



COOK COUNTY COMMITTEE ON ADDRESSING BIAS, EQUITY, & CULTURAL COMPETENCY

October 2019

FINAL REPORT



presented by:

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Commissioner Stanley Moore, 4th District

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LETTER FROM THE COMMITTEE

Dear Honorable Commissioners:

Our role in County government is to advance the policy and budget priorities of our constituents. For too long, Cook County Government, along with other government entities, has not represented all residents and has been part of some of the systemic inequities that we see in our County and larger society. Cook County Government also has the ability to be a part of the solution and to create real equity in government. The Cook County Committee on Addressing Bias, Equity, and Cultural Competency was formed to bring together internal and external representatives to explore ways that we can make Cook County Government more equitable and accessible to all Cook County residents. This group's work has culminated in a final report with recommendations of the top priorities.

This report is the result of six months of work in gathering baseline information from internal Cook County departments and separately elected officials' offices and engaging external stakeholders on their interactions with Cook County Government. The report also explores best practices from other jurisdictions that have been successful in implementing equity-focused policies and programs.

The Committee spent these months discussing and debating new ideas, areas for improvements, and existing work that can be built upon. The report outlines findings from the Committee and offers community engagement, training, and policy recommendations that we felt could move Cook County toward a more equitable future.

The Committee members included representatives from over 15 Cook County departments and separately elected officials' offices and 10 community partner organizations. As leaders of the Committee, we are grateful for the thoughtful input and discussion from the Committee members who led the way in the ideas this report puts forward.

We look forward to seeing many of the ideas in this report advanced in Cook County by this body and our government working for all residents of Cook County.

Sincerely,

Alma Anaya
Commissioner, 7th District
Cook County Board of Commissioner

Dr. Dennis Deer
Commissioner, 2nd District
Cook County Board of Commissioner

Stanley Moore
Commissioner, 4th District
Cook County Board of Commissioner

Kevin B. Morrison
Commissioner, 15th District
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INTRODUCTION

The Cook County Committee on Addressing Bias, Equity, and Cultural Competency was formed by four members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners to take a broad look at all facets of Cook County Government and to explore ways that we could work together, learn from each other, and move forward with a united plan to address inequities in Cook County. This important work cannot be done without accountability. Input from community organizations that are helping our communities and represent residents that have historically been marginalized needed to be at the table. The co-chairs were humbled by the willingness of internal and external stakeholders to dedicate their time and effort to this Committee.

The Committee met bimonthly to hear from speakers and to engage in depth in small and large group discussions and exercises exploring the current operations of Cook County Government as it relates to bias, equity, and cultural competency and where it could go. The several speakers the group heard from are doing work in communities and in other jurisdictions to make government more equitable and accessible. The Committee was particularly grateful to hear a presentation from members of President Preckwinkle's administration on their Racial Equity Leadership Council. It illustrates that there is incredible work in this sphere already happening in many departments and offices. The goal of this Committee was to see if we could share that knowledge across offices and build upon it to further advance equity in Cook County.

This final report reflects input from a variety of sources including the Committee members, best practices from other government jurisdictions,



and Cook County residents. This helped provide a fuller picture of how employees and residents currently experience County government and a map for the future. The report details information gathered during this process and final recommendations to President Preckwinkle and the Board of Commissioners. The recommendations encompass internal procedures and practices and external facing policies that can affect the lives of all Cook County residents.

The Committee united around the idea that this work cannot be contained to just this group of people but must be embedded in all County offices, must be present in every interaction with a resident, and must be a priority for all leaders in Cook County Government. The recommendations put forth in this report are not fully comprehensive of all ideas that the Committee would recommend but represent the top priorities that will center equity in all that Cook County Government does. The co-chairs and members of the Cook County Committee on Addressing Bias, Equity, and Cultural Competency stand ready to help advance the recommendations offered in the report. We hope to see residents engaged in ways that allow for their continued input and will promote transparency and accountability.

DEFINITIONS & CONSIDERATIONS

The Committee was deliberate in deciding that shared definitions for key topics were necessary as these concepts can have different meanings within different contexts. The following definitions should serve as a guide and framework in considering the full report.

bias

Intentional or unintentional beliefs based on stereotypes that causes someone to perceive traits or characteristics that may or may not be true, which causes favorable or unfavorable treatment of said person or groups.

equity

A commitment, based in a human rights framework, that promotes fairness and justice in the formation of public policy and internal practices that results in all residents and employees having opportunity to fully participate in the region's vitality, contribute to its readiness for the future, and connect to its assets and resources.

After in depth discussion, the Committee concluded that another term that was not initially considered as part of this group should be included as part of the framework needed to execute these recommendations moving forward.

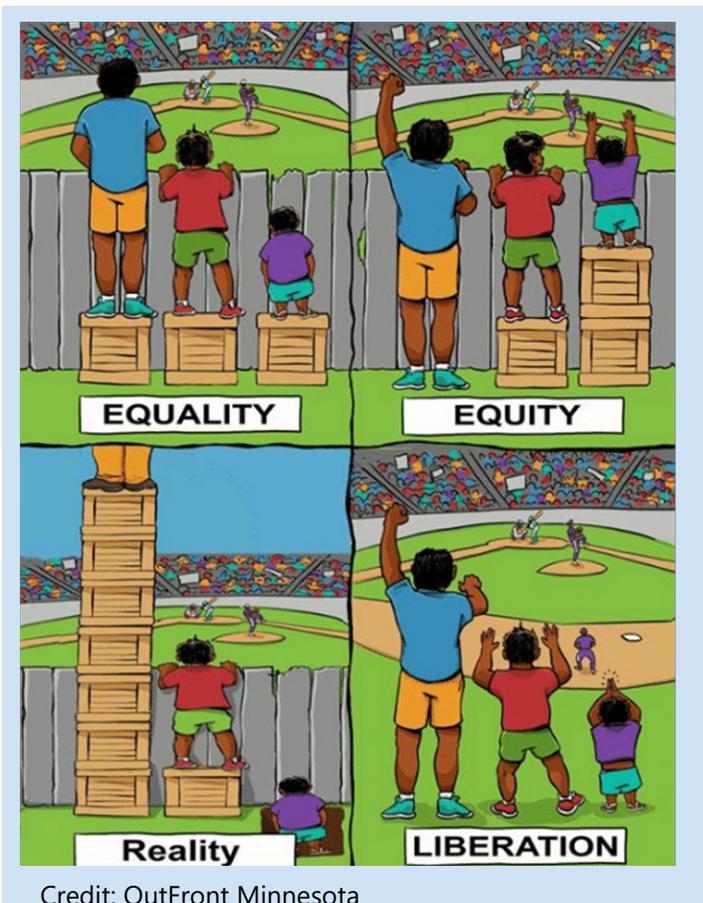
cultural humility

A humble and respectful attitude toward individuals of other cultures that pushes one to challenge their own cultural biases, realize they cannot possibly know everything about other cultures, and approach learning about other cultures as a lifelong goal and process.

cultural competency

A willingness to acknowledge, identify, and challenge one's own assumptions, values, power dynamics, and beliefs to build understanding around the unique attributes that make up the various demographics of Cook County for effective communication and interactions among community members and employees.

A key distinction to keep in mind while reviewing the recommendations is the difference between equity and equality as illustrated by the graphic below.



Credit: OutFront Minnesota



COOK COUNTY COMMITTEE
ON ADDRESSING
BIAS, EQUITY, &
CULTURAL COMPETENCY

BACKGROUND

BASELINE OF OPERATIONS

The Committee sought to take stock of some of the great initiatives already happening in Cook County Government offices as it relates to bias, equity, and cultural competency training, procedures, and policies and where there is room for improvement. The Committee discussed several stand-out examples of programs and plans that have been realized in Cook County Government offices. These highlights served as a starting point for the Committee to build their recommendations on.

policy roadmap

President Preckwinkle released the Policy Roadmap: Five-Year Strategic Plan for Offices Under the President (Appendix A) in 2018. The Policy Roadmap is a policy driven five-year strategic plan that places an emphasis on the values of equity, engagement, and excellence.

racial equity leadership council

President Preckwinkle established a Racial Equity Leadership Council to plan and advance equity work internally. The Racial Equity Leadership Council consists of a core team and several working groups composed of diverse employees across Cook County Government.

roots of health inequity dialogues

Cook County Department of Public Health engaged all CCDPH employees to complete the online Roots of Health course. Following the course, employees engaged in facilitated, small group dialogues on the material including a robust syllabus. (Appendix B)

office equity activities

The Cook County Public Defender's Office holds regular speakers and activities that address topics surrounding bias and equity. The office has hosted several half day seminars related to the impacts of implicit bias and engages employees in new, interesting ways such as hosting documentary screenings. (Appendix C)

state's attorney training program

The Cook County State's Attorney's Office took several steps in addressing bias, equity, and cultural competency. The SAO hired its first ever Chief Diversity Officer and has held implicit bias training from recognized experts.

equity roadmap

The Cook County Commission on Social Innovation worked closely with Alberto Rincon as he prepared his report *Equity in Cook County: A strategic roadmap for integrating data-driven changes*. (Appendix D)

EXISTING STRENGTHS

vision, leadership & messaging

- Leadership has a desire to address equity and bias (i.e. President Preckwinkle's Policy Roadmap, Board of Commissioners)
- Open door on reporting issues
- Passionate, ethical leadership

constituent services

- Online information and services leading to more efficient service delivery in some instances

workforce

- Diverse workforce
- Employees are willing to serve all constituents
- Many opportunities for broad range of skills and experiences

healthy climate/culture

- Strong, interpersonal relationships within departments

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

vision, leadership & messaging

- Unified vision and messaging needed across offices
- Clear metrics Countywide to documenting success or failure for equity initiatives
- Negative image of government

constituent services

- Educating the public about the services offered and improving ways for them to connect with services
- Offering public meetings and event out in communities
- Providing greater accessibility to County government (physical access, language access, etc.)

workforce

- Implicit Bias
- Need to accurately reflect County residents
- More training needed to address implicit bias and cultural competency
- Workforce is currently site-specific limiting flexibility for telecommuting or jobs in different communities in County
- Technology challenges

healthy climate/culture

- More robust reporting needed
- Departments are still silo-ed
- More equitable and accessible office design

BEST PRACTICES

The Committee engaged with other counties to learn from their efforts around equitable engagement, training, and policies. The insight gained through these conversations informed the recommendations offered by the Committee.

Los Angeles County, California

On May 28 through 31, 2019, Committee Co-Chairs Kevin Morrison and Alma Anaya travelled to Los Angeles, California for Los Angeles County's second annual Equity Summit that brought together County leadership and employees from all departments to learn best practices on integrating equity into their operations and services. Participants learned from local and national practitioners and experts on gender bias, language access, health services, and accessibility.

With a budget of approximately \$26 billion and a population of over 10 million, opportunities for equity work in Los Angeles County abound. The County has managed to nurture a strong, energetic culture in the workplace.

The Summit featured a variety of panels with experts speaking on a range of topics from racial equity and language access to how to incorporate inclusive practices in the workplace. Additionally, Commissioners Morrison and Anaya were able to meet with several departments to learn about their work. These departments included:

- The Office of Diversion and Reentry
- Office of Consumer and Business Affairs
- Housing for Health — Partnership of Dept. of Health Services & L.A. County
- My Health L.A.

office of diversion and reentry

The office started in 2014 with a mission to divert people with mental health or substance use disorders from the criminal justice system. L.A. County currently has a detainee population of approximately 17,000 and there are 250 judges hearing cases on a daily basis. Additionally, there is a population of homeless individuals with mental health issues in the jail that continues to rise.

To mitigate the issues of homelessness and mental health, the Office has developed a Permanent Supportive Housing model to keep detainees with these issues in the community instead of jail. The director, Judge Peter Espinoza stated that it costs \$60,000 to monitor someone constantly in jail, and only \$26,000 if the individual stays in the community. In order to qualify for supportive housing, individuals need to have a pending felony and a likelihood of homelessness, most of whom tend to plead guilty. This program has been very well-received as a rehabilitative effort in criminal justice as there is no bond reform in Los Angeles County.

office of business & consumer affairs

The office was established in 1976 and assists with business and community education, advocacy, and complaint resolution. It oversees various offices that include Consumer Protection, Office of Cannabis Management, Office of Immigrant Affairs, Foreclosure Prevention, and the Center for Financial Empowerment. Although it is based in downtown

L.A., the office has several branches throughout L.A. County. Their specialized programming and services includes:

- Managing a team of investigators and mediators to work on consumer fraud complaints
- Developing a community education program on wage enforcement and investigating potential violations
- Counsel tenants and landlords on rent stabilization
- Established an Immigrant Affairs office that helps connect people to L.A. Justice Fund program
- Developing a sidewalk vending initiative and County microloan program
- Established a Social Enterprise Preference Program for contracts with the County
- Handle policy work directly with the Board of Commissioners

housing for health

The Housing for Health program is a partnership between the L.A. County Health Services and Housing Authority. During the visit, the homeless population was estimated to be 52,765 people and growing, 75% of whom are unsheltered. Of this population, 22% are age 62 or over, and 26% report serious mental illness. This population is 3 to 4 times more likely to die prematurely, as their life expectancy is as low as 41 years of age. Homeless individuals also have higher rates of acute illness, and their hospital stays average four days longer than a non-homeless person. Their use of public services is at a value of \$8,000 each month, per person.

The program targets people with physical or behavioral health issues and high utilizers of public services through: Interim Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Rehousing, a Sobering Center, as well as providing assistance with benefits applications. Besides programs run by the County, Housing for Health has also worked to strengthen tools that facilitate access to affordable housing. For example, in partnership with Health Services and Hilton Foundation, they developed a Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool to increase safe and affordable housing. Additionally, a Homeless Incentive Program was established that incentivizes landlords to rent to households with vouchers, and assists potential tenants with rental process.

my health L.A.

My Health L.A. is a program funded by the L.A. County Board of Commissioners that was launched in its current form in 2013, but has technically existed since the 1990's. Its main purpose is to serve as a primary care program for the undocumented population in L.A. County, who are referred to as the "the uninsured and uninsurable." 500,000 throughout the County are estimated to be undocumented, and 200,000 were enrolled in the program as of the learning trip.

Individuals will only receive services if they go to a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and they must meet federal poverty guidelines. They can get no-cost emergency care at County facilities and referrals to specialty care at County, but their primary physician must be based at a FQHC. This gives people an option of choosing their primary medical home.

L.A. County has a \$1 million contract with 1EApp, through which people can apply to the program securely without their personal information being shared. All information collected goes directly to County. Furthermore, L.A. County is not allowed to use bilingual staff to interpret for patients. The County has contracts with vendors for translation and interpretation who are professionally trained for these interactions.

King County, Washington

The June 11, 2019 meeting of the Committee featured a presentation from Matias Valenzuela, Director of the Office of Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) in King County, Washington which was established in 2015. The Office works with King County leadership and employees, as well as local and national partners to “advance practices, strategies, and policies that promote fairness, justice and opportunity for all.” The key areas addressed by the Office include racial equity, civil rights, and immigration issues.

History

Prior to 2008, equity work was uncoordinated throughout the County and was mostly carried out by individual departments that heavily focused on the areas of health and criminal justice. In 2008, the County Executive at the time, Ron Sims, launched the Equity and Social Justice initiative. This work continued with the following executive, Dow Constantine. The County Council took several formal actions in 2010 and thereafter such as establishing the Equity and Social Justice Ordinance, creating an Inter-Branch Team, and including “fair and just” principles in the County’s Strategic Plan. These efforts ultimately led to the establishment of the Office of Equity and Social Justice in 2015.

Initial Approaches

Data analysis undertaken by the Office was critical to demonstrating the need for this work. For example, the County used mapped disparities in its population based on the percentage of people of color, income level, and life expectancy. The findings indicated that

the majority of King County residents of color and on low incomes lived in the same areas. This analysis of the population served was a basis for why further work was needed to address this chasm.

Furthermore, the ESJ Office conducted an internal analysis of the County’s workforce in 2013, specifically wage differences by race of the employee, which indicated that white employees earned more across pay rates, and earned the most at the highest hourly rates. This was an issue that was later addressed in King County’s Strategic Plan. While everyone knew discrimination generally exists, these analyses prove how and where it was happening in the County at the time.

Practicing Equity

During his presentation, Mr. Valenzuela pointed out that these efforts are very different from most work in bureaucracies because it is more personal and it is work that is applicable to a wide host of issues. Facing the realities of disparities within government and in serving community has led the ESJ Office to face much resistance. However, they have been able to move forward in their work and become a national model on equity practice through several innovative approaches.

accountability

The Office developed its own measures to track and hold departments accountable as a way to confront the County’s history of lacking transparency. Now, all department include equity as a guiding principle.

affinity groups

Affinity group representatives of employee racial groups (Asian, Black, Native, etc.) meet with the County Executive every two months to discuss employment issues

equity manager

With the ESJ Office's encouragement, most departments now have a designated Equity Manager within their leadership team to ensure Countywide equity objectives are being met.

immigration

Initially starting with a Task Force, King County now has a Commission to oversee immigration issues. In 2018, the Commission passed an ordinance that reflects the County's commitment to protect immigrants and refugees, as well as promote language access. A Legal Defense Fund was also established.

strategic plan

King County published an Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2022 (Appendix E) which holistically proposes a diverse, pro-equity policy agenda that addresses a variety of areas, from economic development and health to housing and transportation.

At its core, the intent of the Strategic Plan is for King County to lead with a racial justice lens. The Strategic Plan highlights six goal areas that include: 1) Leadership, Operations & Services; 2) Plans, Policies & Budgets; 3) Workplace & Workforce; 4) Community Partnerships; 5) Communication and Education; and 6) Facility and System Improvements.

The Strategic Plan uses the metaphor of "unhealthy streams" and "healthy streams" in the County's approach to policy. This is the concept that problematic practices such as structural racism and gender bias are part of the "unhealthy stream" that contributes to conditions that produce limited social and economic mobility, resulting in a poor quality of life for constituents and work to reverse these practices will result in a "healthy stream" to promote opportunities for residents to thrive.

Lessons Learned

Mr. Valenzuela's recommendations to integrate equity into government is to work to break down silos among departments to find common challenges and create solutions collectively.

Furthermore, the practice of measuring outcomes is integral to making note of barriers or success. This is necessary both internally within government and in the work done in the community. Similarly, clear and consistent communication within government and to communities is essential in moving towards equitable practice.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

While the Committee looks forward to a robust outreach effort on the part of a proposed Cook County Office of Equity, the co-chairs begun conversations in their Districts with constituents at a series of town halls. The following is sampling from two of those town halls.

James Shields Middle School

On September 21, 2019, Cook County Commissioner Alma E. Anaya held a Town Hall in James Shields Middle School in Chicago. The event was an open invitation to residents of Cook County to participate in a conversation around the topics of Equity, Bias, and Cultural Competency as they relate to County services. The Town Hall began with an introduction to these concepts and an overview of the Cook County Policy Roadmap, which is a five-year comprehensive policy plan for the Offices Under the President (OUP) published in September 2018. A discussion titled "Our Experience" was then facilitated by Yesenia Lopez of SGA Youth and Family Services & Dr. Linda Murray of the Collaborative for Health Equity Cook 7th District. The discussion took place among a diverse group of individuals from across the County, including community organizers, students, philanthropy professionals, and concerned citizens.

The discussion shifted effortlessly between four overarching topics:

- Cook County's Health Services
- Environmental Justice & Health
- Mental Health Programs & Infrastructure
- Intergovernmental Collaboration

After sharing their concerns, participants were encouraged to formulate strategies to address the concerns that require more urgent attention. The activity required that participants answer a central question:

- What does an accessible, equitable, and culturally competent County Government look like to you? What can the County do to be successful in this effort?

Lastly, a survey (Appendix F) was conducted.

Community Discussion Feedback

health services

Participants demonstrated a great deal of concern regarding the current state of Cook County's health systems and the quality of the services that it provides. Several participants shared their experiences with the County's hospital system. The participants expressed disappointment regarding long wait times and limited access to quality language interpreters. There are existing policies that ensure that medical services are provided in the language of choice; however, residents feel that many health facilities in the County have failed to implement this mandate. The list of policies includes Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the state's Language Assistance Services Act, which ensure that bilingual staff and language interpreters are available to patients in health facilities who need them. Participants discussed tactics to address these limitations:

- Ensure that health services are efficient, hygienic, and superlative.
- Increase collaboration between the hospital system and community health centers.
- Improve the quality of existing language interpreter services by ensuring that interpreters are available in several languages.

- Push for equitable access to health services through partnerships with community-based organizations and churches.
- Improve patient-centered care in hospitals through staff training.

Accessibility, a concept that was collectively defined as the quality of being easy to obtain or use, was a recurring topic of conversation. Participants raised questions regarding the County's ability to employ Latinos in Cook County's Healthcare system. Participants felt that there is a mismatch between health facility staff and the individuals that they serve. Participants attributed this discrepancy to a larger trend of minority underrepresentation in Cook County employment. Recommendations related to representation include:

- Cook County must ensure that its workforce reflects the County's population.
- The County should adopt a transparency framework that reports the percentage of staff by race/ethnicity at different levels: frontline, supervisors, and directors.
- Use health promoters to advocate on behalf of Spanish-speaking patients
- Motivate and support Black and Latino youth who are pursuing a career in health.

The group also expressed concern regarding the state of immigrant-oriented services and concluded that undocumented individuals have limited access to health-related resources. Participants are fearful of declining resources under the current federal administration. One participant stated that undocumented people "are too scared to seek healthcare." Many immigrant families are avoiding necessary medical services out of fear that they could be putting themselves and their family members at risk. A recommended strategy to address this challenge is:

- Train hospital staff and providers to address gaps in knowledge about how to serve the undocumented community.

environmental justice & health

Participants discussed the importance of environmental sustainability through a lens of social equity. Highlighting recent development projects in the City of Chicago, participants discussed the injustices that are inherent to existing modes of economic development. Participants felt that industrial districts within the City of Chicago, mostly concentrated in the southeast and southwest portions of the County, have prioritized wealthy investors and disregarded the health of community members. Participants didn't approve of that County's desire to incentivize industrial migration to the southwest side of Chicago without regarding residents' wellbeing. The group highlighted Little Village, a historically immigrant community in Chicago's West Side, as a primary example. The neighborhood's role as an industrial corridor has left its residents disproportionately vulnerable to health issues. Despite fervent opposition from residents and local organizations, a \$100 million plan to redevelop an old power plant site into a distribution center was approved earlier this year.

The group agreed that basing the success of a community or a County on economic stimulation alone is the failure of a one-sided evaluation. A member of a local environmental justice organization reminded local elected officials that they must consider what they are leaving behind for future generations; and warned that, "we can't continue sacrificing our people in the name of economic development." Instead, participants

hope that Cook County could take the initiative and push environmental justice forward. Recommended strategies to address these challenges include:

- Use Equity as a central ethical principle behind sustainable development.
- Transition the County's economy from extraction-based to regenerative.
- Consider alternatives to existing forms of industry, including "green" factories and hydroponic farming.
- The County must consider environmental impacts and the health of vulnerable populations when considering economic development projects.
- Establish a precautionary framework that links environmental health and health outcomes.
- Make well-established green infrastructure available to all people.
- Hold industries accountable for environmental degradation while also establishing best practices standards.
- Consider socially equitable economic frameworks that operate within ecological limits.
- Eliminate the use of fossil fuel in the County's health and transportation industries.

mental health services & infrastructure

Participants identified mental health as one of Cook County's areas of opportunity. Several residents decried a shortage of mental health services and a discrepancy in available information. Despite a lagging conversation in Cook County regarding health, the group agreed that mental health services are essential and urgently needed resources; in particular, those services that are affordable and readily available to the County's uninsured populations.

The group reflected on the history of mental health services in the County to highlight the disproportionate impact of closing mental health clinics on minority groups. Since 2011, half a dozen city-funded mental health clinics were closed. Among the closed clinics were the Back of the Yards and Woodlawn clinics, which were crucial spaces for Black and Latino individuals in need. Compounded with the physical obstacle to access, participants expressed concern that Black and Latino individuals are less likely than other groups to seek out mental health treatment because of stigma. According to the group, the perpetuation of mental health stigma results from the County's failure to educate the public and reestablish the mental health spaces that the City of Chicago had previously removed. To address these issues, participants suggested Cook County:

- Establish services that address the mental health issues that are currently affecting minority populations in disinvested communities, including post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), emotional trauma, and substance abuse.
- Establish mental health services for youth that have been justice-involved; also, encourage educational programming and support for parents of young people in the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center.

Participants directly linked exposure to trauma to adverse outcomes for young people of color, including PTSD and depression. Participants felt that existing mental health resources are not reaching the vulnerable populations that need them the most. In addition, participants expressed that language access is a significant issue in mental health spaces.

intergovernmental collaboration

Some of our 7th District conversation addressed the need for cooperation between different levels of government; in particular, the City of Chicago and Cook County. The City of Chicago and Cook County must work together to leverage funds and resources in order to promote the common good of the public.

Hoffman Estates Village Hall

Cook County Commissioner Kevin B. Morrison held an Equity Town Hall at Hoffman Estates Village Hall. The event was an open invitation to residents of Cook County to participate in a conversation around the topics of Equity, Bias, and Cultural Competency as they relate to County services. Commissioner Morrison was grateful to have Sherrine Peyton from the Kenneth Young Center facilitate the discussion with community organizations, service providers, and constituents.

Community Discussion Feedback

transportation

Many attendees spoke to some of the unique challenges facing residents in the Northwest Suburbs of Cook County including lack of public transportation options. This issue was identified as being particularly problematic for low-income and disabled residents. They saw Cook County as a conduit to work with PACE and Metra to expand service.

Recommended strategies for these challenges:

- Pilot spearheaded by County for expanded PACE service in some areas of NW Cook County in coordination with social service providers
- Expanded PACE routes or other transportation modes that connect with Metra stations

mental health access and infrastructure

Nearly all attendees raised the lack of mental health access and infrastructure as an equity concern. Residents and service providers spoke of the great distances that those living with severe mental illness would have to travel to access services. Given those physical barriers and compounded with a lack of transportation and instable housing, many individuals do not get help at all, leading to homelessness or incarceration.

Another challenge facing those experiencing mental illness is a lack of mental health beds at hospitals. This is a problem in the adult population but an even more acute problem for youth experiencing mental illness as there are no dedicated youth beds at hospitals in this area of Cook County. The need for expansion of this type of infrastructure is critical.

Lastly, the group emphasized the need for training of Cook County Health staff on people experiencing mental illness. They felt that there is a major lack of understanding of how best to interact and to not further stigmatize this community.

Recommended strategies for these challenges:

- Cook County Health should explore how to better connect and coordinate with local community groups to promote CCH's free transportation program to appointments
- Cook County should add youth specific mental health beds at CCH's two hospitals
- Cook County Health should conduct a training for all employees, including front line staff, on people experiencing mental illness and should incorporate people with lived experience in the training
- Cook County State's Attorney Office should expand existing Mental Health Courts

housing

Housing and homelessness services providers raised concerns about the lack of affordable housing in NW Cook County.

Recommended strategies for these challenges:

- Cook County should start a landlord mitigation fund to help address landlords' reluctance to rent to individuals that are working with service providers
- Cook County should start a flexible homelessness prevention fund
- Cook County Health should continue to fund housing initiatives as part of public health solutions



COOK COUNTY COMMITTEE
ON ADDRESSING
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FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

One of the most significant ways to commit to equity is to engage the residents of Cook County in the process. Based on best practices, community process is crucial for accountability and metrics—the County must engage those most directly impacted by inequities and biases, and who have been historically and systematically marginalized in the decision-making process. Therefore, it should be a core mission of Cook County to authentically engage residents in public decisions. Promoting community engagement and public participation will create an inclusive government that will help carry out key functions in a robust manner, such as drafting legislation, implementing internal and external policies, budgeting, scaling programs or initiatives, and changes in direct services. Doing so will contribute to the vitality of equity in our County and result in developments, practices, and decisions that are more responsive to the issues constituents have and that prevent unintended consequences of changes in policies. Additionally, community engagement can also lead to decisions that can help fulfill the mission highlighted in Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle’s Policy Roadmap (2018) to create healthy, vital, sustainable, smart, open, and safe and thriving communities. All engagement can ultimately help create trust and a relationship between residents and their government.

Recommendations

Based on input from diverse County stakeholders and community partners, the Committee identified that the Equity Mission, Vision, and Core Values would be:

- **Mission:** An ongoing commitment in which communities and government collaboratively identify and work to eliminate obstacles to equitable distribution of resources by building awareness, developing leadership, and promoting solutions resulting in healthy, sustainable, and thriving Cook County residents and workforce members.
- **Vision:** All Cook County residents and workforce members have equitable access to public resources and can fully realize their human rights and potential.
- **Values:** Social justice, Inclusion, Empathy, and Collaboration

county policy for community engagement

To further this commitment, Cook County Government should develop countywide policy and guidelines for community engagement that are based on best practices and learned “do’s and don’ts” from the counterparts around the country. There have been several whitepapers that have been created to emphasize recommendations for local governments based on the work of other jurisdictions such as Los Angeles County and King County. A roadmap was also prepared titled *Equity in Cook County: A strategic roadmap for integrating data-driven changes* written by Alberto Rincon that was prepared for the Cook County Commission on Social Innovation. The roadmap brings forward equity initiatives that specifically provides recommendations for Cook County Government. The analysis is a good starting point for policy, both internal and external, initiatives to assist in equity but also addressing ways to improve community engagement.

accessibility

Accessibility was one of the biggest barriers emphasized in the Los Angeles County visit and in the Committee discussion. Government is often not seen as accessible for multiple reasons—either the “bureaucracy” doesn’t allow for meaningful interaction with residents or physically it is not accessible. Additionally, given the diversity in Cook County, language access in our services, information, and procedures have become a barrier for the residents. To be authentic to the commitment of equity, Cook County must address the accessibility issue by: (1) contracting services for in-person interpretation and translation that are culturally competent; (2) commit to fully accessible informational materials, facilities, and community meetings; and (3) take into consideration and include all differently abled persons when holding meetings and making decisions.

