayor and City Council	Passed by City Council, Nov. 21, 2016; signed by Mayor, Nov. 28, 2016
King County, WA	Ordinance No. 16948	Establish definitions and direct implementation of the fair and just principle in the county strategic plan	Passed by County Council on Oct. 11, 2010; Approved by Executive Oct. 20, 2010
Portland, OR	Ordinance No. 184880 as amended	Create Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR) and staffing of the Human Rights Commission by OEHR	Passed by City Council, Sept. 21, 2011
	Resolution No. 37144 as amended	Adopt Citywide Racial Equity Goals & Strategies to guide City policies, plans, and procedures	Adopted by City Council, July 8, 2015
Multnomah County, OR	Ordinance No. 1166	Establish the Organization and Functions of the Office of Diversity and Equity	Adopted by Board of County Commissioners, July 8, 2010
Madison, WI	Resolution No. 13-00828	Declare the City's adoption of an Equity Impact Model	Enacted by City Common Council on Oct. 30, 2013
	Resolution No. 33869	Establish the City's Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative	Passed by Board of Health, June 12, 2014; final Apr. 29, 2016
Dane County, WI	Resolution No. 284 (2013 RES-284)	Establish Dane County Equity Initiative	Adopted by County Board, Apr. 1, 2014; signed by County Executive, Apr. 5, 2014
	Resolution No. 249 (2017 RES-249) ¹⁴²	Incorporate Equity Questions into County Agendas	Final action by County Board on Mar. 19, 2018
Fairfax County, VA	Action Item 5: One Fairfax Resolution	Adopt resolution for developing of racial and social equity policy and strategic actions to advance opportunities and achieve equity	Adopted by County Board of Supervisors, July 12, 2016
	Policy A-6: One Fairfax Policy	Adopt policy that defines expectations and processes for considering racial and social equity in planning and implementation of policies, practices, and initiatives across county services and public schools	Adopted by County Board of Supervisors, Nov. 21, 2017

¹⁴² <https://tinyurl.com/ybxpg3d7>; retrieved from <https://dane.legistar.com/Legislation.aspx>

OLO Recommendations

Based on this report's findings, OLO offers a comprehensive list of recommendations for Council and Executive Branch action for prioritizing racial equity in government decision-making in the short-to-medium-term and in the long term long-term. This list aligns with best practices for advancing racial equity and reflects the combined approaches used in the seven jurisdictions reviewed for this report.

Of note, OLO's list of recommended actions reflects a menu of approaches rather than a prescription. Beyond initial training for elected officials and staff leaders to create a common vision for the racial equity locally, OLO recommends the formation of Legislative and Executive Branch Racial Equity Action Teams to determine next steps.

Recommendations for the Short-Term to Medium-Term (6 Months to Two Years). The following recommendations are for combined Council and Executive Branch action for the next two years. Specific recommended actions for the short- to medium term for the County Council and Executive Branch are described separately beginning on page 95.

- **Leadership Training and Targeted:** Coordinate and deliver training on racial equity for elected leaders, departmental directors, and senior staff to normalize conversations about racial equity.¹⁴³ Afterward, deliver training to racial equity teams, managers and supervisors.
- **Join Communities of Practice:** Join the GARE to partner with other jurisdictions prioritizing racial equity, share strategies and resources. Partner with Fairfax County and other jurisdictions in COG to advance equity work and share best practices
- **Hire/Designate Equity Chief and Coordinating Department:** Hire or designate chief equity officer to lead the County's equity work. Designate existing or develop new county department to lead the County's racial equity work and provide support and technical assistance to county departments and funded agencies and provide funding and staffing to implement racial equity work.
- **Develop Racial Equity Action Teams:** Identify and develop racial equity champions representing management, staff, and community to help design the County's racial equity agenda and shape the County's work. Champions and action team members should reflect diversity of county departments and residents.
- **Develop Vision, Mission, and Goals:** Develop and adopt vision, mission, and goals for County on racial equity.
- **Identify Racial Equity Focus Areas:** Identify departments and geographic areas within the County to focus equity work. Also identify priority issue and policy areas.
- **Develop Racial Equity Tools:** Develop tools to apply racial equity lens to proposed budgets, legislation, and policies and the Council and Executive grants processes.

¹⁴³ Recommended sources for training include the Racial Equity Institute, Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE), Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, and Montgomery County Public Schools Equity Initiatives Unit.