It is important to have culturally competent translations and interpreters facilitate the accessibility of the County’s resources and services. Due to the fact that Cook County’s functions focus mainly on public safety and public health, it is fundamental that the decisions being made about people’s lives are done accurately and with participation and approval from the residents. The County has many departments that provide front facing direct services that residents rely on, and therefore should have a robust in-person interpreter and translation program. A first step in achieving this could be to have a county-wide contract for culturally competent services. Often, internal staff that are not certified interpreters or translators are tasked with the responsibility of providing those services, and best practices demonstrate that doing so can cause misinterpretations and mistranslations and does not adequately convey the information. Ensuring a countywide commitment to hiring or contracting those services to professionals can help accessibility.

There must also be a commitment to have fully accessible information and physical spaces. Obtaining information from the County is currently difficult. One must know have access to the downtown office or any other County facility, or access and knowledge on how to use a computer. A commitment must be taken to helping make the information accessible including in auditory-oral, video sign-bilingual, and total communication. Additionally, many County facilities are not Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible. The County should priorities public spaces, such as the Cook County Board Room, for changes in physical accessibility. By taking those considerations and including different-able persons to the table Cook County can begin to take steps to becoming fully accessible and equitable.

increased ability for feedback

As highlighted in the introduction of the Community Engagement section, community participation help create a government “for the people, by the people.” Another current obstacle to community engagement is that Cook County does not have opportunities for residents to provide meaningful feedback. To improve that, the Committee recommends continuing with initiatives such as Cook County Equity week where multiple events are held in the community to allow for fruitful discussion and feedback to the County. Cook County can similarly start an Annual Equity Townhall for residents and an Annual Equity Summit like what Los Angeles County convenes. Additionally, paper and online specific tool on the County website to give feedback on the equity work is necessary. Cook County must actively look for opportunities to engage residents to provide meaningful feedback and continue the equity work.

TRAINING

In investigating what Cook County Government offices and other jurisdictions have already done to create a more equitable government, training of employees was a cornerstone to nearly everything that the Committee found. The following recommendations were the unanimous opinion from internal and external stakeholders.

Recommendations

countywide staff training on bias and cultural competency

The Committee recommends mandatory training on bias and cultural competency for all Cook County Government employees. The Committee asserts that uniform training on these topics will provide for standard constituent services and improved employee satisfaction for Cook County residents. This training not only has the potential to improve employee relations with existing employees but identifies Cook County Government as a desirable place to work that values diversity, equity, and inclusion for all employees. Although those are already areas that Cook County has focused on, this is a tangible way to show the importance.

This investment unifies the County's workforce across departments and separately elected offices. As evidenced by examples cited in the Baseline of Operations section, there are excellent examples of training and activities happening sporadically in certain County offices. The Committee contends that an evaluation of these trainings and programs should be conducted to see if an existing model could be scaled up or if a different training should be used.

This type of training is essential to equip our County workforce to provide the best service to Cook County residents and avoid costly settlements with employees and constituents that continue to cost taxpayers millions of dollars each year.

engagement opportunities for staff

In addition to training, the Committee identified that other opportunities for dialogue around bias, equity, and cultural competency should be offered by Cook County Government. This was highlighted particularly as it relates to employees. While formal training is essential as a starting point for advancing equity in Cook County, these topics cannot fully be addressed in a singular training or setting.

Providing non-training opportunities to learn more about these topics and dialogue with other employees has proven to be successful for some Cook County Government offices including Cook County Department of Public Health and the Cook County Public Defender's Office. These activities can include but are not limited to movie screenings, small group discussions within departments, lunch and learn presentations, and cultural celebrations in partnership with community organizations.

These opportunities are critical to creating a culture of equity within Cook County Government as it expands activities beyond just one mandatory training and provides the chance for employees to engage in new and interesting ways. In depth conversations on topics that not all employees feel comfortable in talking about will need continual

engagement and these activities do just that. Additionally, this could be an opportunity for Cook County Government to partner with community organizations in meaningful ways that have not been previously done. External stakeholders on the Committee shared a sincere desire to be more integrated in Cook County Government.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Committee's following recommendations, if adopted, would transform the way Cook County Government evaluates and conducts policy. The Committee's view is that these recommendations are essential to centering equity in the work we do as a County.

Recommendations:

creation of a cook county office of equity

Committee members recommended that the top equity priority for Cook County was the creation of a Cook County Office of Equity. It was clear through discussions that a central office dedicated to this work would be the most sustainable way to embed equity within all parts of Cook County Government. This office would be dedicated to serving as a resource to all departments, conducting important policy analysis, and creating a strategic vision for advancing equity in Cook County.

The Committee recommends strongly that community members and organizations should have opportunities to be engaged during the formation of this office to determine how this office can best serve Cook County residents. Ongoing community involvement should be built into the foundation of the Office with consideration for a formal advisory role for community members and organizations to weigh in on major initiatives and provide feedback on behalf of Cook County residents.

The Committee recommends that upon creation of the Cook County Office of Equity that an Equity Strategic Plan be completed within the first year. This strategic planning process should include robust outreach to Cook County Government employees and Cook County residents. The Committee held a facilitated discussion in coordination with Cook County Department of Public Health to develop questions for an employee survey that can be used. (Appendix G) Based on the access issues identified within this report, efforts should be made to coordinate outreach with trusted community organizations that can help solicit feedback from residents.

equity audit with an external partner

The Committee recommends the proposed Cook County Office of Equity seek an external partner (academic partner or consulting company) to do a full review and audit of community engagement practices, training, and policies and procedures used by Cook County Government to determine areas of improvement. This audit can be a helpful addition to guide the Equity Strategic Plan.

equity assessment tool

The Committee recommends that the Board of Commissioners adopt a rule to allow for a Commissioner to request an Equity Impact Note for items that go before the Board of Commissioners. An equity assessment tool should be developed and used by the proposed Cook County Office of Equity to evaluate legislation or other items through an equity lens and to determine who benefits and who is burdened as a result of that policy. There are strong examples of such tools being used in King County, WA and St. Paul, MN that can serve as examples for this tool.

departmental equity metrics and equity champions

The Committee recommends that annual metrics related to equity be implemented for each Cook County Government department and office. The proposed Cook County Office of Equity would serve as a resource to Cook County Government departments and offices in developing appropriate metrics. The Committee recommends that these metrics be presented on an annual basis during the normal budget cycle and subsequent hearings so as to streamline this process to align with time that departments are already setting the following year's goals and metrics.

Additionally, the Committee recommends identifying one or more existing employees in each Cook County Government department and office to act as an Equity Champion. Equity Champions would meet regularly as a group led by the Cook County Office of Equity to share knowledge, report on progress made on identified metrics, and brainstorm larger Countywide initiatives. Los Angeles County advised the Committee on this model, which they use, and reported that they have had success in a more unified approach Countywide to advancing equity goals.



COOK COUNTY COMMITTEE
ON ADDRESSING
BIAS, EQUITY, &
CULTURAL COMPETENCY

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Process

The Cook County Committee On Addressing Bias, Equity, and Cultural Competency (“Committee”) held approximately ten (10) working meetings with internal government stakeholders and external partners, examined multiple reports regarding equity in local governments, sent a delegation to Los Angeles’ Equity Summit, conducted surveys, and held three (3) townhalls throughout Cook County to discuss experiences, problems with accessibility and equity, and to produce recommendations. Based on those actions, the Committee examined best practices and produced several recommendations. The goal is to align the work this Committee has started with the Cook County Board President’s Office’s Policy Roadmap and the President’s Racial Equity Council to ensure that Cook County implements policy changes and procedures to address bias, equity, and cultural competency (humility) in the workplace and with our front-facing services.

The Committee’s recommendations include expanding training to Cook County employees to include staff training on bias and cultural competency and opportunities for staff engagement for employees to learn about topics related to equity, bias, and cultural competency.

The Committee’s policy recommendations include the creation of a Cook County Office of Equity to centralize equity work in a sustainable manner through the establishment of an Equity Strategic Plan. Committee members also recommended that equity audits take place through an external partner in academia or consulting to review community engagement, training, policies and procedures of Cook County Government. Committee members also recommended developing metrics for departments and offices to report

on annually during budget hearings. Finally, the Committee recommended that each department or office designate an Equity Champion to meet with the Equity Office on a regular basis, to promote equity throughout the County.

Additional Recommendations

We thank the Committee participants from public health agencies and external public health partners who engaged in our discussions and made detailed recommendations to improve public health equity in Cook County. Public health agencies and organizations represented by members of the Committee included: the Cook County Department of Public Health, Health & Medicine Policy Research Group, and Public Health Woke (a member organization of the national coalition, Public Health Awakened).

These partners recommended improving equity in Cook County Health (CCH) and housing policies. In addition, the Committee and the Cook County Board of Commissioners recognized this year that racism is a public health crisis. As such, the Board of Commissioners passed a resolution in the July 2019 Board Meeting entitled: Resolution Recognizing Racism as a Public Health Crisis Declaring Racism and Racial Inequalities a Public Health Crisis in Cook County. (Appendix H) The recommendations listed below were made with acknowledgment of the realities highlighted in that resolution.

Recommendations to Improve Equity in Cook County Health

- Improving language access by ensuring that welcoming signs are translated with better accuracy;
- Creating and affirming a more welcoming, safe environment for immigrants:
 - A committee of the CCH board

should review the 2017 policy Outside Personnel on Premise at CCHHS Facilities to clarify patient protections;

- Patient data protections should be bolstered to limit any sharing that could place patients in jeopardy;
 - More thorough training should be provided for staff to respond to federal law enforcement;
 - A script should be developed for staff to respond to federal law enforcement;
 - Training of appropriate staff should be conducted on the type of warrant needed to review the legality of entry of a law enforcement agent;
 - Training of patient care providers in trauma-informed bedside manner should be conducted in a manner that supports immigrants and marginalized groups who are under attack;
 - CCH should become a trauma-informed institution;
 - CCH services should include the provision of legal resources to patients and referrals to legal assistance through a medical-legal partnership;
 - Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) and CCH should monitor indicators of neighborhood stress in marginalized communities; and
 - Cook County should prioritize Community Benefit Agreements (CBA's) when building new facilities or when making changes to public health facilities.
- Cook County should allocate funding to CCH and CCDPH for the efforts listed above.

Recommendations to Improve Equity in Housing

Housing is critical to health and barriers to housing are a grave public health concern. Members from the Cook County Department of Public Health suggested that the County could improve equity in housing policies by following the policy recommendations listed in the March 2018 report *Prejudged: The Stigma of Eviction Records* written by the groups Housing Action Illinois and Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing.

The report notes that 15,091 residents of Cook County receive eviction filings that do not result in a judgement against them. However, the simple filing of a case will appear on their records, become available to the public, and likely be used against them as they seek housing in the future. Landlords in Cook County have been shown to deny tenants seeking to rent if they have a filing on their record, without regard for the context of their case or the actual, final judgement made in the case.

To improve equity, Cook County should work to limit the damage of eviction filings on tenants. Filings and other eviction case information should only be available to the public if the case ultimately resulted in an eviction order or other finding by the judge against the tenant. Otherwise, the housing security of Cook County tenants may be placed at risk without reason. In addition, access to legal resources for tenants should be improved.

Recommendations on Addressing New Development

On May 16, 2019, staff from the Metropolitan Planning Council presented to the Committee on their research regarding equity and how it might apply to Cook County. One of their recommendations highlighted the need to assess the impact of new and proposed developments on key areas.

This report has mentioned the recommendation to create an equity impact assessment tool to better understand the fiscal and social impacts of decisions made by the Cook County Board of Commissioners. This tool can also include, or complement, assessments made on new developments. This is especially relevant to Cook County given the population shifts that have occurred throughout the last decade due to a host of causes, including displacement based on new development. The Committee also discussed that Cook County should employ Community Benefits Agreements as they pertain to new development. Although specific solutions to this were outside the scope of the Committee, it is recommended that this issue be further addressed through the Office of Equity.

Next Steps

The Committee on Addressing Equity, Bias, and Cultural Competency hopes that the recommendations set forth in this report serve as a baseline guiding point for Cook County, including departments and partners who were not able to participate on a regular basis and that it ultimately adopts the mission, vision, and values as crafted by Committee members.

Additionally, the work of the Committee intends to complement the ongoing efforts of the President's Office with the implementation of the Policy Roadmap and the launch of the Racial Equity Leadership Council. The Committee met for a set time period per Ordinance, and therefore the recommendations herein are a snapshot of possibilities for Cook County to consider and undertake

The Committee encourages the Board of Commissioners to conduct their own community discussion on equity to further learn how Cook County services and operations can be improved according to the needs of each individual district.

Furthermore, the Committee encourages

Cook County to explore partnerships with other local units of government to collaborate and streamline efforts, proposals, and projects that can be approached through an equity lens.

The Committee is grateful for the participation of all involved in this process and looks forward to integrating the ideas and recommendations that have been shared into the work of Cook County.



COOK COUNTY COMMITTEE
ON ADDRESSING
**BIAS, EQUITY, &
CULTURAL COMPETENCY**

APPENDIX



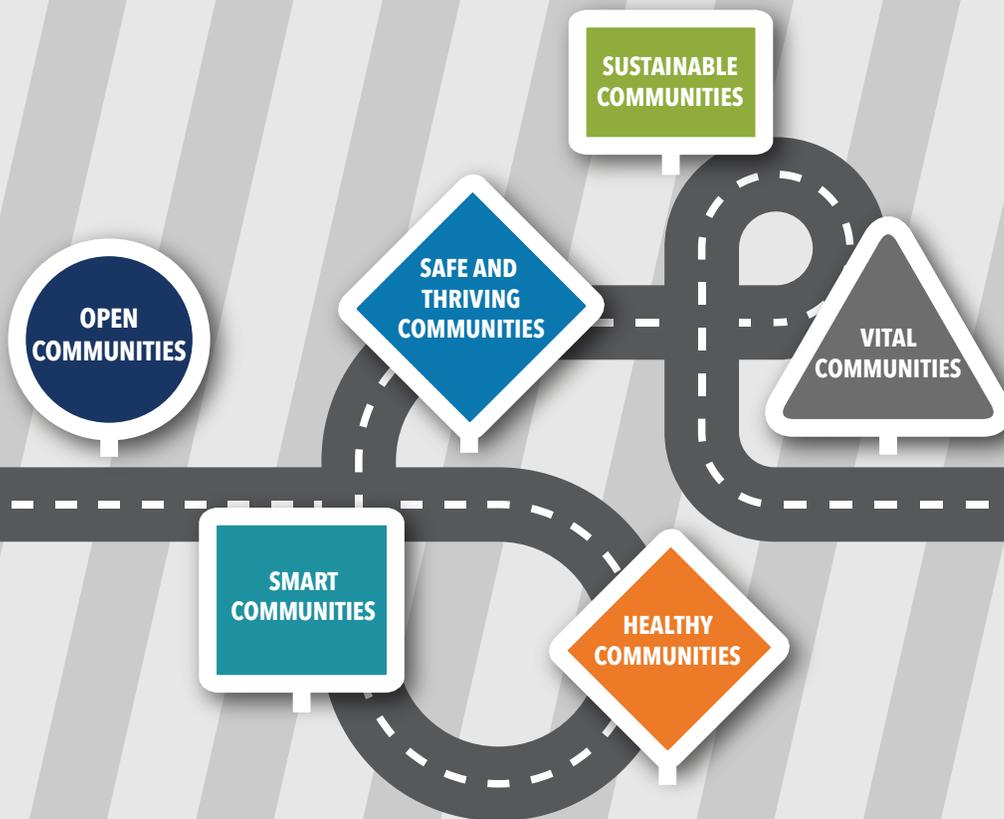
COOK COUNTY COMMITTEE
ON ADDRESSING
BIAS, EQUITY, &
CULTURAL COMPETENCY

APPENDIX A



Cook County Policy Roadmap

Five-Year Strategic Plan for Offices Under the President



Cook County Policy Roadmap

Five-Year Strategic Plan for Offices Under the President



Released November 14, 2018
Designed by Alexandra Ensign
Printed by Cook County Printing and Graphics Services

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Letter from the President

To the Residents of Cook County:

Cook County is the heart of the nation's third-largest metropolitan area. It is home to more than half of both the region's population and its economic activity. Cook County and the rest of the metropolitan region form an integrated and interdependent community serving the needs of its residents and businesses.

Cook County government plays a pivotal role in serving and supporting the needs of those who live and work here. We are responsible for promoting the health, welfare and safety of our 5.2 million residents. We manage the nation's largest consolidated court system and largest single-site jail campus. We influence the effectiveness of the region's transportation system, provide recreational opportunities and promote economic growth. We accomplish these objectives through the services of 11 separately-elected Cook County officials and other appointed and independent agencies.

The *Cook County Policy Roadmap: Five-year Strategic Plan for the Offices Under the President* has been developed by the Office of the President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners. As President of the Board of Commissioners, I am charged with leading the County's policy, budget and fiscal activities. In addition, I oversee the Offices Under the President, which includes six bureaus and 34 departments.

This plan outlines my office's priorities over the next five years. It identifies the principles that will guide our activities, including a focus on racial equity to ensure that all Cook County residents have opportunities to prosper, participate and reach their full potential no matter their race, gender, geography or socio-economic status.

This plan establishes goals and strategies for our work on justice, health, economic development and the environment. It defines our criteria for serving as responsible stewards of the County's infrastructure, and establishes the standards of efficiency, transparency and good customer experience that will continue to guide the operations of the County, while also ensuring we have a talented, diverse and productive workforce. The *Policy Roadmap* lays out the strategies we will use to achieve our goals and the metrics by which we will measure our success.

The *Policy Roadmap* is the result of an inclusive process in which employees and hundreds of volunteers played an active role to help the County define its future. It reflects the views expressed at numerous community meetings held throughout the County, as well as the input gathered from our opinion survey. These engagement efforts allowed us to hear directly from residents about what they believe it will take to make Cook County a leader in building vibrant, sustainable and inclusive communities where people want to live, learn, work and play. Further, it incorporates detailed suggestions from non-profit partners, small businesses, residents and community groups that provided feedback during the public comment period. I thank all who participated. I also extend my sincere gratitude to the Civic Consulting Alliance for their invaluable, pro bono assistance throughout this process.

The *Policy Roadmap* is a beginning. It will guide our actions, and we will consistently monitor results against our expectations to make sure we meet our goals. It is a dynamic document and will be updated periodically. It will also be the basis for the launch of our public dashboard in early 2019, which will measure our progress in meeting our objectives and provide a window into the work we are doing to realize the *Policy Roadmap*. We are committed to an administration that is accountable and transparent. In that spirit, please continue to give us your opinions and suggestions for ways we can improve.

Sincerely,



Toni Preckwinkle
President, Cook County Board of Commissioners

Introduction

The *Policy Roadmap* lays the foundation for the next five years of work by the Offices Under the President (OUP) of Cook County, under the leadership of the President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners. The 5.2 million residents of Cook County are served by local governments that include the City of Chicago, 135 suburban towns and municipalities, hundreds of school districts and special purpose governments, as well as Cook County government itself.

OUP is only one part of the complex system of government responsible for the welfare of the residents of Cook County and the broader northeastern Illinois region. The President is not only responsible for the offices that directly report to her; she is also responsible for coordinating stakeholders, identifying policies and solving problems throughout County government. Since taking office in 2010, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle has established a foundation for long-lasting and systemic changes in government policies and operations.

Under the leadership of President Preckwinkle, OUP has crafted the *Policy Roadmap*, our first comprehensive, policy-driven strategic plan since the administration's 2011 transition plan, to institutionalize existing reforms and provide sustainable benefits to Cook County residents. The *Policy Roadmap* takes an expansive view of

the challenges and opportunities Cook County faces, as well as the steps we must take as a region to promote greater prosperity, equity and resident wellbeing.

The *Policy Roadmap* incorporates key policy priorities and strategic objectives and reflects the Preckwinkle administration's core values and vision for fostering safe, thriving and healthy communities. While the majority of the *Policy Roadmap* focuses on OUP's specific roles and responsibilities, it also includes objectives that look beyond our statutory responsibilities and require us to continue improving coordination and collaboration with partners to achieve the best outcomes for residents.

The *Policy Roadmap* reflects a shared vision for Cook County. The drafting process was designed to gather and incorporate input and feedback from employees, residents, community groups, other governmental agencies and partners in the non-profit, civic and private sectors. We are grateful to all who made their voices heard throughout the planning process over the past year. (see fig. 1)

As we implement the *Policy Roadmap*, Cook County residents have the opportunity to remain active and engaged to ensure Cook County meets their needs. We are committed to having a transparent and effective government that is aligned with our residents' priorities while providing them with quality services.



From left: bike path at Miami Woods; Old Cook County Hospital, under renovation; bike racks at a multi-modal transit center.

Development Timeline

6 POLICY PRIORITIES 29 OBJECTIVES 131 STRATEGIES

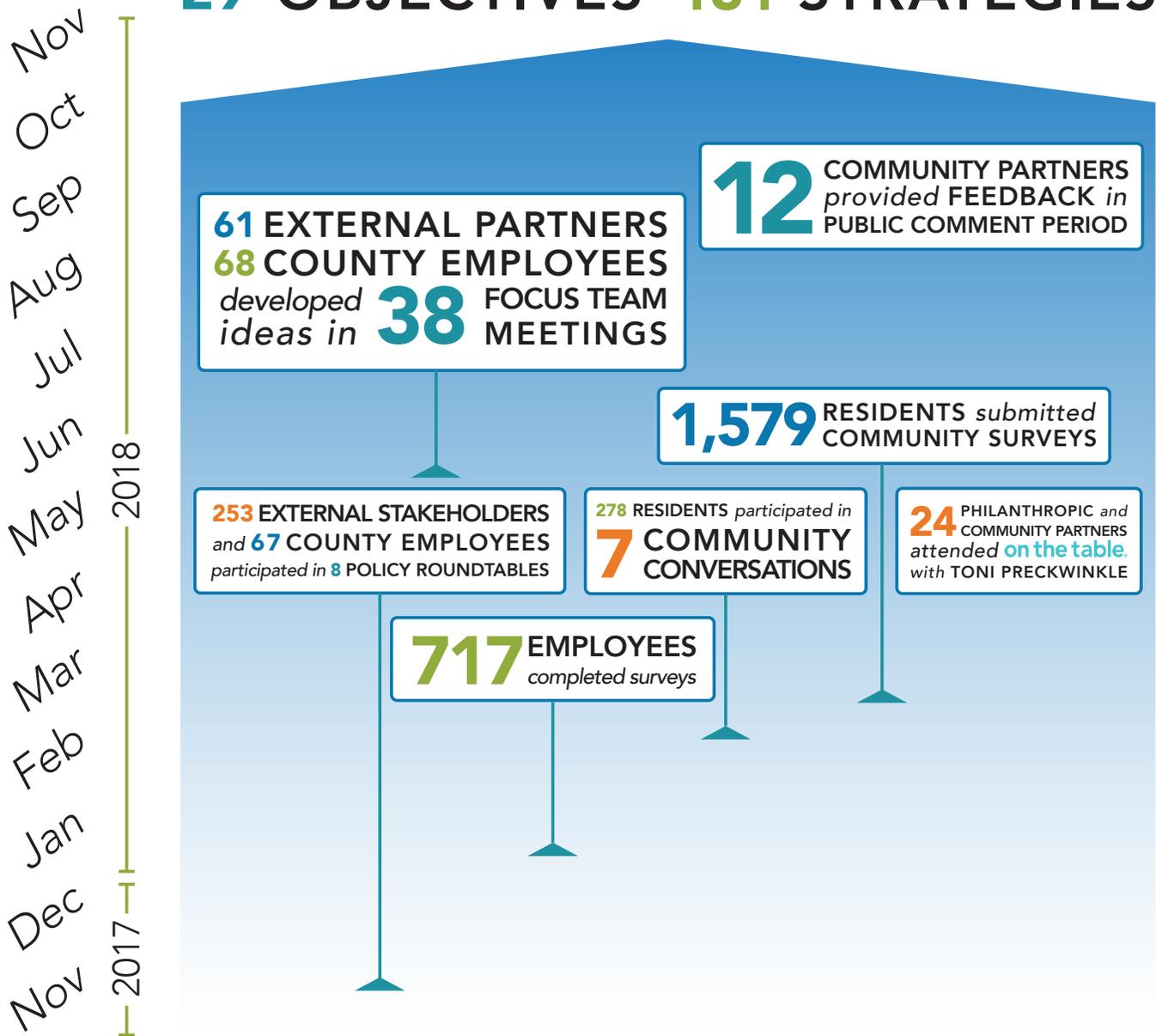


Figure 1, a timeline of the planning process. For more detail on the feedback process, visit www.cookcountyil.gov/service/policy-roadmap to read the Policy Roadmap Community Conversation Report.

Cook County Past and Present

Cook County (see fig. 2) is the heart of the nation's third largest metropolitan region and second largest county, the center of the Midwest and a major participant in the global economy. The region's economy is exceeded only by Los Angeles and New York. Cook County's assets have an outsized influence on the regional economy, and that influence is likely to grow as global economic trends continue to favor investment in dense, central areas of economic regions.

Approximately 8.5 million people live in the Chicago metropolitan region, which encompasses the City of Chicago and its suburbs. More than 60 percent of that population, or 5.2 million people, live in Cook County, making it the second largest county in the nation.¹ Our population is exceptionally diverse (see fig. 3). Historically and in the present day, Cook County has been a major destination for immigrants. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of 2016 more than 1.1 million Cook County residents are foreign born and nearly 35 percent of residents speak a language other than English at home, including Spanish, Arabic and Polish.²

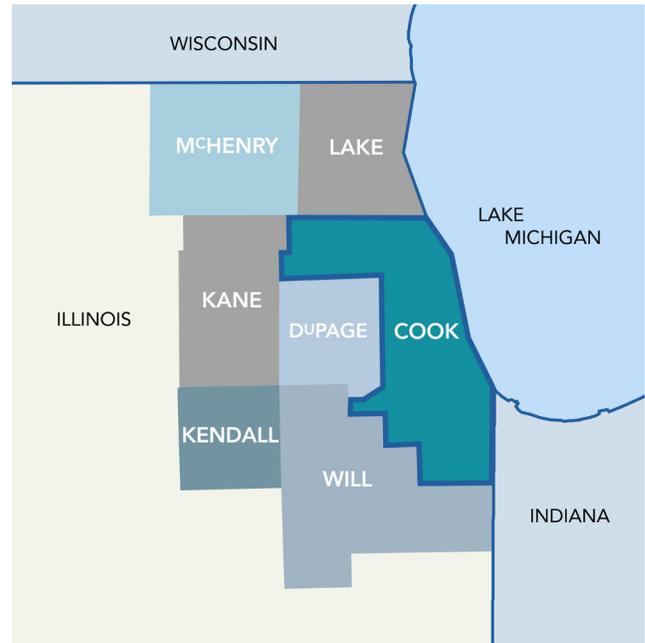


Figure 2, regional map of northeastern Illinois.

Race and Ethnicity in Cook County

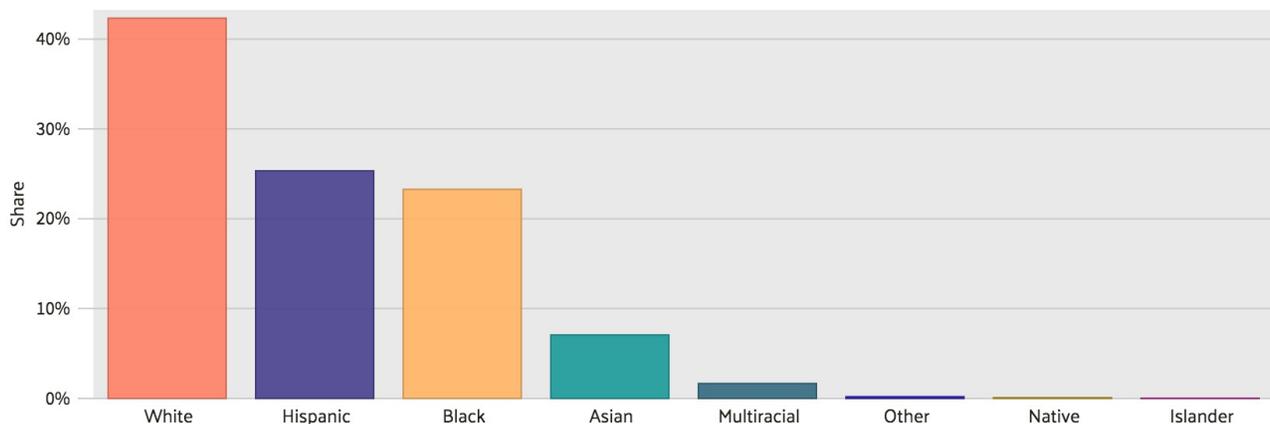


Figure 3, graph of race and ethnicity in Cook County by percentage of population. Source: Data USA and the U.S. Census Bureau.

Cook County Past and Present

Cook County's diverse economy, including its status as a transportation hub for the region, the Midwest and the nation, provides numerous opportunities for residents and businesses to prosper. Our region is home to two international airports, a port that serves the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River, a convergence of several interstate highways, rail service from six of the nation's seven largest railroads and the nation's second largest transit system. Virtually all of these assets are concentrated in Cook County, moving vital goods through the region and increasing the ease and ability of commuting for residents and visitors. Almost one third of all freight tonnage in the U.S. either originates in, terminates in or passes through the Chicago region, with over half of that tonnage crossing through Cook County.³ Furthermore, the region's robust transit system serves more than 650 million passengers a year, with about 90 percent of these trips beginning or ending in Cook County.

Cook County is also home to numerous universities with national and international reputations that draw people from all over the world to study and work. Our cultural amenities include world-class museums, theaters, opera companies and music venues. These assets draw visitors from around the world to the County and make it one of the country's major convention and conference destinations.

In addition to its strengths, Cook County, like many of its counterparts, faces a significant number of economic and social challenges. In the past decade, the County has lost a small percentage of its population and the region as a whole is not keeping pace with national growth trends. As these patterns highlight, Cook County is a study in contrasts. Cook County's central area is growing and robust, with new offices, retail and housing. Residents in much of the north and northwest areas of the County enjoy relatively high levels of income and low levels of unemployment. In contrast, residents in the western and southern parts of the City of Chicago and in the south suburbs struggle with higher unemployment rates, lower incomes and less access to quality jobs and education.

Cook County is highly racially and economically segregated, resulting in economic and resource disparities between communities and regions. This segregation fosters inequity for residents and adds to the economic disparities that exist throughout the County. Overall, Cook County has a poverty rate of 15.0 percent, which is slightly higher than the national poverty rate of 12.3 percent.⁴ When broken down by race, the poverty rate is dramatically higher for black and Latinx populations than for white populations (see fig. 4).

Poverty by Race and Ethnicity in Cook County

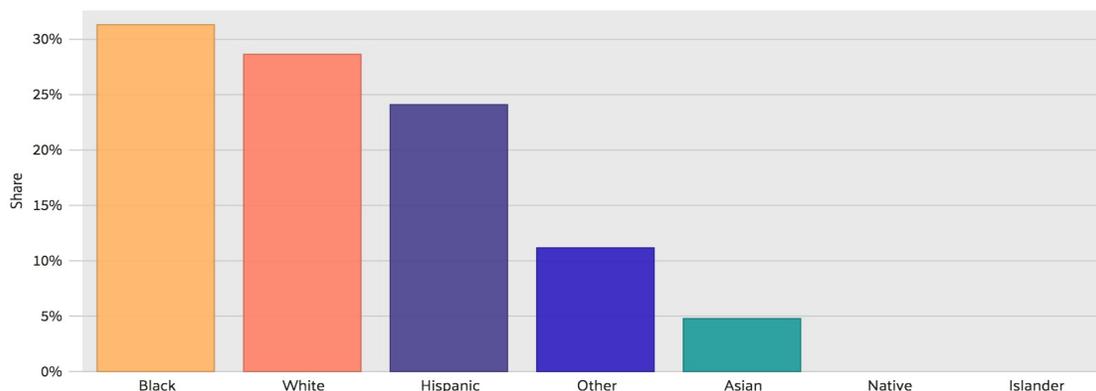


Figure 4, graph of poverty by race and ethnicity in Cook County by percentage of population. Source: Data USA and the U.S. Census Bureau.

Cook County Past and Present

Cook County is also experiencing the suburbanization of poverty (see fig. 5), where concentrated poverty shifts from neighborhoods in the city of Chicago to the surrounding suburbs. According to the Social IMPACT Research Center, the number of people experiencing poverty in Chicago’s suburbs increased by 95 percent from 1990 to 2011, though the total population of suburban residents only grew 29 percent.⁵ Since social service agencies and governments have designed their programs to target poverty concentrated in specific areas of larger cities, this shift requires us to change the way we administer social services.

Change in Residents Living in Poverty 2000 – 2016.

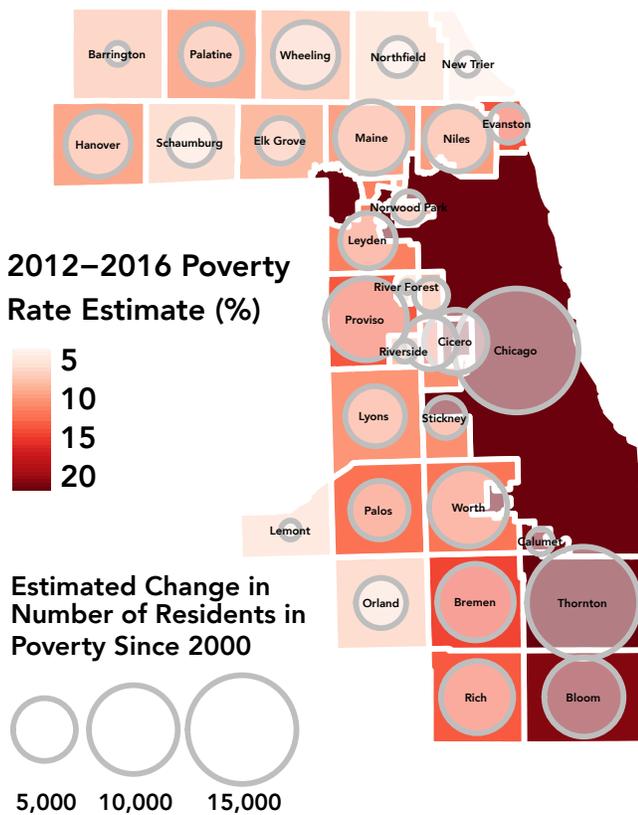


Figure 5, map of change in residents living in poverty. Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Map and Analysis: Andrew Miller.

“The changing landscape of poverty and hardship is significant because safety net policies and social service infrastructure are built on the assumption that poverty is concentrated in central cities. As a result, the suburbs—both across the nation and in the Chicago region—are characterized by a weak or lacking infrastructure of social services, and some suburban communities are unprepared to adequately serve individuals and families experiencing economic hardship. Such infrastructure is important to both mitigate the worst effects of poverty and help move families from poverty to economic security.”⁶

Averages for social and economic trends such as employment, wealth, home ownership, income and educational achievement mean little if huge disparities exist between those who have and those who have been left behind. Governments have an essential obligation to use their resources and leadership to address these disparities and provide all residents — regardless of race, ethnicity or neighborhood — opportunities and outcomes that correct historic inequities and address current challenges.

While all levels of government, including the federal government and the State of Illinois, must devote themselves to addressing these economic and social challenges, local governments—Cook County in particular—have an essential role to play in finding solutions to these challenges.

Cook County Government

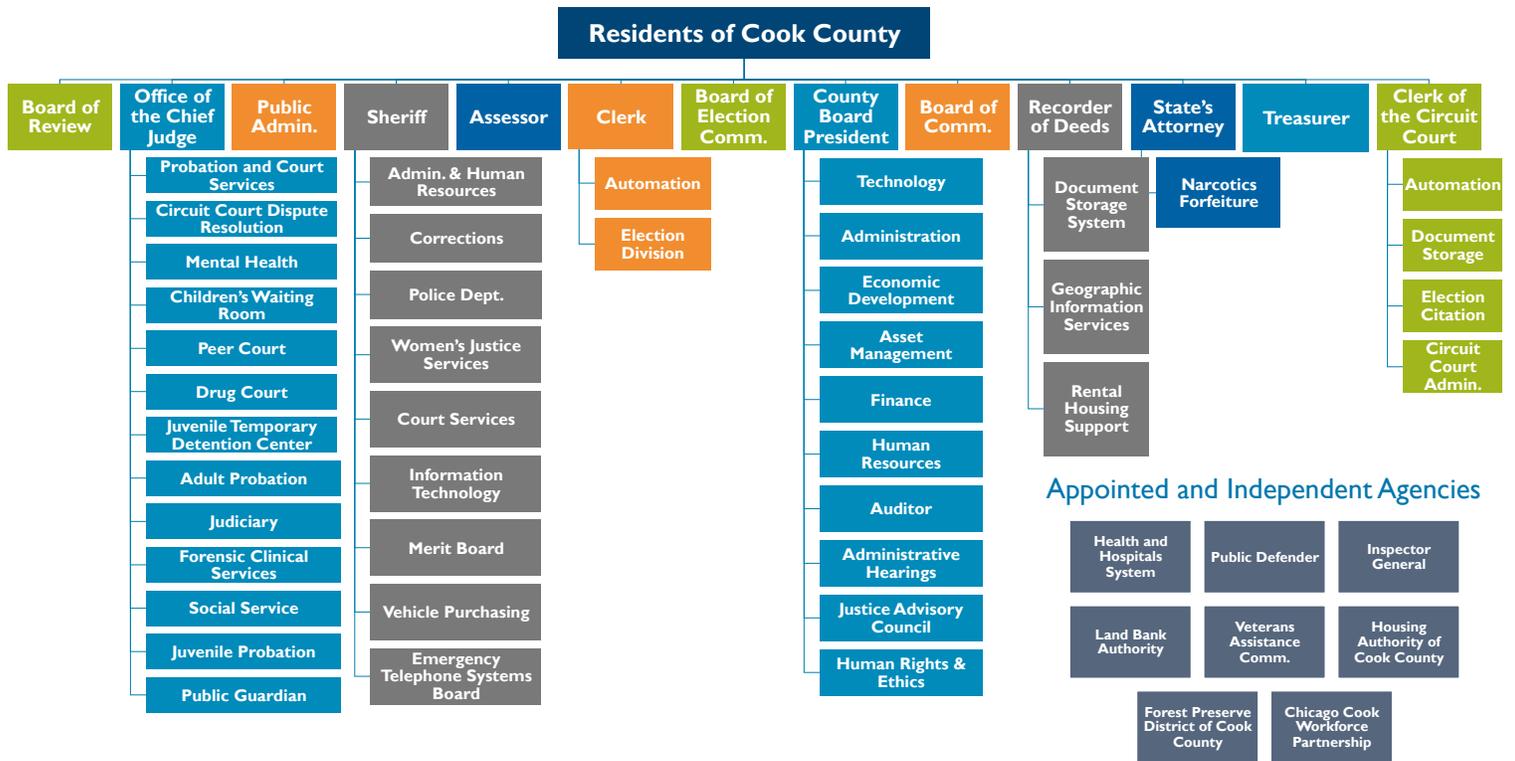


Figure 6, organizational chart of Cook County Government. See Appendix C for full-page organizational charts.

The services provided to the 5.2 million residents of Cook County are the responsibility of eleven separately-elected public officials, including the President of the Board of Commissioners. Those services fall under five broad mandates:

- ▶ Promoting healthy families through access to community-based healthcare and other public health services;
- ▶ Promoting equitable economic and community development;
- ▶ Supporting the criminal justice system and the administration of court services;

- ▶ Building, managing and conserving County assets through finance and administrative services; and
- ▶ Collecting revenue to fund County government through property assessment and taxation services.

In addition to leading the legislative function of the County, the President of the Board of Commissioners is also responsible for executive functions, including budgeting and administrative services for all County agencies and separately-elected officials. While Cook County government has many responsibilities, criminal justice and healthcare represent more than 88 percent of the total budget.⁷ (see fig. 7)

Cook County Government

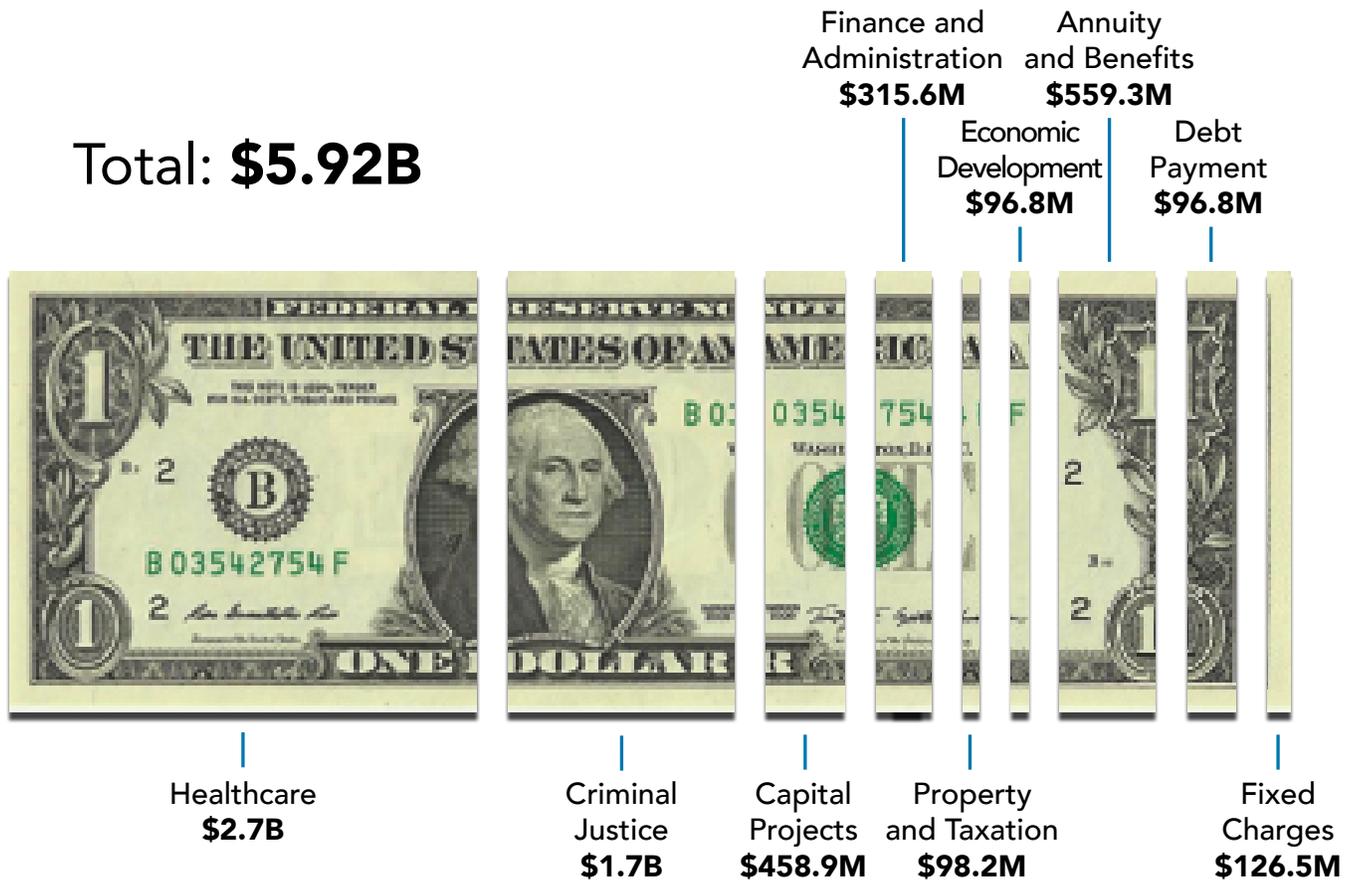


Figure 7, how taxpayer dollars are spent in the 2019 budget.

Criminal Justice

Cook County maintains and operates the Circuit Court of Cook County, the second largest unified court system in the nation, in which all trial courts are consolidated under the Office of the Chief Judge. The Circuit Court handles all civil and criminal justice matters under its jurisdiction. Officials responsible for its operations include:

- ▶ The **Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County**, who has centralized authority to coordinate and supervise the administrative functions of the Court, including managing the court assignments of approximately 400 judges,
- ▶ administering the Court’s annual budget, supervising approximately 2,750 non-judicial employees and operating the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center; and
- ▶ The **Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County**, who serves as the official record keeper for all judicial matters, collects and disburses all filing fees and fines for the Court, services more than 400 judges and manages electronic tools to improve Court services.

Cook County Government

The County is also responsible for many elements of its broader criminal justice system. These include the operation and maintenance of the nation's largest single-site jail and the provision of public prosecution and defense. Officials responsible for these duties include:

- ▶ The **Cook County Public Defender**, who protects the fundamental rights, liberties and dignity of thousands of County residents by providing legal representation at no cost to those unable to afford an attorney;
- ▶ The **Cook County Sheriff**, who provides policing services as the chief law enforcement officer in the County, ensures safe and secure County and court facilities and administers the Cook County Jail; and
- ▶ The **Cook County State's Attorney**, who prosecutes crimes committed in the County, provides services to victims and witnesses and represents the County in civil proceedings.

Healthcare

To meet residents' healthcare needs and coordinate overarching public health strategies, Cook County operates and maintains Cook County Health and the Cook County Department of Public Health:

- ▶ **Cook County Health (CCH)** delivers integrated health services regardless of a patient's ability to pay, partners with other health providers and communities to enhance public health and advocates for policies that promote the physical, mental and social wellbeing of the people of Cook County. CCH cares for more than 300,000 patients each year.
- ▶ The **Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH)** brings residents, partners and resources together to protect and promote health in communities throughout Cook County. CCDPH works to prevent the spread of over 70 reportable communicable diseases and enforce public health laws, rules and regulations. CCDPH also serves as a major source of information about the priority health needs in each community in suburban Cook County to help County agencies, partners and the public plan for and address emerging health threats and promote healthy living through awareness, education, programs and community development.

Cook County Government

Administrative and Operational Services

In addition to its criminal justice and healthcare responsibilities, Cook County government provides essential administrative services that support residents, businesses, municipalities and the County's operations. Officials responsible for these duties include:

- ▶ The **Cook County Assessor**, who assesses the value of residential and commercial property within the County as a basis for levying taxes and determining the distribution of property tax levies among taxpayers;
- ▶ The **Cook County Board of Review**, which reviews and corrects the assessments of property within the County;
- ▶ The **Cook County Clerk**, who oversees elections, prints ballots and administers voting locations during election years. The Clerk also maintains and provides vital records, aids in the real estate tax process, and receives and makes government employee statements of economic interests and lobbyist registration available to the public;
- ▶ The **Cook County Recorder of Deeds**, who records, stores and maintains land records and other official documents required by County residents;⁸ and
- ▶ The **Cook County Treasurer**, who collects, safeguards, invests and distributes property tax funds paid by the residents and businesses of the County.

Finally, policy and legislation in the County is the responsibility of the **Cook County Board of Commissioners**. The Board is composed of 17 elected officials representing 17 districts. The Board of Commissioners is chaired by the President.

The **President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners** serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Cook County and presents an annual balanced budget to the Board of Commissioners, provides leadership on key policy issues facing the County and oversees the Offices Under the President (OUP).

Offices Under the President

Under the guidance and oversight of the President, OUP serves all County residents and supports the day-to-day functions and operations of County agencies. Additionally, OUP advances the President's agenda across the County's five broad mandates. This work is coordinated through OUP's bureaus and departments below. *(See Appendix C for Offices Under the President Organizational Chart.)*

Office of the President

manages the Bureaus and departments under the President's leadership to support the administration's agenda. The Office collaborates with the separately elected officials to support the administration of County government.

Bureau of Administration

oversees a broad range of operational functions from environmental protection to transportation development, as well as resident-facing functions including maintaining a public County Law Library that ensures access to justice for self-represented litigants and providing discounted rabies vaccinations for pets.

Bureau of Asset Management

manages, maintains and develops County-owned land and buildings and manages work environments for County employees.

Bureau of Economic Development

leads and coordinates economic and community development initiatives and administers federal funds to support low- and moderate-income communities.

Bureau of Finance

oversees budgeting, payroll, procurement and contract compliance for all County agencies and elected officials.

Bureau of Human Resources

oversees employee training and support, labor relations and negotiations and an employee appeals board for all County agencies and elected officials.

Bureau of Technology

oversees technology systems for all County agencies and elected officials, maintains Cook County's website and provides resident-focused technological interfaces.

Dept. of Administrative Hearings

provides expedient, independent and impartial hearings to residents who are alleged to have violated a Cook County ordinance

Dept. of Human Rights and Ethics

supports the Commission on Human Rights and the Board of Ethics to protect people who live and work in Cook County from discrimination and harassment, inadequate wages and unfair work conditions. The Board of Ethics also ensures that Cook County employees and officials comply with the highest standards of ethical conduct.

Justice Advisory Council

coordinates and implements the President's criminal and juvenile justice reform efforts and public safety policy development.

Office of the County Auditor

conducts internal audits that bring a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of countywide risk management, control, and governance processes.

Sec. to the Board of Commissioners

provides legislative support and information for the Board of Commissioners, President, elected officials, agencies, departments and members of the public to make the legislative process efficient, effective, open and transparent.

Mission, Vision and Values

Equity

Promoting equity, specifically racial equity, has been a central principle of OUP under the leadership of President Preckwinkle. Historically, government has played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequities. Despite progress, racial inequities are still deep, structural and pervasive and racial anxiety is on the rise in our current political climate. At its core, our focus on racial equity centers around ensuring residents can enjoy the full array of recognized civil and human rights, and includes work to protect those rights regardless of immigration or documentation status. While governmental bodies need strong partnerships with non-profit, public and private sector stakeholders to address inequities, we have a unique responsibility to reduce inequity by ensuring policies and fiscal decisions consistently meet the needs of all residents, especially residents who are often marginalized and excluded from decision-making.

We explored the importance of equity in improving outcomes for all Cook County residents by considering it in two central ways:

- ▶ As a foundational value, by pursuing institutional change in part through adopting a racial equity framework and conducting implicit bias training for our employees; and
- ▶ As a practice, by identifying strategies across our six policy priorities that will advance equity across our operations and the services we provide in our communities.

Approaching our work through a racial equity lens will strengthen our institutional ability to apply a structural approach to other forms of marginalization. This framework will also help us address compounding inequities, such as the intersection of race and disability, the intersection of race and gender and the intersection of race and economic status.

Median Household Income by Race in Cook County



Figure 9, infographic of median household income by Alexandra Ensign. Source: Statistical Atlas, analysis of Census Bureau Data 2000–2010 and American Community Survey Data 2012–2016.

As part of our commitment to advancing racial equity, OUP will begin its work by:

- ▶ Becoming a member of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) to help build capacity, connect with peer organizations and receive support in advancing our equity work;
- ▶ Mandating implicit bias and diversity and inclusion training for all OUP employees to ensure shared definitions and understanding;
- ▶ Establishing a Racial Equity Leadership Council to plan and advance equity work internally; and
- ▶ Formally adopting a racial equity framework and a diversity and inclusion statement to elevate our commitment to and raise awareness about the importance of racial equity.

Mission, Vision and Values

Engagement

Engaging with residents, community groups and partners ensures government understands the challenges and concerns central to residents' daily lives and fosters a welcoming community for all residents. While the electoral system is structured to ensure voters are heard during election cycles, it is the responsibility of government to consistently engage with residents to better meet their needs. By incorporating resident engagement as a central value, we are recommitting to creating ways for residents and partners to participate in planning and decision-making and to ensuring we have a process in place to translate that engagement into tangible results for residents. The *Policy Roadmap* reflects our commitment to collaborating with County residents who are marginalized in Cook County to increase their power and draft policy that works for them.

As a grounding principle of our work to meaningfully engage residents, OUP will honor the agency, ownership and capacity of community stakeholders and promote a culture of engagement and participation by:

- ▶ Ensuring our engagement with residents is broad, inclusive, accessible and culturally- and linguistically-competent, particularly for marginalized populations;
- ▶ Reviewing and revising County policies and procedures to ensure OUP leads Cook County government in operating as a welcoming community;
- ▶ Institutionalizing community engagement across our operations, which enable us to recognize the assets, needs and experiences of our residents and engage them in our planning processes, policy development and decision-making; and
- ▶ Continuing to foster transparency and public awareness about what we do and how we do it.

Excellence

Residents trust Cook County government and its elected officials to be good stewards of County resources. We aim to be an excellent administrator of the vital services residents rely on by being transparent, accountable and effective. Over the past eight years, we have made great progress by producing balanced budgets, restructuring our office to better achieve our goals and laying the foundation for a government that is responsive and forward-thinking. To build from these accomplishments, OUP will be a responsible steward of public trust and Cook County's resources by:

- ▶ Maintaining good financial health by continuing to live within our means;
- ▶ Enhancing language accessibility by translating and interpreting public-facing OUP materials and events;
- ▶ Increasing transparency in the collection, use and public sharing of data through legislative and policy changes;
- ▶ Providing in-house employee training and support to improve customer experience and operational performance;
- ▶ Redesigning our performance management system to maximize efficiency; and
- ▶ Implementing effective measures to benchmark ourselves against peer counties across the country and increase accountability to our residents.

Policy Priorities

With our mission, vision and values in mind, we identified six policy priorities for OUP to concentrate its efforts on over the next five years. A central theme throughout our policy priorities is the commitment to ensuring Cook County is a welcoming community and can reach all of its residents, including those who are often marginalized. We will foster communities that are healthy, vital, safe and thriving, sustainable, smart and open.

Given OUP's role in supporting individuals and communities throughout Cook County, the first five policy priorities relate directly to the services we provide to residents. To achieve a high standard of efficiency and excellence, our sixth policy priority describes how we will deliver services to residents.

Together, these policy priorities create the comprehensive agenda OUP will implement to provide innovative and essential services for residents in an effective, efficient manner and ensure Cook County is an exceptional place to live, work, play and visit.

Healthy Communities

Health and Wellness

Integrating health and social services, addressing the social determinants of health and improving the health and wellness of County employees.

Vital Communities

Economic Development

Creating and retaining jobs, developing industry-sector strategies, supporting workforce training and development, quality housing, safety net services and community and municipal infrastructure investments.

Safe and Thriving Communities

Criminal Justice

Implementing violence reduction strategies proven to increase community safety, advocating for sustainable reforms within the criminal justice system and investing in community-based services for communities and residents.

Sustainable Communities

Environmental Sustainability

Prioritizing environmental justice, addressing climate change, investing in clean energy and green jobs and creating equitable access to open spaces.

Smart Communities

Public Infrastructure

Maximizing the benefits of County buildings, improving transportation systems and managing enterprise technology services.

Open Communities

Good Government

Achieving operational excellence by being accountable to residents, investing in our workforce and continuously improving the effectiveness of County services.

Healthy Communities

A person's health is a product of their environment and impacts all segments of their life. The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing.⁹ According to the Center for Disease Control, a healthy community "is continuously creating and improving [its] physical and social environments and expanding [its] community resources that enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing to their maximum potential."¹⁰

Alonzo is a CountyCare member who receives primary care and care management at Alivio Medical Center. As a patient with many chronic illnesses, Alonzo struggled for a long time to stay healthy and to manage making appointments with multiple doctors. Through Alivio's participation in the Medical Home Network ACO, Alivio is able to offer CountyCare beneficiaries like Alonzo a dedicated, practice level care manager—part of an integrated care team that works with Alonzo's primary doctor to coordinate Alonzo's care both at Alivio and across all settings. Alonzo's Alivio care team ensures his care is streamlined, effective, and holistic, treating not only his physical wellness, but also addressing the social challenges that impact his health as well, such as transportation and housing.

Food Insecurity in Cook County, 2014

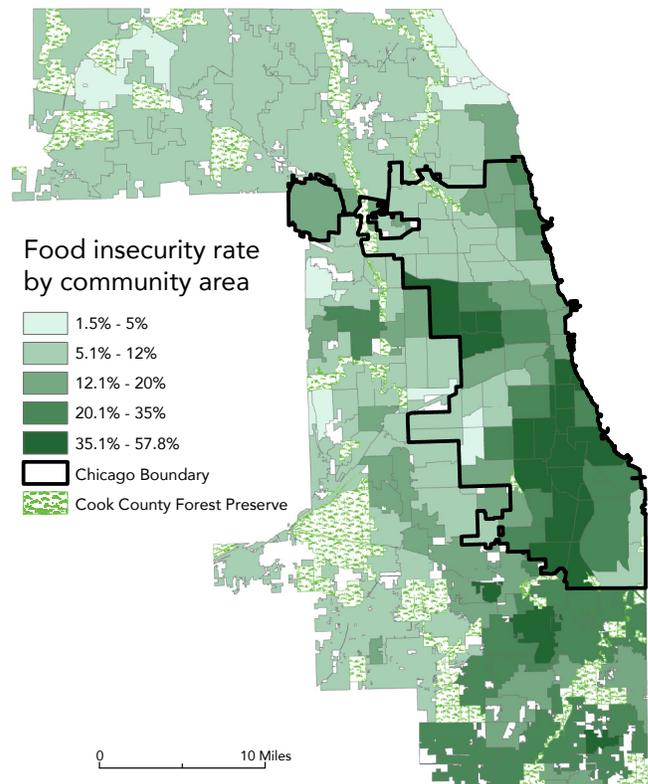


Figure 10, map of food insecurity rates by community area in Cook County. Prepared on 9/16/2016 by Greater Chicago Food Depository.