- **Compile Data:** Assess racial and social disparities in local government (e.g. outcomes, operations, hiring, and contracting) and identify metrics for monitoring equity efforts
- **Develop Departmental Racial Equity Action Teams:** Establish departmental racial equity teams inclusive of community partners across County departments and funded agencies.
- **Develop Countywide Racial Equity Strategic Plan:** Develop county-wide racial equity strategic plan with goals and benchmarks for progress in partnership with communities and/or employees of color
- **Pilot Equity Tools:** Develop capacity within County departments to conduct racial equity analyses for proposed budgets and policies and pilot use of racial equity tools among select departments (at least one service, one infrastructure, and one planning department). Also continue to apply racial equity lens to County and Executive grants processes.
- **Develop and Implement Strategies to Promote Community Engagement:** Identify and connect with stakeholders representing communities of color to promote racial equity by enhancing their capacity to influence government decision-making. Develop strategies to promote inclusive community engagement and pilot their use among selected departments by type (service, infrastructure, and planning).
- **Launch Public Education Campaign:** Develop tools to communicate county-wide racial equity efforts to the public (e.g. website, community forums, annual report)
- **Review Policies for Racial Equity:** Review County policies for opportunities to apply a racial equity lens; identify barriers to equity in policies and practices by conducting basic systems analysis to identify the root causes of inequities and develop racially equitable solutions
- **Evaluate Equity Efforts:** Develop tools and performance metrics for assessing the impact of racial equity efforts to review what works and opportunities for improvement.

Recommendations for the Long-Term (Two or More Years). The following recommendations are for combined Council and Executive Branch actions for the long-term after short- to medium term actions have been undertaken. Specific recommended long-term actions for the County Council and Executive Branch are described separately beginning on the next page.

- **Mandate Training:** Develop and require minimum training on racial equity for racial equity teams, managers, and supervisors.
- **Community of Practice Leadership.** Host convening of national and/or regional racial equity communities of practice to offer professional development for local racial equity teams, to share lessons learned with regional and national partners, and to showcase efforts in Montgomery County.
- **Departmental Racial Equity Action Plans:** Develop department level racial equity action plans with goals and benchmarks in partnership with communities of color and/or employees of color.

- **Require Use of Equity Tools:** Require use of equity tools for budget and policy proposals and the use of community engagement, hiring, and contracting tools in decision-making.
- **Expand Public Education Campaign:** Develop additional tools to communicate county-wide and departmental racial equity efforts to the public (e.g. annual report and survey).
- **Launch Community Engagement Committee:** Develop a committee representative of demographic and geographic diversity of county residents to offer advice and recommendation to Executive and County Council to expand inclusive community engagement in County decision-making.
- **Advance Equitable Policies:** Align local policies and practices to policies and practices that advancing racial equity and well-being recommended by PolicyLink and other organizations with subject matter expertise on equitable development.
- **Evaluate Data for Accountability:** Develop and track new data points to assess equity efforts and monitor performance metrics to evaluate the longer-term impact of equity efforts and to identify opportunities for improvement.

<u>Recommended Actions for the County Council and Legislative Branch</u>		
	Short-to Medium-Term Six Months to Two Years	Longer-Term Two or More Years
<p><u>Normalize</u></p> <p>1. Training 2. Act with Urgency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train Councilmembers, Council staff, managers and supervisors in Legislative Branch, and racial equity teams • Develop public education campaign and website on Council equity efforts • Collaborate on racial equity with GARE and COG on regional community of practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require training for all Legislative Branch staff • Expand public education campaign with Executive • Lead/co-host regional community of practice
<p><u>Organize</u></p> <p>3. Staffing 4. Planning 5. Community Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate staff to coordinate Council work • Create Council-wide Racial Equity Team • Create Racial Equity Teams by Target Area • Develop Council equity vision & policy • Identify equitable policies and practices by target area (e.g. hiring, contracting, services, planning, infrastructure) • Host community conversations on equity • Engage underrepresented communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Legislative Branch Racial Equity Plan • Develop process to apply equity lens to existing policies and practices • In target areas, implement equitable policies • Require focus on equity in Council grants review
<p><u>Operationalize</u></p> <p>6. Equity Tools 7. Data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Council racial equity tools • Pilot Council equity tools in target areas • Compile data on disparities • Develop performance measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise Council equity tools • Require use of equity tools in target areas • Report data on progress