OUP is taking an expansive view of healthy communities by working to address the social determinants of health, including access to adequate and safe housing; equitable education; quality employment opportunities; public transportation; healthy physical environments; recreational spaces and activities and nutrition for our residents. Food access is a critical issue in Cook County (see fig. 10), where an estimated 600,000 residents live in food deserts—many of them in the south and west suburbs.¹¹

Addressing the social determinants of health also means ensuring access to affordable, quality healthcare that is culturally and linguistically responsive. While these conditions are not always



Healthy Communities

discussed as health challenges, they make up the cornerstones of residents' lives and therefore their health.

Creating healthy communities requires addressing health inequities; partnering with communities to better meet their needs; extending the public health system's partnerships with key stakeholders, including the criminal justice system; and addressing the health and wellbeing of our greatest talent, our employees.

Health is the foundation for building safe, vibrant, thriving communities throughout Cook County. Through the work of Cook County Health (CCH) more than 300,000 residents annually have access to vital, high quality, affordable health services and a welcoming, accessible healthcare system, regardless of their financial circumstances. Despite operating only two of the 72 hospitals in Cook

County, CCH continues to serve as a safety net for many residents and provides nearly 50 percent of all charity care in the County.

In 2011, Cook County changed the landscape of our public health scope by creating CountyCare, a Medicaid managed care health plan that supports access to preventative care, behavioral healthcare and community-based health centers throughout the County. Made possible by the Affordable Care Act, CountyCare is now the largest Medicaid managed care organization in Cook County.

In addition to quality healthcare, we must focus on the relationship between health and wellness, and the key components of the environments in which residents live and work. Taking this comprehensive view also requires us to address health disparities to ensure all residents — regardless of race, socio-economic status or geography — live in equitable, healthy communities. With this equitable framework in mind, we are committed to addressing the barriers to accessing healthcare many residents experience throughout Cook County, particularly residents in minority and immigrant communities. To do so, we will continue to improve the language accessibility of government and healthcare providers and support community-based healthcare solutions.

Despite significant advancements in healthcare and insurance coverage, health inequities persist. Societal inequities lead to disparate health outcomes including higher levels of chronic disease among low-income and minority populations. For example, infant mortality rates differ widely by race. We have seen a 12.4 percent decline in the infant mortality rate overall in the United States from 2005 to 2014.¹² However, an analysis published by JAMA Pediatrics found that mortality rates for white infants are at least 50 percent lower than for black infants.¹³ Those disparities can also be seen when broken down by zip code (see fig. 11).¹⁴ In recognition of our County's demographic shifts, we must respond to residents' needs by devoting proportional resources to medically underserved communities outside of the City of Chicago.

Life Expectancy by Census Tract

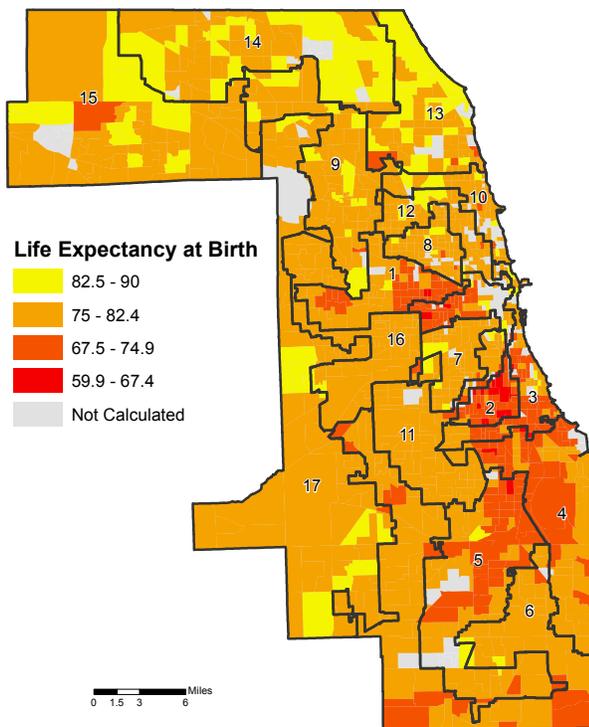


Figure 11, life expectancy by census tract, 2010 – 2015. Map created by Cook County Dept. of Geographic Information systems. Source: NCHS, National Vital Statistic Systems, Morality.



Healthy Communities



Cook County Health CEO Dr. Shannon, President Preckwinkle, Executive Director and CEO Kate Maehr of the Greater Chicago Food Depository and Commissioner Arroyo commemorate partnership between Greater Chicago Food Depository and CCH to bring fresh food to CountyCare members.

Health inequities are inextricably linked with inequities mirrored in our criminal justice system, which has required us to better integrate behavioral health services into our criminal justice system. Since 2014, CCH has enrolled over 16,000 justice-involved individuals into Medicaid, allowing them to access healthcare services in the community when they are released from jail and reducing recidivism by providing vital services, such as behavioral healthcare. The public health system and criminal justice system also increased their collaboration by participating in a MacArthur Foundation public safety grant to reduce the jail population and address the racial and ethnic disparities reflected in our detainee population. These partnerships aim to meet residents' healthcare needs as a way to treat potential underlying causes that lead them to be involved in the criminal justice system.

As OUP continues to promote health and wellness, it will continue to address health inequities and social determinants of health in part through partnerships and policy leadership. This includes increasing access to healthy food

and affordable housing and using the Cook County Forest Preserves and other public green spaces for exercise and recreation. Addressing the social determinants of health also requires us to prioritize health-related public awareness campaigns to ensure residents have accessible, accurate information related to their health and wellness.

We will work to promote health and wellness for our employees and lead by example in creating a supportive and productive work environment. As the people who implement our policies, support our residents on a day-to-day basis and keep Cook County government running, the health and wellbeing of our employees plays a key role in advancing healthy communities and serving residents.

The objectives and strategies that follow will ensure we address the social determinants of health, operate a respectful and efficient healthcare system and support our residents' and employee's overall wellbeing to foster healthy communities.



Healthy Communities

Goal

Improve the physical, mental and social wellbeing of Cook County residents and communities.

Key Performance Indicators

- ▶ Life expectancy
- ▶ Infant and maternal mortality
- ▶ Percent of eligible residents with health insurance
- ▶ Rate of gun related homicides per 1,000 residents
- ▶ Rate of opioid related deaths

Objective

1

Reduce health inequities for all residents by addressing the racial disparities and the social, physical and economic conditions that impact health.

Strategy

- 1.1 Ensure all policies and practices address the root causes of health inequities.
- 1.2 Reduce barriers to accessing health services for all residents in order to improve their quality of life.
- 1.3 Support inter-agency coordination to maximize the impact of Cook County investments to address the root causes of health inequities.
- 1.4 Use data and public information to educate communities and raise awareness about health inequities negatively impacting vulnerable communities.

What is a key performance indicator?

A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively an organization is achieving key objectives. It is supported by performance metrics measuring the organization's progress toward that objective.



Healthy Communities

Objective

2

Improve access to and integration of high-quality responsive healthcare and information.

Strategy

- 2.1 Enhance access to high-quality behavioral healthcare, trauma-informed services and mental healthcare.
- 2.2 Ensure a continuum of health-related services exists within Cook County to meet residents' needs, particularly those who are vulnerable or marginalized.
- 2.3 Explore new or developing models of care that increase access and expand ability to serve marginalized residents.
- 2.4 Enhance the language accessibility and cultural appropriateness of public health messaging so that all residents receive pertinent health information that they can understand.
- 2.5 Make quality health-related data widely accessible to promote a better understanding of residents' health and drive decision-making.
- 2.6 Provide accessible health consumer education to increase residents' ability to access health and wellness services.

3

Support an active and healthy lifestyle and healthy communities.

- 3.1 Advocate for recreational opportunities and wellness programs that promote physical activity and improved health outcomes for all residents.
- 3.2 Improve access to healthy and affordable food options to reduce hunger and enable healthy living, especially within marginalized communities.
- 3.3 Promote accessible multi-modal transportation options, including walking and biking, that connect people to family, work and play.
- 3.4 Encourage a cleaner and more resilient environment to mitigate the harmful effects of pollution and climate change.



Healthy Communities

Objective

4

Advocate for increased community safety through a public health approach to violence reduction.

Strategy

- 4.1 Address the root causes of violence through increased trauma awareness and trauma-informed care.
- 4.2 Encourage hospitals and healthcare providers to develop intervention models to reduce individual and community violence in areas of the highest need.
- 4.3 Support the implementation of the Chicago-Cook Task Force on Heroin recommendations regarding the heroin/opioid epidemic.
- 4.4 Promote the increased use of alternatives to detention in the criminal justice system, particularly for people struggling with mental health and substance abuse issues.
- 4.5 Partner with health stakeholders to improve access to employment in the health sector for individuals facing existing barriers, including young adults and people with criminal backgrounds.

5

Improve the health and wellbeing of the Offices Under the President's workforce by fostering a supportive, healthy work culture.

- 5.1 Augment Cook County's existing wellness program to support employees' adoption of a healthy lifestyle.
- 5.2 Align OUP's personnel and operational policies with health-related and supportive best practices.
- 5.3 Increase the awareness and capacity of the Employee Assistance Program and other supportive programs for OUP employees.
- 5.4 Expand access to healthy, resource-efficient amenities in Cook County facilities to improve employees' workplace experience.
- 5.5 Prioritize employee wellbeing in workplace design.



Vital Communities

Cook County represents the core of the region's population, jobs, businesses and productivity. The economic footprint of the Chicago region is larger than that of most nations in the world. One of the great strengths of Cook County, and the larger region, is the diversity of our economy. Supporting a wide variety of industries in the region encourages economic development and job growth for Cook County residents.

In recent years, many areas of Cook County, including the central downtown district within the City of Chicago, have experienced robust economic growth, increased property values and quality of life improvements. However, a substantial portion of the County, particularly in the southern and western regions, struggles

Top Five Job Sectors in Cook County

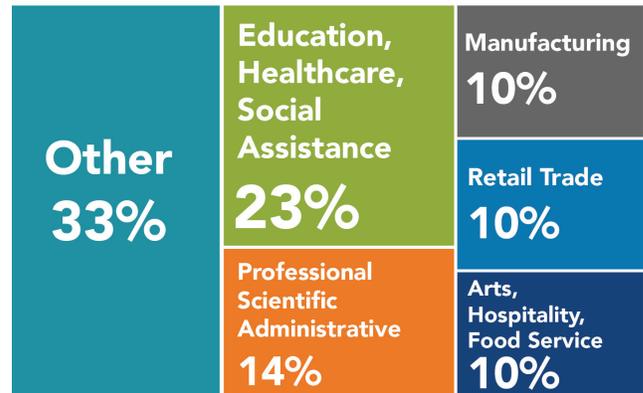


Figure 12, top job sectors in Cook County. Source: 2012 - 2016 American Community Survey five-year estimates.

“For my family-owned small manufacturing companies, Chicago Regional Growth Corporation (CRGC) has been a valuable resource. Not only do they help to shine a spotlight on a tremendously important job-creating sector of our regional economy, but they have helped our companies grow sales through leveraged programs that expand our exports. We are moving from what I would call a reactionary exporter to a proactive exporter with the help of CRGC’s programs.”

– Zach Mottl, Chief Alignment Officer, Atlas Tool Works, Lyons

with high levels of unemployment, declining property values and limited access to essential services that help to improve their quality of life. These disparities are, in part, the result of high levels of segregation. According to the Metropolitan Planning Council, the Chicago region is the fifth most racially and economically segregated region out of the top 100 regions nationwide.¹⁵ Despite overall unemployment rates at record lows in Cook County, certain communities and segments of the population experience unemployment rates as high as 40 percent. While wages increased by 2.3 percent between 2010 and 2015 for white people, wages for people of color declined by 2 percent. If the region’s economic and racial segregation were reduced to the national median, the region would generate an estimated \$4.4 billion in income.



Vital Communities

In addition to addressing the region's segregation, equitable regional prosperity requires improved quality of life and increased economic opportunity for all residents. OUP enacts policies that improve workplace conditions, such as a minimum wage increase and paid sick time, and works with local municipalities to ensure these initiatives benefit all County residents. We also invest in affordable housing; support neighborhood infrastructure including water, sewer, sidewalks and roads; and fund social service agencies that serve low- and moderate-income communities. Recognizing and addressing the complex relationship between housing, employment and transportation, and the disparate access to each for marginalized residents, is key to creating an equitable and vibrant community.

An important driver of economic prosperity in the County is to promote a more regionally equitable distribution of economic development. This requires strategic investments designed to maximize impact, such as prioritizing employment services in communities with high availability of affordable housing but low availability of jobs. Additionally, this requires focused investments in specific communities facing the biggest challenges. For example, while Cook County's south suburbs are asset-rich with people, businesses, land and infrastructure critical to our regional economy, population loss, foreclosures and government and private sector disinvestment have led to the region becoming increasingly disconnected from the regional economy. To address the population loss, high unemployment and high levels of poverty, we launched the South Suburban Economic Growth Initiative (SSEGI) to increase connections to regional resources and institutional capacity to manage large scale, comprehensive growth in the south suburbs.

To achieve similar impact throughout the County, we will proactively partner with communities to develop a five-year plan to guide the distribution of future federal funds and direct County resources.

We have embraced best practices in economic development by adopting a regional approach to growing our economy. Regional economic development acknowledges that local governments and municipalities have a collective interest in working together rather than engaging in wasteful competition. This approach allows us to work collaboratively with the City of Chicago and surrounding counties to promote equitable growth and develop new initiatives that strengthen the economy of the entire region. That includes the Chicago Metro Metal Consortium and the Chicago Regional Growth Corporation, which furthers global trade and investment for the region.

In addition to a regional and sector-based approach to economic development, equitable growth requires us to build a more robust set of tools to help small businesses and entrepreneurs, particularly those owned by women, minorities or people living with disabilities. While minorities make up more than 35 percent of the population nationally, they own less than 20 percent of businesses and only 17.4 percent of businesses with at least one million dollars in revenue.¹⁶

The distinctively local dynamics of inequality in our area reaffirm the importance of local leadership for understanding and improving economic opportunities to reduce disparities for all residents.

The objectives and strategies that follow represent the County's commitment to supporting inclusive local and regional economic growth.



Vital Communities

Goal

Pursue inclusive economic and community growth by supporting residents, growing businesses, attracting investment and nurturing talent.

Key Performance Indicators

- ▶ Median income (broken down by race/ethnicity and gender)
- ▶ Unemployment rate (broken down by race/ethnicity and gender)
- ▶ MBE/WBE/DBE Award Commitments
- ▶ Job training and placement through Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership

Objective

1

Champion a regional approach to grow the economy and combat racial and economic inequality.

Strategy

- 1.1 Ensure equitable and inclusive policies and practices for recipients of Cook County resources.
- 1.2 Implement Racial Equity Assessments in planning and decision-making.
- 1.3 Restructure the economic development property tax and financial incentives to enhance investment in underserved communities and support key economic sectors.
- 1.4 Provide leadership and support for the Chicago Regional Growth Corporation.
- 1.5 Develop global trade programs to increase export and foreign direct investments in the region.



Vital Communities

Objective

2

Grow key economic clusters by launching and supporting industry-led partnerships.

Strategy

- 2.1 Identify, prioritize and support new and emerging sectors that lead to living wage jobs.
- 2.2 Create a center for industry partnerships to lead, coordinate and support key economic sectors' competitiveness, productivity, resiliency and adaptation to rapidly changing technology.
- 2.3 Promote targeted "shovel ready sites" through utility, transportation and environmental remediation investments.
- 2.4 Increase minority and women business ownership and labor force participation in sectors that offer living wage jobs.

3

Support expanded opportunities for local businesses, women- or minority-owned firms and firms owned by people living with disabilities.

- 3.1 Expand Cook County's toolbox of available resources for small- and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurs.
- 3.2 Connect small businesses to banks, Community Development Financial Institutions, business incubators and worker cooperatives.
- 3.3 Align procurement and contract compliance policies to strengthen the minority, women and veteran business enterprise programs.
- 3.4 Encourage major corporations and non-profit organizations to use their purchasing power to strengthen their local communities and increase support to local, women- and minority-owned firms.



Vital Communities

Objective

Strategy

4

Invest in and support quality housing and core services to improve regional equity and access to opportunity.

- 4.1 Advocate for fair housing practices across the region.
- 4.2 Increase funding for affordable housing and community development, ensuring investments are community-driven and maximize impact.
- 4.3 Eliminate barriers to participation and access in Cook County economic development programs.
- 4.4 Provide technical assistance to Cook County municipalities to identify needs and leverage resources.
- 4.5 Reactivate vacant land in Cook County.

5

Open access to economic prosperity for all by investing in workforce and talent development.

- 5.1 Support industry-based training models that lead to industry-recognized credentials.
- 5.2 Align Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership's programs with Cook County's priority economic growth sectors.
- 5.3 Proactively identify opportunities to preserve jobs and increase wealth and prosperity for all residents.
- 5.4 Eliminate barriers to participation and access in Cook County workforce development and training programs.

6

Base transportation investments on their capacity to promote equitable economic growth.

- 6.1 Invest in opportunities that reduce the jobs/housing mismatch.
- 6.2 Facilitate multimodal transportation of goods and people within and beyond Cook County to encourage economic growth.
- 6.3 Expand alternative forms of transportation to improve residents' mobility.



Safe and Thriving Communities

As the administrator of the County's criminal justice system, Cook County operates the second largest unified court system in the United States. Through the Justice Advisory Council and Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, OUP works closely with the County's separately-elected criminal justice agencies and public safety stakeholders in the City of Chicago and the 135 other municipalities within Cook County to ensure safe and thriving communities across the County.

OUP will foster Safe and Thriving Communities by implementing violence reduction strategies. Additionally, we will create an equitable justice system in which every person has access to fair treatment, regardless of race or economic status.

Similar to other major metropolitan areas, Cook County has seen a significant decline in arrests, particularly arrests for violent crime, over the last two decades. This trend has held true, despite an uptick in gun shootings and homicides, which spiked in 2016 and has resumed a downward trend. Between 2010 and 2016, criminal case filings for felonies decreased by 13 percent and criminal case filings for misdemeanors decreased by nearly 50 percent in Cook County.¹⁷ In addition, prison and probation admissions have declined substantially and both the Cook County Jail and the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, where juveniles are detained, have reached population lows not seen since the 1990s.

This sustained decline in Cook County's criminal justice population has not had a negative impact on public safety and has given the County an opportunity to implement fiscally sound practices that prioritize long-term sustainability and proactive policy goals rather than reactive approaches to crime. Interagency collaboration

"JP enrolled in the welding training program in spring of 2017. He had been involved in crime for 13 years. JP matured greatly while he was in class. He struggled through many internal issues like anger, bitterness and un-forgiveness. Through our life skill classes, JP has been able to cope with some of the hardships in life. JP has been working as a welder for over a year now."

—*Chicagoland Prison Outreach on welding training program for formerly incarcerated people, funded in part by the Justice Advisory Council*

on key initiatives such as the Central Bond Court reform (see fig. 13) and the MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge are examples of positive cultural shifts brought about by these circumstances.

Several leadership changes in elected and appointed officials have spurred renewed energy on reform and collaboration. Alongside these leadership changes, several administrative and legislative reforms have positively altered our justice system. As a result of broad strategies to prevent the unnecessary detention of people at low risk of committing crimes or threatening public safety, we have decreased the population in the Cook County Jail from 8,600 people at the end of 2014 to 5,091 people in September of 2018. The Juvenile Temporary Detention Center's detained population decreased from 370 young people to



Safe and Thriving Communities

Bond Court Reform Leads to Reduction of Pre-Trial Detainees

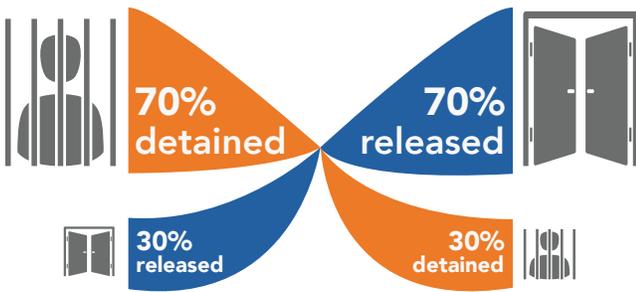


Figure 13, infographic showing reduction in detention due to bond court reform in 2017.

211 young people over the same time period.

In the area of juvenile justice, in partnership with advocates, community organizations and other public safety agencies, we helped pass legislative changes including raising the age of the juvenile justice system from 16 to include 17-year-olds as of 2015; reducing the automatic transfer of juveniles to adult court as of 2016; reducing five-year mandatory probation sentences for lesser juvenile offenses as of 2017 and expanding automatic juvenile record expungement as of 2018.

Notwithstanding the accomplishments noted above, one of the most pressing challenges the County continues to face is the gun violence that leads to the senseless loss of life and devastates communities and families. Over the last two years, as part of our work to reform the criminal justice system, we have broadened our focus to address gun violence, particularly as it continues to impact people of color in the same communities most impacted by the criminal justice system.

Communities impacted by gun violence have historically experienced a constellation of negative conditions — created in part by government — including divestment of infrastructure and resources; high levels of segregation; a lack of employment opportunities and under-resourced schools. Applying a public health approach to curing violent crime and victimization holds the greatest promise, as it addresses these historic inequities. This will require partnering with the City of Chicago and other stakeholders to implement coordinated and comprehensive prevention and intervention activities and strategies within those targeted communities.

In addition to tackling gun violence, we are committed to increasing transparency within the criminal justice system by encouraging the expansion of data sharing among criminal justice stakeholders and with the public. This will increase the system's public accountability and allow us to better identify and address service needs and gaps in under-resourced portions of Cook County.

To design, advocate for and implement public safety and criminal justice policies that create safe and thriving communities, we will have to address inequities caused by race, geography, socio-economic status and disabilities. To accomplish this and ensure our efforts align with residents' priorities, the County will incorporate the input of residents and those with firsthand experience in the criminal justice system throughout the decision-making process.

The objectives and strategies that follow will ensure we operate a fair, efficient and equitable criminal justice system, create a County where all residents feel safe and support communities to thrive for years to come.



Safe and Thriving Communities

Goal

Create safe communities and an equitable and fair justice system for all residents.

Key Performance Indicators

- ▶ CCDOC and JTDC population
- ▶ Resources invested in alternatives to detention
- ▶ Rates of violence per capita, broken down by geographic area

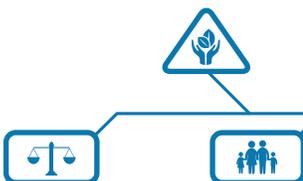
Objective

1

Develop comprehensive and coordinated planning and preparedness activities to proactively address violence in highly impacted communities throughout Cook County.

Strategy

- 1.1 Invest in a public health approach to reduce gun violence.
- 1.2 Ensure that access to resources and response capabilities to address violence and respond to emergencies are equitably distributed throughout Cook County.
- 1.3 Improve public safety planning and coordination to identify shared goals and maximize investments in suburban Cook County.
- 1.4 Use federal, state and local grant dollars to build capacity within municipalities to effectively address protective factors that prevent violence and justice involvement.



Safe and Thriving Communities

Objective

2

Align criminal justice investments and strategies to prioritize the needs of individuals involved in the criminal justice system.

Strategy

- 2.1 Generate cost-savings through the reduction criminal justice system expenses and the consolidation of the criminal justice system.
- 2.2 Expand investment in community-based organizations, anti-violence prevention initiatives and reentry services to address root causes of violence.
- 2.3 Advocate for policies that decrease racial, ethnic and socio-economic disparities in the criminal justice system.
- 2.4 Advocate for criminal justice reform policies and legislation that are informed by data and research.
- 2.5 Promote community-based programs that use promising practices or are evidence-based.
- 2.6 Continue to safely reduce detention populations.
- 2.7 Develop a collaborative budgeting process and performance metrics for multi-agency criminal justice reform efforts.

3

Increase alternatives to detention and access to supportive services for justice-involved residents.

- 3.1 Increase access to wraparound, case management and re-entry services.
- 3.2 Build the capacity of service providers in underserved areas of Cook County through technical assistance and funding.
- 3.3 Increase coordination between government agencies and service providers in the provision of services.



Safe and Thriving Communities

Objective

4

Cultivate multidisciplinary collaboration to advance criminal justice reform that incorporates the voices of affected communities.

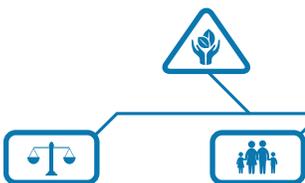
Strategy

- 4.1 Incorporate the voices of impacted communities and people with lived experiences in criminal justice reform efforts and decision-making.
- 4.2 Increase inter-agency collaboration within Cook County to meet the needs of justice-involved individuals.
- 4.3 Support the creation of a Cook County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), responsible for planning and coordinating criminal justice reform.

5

Inform criminal justice decision-making by improving collection, analysis, interagency sharing and public release of justice-related data.

- 5.1 Advocate for Cook County agencies to review current data collection procedures, including abilities, capacity and barriers, and implement necessary changes.
- 5.2 Improve residents' experience utilizing the court system and accessing needed information.
- 5.3 Maximize the use of Cook County's data sharing platform to enhance the exchange of timely and relevant data and information between criminal justice stakeholders.
- 5.4 Encourage the creation of a publicly available dashboard and reports on the criminal justice system, including aggregated data by race, ethnicity, gender, age and geography at each point of the system to educate and inform the public.



Sustainable Communities

The continent's major waterways, forests and prairies meet in Cook County, as do the nation's transportation networks, representing both the promises and perils that fall within the portfolio of sustainability. Sustainable communities do not just have a clean environment. They are attractive communities, good for families and the elderly, and desirable places for businesses to locate and create jobs. A clean environment, green space, jobs near housing and choice in modes of transportation create desirable communities and drive investment and higher property values. Renewable energy and energy and water efficiency conserve resources for our future, while also growing well-paying jobs and saving money for residents, businesses and local governments.

Creating sustainable communities also has health benefits. A clean environment reduces rates of asthma and cancer, while outdoor activity lowers levels of heart disease and prevents diabetes. Better health means residents and local governments spend less on healthcare. Access to nature improves health, lowers stress and crime and improves learning outcomes for our children.¹⁸

Despite significant improvements in air and water quality, Cook County's industrial heritage and its concentration of people, development and transportation still cause environmental challenges that impact residents' quality of life. From the effects of climate change, uneven development across Cook County and persistent segregation, we must address past environmental injustices in underserved communities. Additionally, we must proactively promote equitable growth by removing barriers to the "green" economy to ensure all residents can benefit.

"The Cook County Community Solar Project launched in 2014 to establish a community solar market in the County that provides the economic and environmental benefits of solar to a dense, urban area: "It's exciting to see the projected savings from community solar. For our residents, most of whom are very low-income, reducing their energy bills by almost \$200 annually is significant. It allows them to use this money toward other basic necessities such as food, medicine and rent. When you live on a limited fixed income, every dollar matters and the research shows that living with physical disabilities costs more in terms of special equipment, transportation and healthcare costs. As a non-profit, we also appreciate the cost-savings that community solar might yield and would put that money into resident programs or building improvements."

– Eric Huffman, Executive Director, Over the Rainbow Association



Sustainable Communities

Local governments are at the forefront of protecting the environment and fighting climate change. OUP works with partners to mitigate the effects of climate change and the impact of climate change on our residents. While our County's greenhouse gas emissions have decreased, this progress is modest compared to what is needed to forestall the worst effects of climate change. This includes negative impacts on human health and wellbeing caused by more extreme weather events, including flooding and wildfires, decreased air quality and agricultural disruptions that can diminish the security of our food supply.

The fragmentation of government hinders our ability to address environmental issues and contributes to extreme disparities in income and municipal government capacity. Cook County's many small, under-resourced municipal governments will need to adapt and overcome challenges including a lack of funding, capacity and technical skills to plan for a future that will look very different from our past. OUP knows that our efforts to help Cook County's municipalities are vital since assistance from the federal and state governments in the form of environmental enforcement, resources for

open space protection and policies that address climate change are waning.

To overcome some of these challenges, we must take a comprehensive approach to energy, transportation, economic development and water that recognizes the sustainability implications of our actions. We are committed to dispelling the false belief that economic development and environmental protection are in conflict. Targeted economic investment in conjunction with efforts to promote environmental co-benefits, manage storm water and reduce vulnerabilities to climate change will be critical to building resilient and sustainable communities. Finding environmental solutions will require partnerships between governments, residents, businesses, non-profits and educational institutions. We will also need to continue being an environmental leader and help communities and municipal governments achieve the environment residents deserve and need.

The objectives and strategies that follow will ensure that we address environmental injustices, combat climate change and promote sustainable growth and development.

Carbon Reduction Targets

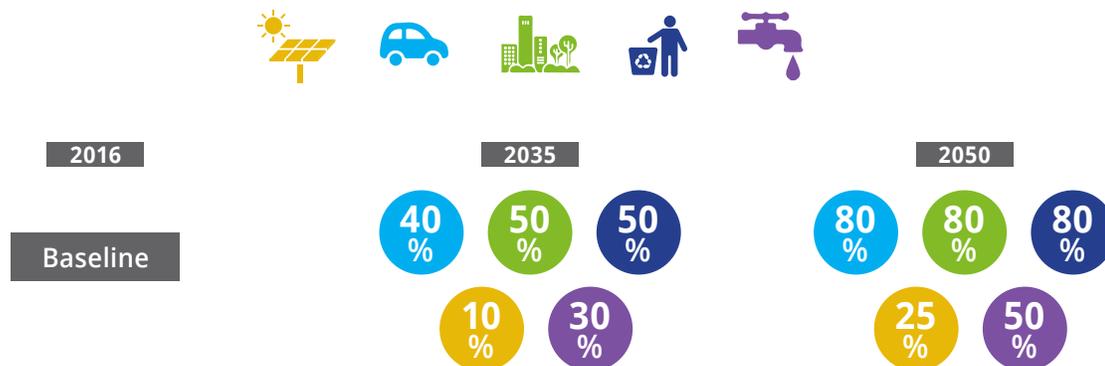


Figure 14, carbon reduction targets from Dept. of Environment and Sustainability's 2017 Sustainability Report.



Sustainable Communities

Goal

Support healthy, resilient communities that thrive economically, socially, and environmentally.

Key Performance Indicators

- ▶ Asthma visits, broken down by geographic area
- ▶ Community Solar subscriptions
- ▶ GHG percent reduction in County buildings
- ▶ Kilowatts of solar installed in Cook County

Objective

1

Ensure environmental justice and a healthy environment for all people and places.

Strategy

- 1.1 Address communities' environmental priorities and identify their assets and vulnerabilities.
- 1.2 Offer programs that reduce exposure to pollution, with priority given to environmental justice areas.
- 1.3 Decrease financial and informational barriers to environmental benefits to ensure equal access to services and resources.
- 1.4 Invest in ecological restoration and stewardship to protect native habitats and species and to reduce the adverse impacts of invasive species.

2

Promote livable, sustainable land use, transportation policy and economic development.

- 2.1 Incorporate environmental impact as a key criterion when making economic development decisions.
- 2.2 Increase access to open spaces, greenways and trails, prioritizing areas where open space is currently limited.
- 2.3 Support transportation and land use policy that prioritizes efficient use of land and the connectivity between jobs, transportation and land use.



Sustainable Communities

Objective

Strategy

3

Reduce climate change and provide ways to mitigate its effects.

- 3.1 Advocate for increased energy efficiency across all sectors.
- 3.2 Prioritize energy efficiency and renewable energy development.
- 3.3 Invest in transportation systems that decrease emissions.
- 3.4 Develop a plan to address community, business, and infrastructure vulnerabilities due to climate change.

4

Capture the job and economic growth potential of making Cook County more sustainable.

- 4.1 Develop workforce programs that provide residents with skills and credentials to obtain green jobs.
- 4.2 Attract quality green sector jobs to the metropolitan region.
- 4.3 Develop equitable, healthy and sustainable local food systems to improve resident health and create economic opportunity.

5

Create enduring capacity in government and communities to build a sustainable and resilient future.

- 5.1 Integrate sustainability measures, such as energy and water use reduction, waste management and recycling, into every Cook County department's operations.
- 5.2 Incentivize sustainability in Cook County purchasing.
- 5.3 Support federal, state and local efforts to advance sustainability polices informed by data and science.
- 5.4 Partner with municipalities and community-based organizations to build regional capacity including renewable energy, energy and water efficiency, waste reduction and recycling.



Smart Communities

Public infrastructure is a fundamental function of Cook County government and represents the backbone of how we provide seamless services to residents. Public infrastructure exists and operates in the background of residents' everyday lives, yet few recognize government's role in ensuring that it works for those it serves. Infrastructure needs to be robust, inclusive and sustainable. Despite its day-to-day importance, many people only think or learn about public infrastructure after a disaster – such as a bridge collapse, severe flooding, internet broadband failure or a transit disruption.

The integration and effective management of public infrastructure, which includes the buildings and land owned by the County, transportation systems and data and technology systems, enables us to maximize our resources more efficiently and effectively serve residents. These essential assets also contribute to the effectiveness of other government services and provide residents with the tools they need to carry out the day to day aspects of their lives. Responsibly managing our infrastructure requires understanding residents' needs ranging from language translation to accessible buildings that comply with federal disability rights laws.

Many of the County's public infrastructure assets are the vast array of buildings and land resources we own and operate, including hospitals, clinics, courthouses, jails and other government facilities. For many residents, visiting these facilities is their primary contact with the County. To meet changing public needs and incorporate innovative services into our operations, we must maintain, upgrade and modernize these assets and demolish or sell old facilities when they are no longer needed.

Cook County joined the CREATE Partnership, which brings the County together with the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, the federal government, Metra and Amtrak and the railroad industry for a total investment of \$474 million dollars for the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project. The 75th Street Corridor Project aims to eliminate a chokepoint at a critical South Side Chicago junction for freight and passenger trains.

When completed in 2025, the project is expected to yield an estimated \$3.8 billion in new economic benefits from eliminating multiple conflicts and increasing capacity at one of the busiest rail intersections in the U.S.

The 75th Street Project represents how we are able to combine our effort with critical partners for significant benefits for our residents.

OUP is also responsible for building and maintaining many of the roadways and bridges that residents and businesses use every day. In addition to direct investment in County-owned transportation assets, we play a major leadership role in transportation decisions throughout the County, regardless of which government agency has jurisdiction. In collaboration with our partners,



Smart Communities

we prioritize transit and other transportation alternatives, support the County's freight delivery system and actively promote equal access to transportation for every resident. To promote equity, we must expand access to the full range of transportation options to include people with disabilities by targeting inaccessible rail stations, bus stops, sidewalks and curb cuts.

Bridging the data divide and ensuring that our employees, County officials and our residents have the information they need is also an important component of a Smart Community. Whether it is exchanging data and information amongst county agencies, or using data to make better policy and budgetary decisions, integrating technology into our public infrastructure and continuously improving the delivery and access of our services will allow us to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

While we have achieved many successes that span the public infrastructure spectrum, OUP still faces many challenges in managing and continuously developing its public infrastructure. New technologies have changed the way we serve residents and many government facilities require substantial renovation to preserve and modernize them. While generating new revenue is a challenging conversation within and beyond County government, funding remains a priority to achieve optimal efficiency.

New technologies foster more efficient and sustainable workplaces but they can also perpetuate inequities and create hardship for residents who lack the resources or skills to access digital tools and information. We must improve our data platforms to ensure we are able to

exchange information and data with residents. While information has become more readily available for many residents, we must strive to ensure our technology allows residents to ask questions and provide feedback to support a more accountable and accessible government. We are committed to improving technology infrastructure while acknowledging that all new technology must be accessible for people with disabilities.

Through our holistic transportation approach, we must address gaps in mobility to create an equitable and multi-modal transportation environment. Our mission must extend beyond providing transportation access to County buildings and services and daily activities to establish a foundation for future community and economic growth. A connected transportation system will allow us to ensure well-paying jobs are located within reach of residents, especially residents who are currently excluded from employment opportunities due to long, complex commutes. Our transportation infrastructure must promote equity by being accessible to and safe for residents living with disabilities. At the same time, we must also create transit-accessible, pedestrian and bicycle friendly environments that bring these jobs closer to home as well.

Through smart, targeted planning, provision and maintenance of our public infrastructure we will close the gap in access to the services, facilities and jobs that our residents and businesses depend on for long term sustainability.

The objectives and strategies that follow will ensure we strategically leverage our assets and improve residents' ability to interact with and access their government.



Smart Communities

Goal

Provide an innovative infrastructure that will change how we live, work and connect.

Key Performance Indicators

- ▶ Money invested in LRTP projects
- ▶ MBE/WBE/DBE commitments for infrastructure projects
- ▶ Percent of bridges and lane miles rated as good
- ▶ Percent of County forms available for electronic submission

Objective

1

Promote an equitable and growing economy through investments in Cook County infrastructure.

Strategy

- 1.1 Prioritize transit-oriented development in infrastructure investments, ensuring access for all residents.
- 1.2 Invest in the improvement of under-developed land throughout Cook County to promote community and economic development.
- 1.3 Use public-private partnerships to spur economic opportunity and generate revenue on Cook County assets.
- 1.4 Coordinate the development of public infrastructure projects across all levels of government.
- 1.5 Connect land maintenance and land use development efforts to employment and job training opportunities for Cook County residents, especially those from marginalized communities.



Smart Communities

Objective

2

Better serve residents by investing in and deploying proven technology infrastructure.

Strategy

- 2.1 Ensure digital access to Cook County services for all residents.
- 2.2 Provide residents an excellent user experience when accessing online Cook County resources.
- 2.3 Prioritize resident ease of access by integrating Cook County building and technology design.
- 2.4 Increase the quality and effectiveness of services by using data in long-term infrastructure planning.
- 2.5 Integrate technology and workplace design to transform Cook County operations.
- 2.6 Minimize environmental impacts of facilities by adopting technology that reduces energy and water consumption and diverts waste.

3

Increase accessibility and connectivity through seamless transportation of passengers and goods throughout Cook County and the region.

- 3.1 Coordinate transportation investments across jurisdictions within the metropolitan region.
- 3.2 Provide technical assistance and funding to other municipalities to promote seamless transportation throughout the region.
- 3.3 Implement the Long Range Transportation Plan to address gaps in transportation networks to ensure equitable access for residents.
- 3.4 Integrate future transportation technologies into public infrastructure planning and development.
- 3.5 Redesign facilities to enable public transit, bicycle and pedestrian access to Cook County facilities.



Smart Communities

Objective

4

Responsibly steward Cook County's resources by increasing the value of Cook County's assets.

Strategy

- 4.1 Use data to make transportation and energy use more efficient.
- 4.2 Increase the resiliency of Cook County infrastructure by fostering partnerships with public, private and non-profit stakeholders.
- 4.3 Conduct a thorough valuation of all Cook County assets to capture market value.
- 4.4 Invest in and integrate high-speed technology infrastructure in Cook County roads and buildings.
- 4.5 Promote and develop public art and civic engagement in Cook County facilities.



From left: Rosemont Transit Center; aerial view of freight; County Building at 118 N. Clark St.; close-up of new community-made mosaic artwork in Stroger Hospital Corridor.



Open Communities

OUP represents less than ten percent of Cook County government's total workforce and accounts for less than nine percent of the entire County budget. Nonetheless, we strive to achieve operational excellence within our own purview as well as through our influence over the County's broader operations.

We have worked hard to create a culture and mindset in which elected officials, employees and appointees adopt a human-centered approach

In 2017, the Medical Examiner's Office and the Bureau of Technology teamed up to create the first-of-their-kind interactive dashboards, maps and an open dataset providing the public with a geographic visualization of every Medical Examiner case since 2014. The system is updated daily. Part of the online data initiative includes interactive maps, which users can customize to visualize where deaths are occurring, create heat maps and locate clusters and trends, which can help researchers, medical professionals, law enforcement, journalists and the public tackle pressing issues such as the prevalence of gun violence and the opioid epidemic.

In recognition of this work, Cook County was awarded an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

to problem-solving, teamwork and responsible leadership. To continually improve business processes and operations and become the best in practice, we have worked to overcome institutional obstacles and exploit advantages to achieve results across key services. This culture shift has increased the professionalization of our workforce and improved residents' experience.

OUP provides a wide array of public services, managing internal operational functions, promoting economic growth, investing in infrastructure and coordinating emergency management among many other activities. The efficient and effective provision of our programs depends on the strength of our internal operations and shared service coordination, including financial planning, core human resources and payroll functions, asset management and technology support that benefit all County government. Although we have made progress towards optimizing our resources, we must continue pursuing additional opportunities to standardize common procedures across various government agencies.

We are committed to providing efficient and effective service to all Cook County residents. We have made significant progress by increasing our emphasis on performance management, investing in technological advancements, conducting an internal restructuring and creating a climate of collaboration and engagement. These improvements have allowed us to do more with less. However, the fragmentation of County government, which operates under the direction of eleven separately-elected officials, hinders effective communication with County residents, who must navigate various independent local government offices with distinct responsibilities and services.



Open Communities

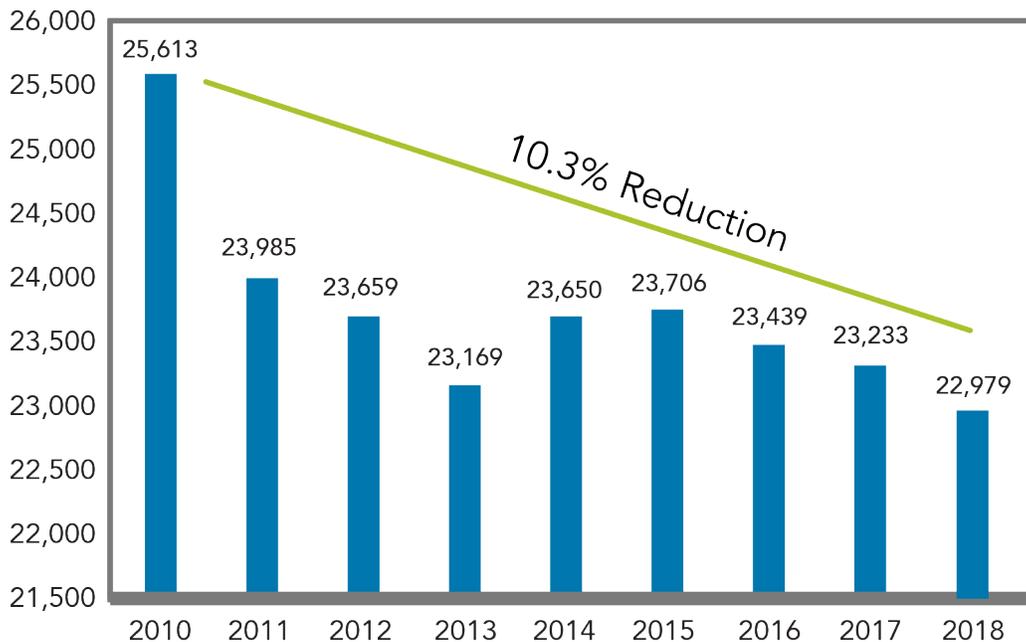


Figure 15, graph of workforce reduction since 2010.

The County is in the process of consolidating the Office of the Cook County Recorder of Deeds, which maintains property ownership records, into the Office of the Cook County Clerk, which maintains other vital records and serves as the chief election officer. OUP is supportive of further reorganization that will provide the public with improved services.

Furthermore, we need to increase our engagement with residents, community partners and businesses to reduce barriers to accessing public services and doing business with the County. Creating the *Policy Roadmap* is a step toward increasing resident participation in identifying priorities and finding solutions. Cook County government exists to serve our residents and we greatly value their contributions and feedback. We are committed to ensuring this engagement is accessible and linguistically- and culturally-competent and produces tangible results for residents.

OUP benefits greatly from our employees' commitment to public service and shared sense of

purpose. To solidify ourselves as a leader in high-quality public service, we must continue to invest in the professional development of our employees and provide opportunities for advancement and growth within County government. Furthermore, we must ensure that we recruit and retain a diverse workforce reflective of the communities we serve and that our employees have the tools and training necessary to apply innovative practices and new technology to the County's work.

Continuous operational improvement is key to making the County a better place to live, work and do business. The *Policy Roadmap* provides a strategic foundation for improvement and has sparked an ambitious, renewed commitment to operational excellence. It represents a key step on the path towards a more innovative, effective and transparent government for all residents.

The objectives and strategies that follow will ensure we are transparent and accessible, engage a diverse and talented workforce and serve as responsible stewards of the County's resources.



Open Communities

Goal

Ensure that Cook County provides responsive, transparent services and develops a thriving, professional workforce that reflects the communities served.

Key Performance Indicators

- ▶ Average percent of job applicants meeting minimum/preferred qualifications
- ▶ Percent of employees completing mandatory and supplementary training
- ▶ Annual preliminary budget gap

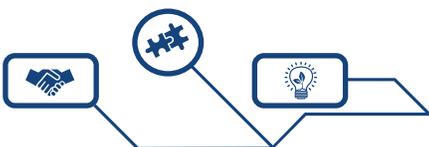
Objective

1

Make doing business with Cook County simple, transparent and accessible for residents, municipalities and businesses.

Strategy

- 1.1 Make all Cook County services accessible to residents with disabilities and non-English speakers.
- 1.2 Improve in-person and virtual customer experience for residents interacting with Cook County.
- 1.3 Publicize Cook County initiatives and services to increase public awareness.
- 1.4 Coordinate media messaging, branding and communications.
- 1.5 Implement a public engagement process to reflect residents' interests and needs.
- 1.6 Streamline the procurement process to make it more efficient and accessible.



Open Communities

Objective

2

Attract and support a diverse, compassionate, high-quality workforce to improve the delivery of services to residents.

Strategy

- 2.1 Increase the quality of services through employee training.
- 2.2 Develop an internal communication strategy to improve OUP employees' understanding of Cook County services in order to foster a resident-centric culture.
- 2.3 Ensure uniformity in employee evaluation process.
- 2.4 Ensure alignment of job descriptions with current operational needs of Cook County.
- 2.5 Foster a culture of continuous improvement for employees.
- 2.6 Formalize organizational structure that encourages interagency coordination and improves visibility to the public.

3

Ensure the best use of taxpayer dollars by promoting responsible and innovative fiscal management practices.

- 3.1 Routinely identify revenue opportunities and areas for cost-savings.
- 3.2 Ensure transparency and accountability around core financial transactions.
- 3.3 Create a standardized purchasing program among local governments to streamline the procurement process and increase equity in purchasing.
- 3.4 Use technology to more efficiently manage accounting and reduce transactional costs.
- 3.5 Improve grant management policies and procedures.
- 3.6 Enhance employee training on technology investments to improve the delivery of services.



Open Communities

Objective

4

Be transparent and accountable through the use of data.

Strategy

- 4.1 Foster a culture of using data and evidence to drive decisions and delivery of services.
- 4.2 Implement a data ethics policy to manage data use and safeguard privacy.
- 4.3 Enhance the collection, availability and transparency of Cook County's operational data.
- 4.4 Build capacity to integrate data analysis across all Cook County functions.

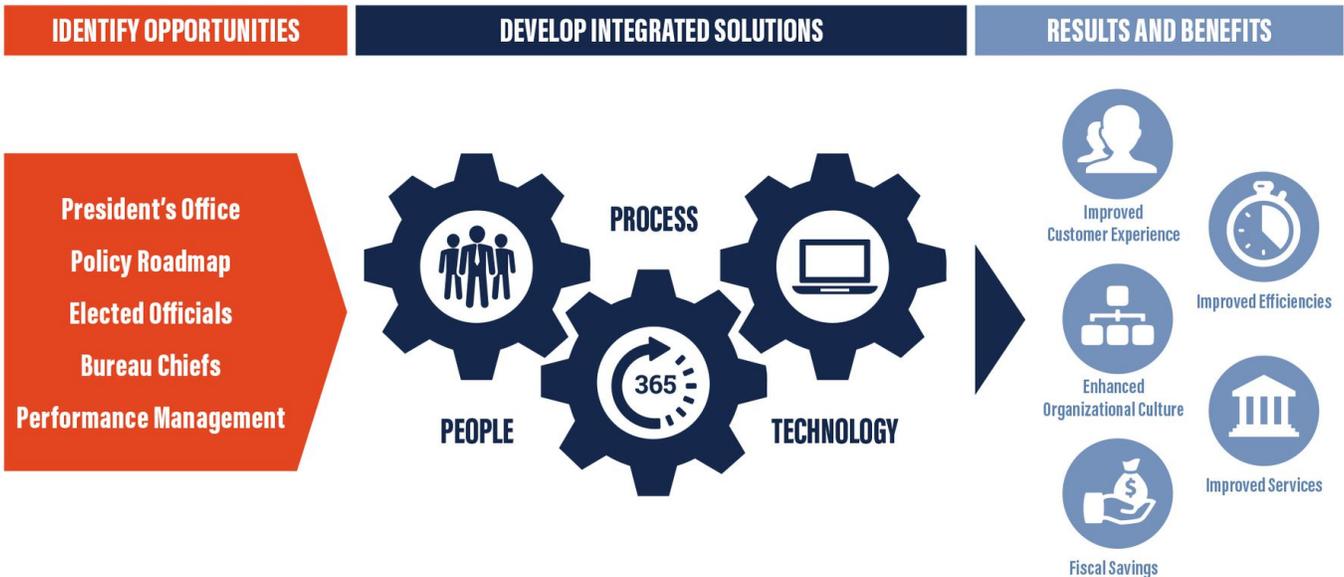


Figure 16, infographic demonstrating process flow of the new Office of Research, Operations and Innovation, beginning in December 2018.



Conclusion

The *Policy Roadmap* outlines our commitment to equity, engagement and excellence and will be our cornerstone for the next five years. We are excited to implement this vision and pledge to remain transparent and accountable to residents. Our public dashboard will launch in January 2019 (see fig. 17) to provide a tool residents can use to find data on the state of the County and the progress of our work. We will also integrate the *Policy Roadmap* with our existing performance management platform to provide a structure to measure, track and evaluate our goals. Additionally, we will publish annual progress reports to provide updates on how well we are achieving our ambitious goals and to share more details about specific programs and initiatives as they are developed and implemented.

The objectives and strategies outlined in this document provide concrete steps we will take to promote residents' health and wellness, foster economic and community development, simultaneously promote public safety and a fair justice system, protect the environment, be responsible stewards of our public assets and provide excellent service to our residents. The *Policy Roadmap* sets forth the Offices Under the President's vision for building vibrant, sustainable and inclusive communities where people want to live, learn, work and play. The vision set forth in this *Policy Roadmap* was inspired by our residents. We will proudly work towards equitable and sustainable communities for all residents.



Figure 17, mockup of new open performance website, which will feature an interactive public dashboard to measure the *Policy Roadmap*'s progress.

Appendix

Appendix A Goals, Objectives and Strategies

<p>Healthy Communities</p>	<p>Goal: Improve the physical, mental and social wellbeing of Cook County residents and communities.</p>
<p>Objective</p>	<p>Strategy</p>
<p>Reduce health inequities for all residents by addressing the racial disparities and the social, physical and economic conditions that impact health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Ensure all policies and practices address the root causes of health inequities. 1.2 Reduce barriers to accessing health services for all residents in order to improve their quality of life. 1.3 Support inter-agency coordination to maximize the impact of Cook County investments to address the root causes of health inequities. 1.4 Use data and public information to educate communities and raise awareness about health inequities negatively impacting vulnerable communities.
<p>Improve access to and integration of high-quality responsive healthcare and information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Enhance access to high-quality behavioral healthcare, trauma-informed services and mental healthcare. 2.2 Ensure a continuum of health-related services exists within Cook County to meet residents' needs, particularly those who are vulnerable or marginalized. 2.3 Explore new or developing models of care that increase access and expand ability to serve marginalized residents. 2.4 Enhance the language accessibility and cultural appropriateness of public health messaging so that all residents receive pertinent health information that they can understand. 2.5 Make quality health-related data widely accessible to promote a better understanding of residents' health and drive decision-making. 2.6 Provide accessible health consumer education to increase residents' ability to access health and wellness services.
<p>Support an active and healthy lifestyle and healthy communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Advocate for recreational opportunities and wellness programs that promote physical activity and improved health outcomes for all residents. 3.2 Improve access to healthy and affordable food options to reduce hunger and enable healthy living, especially within marginalized communities. 3.3 Promote accessible multi-modal transportation options, including walking and biking, that connect people to family, work and play. 3.4 Encourage a cleaner and more resilient environment to mitigate the harmful effects of pollution and climate change.
<p>Advocate for increased community safety through a public health approach to violence reduction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Address the root causes of violence through increased trauma awareness and trauma-informed care. 4.2 Encourage hospitals and healthcare providers to develop intervention models to reduce individual and community violence in areas of the highest need. 4.3 Support the implementation of the Chicago-Cook Task Force on Heroin recommendations regarding the heroin/opioid epidemic. 4.4 Promote the increased use of alternatives to detention in the criminal justice system, particularly for people struggling with mental health and substance abuse issues. 4.5 Partner with health stakeholders to improve access to employment in the health sector for individuals facing existing barriers, including young adults and people with criminal backgrounds.
<p>Improve the health and wellbeing of the Offices Under the President's workforce by fostering a supportive, healthy work culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Augment Cook County's existing wellness program to support employees' adoption of a healthy lifestyle. 5.2 Align OUP's personnel and operational policies with health-related and supportive best practices. 5.3 Increase the awareness and capacity of the Employee Assistance Program and other supportive programs for OUP employees. 5.4 Expand access to healthy, resource-efficient amenities in Cook County facilities to improve employees' workplace experience. 5.5 Prioritize employee wellbeing in workplace design.

Appendix A Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Vital Communities	Goal: Pursue inclusive economic and community growth by supporting residents, growing businesses, attracting investment and nurturing talent.
Objective	Strategy
Champion a regional approach to grow the economy and combat racial and economic inequality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Ensure equitable and inclusive policies and practices for recipients of Cook County resources. 1.2 Implement Racial Equity Assessments in planning and decision-making. 1.3 Restructure the economic development property tax and financial incentives to enhance investment in underserved communities and support key economic sectors. 1.4 Provide leadership and support for the Chicago Regional Growth Corporation. 1.5 Develop global trade programs to increase export and foreign direct investments in the region.
Grow key economic clusters by launching and supporting industry-led partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Identify, prioritize and support new and emerging sectors that lead to living wage jobs. 2.2 Create a center for industry partnerships to lead, coordinate and support key economic sectors' competitiveness, productivity, resiliency and adaptation to rapidly changing technology. 2.3 Promote targeted "shovel ready sites" through utility, transportation and environmental remediation investments. 2.4 Increase minority and women business ownership and labor force participation in sectors that offer living wage jobs.
Support expanded opportunities for local businesses, women- or minority-owned firms and firms owned by people living with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Expand Cook County's toolbox of available resources for small- and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurs. 3.2 Connect small businesses to banks, Community Development Financial Institutions, business incubators and worker cooperatives. 3.3 Align procurement and contract compliance policies to strengthen the minority, women and veteran business enterprise programs. 3.4 Encourage major corporations and non-profit organizations to use their purchasing power to strengthen their local communities and increase support to local, women- and minority-owned firms.
Invest in and support quality housing and core services to improve regional equity and access to opportunity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Advocate for fair housing practices across the region. 4.2 Increase funding for affordable housing and community development, ensuring investments are community-driven and maximize impact. 4.3 Eliminate barriers to participation and access in Cook County economic development programs. 4.4 Provide technical assistance to Cook County municipalities to identify needs and leverage resources. 4.5 Reactivate vacant land in Cook County.
Open access to economic prosperity for all by investing in workforce and talent development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Support industry-based training models that lead to industry-recognized credentials. 5.2 Align Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership's programs with Cook County's priority economic growth sectors. 5.3 Proactively identify opportunities to preserve jobs and increase wealth and prosperity for all residents. 5.4 Eliminate barriers to participation and access in Cook County workforce development and training programs.
Base transportation investments on their capacity to promote equitable economic growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1 Invest in opportunities that reduce the jobs/housing mismatch. 6.2 Facilitate multimodal transportation of goods and people within and beyond Cook County to encourage economic growth. 6.3 Expand alternative forms of transportation to improve residents' mobility.

Appendix A Goals, Objectives and Strategies

<p>Safe and Thriving Communities</p>	<p>Goal: Create safe communities and an equitable and fair justice system for all residents.</p>
<p>Objective</p>	<p>Strategy</p>
<p>Develop comprehensive and coordinated planning and preparedness activities to proactively address violence in highly impacted communities throughout Cook County.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Invest in a public health approach to reduce gun violence. 1.2 Ensure that access to resources and response capabilities to address violence and respond to emergencies are equitably distributed throughout Cook County. 1.3 Improve public safety planning and coordination to identify shared goals and maximize investments in suburban Cook County. 1.4 Use federal, state and local grant dollars to build capacity within municipalities to effectively address protective factors that prevent violence and justice involvement.
<p>Align criminal justice investments and strategies to prioritize the needs of individuals involved in the criminal justice system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Generate cost-savings through the reduction criminal justice system expenses and the consolidation of the criminal justice system. 2.2 Expand investment in community-based organizations, anti-violence prevention initiatives and reentry services to address root causes of violence. 2.3 Advocate for policies that decrease racial, ethnic and socio-economic disparities in the criminal justice system. 2.4 Advocate for criminal justice reform policies and legislation that are informed by data and research. 2.5 Promote community-based programs that use promising practices or are evidence-based. 2.6 Continue to safely reduce detention populations. 2.7 Develop a collaborative budgeting process and performance metrics for multi-agency criminal justice reform efforts.
<p>Increase alternatives to detention and access to supportive services for justice-involved residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Increase access to wraparound, case management and re-entry services. 3.2 Build the capacity of service providers in underserved areas of Cook County through technical assistance and funding. 3.3 Increase coordination between government agencies and service providers in the provision of services.
<p>Cultivate multidisciplinary collaboration to advance criminal justice reform that incorporates the voices of affected communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Incorporate the voices of impacted communities and people with lived experiences in criminal justice reform efforts and decision-making. 4.2 Increase inter-agency collaboration within Cook County to meet the needs of justice-involved individuals. 4.3 Support the creation of a Cook County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), responsible for planning and coordinating criminal justice reform.
<p>Inform criminal justice decision-making by improving collection, analysis, interagency sharing and public release of justice-related data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Advocate for Cook County agencies to review current data collection procedures, including abilities, capacity and barriers, and implement necessary changes. 5.2 Improve residents' experience utilizing the court system and accessing needed information. 5.3 Maximize the use of Cook County's data sharing platform to enhance the exchange of timely and relevant data and information between criminal justice stakeholders. 5.4 Encourage the creation of a publicly available dashboard and reports on the criminal justice system, including aggregated data by race, ethnicity, gender, age and geography at each point of the system to educate and inform the public.