<u>Recommended Actions for the Executive Branch and County Departments</u>		
	Short-to Medium-Term Six Months to Two Years	Longer-Term Two or More Years
<p><u>Normalize</u></p> <p>1. Training 2. Act with Urgency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train Executive, senior staff, directors, managers, supervisors, and equity teams • Develop public education campaign and website on Executive Branch efforts (can combine with Legislative efforts) • Join GARE and regional community of practice with COG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require training for all staff • Expand public education campaign with Council • Develop annual report for the public • Lead/co-host regional community of practice
<p><u>Organize</u></p> <p>3. Staffing 4. Planning 5. Community Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire/designate Chief Equity Officer • Create Executive Racial Equity Team • Designate Racial Equity Lead Department • Develop Executive Branch Racial Equity Plan with vision, mission and goals • Identify target areas (e.g. hiring, contracting, services, planning, infrastructure) and equitable policies • Develop racial equity plans by department • Develop vision and tools to enhance community engagement • Host community conversations on equity • Engage underrepresented communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop department racial equity plans in partnership with communities of color • Develop community engagement committee • Develop process to apply equity lens to existing policies and practices • In target areas, implement equitable policies • Require focus on equity in Community Grants review • Develop Racial Equity Fund
<p><u>Operationalize</u></p> <p>6. Equity Tools 7. Data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Executive racial equity tools • Pilot Executive equity tools in target areas • Compile data on disparities • Develop performance measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise equity tools • Require use of equity tools • Evaluate racial equity work • Report data on progress

Glossary of Terms¹

“Anti-oppression Organization: An organization that actively recognizes and mitigates the oppressive effects of white dominant culture and power dynamics, striving to equalize that power imbalance internally and for the communities with which they work.

Assimilate: The phenomenon that occurs when people belonging to the nondominant group understand dominant culture norms and take on their characteristics either by choice or by force. Many people of color are asked to “check their identities at the door” in professional settings to make their white peers comfortable. By doing so, many people of color find it easier to get promotions and professional opportunities, as well as to gain access to informal networks typically accessible only to whites.

Critical Mass: In reference to representation of people of color within an organization or at a certain level of leadership. This figure is dependent on, and reflective of, the specific demographics of the communities in which an organization serves or operates.

Critical Race Theory: A theory that explicitly states and recognizes that racism is ingrained in the fabric and system of American society. Even without overt racists present, institutional racism is pervasive in dominant culture. Critical Race Theory examines existing power structures, and identifies these structures as based on white privilege and white supremacy, which perpetuate the marginalization of people of color. Overall, Critical Race Theory examines what the legal and social landscape would look like today if people of color were the decision-makers.

Decolonize (Mind): We exist within societal structures rooted in historical facts, one of which is colonialism: the policy and practice of acquiring control of land (frequently occupied by people of color), occupying it, and codifying power structures to elevate one race and culture above all others. The international practice of colonization informs the dominant culture that characterizes American society today, driving ideologies and subconscious biases rooted in centuries of racism, classism, and white privilege. In order to dismantle white supremacy and the white dominant culture norms it influences, one must actively “decolonize” the mind, recognizing and counteracting the thoughts, preferences, practices, and behaviors that are deeply rooted vestiges of colonization.

Diversity: Psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals; including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and learning styles.

Dominant Culture: Dominant culture in a society refers to the established language, religion, values, rituals, and social customs on which the society was built. It has the most power, is widespread, and influential within a social entity, such as an organization, in which multiple cultures are present. An organization’s dominant culture is heavily influenced by the leadership and management standards and preferences of those at the top of the hierarchy. In this paper, dominant culture refers specifically to the American context in which organizational culture is predominantly defined by white men and white women in positional power. See also “White Dominant Culture.”

¹ This glossary of terms is from [Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56b910ccb6aa60c971d5f98a/t/5ae20e22562fa7ff776a49e9/1524764255184/ProInspire-Equity-in-Center-publication.pdf). (Equity in the Center, 2018) Appendix B, pp. 24-25; <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56b910ccb6aa60c971d5f98a/t/5ae20e22562fa7ff776a49e9/1524764255184/ProInspire-Equity-in-Center-publication.pdf>

Employee Resource Group: Voluntary, employee-led groups that foster a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational mission, values, goals, business practices, and objectives. Often, these groups provide support to staff who formally or informally lead race equity work in some capacity within an organization.

Equity: The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations, and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.

Inclusion: The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate and bring their full, authentic selves to work. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in the words/actions/ thoughts of all people.

Leadership: Individuals who influence a group of people to act towards a goal. Individuals may or may not be in positions of authority.

Microaggression: The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

Race Equity: The condition where one's race identity has no influence on how one fares in society. Race equity is one part of race justice and must be addressed at the root causes and not just the manifestations. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race.

Race Equity Culture: A culture focused on proactive counteraction of social and race inequities inside and outside of an organization.

Race Equity Lens: The process of paying disciplined attention to race and ethnicity while analyzing problems, looking for solutions, and defining success. A race equity lens critiques a "color blind" approach, arguing that color blindness perpetuates systems of disadvantage in that it prevents structural racism from being acknowledged. Application of a race equity lens helps to illuminate disparate outcomes, patterns of disadvantage, and root cause.