Appendix A Goals, Objectives and Strategies

<p>Sustainable Communities</p>	<p>Goal: Support healthy, resilient communities that thrive economically, socially, and environmentally.</p>
<p>Objective</p>	<p>Strategy</p>
<p>Ensure environmental justice and a healthy environment for all people and places.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Address communities' environmental priorities and identify their assets and vulnerabilities. 1.2 Offer programs that reduce exposure to pollution, with priority given to environmental justice areas. 1.3 Decrease financial and informational barriers to environmental benefits to ensure equal access to services and resources. 1.4 Invest in ecological restoration and stewardship to protect native habitats and species and to reduce the adverse impacts of invasive species.
<p>Promote livable, sustainable land use, transportation policy and economic development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Incorporate environmental impact as a key criterion when making economic development decisions. 2.2 Increase access to open spaces, greenways and trails, prioritizing areas where open space is currently limited. 2.3 Support transportation and land use policy that prioritizes efficient use of land and the connectivity between jobs, transportation and land use.
<p>Reduce climate change and provide ways to mitigate its effects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Advocate for increased energy efficiency across all sectors. 3.2 Prioritize energy efficiency and renewable energy development. 3.3 Invest in transportation systems that decrease emissions. 3.4 Develop a plan to address community, business, and infrastructure vulnerabilities due to climate change.
<p>Capture the job and economic growth potential of making Cook County more sustainable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Develop workforce programs that provide residents with skills and credentials to obtain green jobs. 4.2 Attract quality green sector jobs to the metropolitan region. 4.3 Develop equitable, healthy and sustainable local food systems to improve resident health and create economic opportunity.
<p>Create enduring capacity in government and communities to build a sustainable and resilient future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Integrate sustainability measures, such as energy and water use reduction, waste management and recycling, into every Cook County department's operations. 5.2 Incentivize sustainability in Cook County purchasing. 5.3 Support federal, state and local efforts to advance sustainability policies informed by data and science. 5.4 Partner with municipalities and community-based organizations to build regional capacity including renewable energy, energy and water efficiency, waste reduction and recycling.

Appendix A Goals, Objectives and Strategies

<p>Smart Communities</p>	<p>Goal: Provide an innovative infrastructure that will change how we live, work and connect.</p>
<p>Objective</p>	<p>Strategy</p>
<p>Promote an equitable and growing economy through investments in Cook County infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Prioritize transit-oriented development in infrastructure investments, ensuring access for all residents. 1.2 Invest in the improvement of under-developed land throughout Cook County to promote community and economic development. 1.3 Use public-private partnerships to spur economic opportunity and generate revenue on Cook County assets. 1.4 Coordinate the development of public infrastructure projects across all levels of government. 1.5 Connect land maintenance and land use development efforts to employment and job training opportunities for Cook County residents, especially those from marginalized communities.
<p>Better serve residents by investing in and deploying proven technology infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Ensure digital access to Cook County services for all residents. 2.2 Provide residents an excellent user experience when accessing online Cook County resources. 2.3 Prioritize resident ease of access by integrating Cook County building and technology design. 2.4 Increase the quality and effectiveness of services by using data in long-term infrastructure planning. 2.5 Integrate technology and workplace design to transform Cook County operations. 2.6 Minimize environmental impacts of facilities by adopting technology that reduces energy and water consumption and diverts waste.
<p>Increase accessibility and connectivity through seamless transportation of passengers and goods throughout Cook County and the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Coordinate transportation investments across jurisdictions within the metropolitan region. 3.2 Provide technical assistance and funding to other municipalities to promote seamless transportation throughout the region. 3.3 Implement the Long Range Transportation Plan to address gaps in transportation networks to ensure equitable access for residents. 3.4 Integrate future transportation technologies into public infrastructure planning and development. 3.5 Redesign facilities to enable public transit, bicycle and pedestrian access to Cook County facilities.
<p>Responsibly steward Cook County's resources by increasing the value of Cook County's assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Use data to make transportation and energy use more efficient. 4.2 Increase the resiliency of Cook County infrastructure by fostering partnerships with public, private and non-profit stakeholders. 4.3 Conduct a thorough valuation of all Cook County assets to capture market value. 4.4 Promote and develop public art and civic engagement in Cook County facilities. 4.5 Invest in and integrate high-speed technology infrastructure in Cook County roads and buildings.

Appendix A Goals, Objectives and Strategies

<p>Open Communities</p>	<p>Goal: Ensure that Cook County provides responsive, transparent services and develops a thriving, professional workforce that reflects the communities served.</p>
<p>Objective</p>	<p>Strategy</p>
<p>Make doing business with Cook County simple, transparent and accessible for residents, municipalities and businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Make all Cook County services accessible to residents with disabilities and non-English speakers. 1.2 Improve in-person and virtual customer experience for residents interacting with Cook County. 1.3 Publicize Cook County initiatives and services to increase public awareness. 1.4 Coordinate media messaging, branding and communications. 1.5 Implement a public engagement process to reflect residents' interests and needs. 1.6 Streamline the procurement process to make it more efficient and accessible.
<p>Attract and support a diverse, compassionate, high-quality workforce to improve the delivery of services to residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Increase the quality of services through employee training. 2.2 Develop an internal communication strategy to improve OUP employees' understanding of County services in order to foster a constituent-centric culture. 2.3 Ensure uniformity in employee evaluation process. 2.4 Ensure alignment of job descriptions with current operational needs of the County. 2.5 Foster a culture of continuous improvement for employees. 2.6 Formalize organizational structure that encourages interagency coordination and improves visibility to the public.
<p>Ensure the best use of taxpayer dollars by promoting responsible and innovative fiscal management practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Routinely identify revenue opportunities and areas for cost-savings. 3.2 Ensure transparency and accountability around core financial transactions. 3.3 Create a standardized purchasing program among local governments to streamline the procurement process and increase equity in purchasing. 3.4 Use technology to more efficiently manage accounting and reduce transactional costs. 3.5 Improve grant management policies and procedures. 3.6 Enhance employee training on technology investments to improve the delivery of services.
<p>Be transparent and accountable through the use of data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Foster a culture of using data and evidence to drive decisions and delivery of services. 4.2 Implement a data ethics policy to manage data use and safeguard privacy. 4.3 Enhance the collection, availability and transparency of Cook County's operational data. 4.4 Build capacity to integrate data analysis across all Cook County functions.

Appendix B Acknowledgments

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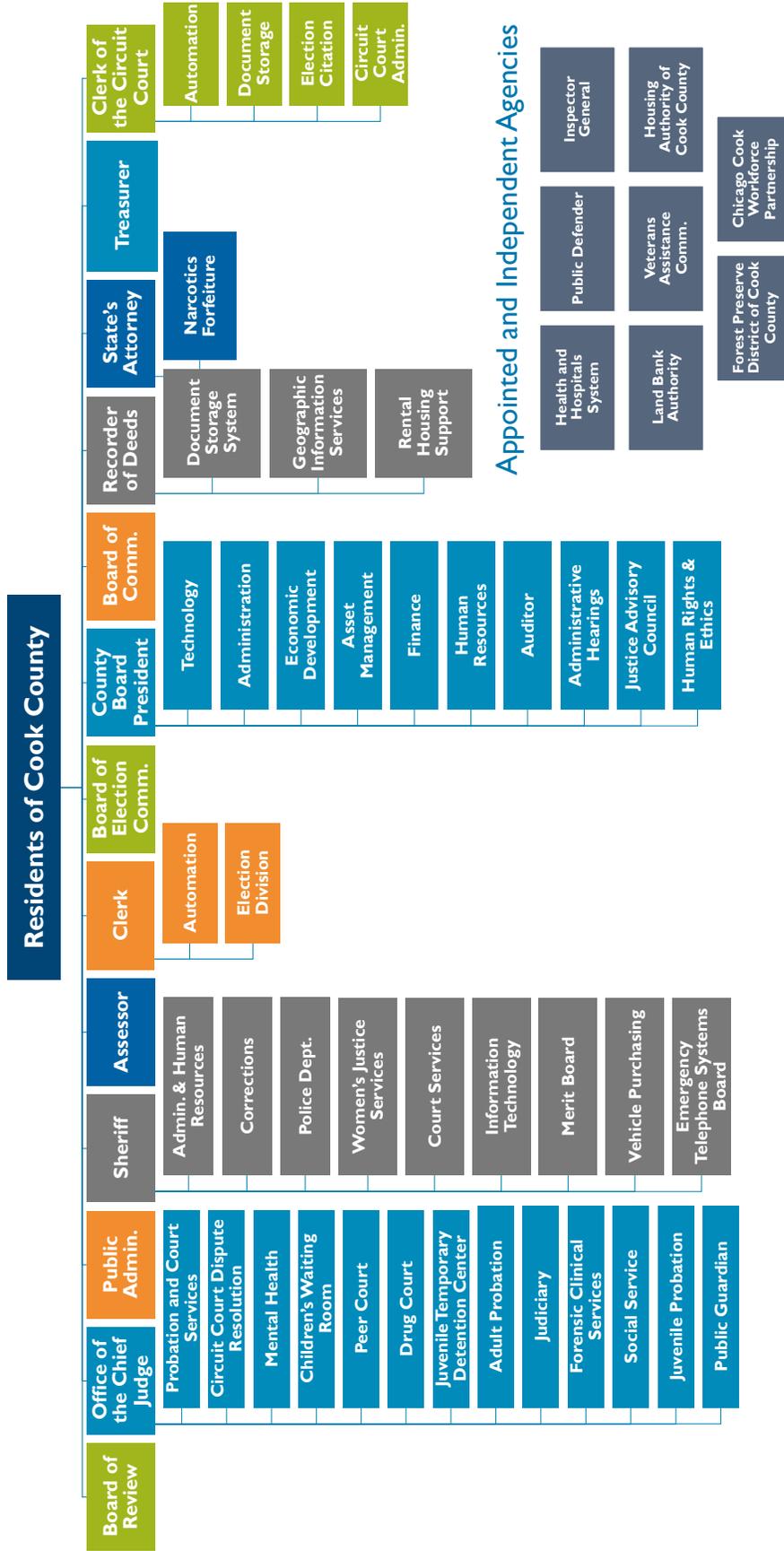
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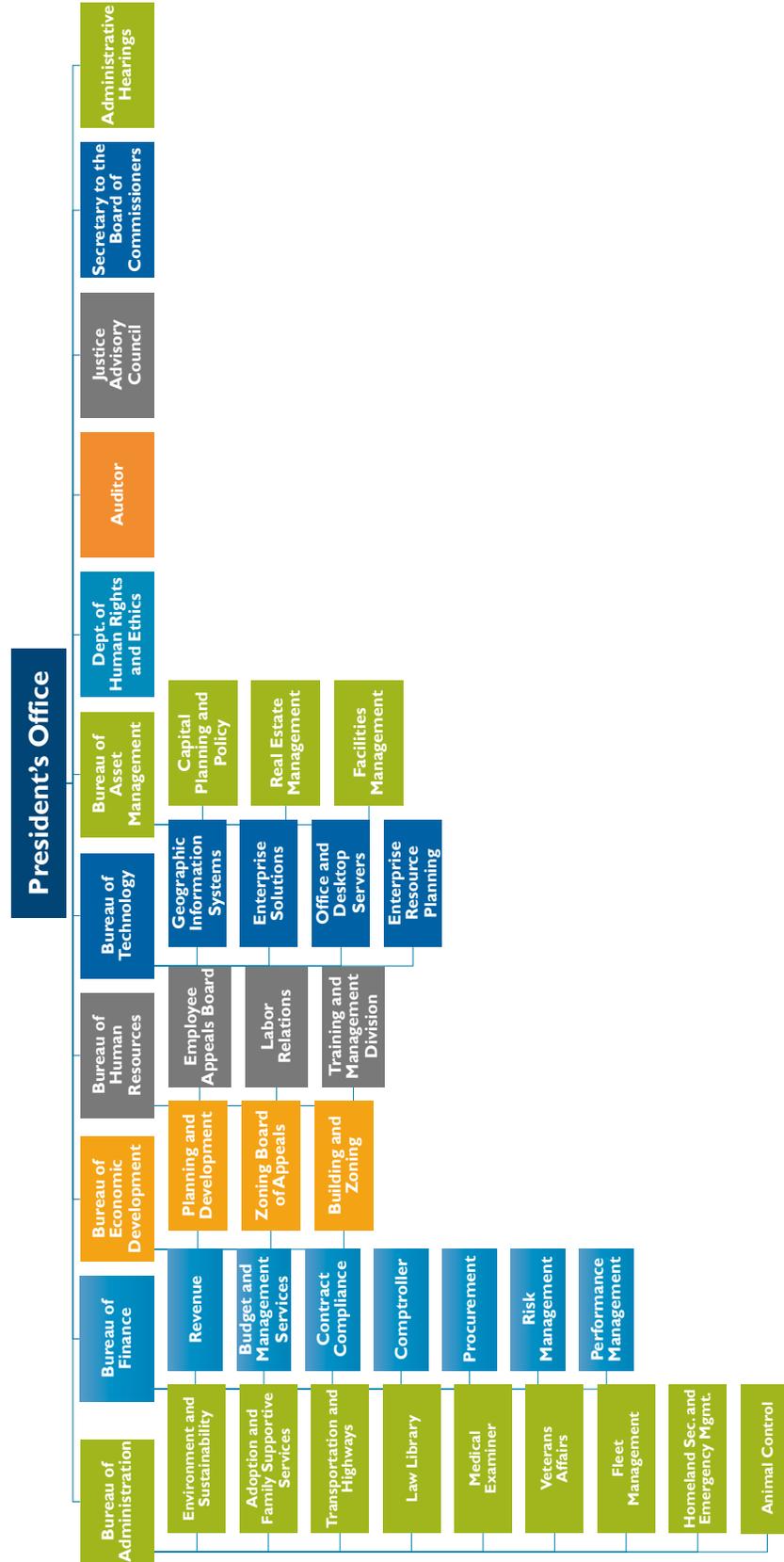
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Cook County Government



Offices Under the President



Appendix D

Endnotes

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Cook County, Illinois.
- 2 2012–2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.
- 3 Connecting Cook County.
- 4 U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Cook County, Illinois.
- 5 Terpstra, Clary, and Kreisburg.
- 6 Terpstra, Clary, and Kreisburg.
- 7 This number represents the portion of the operating budget devoted to criminal justice and healthcare when capital, debt service and pension-related payments are excluded and all other fixed charges are included.
- 8 The Recorder of Deeds’ office duties will be assumed by the Cook County Clerk’s office in 2020, following the merging of the two offices.
- 9 Constitution of the World Health Organization: Principles.
- 10 Healthy Places.
- 11 Map the Meal Gap.
- 12 Trends in Infant Mortality in the United States, 2005–20
- 13 Riddell, Harper and Kaufman.
- 14 U.S. Small-Area Life Expectancy Estimates Project (USALEEP): Life Expectancy Estimates File for Cook County, 2010–2015.
- 15 Cost of Segregation.
- 16 Morelix, Hwang and Tareque
- 17 Cook County’s Criminal Justice System Trends and Issues Report.
- 18 Louv.

Appendix E

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APPENDIX B

Building a health equity practice at the Cook County Department of Public Health: Summary of the Roots of Health Inequity Dialogues

The Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) is using the online course Roots of Health Inequity for the public health workforce, to accomplish three goals:

1. change the way staff think about public health;
2. change the way staff practice public health;
3. apply health equity principles to their daily work.

Chief Operating Officer Terry Mason, MD, required that all staff participate in the training in a memo to staff in October, 2017. Dr. Mason noted that health equity is a priority of WePlan2020, the CCDPH community health assessment and plan. Increasing the integration of a health equity approach by first training staff is also a quality improvement and workforce development priority for CCDPH.

Key components of the CCDPH Roots of Health Inequity Dialogues included

- the creation of 12 small groups for in-person discussion,
- a leadership committee to guide the initiative,
- training of staff who served as facilitators,
- design of an evaluation component,
- a Syllabus and CCDPH Health Equity Guide.

Learning took place through independent study of the free online material located at

www.RootsofHealthInequity.org.

Meetings of small groups of employees took place about every six weeks.

Twelve small groups with 8 to 20

participants were formed. The small-group approach accomplished two things: dialogue and discussion was maximized, while disruption of regular

“Advancing health equity in suburban Cook County requires that we change the way we think about and practice public health.” Dr. Terry Mason

duties and health department functions were minimized. To reduce travel time, staff were assigned to a small group based on their normal workplace location.

Reliance on CCDPH staff to facilitate discussions provided an opportunity for 22 co-facilitators to develop leadership skills. It reduced the need to use scarce resources to pay for external facilitation. The “insider” knowledge of the Co-Facilitators—most of whom have years of experience working at CCDPH—ensures that dialogue leaders understand the institutional culture. That knowledge increases the likelihood of examining real barriers to institutional change, as well as creating opportunities for organizational transformation. Participants know that Co-Facilitators are co-workers, rather than consultants who may not understand the context of day-to-day work, and who may be perceived as ‘here today, gone tomorrow.’ After receiving their assignments, Co-Facilitators met as a group over several months in 2017 to become familiar with the Roots course, and to develop & strengthen skills including use of the ORID (objective, reflective, interpretive,

and decisional) method of focused discussion.

A five-member Praxis equity implementation group includes senior leadership, and meets to address logistics, monitor progress, and address issues that may arise. For example, after the second round of small group meetings, the group modified the evaluation component to increase the opportunity for participant feedback in writing. The Praxis group is guiding Units in CCDPH to develop goals for change based on new insights gained from the agency-wide dialogues.

Evaluation has been included from the start of the Roots initiative. Data collected for evaluation included Pre- and Post-tests for Co-Facilitators and for participants, sign in sheets for small group meetings, and agendas and open ended questions for every meeting for Co-Facilitators and for participants.

Following the recommendation of National Association of County & City Health Officials, and in the footsteps of Doak Bloss formerly of Ingham County (Michigan) Public Health Department, **the aim of the small groups was to create dialogue** based on mutual respect, not passive absorption of information. Dialogues were based on Guidelines for Positive and Productive Dialogues, which is part of the Roots Syllabus. Meetings 1-6 involved an orientation meeting in order to level-set, followed by meetings aligned with each of the five units in the online Roots of Health Inequities course focused around overarching themes such as: framing, public health history, root causes, and social justice. Meetings 7 and 8 provide facilitated discussion to develop staff

ideas for changes that can be made at the individual, unit, and agency levels in order to advance health equity. This data was reviewed by the coordinating group in order to develop suggested priorities/strategies for the agency and for unit directors. Unit directors have been asked to identify and develop ways to integrate health equity into the work of their units.

All new hires are included in dialogues in order to maintain the base of knowledge and understanding of health equity principles, concepts and values.

Accomplishments:

- 22 Co-Facilitators trained
- All staff registered online at www.rootsofhealthinequity.com
- 12 Roots online groups created
- Meetings 1-6 held (12 groups x 6 meetings) equals 72 individual small group meetings held
- Meeting of first dialogue group for new hires in progress
- Presentations annual meetings of the Illinois Public Health Association and American Public Health Associations in 2019.

For information, please contact:

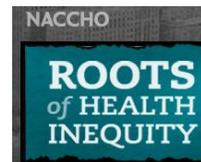
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Roots of Health Inequity Dialogues: Syllabus

Cook County
Department of Public Health



Cook County DEPT. of
Public Health
Promoting health. Preventing disease. Protecting you.



November, 2017

This syllabus will guide you through the Roots of Health Inequity Dialogues course.

The Role of Public Health & Why It Matters

The public health community has played a central role in pushing for reforms in health equity and social justice since the 19th century in response to industrialized capitalism. Some examples of the results fought for include introducing housing and factory codes, abolishing child labor, and implementing food safety protocol. With a growing degree of social and economic inequality in the US today, rates of disease and illness for those with lower socioeconomic status are worsening across the country. This is large part due to the global recession, high levels of unemployment, and continued wage depression leading to an inequitable gap in illness and disease. In the 21st century there have been many advances in public health, yet oppressed and marginalized populations still lack agency and face numerous health inequities as a result. There is much work to be done and this training aims to face these inequities by addressing them at their root causes.

Purpose of This Training

The Roots of Health Inequity Dialogues was developed by the National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO) to train local public health workers how to identify and address the root causes of public health inequities in the distribution of disease, illness, and death. This training highlights social justice as the most important undertaking health workers can take on to make communities healthier. According to the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health Final Report, “Social justice is a matter of life and death. It affects the way people live, their consequent chance of illness, and their risk of premature death.” Morbidity and life expectancy is deeply tied to the lived experience and social injustices faced. Class oppression, racism, and gender inequity in particular lead to numerous health inequities. Being able to identify social injustice as the root cause of health discrepancies is crucial to making effective public health changes. This curriculum prompts participants on how our institutions set the foundations for the possibility for healthy or unhealthy lives, laying the preconditions for production and transmission of disease (NACCHO 2016).

Expectations of participants:

- Work online independently on the five Roots Units
- When going through units pay extra attention to bolded questions to be ready to discuss them in your small group meetings
- Come prepared and on time to group meetings
- Follow rules for productive and respectful dialogues
- Contribute your opinion and point of view, as well as listen to those of your coworkers
- Support the Co-Facilitators as they work to create dialogues that help the group learn and discuss challenging topics together
- Ask for help when you need it

Concepts & Definitions

Health - Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, and a fundamental human right (World Health Organization 1978).

Health disparities - Simply differences in health outcomes with no political implications. Health inequities, by definition, involve issues of social injustice (NACCHO 2016).

Health equity - There are numerous definitions of health equity. The World Health Organization defines health equity “as the absence of systematic and potentially remediable differences in one or more aspects of health across populations or population groups defined socially, economically, demographically, or geographically.” Dr. Camara Jones, Morehouse College, states “Health equity is assurance of the conditions for optimal health for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing all individuals and populations equally, recognizing and rectifying historical injustices, and providing resources according to need” (NACCHO 2016).

Health inequity – Health inequity refers to differences in population health status and mortality rates that are systemic, patterned, unjust, and actionable. Health inequities, most importantly, are not the result of unfortunate, random events or differences caused by individual behavior or genetics. Health inequities, by definition, involve issues of social injustice (NACCHO 2016).

Structural racism - A fundamental cause of health inequity, associated with imbalances in political power throughout society. It functions to normalize and legitimize cultural, institutional, and personal hierarchies and inequity that routinely advantage whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse health outcomes for people of color. Structural racism perpetuates residential segregation, concentrated poverty, disinvestment in neighborhoods, and targeting neighborhoods for toxic waste— all issues related to serious health outcomes (NACCHO 2016).

Meeting 1

Welcome to CCDPH Roots of Health Inequity Dialogues

The goal of this session is to introduce participants to the topics addressed in the training, to set expectations, and to assist participants in setting up accounts in the Roots of Health Inequity module online. Co-facilitators will set the stage for the curriculum ahead and answer questions.

Meeting 1 Objectives/Activities:

1. Understand the purpose of the Dialogues: Transforming practice to achieve the CCDPH Mission.
2. Register for the NACCHO Online course www.RootsofHealthInequity.org
3. Describe the roles of co-facilitators and role of participants
4. Be able to describe the learning philosophy of **the dialogues-co-creators of knowledge**
5. Begin to use the ORID method of focused conversation.
6. Discussion of rules for respectful and productive dialogues
7. Make any group decisions that might needed.

The screenshot shows the login page for the 'Roots of Health Inequity' website. The header features the logo 'ROOTS of HEALTH INEQUITY' and the subtitle 'A Web-Based Course for the Public Health Workforce'. Navigation links include 'Create new account', 'Log in', and 'Request new password'. The main heading reads 'Welcome, please log in.' Below this, a paragraph describes the course as an online course for the public health workforce, containing five units on social justice. A login form is present with fields for 'Email Address *' (containing 'jbloyd@cookcountyhhs.org') and 'Password *' (masked with dots). A 'Log in' button is below the form. To the right, there are sections for 'Help Guides' (with links to visual guides, course features, and FAQs) and 'About the Course' (with links to technical requirements and contact information). A 'QUICK START FOR NEW USERS' section is partially visible at the bottom.

Meeting 2:

Unit 1 Where Do We Start?

The goal of this unit is to provide a forum in which your team can have a thoughtful discussion on the roots of health inequity. This will hopefully inform your work and provide some resources and strategies that will provide support as you develop your own ideas about the fundamental social injustices and institutional manifestations that generate these inequities. Addressing health inequities will apply directly to your public health work as you remain dedicated to eliminating them in disease and illness.

Learning Objectives for this unit:

- Identify methods for beginning to shift public health practice and organizational culture toward the elimination of health inequity.
- Examine approaches to addressing how "privilege" and "power" affect your capacity to act on the root causes of health inequity.
- Describe the components of community capacity and community engagement.
- Describe how political pressure influences public health practice.



Activities and Discussions - Unit 1: “Where Do We Start?”

Biggest Obstacles Poll

Inspire Change from Within (includes Doak Bloss slides: “Revealing Oppression: Definitions”)

- Objective:** What stands out to you about this slide?
- Reflective:** What was clear to you? What was confusing?
- Intentional:** What is important about this activity? How does this discussion apply to our own work?
- Discussion:** What do you think this means for us as we go forward in our learning group?

Discussion: Confront Unearned Privilege [discussion]

Authentic Community Engagement

- O:** What do you notice about these terms?
- R:** Did any of these terms help clarify concepts for you? Do you find any unclear?
- I:** How do you define community in your life? What is a community you belong to? How does belonging to this community affect your life?
- I:** How are we already engaged in authentic community engagement in our work?
- D:** How can we improve and increase our organization’s ability to create

A Neighborhood Fights Back [Interactive]

Share Your Experience [Discussion]

Competing Interests and Political Pressures

Political Pressure Points [Discussion]

Voices From the Field: Dr. Renee Canady [Audio, transcript]

Meeting 3

Unit 2. Perspectives on Framing

In this unit, we will discuss how underlying thoughts and pre-determined ways of thinking can shape programmatic planning, policy making, priority setting, research, and resource allocation. In the process we will explore the implications of defining public health “problems” as issues of social injustice.

Learning objectives for this unit:

- Define a mental “frame” in reference to public health practices.
- Determine how particular frames influence public health practice and research.
- Recognize the role of language in framing the issues.
Challenge hidden, long-held, or recently established frames that maintain health inequity.

Activities and Discussions - Unit 2: Perspectives on Framing

What is a Frame?

Why is it Important to Explore Frames?

What is Framing?

Frames, Framing, & the Role of Language

Recognizing Frames Through Language Activity

Comparison: Recognizing Frames Through Language Activity

- **Objective - What stood out to you in this activity?**
- **Reflective/Interpretive - What similar terms or phrases do you frequently encounter in your work?**

Defining Public Health Issues

Aligning Frames Video Clips & Discussion: Water Rights and Diabetes in Arizona; Diabetes Among Native Americans

Voices: Dr Linda Rae Murray, MD MPH

- **Objective - What stands out to you from the presentation?**
- **Reflective - What makes you feel concerned? What makes you feel inspired?**
- **Interpretive - How does this presentation influence your thoughts your organization’s work in addressing health inequities?**
- **Decisional - What is one key lesson from the presentation that you want to apply to your work?**

Meeting 4

Unit 3 Public Health History

The goal for this unit is for you to become familiar with both the broad evolution of public health and the definitions of appropriate and effective public health practice. We will then question whether these definitions are fixed or inevitable.

Learning objectives for this unit:

- Appreciate the evolution of public health since the 19th century.
- Understand how public health relates to the broader social history of the times, including the conflicts with industry, government, and the medical profession. Recognize the ongoing tension between the demands for a science-based public health system and one engaged more deeply in the political process.
- **1, 2, and 4 Discussion from the examples**

Activities and Discussions - Unit 3: Public Health History

Introduction: Learning From History

Connecting the Past and the Present (Explore the Timeline)

Discussion: Thoughts About the Presentation

Introduction: Legacies of Social Injustice, Discuss Each of 4

1850's to 1870's: Structural Racism and the Transcontinental Railroad & 1900's Exposing Structural Racism at the Turn of the Century

- **We've covered a lot of information in these examples.**
- **What is one story that stands out to you?**
- **What new insights do you have based on what you read, saw and heard?**
- **How might you apply the information to your work?**

1870s to 1950s Discovery of the Causes and Cures of Infectious Diseases & 1940s and 1950s Growth of Social Determinants of Health Inequities

- **Of everything you saw and read in the presentation, what stands out for you as particularly surprising or important?**
- **What did each example reveal about who had the power to make decisions that affect health and well being?**
- **Identify the institutions that held power and how their decision-making affected health.**
- **What are the connections between elements of the examples used here and the public health problems you encounter today?**

Discussion: Thoughts About the Examples

Video: The House we Live in Clip

Voices from the Field: Josy Hahn, MPH

Meeting 5

Unit 4 Root Causes

This three-part unit features presentations that examine root causes of health inequity: class oppression, racism, and gender inequity. You will be asked to review the presentations, explore the issues raised, and notice connections among different forms of social injustice and how they relate to public health's capacity to take action. Discussion questions emphasize the implications for practice.