Racism: A system of advantage and oppression based on race. A way of organizing society based on dominance and subordination based on race. Racism penetrates every aspect of personal, cultural, and institutional life. It includes prejudice against people of color, as well as exclusion, discrimination against, suspicion of, and fear and hate of people of color.

Social Justice: A concept of fair and just relations between the individual and society. This is measured by the explicit and tacit terms for the distribution of power, wealth, education, healthcare, and other opportunities for personal activity and social privileges.

Social Sector: The group of organizations that consist of both nonprofit and philanthropic organizations.

Structural Racism: The arrangement of institutional, interpersonal, historical, and cultural dynamics in a way that consistently produces advantage for whites and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. It illuminates that racism exists without the presence of individual actors because it is systemically embedded. When the United States was founded, racist principles were codified in governance structures and policies. As a result, racism is embedded in institutions, structures, and social relations across American society. Today, structural racism is composed of intersecting, overlapping, and codependent racist institutions, policies, practices, ideas, and behaviors that give an unjust amount of resources, rights, and power to white people while denying them to people of color.

White Dominant Culture: Culture defined by white men and white women with social and positional power, enacted both broadly in society and within the context of social entities such as organizations. See also “Dominant Culture” and “White Supremacy Culture.”

White Privilege: The power and advantages benefiting perceived white people, derived from the historical oppression and exploitation of other non-white groups.

White Supremacy: The existence of racial power that denotes a system of structural or societal racism which privileges white people over others, regardless of the presence or the absence of racial hatred. White racial advantages occur at both a collective and an individual level, and both people of color and white people can perpetuate white dominant culture, resulting in the overall disenfranchisement of people of color in many aspects of society.

White Supremacy Culture: Characteristics of white supremacy that manifest in organizational culture and are used as norms and standards without being proactively named or chosen by the full group. The characteristics are damaging to both people of color and white people in that they elevate the values, preferences, and experiences of one racial group above all others. Organizations that are led by people of color or have a majority of people of color can also demonstrate characteristics of white supremacy culture. Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun identified twelve characteristics of white supremacy culture in organizations: Perfectionism, Sense of Urgency, Defensiveness, Quantity of Quality, Worship of the Written Word, Paternalism, Power Hoarding, Fear of Open Conflict, Individualism, Progress is Bigger/More, Objectivity, and Right to Comfort.”

Summary of Racial Equity Tools and Racial Equity Websites, by Jurisdiction		
Jurisdiction	Racial Equity Tool	Racial Equity Website
Seattle, WA	Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI): Vision & Strategy 2015-2017	www.seattle.gov/rsji
	RSJI: Racial Equity Toolkit	
	RSJI: training modules for employees	
	Departmental racial justice work plans	
	Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide	www.seattle.gov (https://preview.tinyurl.com/y9tfrru2)
	Public Schools: Racial Equity Analysis Tool	www.seattleschools.org
King County, WA	Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan	www.kingcounty.gov (https://preview.tinyurl.com/ybhdhh9n)
	Equity Impact Review tool	www.kingcounty.gov (https://preview.tinyurl.com/y7nsd2hh)
	Community Engagement Guide	
	Implicit Bias Toolkit	
	Translation resources for employees	
Portland, OR	The Portland Plan	www.portlandonline.com (https://preview.tinyurl.com/y8ods89h)
	Three Year Goals: Citywide Equity Initiative	www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/448763
	Citywide Racial Equity Goals and Strategies	www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/537589
	City Bureau Racial Equity Plans (multiple)	www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/70048
	Racial Equity Toolkit	www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/71685
	Budget Equity Assessment Tool	www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/62229
	Equity Training and Education	www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/450420
Multnomah County, OR	Equity and Empowerment Lens	https://multco.us/diversity-equity (https://preview.tinyurl.com/j3lcnrk)
	Workforce Equity Strategic Plan	(https://preview.tinyurl.com/y72pwel6)
Madison, WI	Fast Track Tool	www.cityofmadison.com (https://preview.tinyurl.com/y99xsemp)
	Comprehensive Equity Tool	
	Equitable Hiring Tool	
	Equitable Workforce Plan 2017	(https://preview.tinyurl.com/yadtt3j4)
Dane County, WI	Race to Equity: A Baseline Report on the State of Racial Disparities in Dane County	http://racetoequity.net (https://preview.tinyurl.com/yauv3px8)
	Racial Equity Analysis & Recommendations (multi-year plan)	www.centerforsocialinclusion.org (https://preview.tinyurl.com/yctp6zls)
Fairfax County, VA	One Fairfax Policy	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/one-fairfax
	Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County	
	Equitable Growth Profile	
	Public Schools: Cultural Proficiency Modules	www.fcps.edu/equity