Learning objectives for this unit:

- Identify and define root causes of health inequities and their relevance and relationship to public health practice.
- Develop strategies that address the root of injustices to break the ongoing cycle of those inequities, even if in small ways.
-

Activities and Discussions - Unit 4: Root Causes

What is Class?

Implications for Health and Well Being

"Hidden Injuries" of a Class Society

- Objective:** What conditions do workers require to thrive?
- Reflective:** What barriers do they face?
- Interpretive:**
- Decisional:** What steps could your unit take to ameliorate health inequities due to class?

Racism: Introduction

Hurricane Katrina: The Unnatural Disaster?

- What was most striking to you as you reviewed the maps?**
- How is the displacement caused by Hurricane Katrina an issue of social injustice? In what ways was social justice an issue long before the hurricane arrived?**
- For public health, how is Katrina an issue of long-term preparedness? In what ways is preparedness a question of setting the foundations for health, independent of any potential disaster?**

Gender Inequity: Introduction

Employment Discrimination: Paid Sick Days- Portia Wi Audio Clip

Video & Discussion: Women Tell Their Stories

Social Justice at Work: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Populations

Meeting 6

Unit 5 Social Justice

You will explore the basic principles of social justice and learn why they are central to public health. One goal of social justice is to end processes that systematically marginalize, exploit, and condemn people to subordinate positions. Beyond reforming institutions, modern conceptions of social justice require evaluating the operation of society's institutions at their core rather than at the margins.

Learning objectives for this unit:

- List four principles of social justice.
- Identify specific ways in which social justice principles might be applied to elements of everyday practice.
- Recognize the difference between social justice and other approaches to public health practice.
- Examine the underlying assumptions, features, and values of a social justice approach to public health practice and contemplate how it relates to everyday work.

- **Activities and Discussions - Unit 5: "Social Justice"**

Social Justice and Public Health

Principles of Social Justice

Discussion: Describe your Experiences and Expectations

Five Faces of Oppression

Social Injustice in Your Jurisdiction

- **1. In relation to the five types of oppression discussed above, how would you describe the nature of social injustices and oppression in Cook County?**
- **2. How are these forms of oppression a public health issue?**
- **3. In what ways can public health use its access to data and knowledge to eliminate these types of oppression?**
- **4. What kind of educational campaigns might the health department conduct in order to do this?**

Tackle Causes of Social Injustice

Why is the Water Toxic?

Remediation vs. Social Justice

Considering Your Approach to Social Justice

Elements and Characteristics of this Approach

- **1. What are some ways in which your department is taking some of the actions described above?**
 - **2. What other actions would you like your LHD to address and what benchmarks would you establish to evaluate how well your LHD did on these dimensions?**
 - **3. What changes in policy, organizational culture, or institutional processes and practices would show alignment with and manifestation of social justice principles?**
 - **4. What would need to happen for public health practice in your jurisdiction to be transformed to act on social injustice and its root causes?**
-



Meetings 7 & 8

Conclusion: Transforming public health practice at CCDPH to achieve health equity

The goal of these sessions is to examine recent examples of public health efforts that created positive change through advocating for health equity and developing programs that give agency and empower oppressed groups. These sessions will outline ways in which participants can reclaim the health narrative to advocate and lead the charge for change in their communities.

Proposed Objectives/ Activities:

- Evaluation
- Questions we have: How do I apply this to my work? My program? Other questions...
- What would work that is focused on health equity look like in each unit within the health department?
- What are ways that CCDPH can measure improvement (or worsening) in health equity?
- Identify strategies to increase support for health equity within Cook County.
- What are three steps towards a practice based on achieving health equity that each unit can take?
- Review DRAFT plans and steps created by units
- Receive certificate of completion
- Recommendations from the group to CCDPH: Next steps? Future dialogue topic suggestions?
- Recognition of the co-facilitators
- Recognition of the participants
- Other potential goals and activities to be determined...



COOK COUNTY COMMITTEE
ON ADDRESSING
**BIAS, EQUITY, &
CULTURAL COMPETENCY**

APPENDIX C

**Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender
Bias, Equity and Cultural Competency Activities**

Professional Development:

Prof. Destiny Peery *Cognitive and Implicit Bias: Effects on Decision-Making for Lawyers* 08/27/2019
Nutshell 3 hours

Terry Soto & Jose Wilson *Uncovering and Challenging Our Implicit Biases* 08/21/2018 Nutshell 3 hours

Jose Wilson *Racism & Racial Microaggression* 69 W. Washington 01/24/2018 2 hours

Edwin Burnette *Bias Free Representation* 08/29/2017 Nutshell 1.5 hours

Kimberly Papillon *Neuroscience of Decision Making and the Law* 09/21/2016 69 W. Washington 3.5 hours

Additionally, staff is sent to various seminars and professional development courses throughout the year where bias, equity and cultural competency presentations are part of the trainings.

Finally, the Office is actively engaged in the MacArthur Safety and Justice challenge which also address these matters.

COMMUNITY DOCUMENTARY MOVIE SCREENING:

“13TH” and panel discussion on Tuesday, January 17, 2017 from 4:45 PM to 8:00 PM at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 East Washington Street, Claudia Cassidy Theater 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL 60602

Movie Critic Owen Gleiberman explains that not only does “13TH” document the present state of mass incarceration, but the film also examines every link in the chain of how we got there, including reconstruction, Jim Crow, the “war on drugs,” the 1994 Crime Bill, and prison privatization.

The panelists included (and their positions at that time): Public Defender Amy P. Campanelli, with Kwame Raoul, Illinois State Senator; Professor Dave Olsen, Loyola University; Jennifer Vollen-Katz, John Howard Association of Illinois; Eddie Bocanegra, YMCA Chicago; and Victor Dickson, Safer Foundation.

Lunch Time Movies Shown Simultaneously at Every Location (with popcorn donated by management):

“*The Murder of Fred Hampton*” Wednesday, January 17, 2018, at Noon and 3:00 p.m.
“*The Murder of Fred Hampton*” is a 1971 documentary film which began with the intention of portraying Fred Hampton and the Illinois Black Panther Party. During the film's production, Hampton was assassinated by the Chicago Police Department

“*The Price of the Ticket*” Thursday, February 21, 2019, at Noon
“*The Price of the Ticket*” is a movie about James Baldwin. Baldwin (1924-1987) was at once a major twentieth century American author, a Civil Rights activist and, for two crucial decades, a prophetic voice calling Americans, Black and white, to confront their shared racial tragedy. JAMES BALDWIN: THE PRICE OF A TICKET captures on film the passionate intellect and courageous writing of a man who was born Black, impoverished, gay and gifted.

"A Class Apart" Thursday, September 5, 2019, at Noon

"A Class Apart" is the first major film to bring to life the heroic post-World War II struggles of Mexican Americans against the Jim Crow-style discrimination targeted against them, *A Class Apart* is built around the landmark 1951 legal case *Hernandez v. Texas*, in which an underdog band of Mexican Americans from Texas bring a case all the way to the Supreme Court - and win.

Book Club:

"Just Mercy" by Bryan Stevenson. Discussion on Thursday, May 10, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. at Wishbone Restaurant, 1000 South Washington, Chicago, IL 60607

Summary: The true measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned. Simply punishing the broken only ensures that they remain broken and we do, too. Each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done.

"Tell me How it Ends, An Essay in Forty Questions" by Valeria Luiselli. Discussion on Thursday, August 30, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. at Cocula Restaurant, 2200 S. California (California and Cermak), Chicago, IL 60623

Summary: Structured around the forty questions Luiselli translates and asks undocumented Latin American children facing deportation, *Tell Me How It Ends* humanizes these young migrants and highlights the contradiction between the idea of America as a fiction for immigrants and the reality of racism and fear—both here and back home.

"Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood" by Trevor Noah. Discussion will be on Thursday, April 11, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. at Nando's Peri Peri, 953 W. Randolph, Chicago.

Summary: In his 2016 memoir *Born a Crime*, comedian Trevor Noah recounts his childhood in South Africa under the apartheid government and the first few years of democratic rule by the nation's black majority. Born in 1984 to a black Xhosa mother and a white Swiss expatriate father, Noah is not merely an anomaly in apartheid South Africa; his existence is actually illegal because the regime outlawed relationships between people of different races. While the 18 chapters of *Born a Crime* generally trace Noah's childhood from his birth to the beginning of his comedy career after high school, they consist of vignettes rather than a linear story. Each chapter also begins with a short preface, generally about the social and historical context behind the events Noah recounts.

Locking up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America, James Forman, Jr. Discussion on Thursday, August 1, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. at Pompei, 1531 W. Taylor St., Chicago, IL 60607.

Summary: An examination of the historical roots of contemporary criminal justice in the U.S., based on vast experience and deep knowledge of the legal system, and its often-devastating consequences for citizens and communities of color.



COOK COUNTY COMMITTEE
ON ADDRESSING
**BIAS, EQUITY, &
CULTURAL COMPETENCY**

APPENDIX D

Equity in Cook County

A strategic roadmap for integrating data-driven equity initiatives into County policy.

JANUARY 16, 2019

Prepared for:

Cook County Commission on Social Innovation

Report by:

Alberto I. Rincon



COOK COUNTY COMMISSION ON
SOCIAL INNOVATION



HARVARD Kennedy School
JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

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Executive Summary

Background

The Cook County Commission on Social Innovation was established by ordinance in 2016 to seek knowledge-based, innovation-driven solutions to social problems. Despite its successes to date, the Commission suggested that policy related to the broader issue of equity is too limited in scope. For instance, Cook County, as the second largest county in the United States, remains absent an institutional mechanism for integrating equity into its goal-setting, policy-making, and operational processes. Here, our working definition of “equity” refers to a state in which all County residents have verifiable and equal access to essential goods & services, and face no discriminatory treatment based on identity, location, or class. Achieving this results in “a society [where] all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.”¹

Specifically, members of the Commission raised concerns over public spending that fails to sustainably address equity and faces little accountability. For example: Transit Oriented Development (TOD) incentives are displacing the low-income populations that need public transportation the most due to fast-rising housing costs.^{2,3,4} Another example: a pharmacy chain in a senior-citizen occupied pharmacy desert was built using tax dollars, but it caused the sole neighborhood pharmacy to shut down, and the chain later closed due to poor sales.⁵ Nevertheless, the County Office of the President (COP) has begun to narrowly address equity by planning to become a member of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, mandate implicit bias training, establish a Racial Equity Leadership Council, and adopt a Racial Equity framework.

The Commission thus began to explore strategies that instill broader accountability to equity and safeguard the success of publicly-funded equity initiatives. Due to time and resource constraints, the Commission engaged me to assist by: (1) evaluating equity initiatives in Cook County; (2) studying the existing challenges in addressing equity; and (3) providing recommendations on how the County can integrate accountability to broader equity standards into its policy and operations.

Methodology

The following questions were constructed to guide the report objectives:

1. How might Cook County define and measure “equity” based on the literature, its unique government prerogatives, and its current priorities?
2. What can we learn from existing examples of equity initiatives around the country as to the challenges of institutionalizing equity in County governance?
3. Can a Chief Equity Officer and an Equity Office effectively hold the government accountable to establishing equitable conditions County-wide?
4. Given the above, what should Cook do to move forward in addressing equity?

Focus was placed on qualitative research that produced insights for constructing viable equity initiatives. This entailed: (i) a review of the literature on equity to gain a fundamental understanding and to inform how Cook County might define, measure, and address it; (ii) research on Cook and Chicagoland data to better understand the regional “state of equity”; (iii) case studies of current equity offices, including Boston, New Orleans, Madison, San Antonio, King County, Dane County, and Fairfax County; and (iv) interviews with officials from equity offices or equity-based organizations.

Key Findings

In the section below, I summarize the major findings from this study.

Knowing the difference between equity and diversity & inclusion is vital

It is important to recognize that equity is a distinct concept from diversity and inclusion, whereby diversity focuses on the presence of difference within a given context and inclusion is about creating welcoming environments for different identities. Equity, however, deals with ensuring everyone access to the same opportunities or resources, and acknowledges unequal starting places and other imbalances.⁶

Diversity	Inclusion	Equity
"Diversity is the presence of difference within a given setting."	"Inclusion is about folks with different identities feeling and/or being valued, leveraged, and welcomed..."	"Equity is an approach that ensures everyone access to the same opportunities."

Source: Meg Bolger, General Assembly (2017).

Equity is rooted in a baseline and universal level of choice, access, and opportunity

Equity stems from the principle of moral equality which stipulates that all have a common humanity and should be treated as equals.⁷ This has been sought after by finding ways to create substantive equality of opportunity: whereby all have legitimate opportunity to fairly compete for places in the social hierarchy, absent disadvantage from discrimination.⁸ Furthermore, a founding study by the World Bank added that differences in outcomes will expectedly persist due to differences in preferences, talents, efforts, and luck. Hence, we find that outcomes do matter to equity but “mainly for their influence on absolute deprivation and their role in shaping opportunities.”⁹

Inequitable distribution often results from stark political inequalities and leads to social and economic losses

The World Bank suggests that inequitable institutions that mainly benefit the politically influential lead to inefficient economic outcomes because of poor distribution of public resources. Thus, the economic inequality that stifles equity tends to happen downstream of political dismemberment, which should be accounted for in any equity-based approach. Furthermore, a study by the Metropolitan Planning Council previously highlighted the estimated costs associated with segregation, which we can think of as a proxy to inequity since segregated neighborhoods suffer most from disinvestment.¹⁰

Inequities are historically tied to both malicious and inadvertent effects of policy

In *The Color of Law*, author Richard Rothstein points to historical records to make the case that some of the inequities witnessed today stem from government policy that racially segregated opportunities for housing, employment, and other public goods.¹¹ Furthermore, as explained by black scholar and economist Thomas Sowell in *Discrimination and Disparities*, data supports the notion that some policies created to mitigate the harm from earlier discrimination worsen things due to poor targeting, a limited understanding of root problems, and failure to account for responses to policy.¹²

Equity requires a comprehensive definition paired with strategic filtering mechanisms

It's clear that equity can be applied in many domains including gender, race, housing, and so on. As such, the term is as comprehensive in nature as sustainability – a term often associated with the environment, despite stemming from systems science and

including social, environmental, and economic dimensions.¹³ Similarly, equity must be thought of as a comprehensive term that encompasses key and measurable domain areas that can be filtered through as needed. This allows for proper management of equity, and informs how and where policy or market-based solutions are targeted.

Effective equity policy agendas cover a handful of major topics and apply simple principles in developing solutions to them

Every policy framework that was studied, in both the literature review and case studies, covered several major sub-domains. For example: a report by the National League of Cities on equity covers infrastructure, economic development, and public safety. The Metropolitan Planning Council’s report, titled “Our Equitable Future”, points to similar areas and adds education, housing, and a neighborhood focus. Also, the 2006 World Bank study adds “fairness in markets” and “investing in human capacities”. Additionally, the World Bank notes that *equity need not be applied to every single policy*. In that regard, the report encourages governments look at equity as it results from: (i) its overall policy agenda or policy portfolio, and (ii) the fairness of the underlying process that took place in creating its policy.¹⁴ Finally, another report finds consensus in the equity literature to suggest how equitable distribution may be established:

1. Examine the various goods that are distributed in a society,
2. Decide on a relevant principle for distributing those goods (based on their features, the needs of those receiving them, positive/negative effects, etc.)
3. Ensure that those goods are distributed consistently according to those publicly stated principles and not other influences.¹⁵



Caption: Branding for Fairfax County equity policy. See full ordinance in Appendix.

Launching equity offices relies on equity-specific ordinances, effective messaging, and inter-departmental support

A foundational step that most localities took before launching an Equity Office was the act of declaring equity a value to its governmental practice through ordinance, such as

the One Fairfax Policy. Also, given that pushback is to be expected, getting people on-board to support a cultural shift in government practice is key. Messaging that is inclusive of all viewpoints and identities is crucial. As such, different data points matter to different people when it comes to supporting equity. Some are moved by the moral sentiments, others by the economic promise, and others by narrative prose. Another crucial starting point was creating a cross-departmental team of equity champions. In King County, for instance, an Inter-Branch Team was first created by ordinance; it went on to create the infrastructure for coordinating equity across departments and built the Determinants of Equity framework that drives their Equity and Social Justice Office.

Equity officers advise executives, develop plans & metrics, manage people & processes, analyze data, and they require substantive authority

Equity Officers generally function as additional C-suite roles alongside Chiefs of Operations, Finance, and so on. However, most only serve in advisory roles with no real authority to direct policy, though Multnomah County concluded this as insufficient; it is now exploring how to provide its Equity Officer with more authority under the suggestion of its Executive and recommendation from a consulting engagement. In terms of substance, most Equity Officers take control over workforce hiring requirements, the handling of discrimination complaints, rolling out improved procurement strategies, and further developing an equity framework for data tracking. These Officers also oversee internal training efforts on equity and work closely with department heads to co-develop goals that guide each department in doing its part to address equity. Most Officers also lobby for increasing internal technical capacity for producing the analyses required to understand, track, and measure impact of their work.

Equity toolkits support the work, regional and community partnerships help inform it, but Equity Officers nevertheless find performance management onerous

Every equity initiative studied used some form of an equity impact assessment tool. For example, Racial Equity Toolkits provide a simplified way in which a department can move through a set of structured questions to ensure it is considering Racial Equity as it thinks through its strategic planning; and San Antonio incorporates an “equity lens” in its proportional budgeting process. Several of the Equity Officers also are moving toward a regional convening model whereby they lead conferences with neighboring city and

county leaders to learn from one another. Offices also incorporated some form of a community-led partnership, such as the New Orleans Community Roundtable, to establish direct connections with the communities they serve. As for data tracking, most offices report the number of internal equity trainings held, or dollars invested into equity-related work, or some other metric related to internal changes. As such, most officials I spoke to advised that Cook ensure it has the technical and analytical capacity in place to measure the effectiveness of its equity work from the start. New Orleans, for example, planned to incorporate equity metrics as part of its performance management systems across government departments from the get-go. Some offices also suggested starting with a comprehensive framework, and then narrowing focus onto concrete, targeted strategies that are measurable, easier to communicate, and lend themselves to “easy wins.”

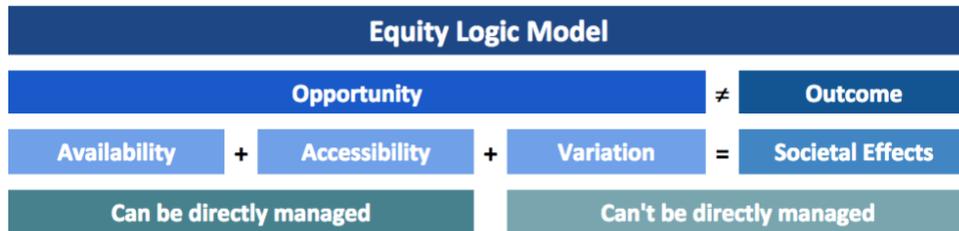
Recommendations

The following recommendations build on the findings to produce a roadmap for establishing a comprehensive, data-driven equity initiative in Cook County.

Create an equity framework that is thorough and forward-looking

As it stands, the primary focus in Cook is on building a racial equity framework. It is true that race stands out as a prominent social determinant of outcomes across the country, and that past injustices have influenced that. However, it is also true that focusing on racial outcomes alone is not nearly enough to understand and address root causes of present-day inequities. Focusing on racial outcomes can be useful for many reasons, including creating direct communication channels and partnerships with groups like New Orleans. However, this narrow framework fails to address possible inequities existing in the realms of gender, place, income-level, disability, and so on. Nor is this framework forward-looking enough to address the consequences and overall sustainability of equity initiatives. Moreover, a stringent focus on outcomes is analogous to confusing correlation with causation, as social scientist Jonathan Haidt points out.¹⁶ Therefore, a thorough and reliable framework needs to look more closely at resource availability, access, confounding factors, and other relevant upstream measures. Lastly, interviews with practitioners warned against too closely following the formulaic

approach of organizations like GARE; they suggest learning from other equity offices directly. I have provided a preliminary framework for Cook County in the Appendix.



Note: Preliminary equity framework. Full framework with explanation found in Appendix III.

★ **Clarify your messaging on equity to be inclusive for building widespread support**

Building on the last point, a focus on racial equity is likely to engender pushback from those that hold different views, or cite alternate data on the issue. A handful of the interviews conducted cited pushback

“It is not possible to be in favor of justice for some people and not be in favor of justice for all people.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

on heavyhanded policies and on teetering on the brink of “reverse racism.” Though this view should not be completely dismissed,¹⁷ especially in an sizeable and diverse county, it more importantly points to the need to construct a unifying message around equity – not one that further divides people. That is not to say that race should not be addressed – it is a powerful way to bring attention to persistent and dramatic inequalities. Rather, those points must be made while also establishing that equity is something everyone will benefit from regardless of identity, place of residence, or class, and that this is an opportunity to get it right. Furthermore, this broader point addresses concerns from the business community given that equity, if done properly, addresses both government approaches and market failures that lead to underinvestment in human capital.¹⁸ Thus, effective messaging should build on a comprehensive definition of equity, touching on both its moral and economic imperatives, and speaking to its promise of helping all people reach their full potential. Such messaging is more inclusive of a broader set of stakeholders and helps avoid unwanted resistance to a future County-wide initiative. Prioritization can happen after.

★ **Collect and publish County-level data on well-researched determinants of equity**

To tackle equity in a data-driven manner, the County will need timely and reliable data. This action could potentially leverage existing data-generating apparatuses. However, the urgency here is on structural, sustainable change and preventing further inequities which requires custom data. That said, effective data-sets should be built on a well-

“More fundamentally, the cause of a given outcome is an empirical question, whose answer requires untangling many complex factors, rather than simply pointing... to statistical disparities in outcomes...”

– Thomas Sowell, *Discrimination and Disparities*

defined framework that is dynamic, adaptable, and able to objectively decipher equity-relevant conditions, not just outcomes. Such an organized data set would

better inform how inequities may be addressed with County levers. Ideally, this data-set clarifies the current state of equity along several dimensions throughout the County, and is able to be navigated based on County priorities and capacity. It should also be built to track the impact that recent initiatives have had on equity, positive or negative, so as to inform the direction of future policies or initiatives. An example data-set that builds on a preliminary equity framework is found in the Appendix. Note that this framework is inspired by the highly analytical approach of Resilience Initiatives around the country (See Boston case in Appendix). The County can also consider working with PolicyLink and the National Equity Atlas to construct an Equitable Growth Profile for the region. This is not ideal for forward-looking, data-tracking purposes, but provides a useful understanding of the current state of equity and contributes to messaging on the economic promise of equitable growth strategies. The ballpark cost and time estimate for this report is \$75,000 and a 9- to 12- month process.

		Grouping		
		Identity	Place	Class
Domain	Availability metrics	Availability metrics	Availability metrics	Availability metrics
	Accessibility metrics	Accessibility metrics	Accessibility metrics	Accessibility metrics

Note: Preliminary equity data framework. See Appendix IV for details.

★ ***Pass an ordinance that commits the County to equity***

It was impressive to see that some of the most prominent equity models in the country began their approach by declaring, via ordinance or resolution, that their respective city or county would either institute equity as an official government value, or commit itself to create an underlying equity policy. Cook County could follow this lead and commit the County to equity with an ordinance that also establishes a sustainable funding source for the effort; all of the studied counties and cities funded their initiatives through general funds or by repurposing existing offices. As a benefit, building such an ordinance allowed counties to clarify their definition and framework on equity before ultimately launching an equity policy; interviewees suggested doing so before fully engaging communities with their equity initiative. Also, King County used their initial ordinance to establish a funded, county-wide Inter-Branch team that constructed their equity framework before officially launching their equity office. An example equity policy from Fairfax County is included in the Appendix.

★ ***Institute the use of equity assessment tools***

Cook should consider mandating that an equity impact assessment (EIA) be conducted prior to approving any spending initiative above pre-specified thresholds, and that a postmortem assessment be conducted to measure initiative efficacy. This helps avoid unanticipated consequences on equity for county-led initiatives, similar to the EPA's environmental impact assessment,¹⁹ and helps efficiently allocate funds where they are most in need – similar to San Antonio's proportional budgeting (See Appendix). Also, the use of EIAs should be linked to a performance management system that maps their relationship to changes in County equity. Furthermore, these assessments should be released to the public so as to hold public officials accountable for responding to these reports – much like Congress responds to Congressional Budget Office reporting. Moreover, both initial and postmortem equity impact assessments should be accompanied with proactive recommendations to offset inequitable or unintended harms from a given policy. With this, the County must remember the advice given by the World Bank that equity should not necessarily be addressed with each policy but rather by assessing its entire portfolio of policies and complementing potentially regressive policies with offsetting equitable ones. The County might leverage toolkits

like the Racial Equity impact assessment in developing its own,²⁰ but should be careful that it tailors its assessments to a more comprehensive understanding of equity.

★ ***Establish an Equity Office and Chief Equity Officer***

The most visible and structurally impactful change the County can make is to create an Equity Officer responsible for holding the County accountable to equity. The Office would support the Officer in conducting research, generating data, developing toolkits, launching campaigns, and crafting a comprehensive plan to address equity county-wide. For example, King County developed an Office of Equity & Social Justice and an Officer-led five-year, pro-equity strategic plan.²¹ New Orleans and Multnomah County have Equity Officers or impressive equity plans that Cook can use as models.



It is highly recommended that this office function independently from the County Executive so as to mitigate politicization and serve as a check and balance on elected officials; similar to how Inspector General offices ensure lawfulness within government agencies. Appointments to this office will nevertheless likely rely on elected executives.

Lastly, the long-term viability of such an office is uncertain as these are relatively new initiatives. Note again that other counties funded their office via general funds or by repurposing existing executive positions. Nevertheless, Cook could implement an annual report that presents a theoretical “return on investment” from Office operations, much like Inspector General reports to Congress. Consider starting with a competent, capable Officer before expanding actual office size.



Full Report

Introduction

Purpose of Report

The Cook County Commission on Social Innovation was established by ordinance in 2016 to seek knowledge-based, innovation-driven solutions to social problems. Despite the successes of the Social Innovation Commission to date – which includes the creation of a Social Enterprise procurement incentive and the passage of a local food procurement ordinance²² – the broader issue of equity remains substantively untouched. In this case, our preliminary definition of “equity” is understood to stem from moral equality and refers to an environment in which all county residents have equal access to essential goods & services, as well as equal treatment under the law, regardless of identity, location, or class. Achieving this results in “just & fair inclusion into a society [where] all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.”^{23,24}

In particular, the Commission believes that existing equity policies are piece-meal and limited in scope: To date, the County simply sets goals for the procurement of services from minority and women owned businesses and it maintains hiring requirements for minorities and women.²⁵ The Commission leadership also points out that Cook County, as the second largest county in the United States, should be more focused on establishing a broadly aligned and institutionalized mechanism for integrating equity standards into both its operations and policy-making process.

Furthermore, members of the Commission have raised concerns over public spending that fails to address equity and faces little accountability after the fact. For example: Transit Oriented Development (TOD) incentives are displacing the low-income populations that need public transportation the most due to fast-rising housing costs.^{26,27,28} Another example: a pharmacy chain in a senior-citizen occupied pharmacy desert was built using tax dollars, but this caused a neighborhood pharmacy to shut down, and the chain later closed down due to poor sales.²⁹

The Commission has thus started to explore strategies that instill broader accountability to equity and that safeguard the long-term success of publicly-funded equity initiatives. Given time and resource constraints, the Commission engaged me to assist by: (1) evaluating the current state of equity initiatives in Cook County; (2) studying the existing challenges to addressing equity; (3) researching best practices from successful equity models around the country; and (4) providing recommendations on how the County can establish an institutional commitment to equity in its policy and operations.

Current Equity Initiatives

Other than the aforementioned hiring and procurement policies, a few other internally-led equity initiatives exist. The Forest Preserve department has incorporated a diversity & inclusion statement in its work, the Cook County Public Defender has racial equity leadership teams, the Bureau of Economic Development is exploring strategies for equitable development, and the Transportation and Highways agency is looking at incorporating equity assessments in its infrastructure investment strategy. Furthermore, the Office of the President (COP) released its 5-year Strategic Plan in November of 2018 with Equity listed as a key value driving its work. In particular, the OUP plans to specifically pursue Racial Equity by doing the following:

- Becoming a member of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity
- Mandating implicit bias and diversity & inclusion training for all OUP employees
- Establishing a Racial Equity Leadership Council to plan out its work
- Formally adopting a Racial Equity framework and a diversity & inclusion statement to elevate a commitment to the work

That said, the remainder of the report sets out to evaluate successful strategies for launching and institutionalizing Equity initiatives in government. Given that the County has recently started to move in this direction, this report will provide guidance in that effort and help avoid roadblocks in their success.

Research Questions

In pursuing the objectives of this study, I have constructed a set of questions that guide the research presented in this report. These questions are listed below:

1. How might Cook County define and measure “equity” based on research, its unique government prerogatives, and its current priorities?
2. What can we learn from existing examples of equity initiatives around the country as to the promises and challenges of institutionalizing equity in County governance?
3. Can a Chief Equity Officer and an Equity Office effectively hold the government accountable to establishing equitable conditions County-wide?
4. Given all of the above, what should Cook County do to move forward in addressing equity?

Challenges, Risks and Other Considerations

Below I include notable considerations to be kept in mind by the County as it assesses its equity approach. The relative importance of each criterion below will ultimately lay in the hands of County leadership.

Resource Constraints: Can the chosen course of action be executed in a timely manner, based on the County Board’s current capacity? What kind of funding or other resources would be required? This is of relative importance given the existing pressure to make system-wide changes as quickly as possible.

Immediate Impact: Can we reasonably expect an immediate impact on the state of equity from this plan? What other short-term benefits are generated by our options? I understand that as public officials with a constituency, this is an important criterion. Consider how the options will help or not help Cook County communities sooner rather than later.

Long-Term Viability: Will this strategy be sustainable long into the future? Once implemented, will it be difficult to reform? And can it easily be adjusted with new

information? Consider the long-term return on investment that will derive from a well-developed strategy to address equity.

Stakeholder Support: Do you have support from both internal and external parties? Is this support sufficient for the short-term and the long-term? We know most members from the Social Innovation Commission are on-board, as are several members in the President's Office, but securing widespread stakeholder support will bring legitimacy to the chosen strategy.

Methodology

In aggregating the data necessary to produce this report, focus was placed on qualitative research that would produce helpful insights in constructing a viable government-led Equity initiative. Below, I elaborate on the three primary domains of inquiry I followed: literature reviews, case studies, and expert interviews.

Literature Review

To answer questions surrounding the definitions and measurement of equity, I focused on a review of the available literature. This included white papers, research articles, media articles, as well as literature produced by major national organizations focused on equity-based work. Also, a review of the literature uncovered several frameworks and policies that have been produced by research institutions and global agencies to address equity directly in all its forms.

Case Studies

Case studies were performed to understand the origins of equity initiatives, offices, and other models from cities and counties around the country. These case studies all sought to systematically explore the motivation for launching the respective equity initiatives, their development process, data tracking and enforcement mechanisms, and any unique or standout features of those equity models.

Interviews

As above, interviews centered around producing insights into the successes and challenges of launching equity initiatives around the country. The interviews, however, were not solely focused on government entities; they also included insights from a handful of nonprofit organization working in the equity space. Interviews were also used as follow-up to case studies for detailed insights on compelling equity models.

Key Findings

In the sections below, I provide the major findings from the research I carried out in studying the origins of equity, strategies for addressing it, and insights from existing Equity Office models around the country.

Defining and Measuring Equity

Knowing the difference between equity and diversity & inclusion is vital

It is first important to recognize that equity is a distinct concept from diversity and inclusion, both of which are often included in discussions on equity. Diversity and inclusion can both be thought of as outcomes; diversity focuses on the presence of difference within a given context, while inclusion is about creating welcoming environments for different identities. Equity, however, deals with ensuring everyone access to the same opportunities or resources, and acknowledges unequal starting places and other systemic imbalances.³⁰

Diversity	Inclusion	Equity
"Diversity is the presence of difference within a given setting."	"Inclusion is about folks with different identities feeling and/or being valued, leveraged, and welcomed..."	"Equity is an approach that ensures everyone access to the same opportunities."
"You can have, for example, a diversity of species within an ecosystem... or a diversity of opinion or experiences."	"You can have a diverse team of talent, but that doesn't mean that everyone feels welcome or are valued, given opportunities to grow, or developed..."	"Equity recognizes that advantages and barriers exist, and that, as a result, we all don't all start from the same place."
"Diversity is about a collective or a group... "A candidate is not diverse—they're a unique, individual unit.""	"We do frequent internal temperature checks, and as far as we know we have an inclusive and welcoming place for women and people of color here."	"Equity is a process that begins by acknowledging that unequal starting place and continues to correct and address the imbalance."

Source: Meg Bolger, General Assembly (2017).

Equity is rooted in a baseline and universal level of choice, access, and opportunity

In their Equity Manifesto, PolicyLink lays out one of the more popular definitions of equity: “just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.”³¹ Historically, this aspiration has been sought after by creating substantive equality of opportunity: whereby all have a legitimate opportunity to fairly compete for places in the social hierarchy on equal terms, absent disadvantage from discrimination.³² The regional Fair Housing and Equity Assessment also cements a key element surrounding equity as that of choice: in their case, choice over where people wish to live.³³ Furthermore, a pioneering study by the World Bank in 2006 labeled equity as a state in which individuals have equal opportunities to “pursue a life of their choosing and be spared from extreme deprivation in outcomes” but also adds that differences in outcomes will expectedly persist due to differences in preferences, talents, efforts, and luck. Hence, it suggests that outcomes do matter to equity but “mainly for their influence on absolute deprivation and their role in shaping opportunities.”³⁴ This perspective is in line with a part of King County’s approach to equity which focuses upstream of outcomes where need is greatest: where choice, access, and opportunity rests.

“More fundamentally, the cause of a given outcome is an empirical question, whose answer requires untangling many complex factors, rather than simply pointing... to statistical disparities in outcomes...”

– Thomas Sowell, *Discrimination and Disparities*

Inequitable distribution often results from stark political inequalities and leads to social and economic losses

Equity also has roots in the principle of moral equality which stipulates that all have a common humanity, or human dignity, and as a result should be treated as equals.³⁵ For obvious reasons, this has not always been the case in the United States and the world. Moreover, the World Bank study suggests that inequitable institutions that mainly benefit the politically influential lead to inefficient economic outcomes because of poor distribution of public resources. The brunt of that poor distribution burdens the middle and low income groups, which are often outgroups, and society as a whole then suffers due to lost opportunities for innovation and investment. Thus, the economic inequality

that stifles equity tends to happen downstream of political dismemberment, which should be accounted for in any equity-based approach. It should nevertheless be noted that the public is generally okay with inequality – so long as there is fair and just competition in the world, i.e., equity.³⁶ Furthermore, a study by the Metropolitan Planning Council previously highlighted the estimated costs associated with segregation, which we can think of here as a proxy to inequities given that those segregated neighborhoods suffer from disinvestment.³⁷

Present-day inequities are historically tied to both malicious and inadvertent effects of government policy

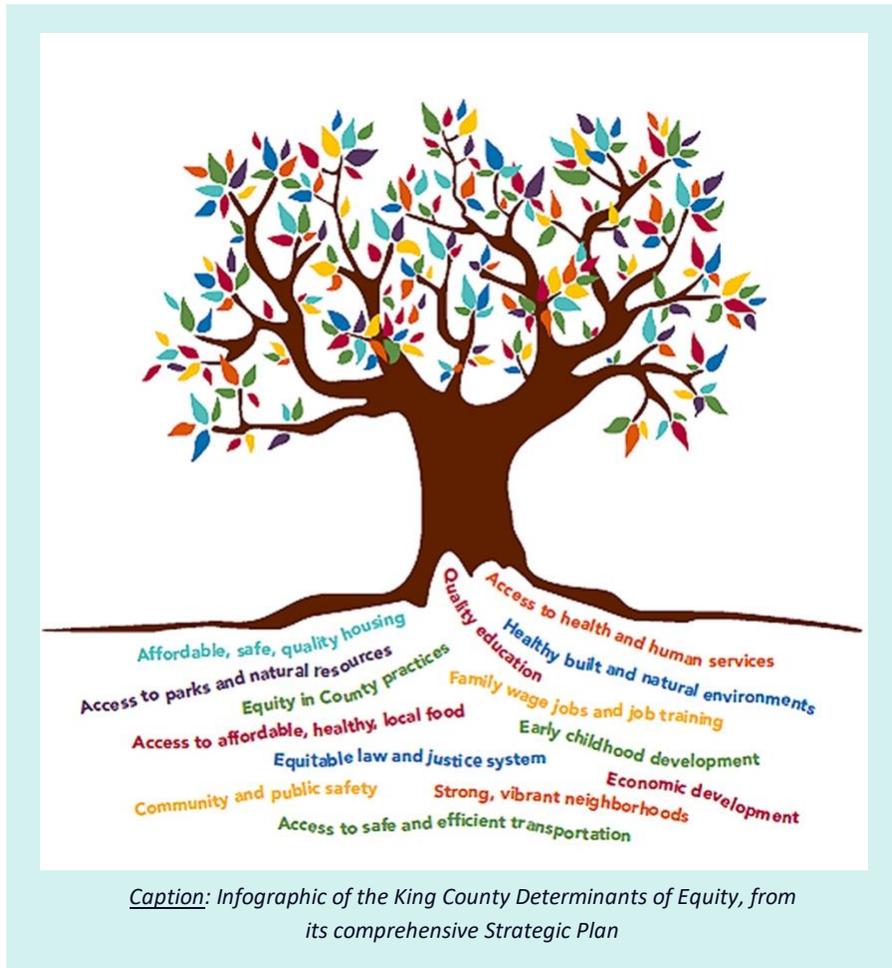
In *The Color of Law*, author Richard Rothstein points to historical records to make the case that some of the inequities witnessed today stem from government policy that racially segregated opportunities for housing, employment, and other public goods.³⁸ Furthermore, as explained by black economist Thomas Sowell in *Discrimination and Disparities*, empirical data supports the notion that some mid 19th century policies that were created to mitigate the harm done by earlier forms of structural discrimination have deepened the divide due to poor targeting, a limited understanding of root problems, and failure to account for responses to policy & incentives in the real-world.³⁹

Equity requires a comprehensive definition paired with strategic filtering mechanisms

It is evident that equity can be applied in several domains including gender, race, housing, transportation, and so on. As such, the term is as comprehensive in nature as sustainability – a term often associated with the environment, despite stemming from systems engineering and including social, environmental, and economic dimensions. Similarly, equity must be thought of as a comprehensive term that encompasses key and measureable domain areas that can be filtered through as needed.

One of the first domains to venture into equity was public health. The health literature on the subject set out to create a guiding definition to operationalize and measure equity in health, citing it as related to the disparities in health amongst people with varying levels of social advantage and disadvantage.⁴⁰ We can therefore imagine how this might be applied to other domains, as is the case in King County. There they incorporate what

they call the Determinants of Equity; these represent a set of 8 such domains for which they aim to expand access to for all community members (See Appendix).



Another important framework for thinking about how to define and measure equity comes from Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen. He highlights that resources should not be the sole focus of fairness-based theories of justice: two people with access to the same resources and the same ambition may not be able to equally achieve a good life. Rather, he believes that the primary focus should be on “capabilities” – a person’s capability refers to the set of socially valuable functions that a person has real access to, such as critical thinking, mobility, literacy, etc.⁴¹ Furthermore, economist Thomas Sowell speaks about the importance of considering “prerequisites” that are unique to success, and thus positive outcomes, in any particular endeavor.⁴²

Lastly, the Fair Housing and Equity Assessment, which was performed in several counties around the country including Chicago-metro in 2013, developed Opportunity Indicators

that establish clear measurement of on-the-ground equity conditions. This framework consists of five opportunity domains that are each calculated through a handful of factors as depicted below:

OPPORTUNITY	HUD FACTORS	ADDITIONAL FACTORS
Housing	Housing Stability Index	Median Home Value
Education	School Proficiency Index	Percentage of Post-High School Degrees
Employment	Job Access Index	Unemployment Rate,
		Poverty Rate
Transportation	Transit Access Index	Mean Travel Time to Work
Fiscal Capacity		Equalized Assessed Value

Figure: FHEA Opportunity Indicators

Equity Policy Agendas

A literature review on existing policy agendas provide helpful guidance in understanding both comprehensive and targeted strategies for addressing equity.

The first comes from the Overseas Development Institute which summarizes its research into five key priorities for any equity agenda:

1. *Providing universal public services for fair treatment* – Including universal access to goods such as health and education and improving their delivery and underlying or related institutions.
2. *Targeted action for disadvantaged groups* – Finding ways to target government spending, job quotas, or even childcare and labor protections, for needy groups.
3. *Social protection* – In effect, a strong social safety net that keeps anyone from falling below a minimum level of wellbeing.
4. *Redistribution* – Finding ways to reduce severe levels of inequality and provide access to productive assets to the poor.
5. *Challenging embedded power imbalances* – Tackling harmful power relations by improving accountability mechanisms and reforming democratic institutions.⁴³

This same report finds consensus in the equity literature to suggest how equitable distribution may be established:

4. Examine the various goods that are distributed in a society,
5. Decide on a relevant principle for distributing those goods (based on their features, the needs of those receiving them, positive/negative effects, etc.)
6. Ensure that those goods are distributed consistently according to those publicly stated principles and not other influences.⁴⁴

Another notable policy framework comes from the National League of Cities in its 2017 report on *The Future of Equity in Cities*. In this report, three major policy domains are highlighted for their role in addressing equity as urban environments grow in the future:

1. *Infrastructure* – Creating adequate infrastructure and transportation access across the board, ensuring future transportation technologies serve everyone, and remaining conscious of job sprawl and its effect on housing, transportation, especially for the poor.
2. *Economic development* – Focusing on equitable growth so that wage growth is not concentrated in the hands of few, strengthening the middle class, addressing inequality, spreading access to financial resources, and recognizing the potential effects of expected demographic shifts which include an aging population and reaching a majority minority population in the US by 2043.
3. *Public safety* – Ensuring that equity is central to the future of policing, changes to the criminal justice system more generally, and how data is used to predict and prevent crime.⁴⁵

Following their report on the cost of segregation, the Metropolitan Planning Council took a regional approach at building a solution-set of policy domains for creating an “equitable future” in the Chicago region:

1. Targeting economic development & inclusive growth
2. Creating jobs & building wealth
3. Building inclusive housing & neighborhoods
4. Creating equity in education
5. Reforming the criminal justice system.⁴⁶

Finally, the 2006 World Development Report on Equity and Development highlights what it believes to be the key domestic policy areas for addressing equity:

1. *Investing in human capacities* – This includes investing in early childhood education, public health, other forms of schooling, and raising the funds for such investments through targeted and non-distortionary tax schemes.
2. *Expanding access to justice, land, and infrastructure* – Improving inequities in the justice system especially those that overburden the poor, providing greater access to land for development, and more swiftly addressing infrastructure needs in ailing neighborhoods.
3. *Promoting fairness in markets* – Ensuring fair play and reducing overly risky lending in financial markets, providing worker security in labor markets, getting rid of distortionary policies that make it costlier to hire unskilled and often minority or female workers, making it easier for people to shift into new work as technology evolves, and improving safety nets.

To conclude its report, the World Bank notes that *equity need not be applied to every single policy*. For example, an advantageous trade policy does not necessarily need to be adjusted to be more equitable, but rather it should more often be complemented with the appropriate changes in labor market policy, safety nets, and educational investments that address equity overall. In that regard, the report encourages governments to look at equity as it results from: (i) its overall policy agenda or policy portfolio, and (ii) the fairness of the underlying process that took place in creating it.⁴⁷

Equity Office Models

The last set of key findings relate to insights derived from studying equity office models from around the country. These findings are provided below.

Launching Equity Offices

One of the foundational steps that most localities took before launching an Equity Office was the mere act of declaring equity a value to its governmental practice through ordinance. These ordinances also often began with a resolution to address equity and, after some strategic planning, resulted in an equity policy created by ordinance. For

example, Fairfax County began its route by first passing its One Fairfax resolution which eventually led to its One Fairfax policy.

In launching equity initiatives, it also became clear that messaging was quite important. Given that pushback and hurdles are expected, getting people on-board to support a cultural shift in government practice is key. Messaging that is inclusive of all viewpoints and identities is crucial here. As such, different data points matter to different people when it comes to supporting equity. Some are moved by the moral sentiments, others by the economic promise, and others by narratives. San Antonio, for instance, had no problem launching its initiative because new leadership were already bought into the promise of equity. Those in Fairfax needed to see the economic impact of equitable growth. And Dane County in Wisconsin was beset given the stark contrast in well-being indicators between whites and minorities.

Another crucial starting point for the majority, though not all, of these localities was starting with a cross-departmental team of equity champions. In King County, for instance, an Inter-Branch Team was first created by ordinance to figure out their equity strategy. This team went on to create the infrastructure for coordinating equity across government departments and built the Determinants of Equity framework that now drives the work of their Equity and Social Justice Office. Only later did these localities establish an Equity Office, paid for through the general fund, to carry out or further detail the strategic plan. However, some of these localities did directly create an Equity Officer position that was charged with coordinating all of the above from the start. Also, a handful of these Equity Officer positions were created by refashioning pre-existing Officer positions into an equity-focused one.

Lastly, most of the studied equity models leveraged national organizations working on equity such as GARE, PolicyLink, National Atlas, and others. These networks provide access to learning opportunities, data, trainings that are important for normalizing concepts of equity within government, and receiving tailored consultation. Nevertheless, a few of my interviews pointed to the importance of contextualizing one's equity approach based on local information. This means making sure not to just follow the formulaic approach that some of these national networks provide but, rather, to

focus on learning from colleagues around the country and apply what is most likely to work in one's own context.

The role of Equity Officers

Once established, Equity Officers play an important role in coordinating government-wide equity initiatives. Usually, Equity Officers generally function as an additional C-suite role in government alongside Chiefs of Operations, Finance, and so on. Most, however, only serve in an advisory role – they have no real authority to direct policy but instead advise the Executive and other department heads as to how to achieve equitable aims in their respective agencies. Multnomah County has decided to take a different approach by exploring the possibility of giving real decision-making power to its Equity Officer, which was a key recommendation provided by a recent consulting engagement.⁴⁸

In terms of substance, most Equity Officers take control over workforce hiring requirements, the handling of discrimination complaints, rolling out improved procurement strategies, and further developing an equity framework for data tracking. These Officers also oversee internal training efforts on equity, which is usually the first step in moving toward some of the more operationally-focused equity initiatives. Hence, most Officers first focus on building internal capacity before rolling out detailed strategies. Such detailed operational changes generally include things such as employee surveys that draw out internal gaps in understanding around equity, or look for practices that can be improved to incorporate. Officers also generally work closely with department heads to co-develop goals that guide each department in doing its part to address equity in its work. Thus, planning, oversight, negotiation and persuasive communication is important to the Equity Officer role. Most Officers also lobby for increasing internal technical capacity for producing the analyses required to understand, track, and measure impact of their work.

Tools of the Equity trade

Whether or not an Equity Officer is leading the charge, every equity initiative that was studied used some form of an equity impact assessment tool. For example, Racial Equity Toolkits provide a simplified way in which a department can move through a set of

structured questions to ensure it is considering Racial Equity as it thinks through its strategic planning. As mentioned earlier, most of these equity initiatives leverage organizations such as the Government Alliance on Race and Equity to facilitate employee training on equity. Several of the Equity Officers also seemed to be moving toward a regional convening model – including Fairfax, Multnomah, and King counties – whereby they lead conferences with neighboring city and county leaders to learn from one another. The City of Madison, Wisconsin publishes publically available equity toolkits on its website and also lists out which of its agencies uses which tools and for what reason. San Antonio incorporates what might be the most direct equity tool of the bunch: its City Council incorporates an “equity lens” to its budgeting process which requires that budgets are adjusted proportionally according to need. Lastly, several of the Offices incorporated some form of a community-led partnership, such as the New Orleans Community Roundtable, to establish direct connections with the communities that stand to help inform, champion, and benefit from the equity. This appeared prominent to the long-term sustainability of equity initiatives.

Measuring the impact of equity initiatives

Multnomah County provided significant insights on the importance of having a clear framework in place over how one defines and measures equity moving forward. Most of the studied localities, when pressed, struggled to articulate how exactly they are measuring the impact or progress of their equity work despite stating that they had a framework to do so in their online reports. Most merely report the number of internal “equity trainings” held, or dollars invested into equity-related positions, or some other metric related to internal changes. King County appeared to have the most comprehensive approach that was founded on their Determinants of Equity, but still seems to struggle in measuring results. As such, most officials I spoke to advised that Cook should ensure it has the technical and analytical capacity in place to actually measure the effectiveness of its equity work from the start, if possible. This would reduce future headaches. New Orleans, for example, planned to incorporate equity metrics as part of its performance management systems across government departments from the get-go. Some offices also suggested starting with a comprehensive framework, and then narrowing focus onto concrete, targeted strategies that are measurable, easier to communicate, and lend themselves to “easy wins” –

which is especially helpful to start with as more resources to support the initiative are made available.

Discussion

The key findings show that there is significant nuance involved in accurately defining and measuring equity, and in building the infrastructure required to support equity within the governmental context. In considering the research questions, we have learned that Cook County would need to consider creating a coherent framework that drives its equity work forward or build on the work of previous organizations that have created their own. This of course would need to be customized to fit the prerogatives and priorities of the County, which as of recently includes attention to racial equity. The case studies and interviews also point to the importance of having both an inter-departmental team in place to widely facilitate the early work, as well as an Equity Officer of sorts in place to strategize, plan, and drive it forward. Given how new these initiatives are, it is yet unclear as to whether or not an Equity Office or Officer can be effective at holding the government accountable to establishing equitable conditions County-wide. Nevertheless, the research presented here points to the key to success as: (i) having a clear and measurable equity framework; (ii) having the technical skill in place to perform the necessary equity-based analytics; (iii) establishing trustworthy community partnerships to inform and champion the work; (iv) department-wide training and support; and (v) the use of equity-based assessment tools linked to performance management schemes.

Recommendations

The following recommendations build on the findings of this report and knowledge of the region to layout a strategic roadmap for moving forward in establishing equitable conditions throughout Cook County.

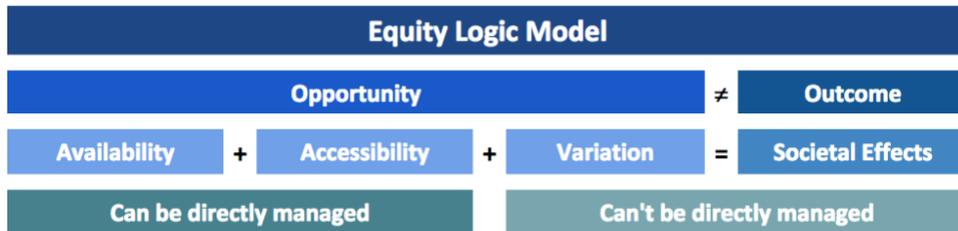
Create an equity framework that is thorough and forward-looking

A first step to take in addressing equity is to re-think the County's equity framework. As it stands, the primary focus is on building a racial equity framework. It is true that race stands out as a prominent social determinant of outcomes across the country, and that past injustices leading to persistent cycles of poverty have primarily influenced those results. It is also true that focusing on racial outcomes alone is not enough to fully understand and address present-day inequities.

What focusing on racial outcomes helps with is pinpointing which particular groups of people, based solely on race, are likely to be being left behind. This can be useful for creating direct communication channels and partnerships with those groups, as New Orleans will do, for instance, but it hardly speaks to how those inequities can be addressed via policy or market mechanisms. Furthermore, this narrow framework fails to address possible inequities existing in the realms of gender, place, income-level, disability, and so on. Nor is this framework forward-looking enough to address inequities that may exist outside of race in the future. Moreover, as explained earlier, a stringent focus on outcomes is analogous to confusing correlation with causation, as social scientist Jonathan Haidt points out.⁴⁹ Thus, a thorough and reliable framework needs to look more closely at opportunity, access, choice, capability, and other relevant upstream measures.

Given that equity requires a comprehensive approach, it makes sense to work internally with a thorough and forward-looking framework. Such a framework can be narrowed down as the County sees fit to focus on particular dimensions of equity – such as housing availability – and further filtered to look at groupings – such as race. The King County

Social Determinants framework offers guidance here. I have also provided a preliminary framework for Cook County that captures these recommendations in the Appendix.



***Note:** Preliminary equity framework. Full framework provided in Appendix III.*

Clarify your messaging on equity to be inclusive for building widespread support

Building on the last point, a focus on racial equity is likely to engender pushback from those that hold different views on the issue. A handful of the interviews conducted cited pushback on heavyhanded policies and on teetering on the brink of “reverse racism.” Though this view should not be completely dismissed,⁵⁰ especially in an sizeable and diverse county, it more importantly points to the need to construct a unifying message around equity – not one that further divides people. That is not to say that race should not be addressed – it is a powerful way to bring attention to persistent and dramatic inequalities. Rather, those points must be made while also establishing that equity is something everyone will benefit from regardless of identity, place of residence, or class, and that this is an opportunity to get it right. Furthermore, this broader point addresses concerns from the business community given that equity, if done properly, addresses both government failures and market failures that lead to underinvestment in human capital.⁵¹ Thus, effective messaging should build on a comprehensive definition of equity, touching on both its moral and economic imperatives, and speaking to its promise of helping all people reach their full potential. Such messaging is more inclusive of a broader set of stakeholders and helps avoid unwanted resistance to a future County-wide initiative. Prioritization can happen after.

“It is not possible to be in favor of justice for some people and not be in favor of justice for all people.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

Collect and publish County-level data on equity

To tackle equity in a data-driven manner, the County will need timely and reliable data. This is an action that could potentially leverage existing data-generating apparatuses within or around Cook County. Resources with equity-level data for the region already exist, such as the MPC Cost of Segregation and Equitable Future reports, the CMAP Fair Housing and Equity Assessment (Chicago-metro), and studies by the Center for Neighborhood Technology. Still, it is difficult to say what, if any, impact this piecemeal data would have in the long-term – especially for tracking data over time. If the urgency were around taking *some* action, using existing data may be the best data option. But the urgency is focused on structural change and preventing further inequities.

That said, effective data sets should be built on a well-defined framework to be dynamic, adaptable, and able to objectively decipher where inequities are found. Such an organized data set can more directly incite how inequities might be addressed with County levers. Ideally, this data set clarifies the current state of equity along several dimensions throughout the County, and is able to be navigated based on the County’s priorities and capacity. It should also be built to track the impact that recent initiatives have had on equity – positive or negative – so as to inform the direction of any future policies or initiatives. An example data set that builds on the aforementioned preliminary equity framework is found in the Appendix. Note that this framework is inspired by the highly analytical approach that Resilience Initiatives around the country are taking in building their Resilience Plans (See Boston case in Appendix).

		Grouping		
		Identity	Place	Class
Domain	Availability metrics	Availability metrics	Availability metrics	Availability metrics
	Accessibility metrics	Accessibility metrics	Accessibility metrics	Accessibility metrics

Note: Preliminary equity data framework. See Appendix IV for details.

The County can also consider working with PolicyLink and the National Equity Atlas to construct an Equitable Growth Profile for the region. This may not be ideal for forward-

looking, data-tracking purposes, but it in the least provides a thorough understanding of the current state of equity. Furthermore, as Fairfax County did, the Equitable Growth Profile can contribute to messaging around equity given that it makes the point that an economy can be performing much better if it were following an equitable growth strategy. The ballpark cost and time estimate for this report is \$75,000 and a 9- to 12-month process.⁵²

Pass an ordinance that commits the County to equity

It was impressive to see that some of the most prominent equity models around the country began their approach by declaring, via ordinance or resolution, that their respective city or county would either institute equity as an official government value, or commit itself to create an underlying equity policy. Cook County could follow this lead and do the same by committing the County to equity with an ordinance that also establishes a sustainable funding source for the effort; all of the studied counties and cities funded their initiatives through general funds or by repurposing existing offices. As an added benefit, building such an ordinance allowed Fairfax County, among others, to clarify its definition and framework on equity before ultimately launching its One Fairfax Policy. A copy of their equity policy is included in the Appendix. Also, King County used their initial ordinance to establish a funded, county-wide Inter-Branch team that constructed their equity framework before officially launching their equity office.



***Caption:** Branding for Fairfax County equity policy. See full ordinance in Appendix.*

Institute equity assessment tools

Taking it one step further, Cook County should consider implementing standardized procedures that mandate an equity impact assessment be conducted prior to approving any spending initiative above pre-specified thresholds. This would help avoid

unanticipated, regressive impacts on equity for all county-led initiatives, similar to the EPA’s environmental impact assessment,⁵³ and help inform the efficient allocation of funds where they are most in need – similar to San Antonio’s proportional budgeting approach. Ideally, equity assessment is also linked to a performance management system that leverages a comprehensive equity framework to pinpoint changes in equity data over time. Furthermore, this assessment should be released to the public so as to hold public officials accountable for responding to these reports – much like Congress responds to Congressional Budget Office reporting. Also, a second assessment should be performed post-implementation to cross-verify whether or not a particular initiative truly had the impact it claimed to make.

Moreover, both initial and postmortem equity impact assessments should be accompanied with proactive recommendations to offset inequitable or unintended harms from a given policy. With this, the County must remember the advice given by the World Bank that equity should not necessarily be addressed with each policy but rather by assessing its entire portfolio of policies and complementing potentially regressive policies with offsetting equitable ones.

This option provides a noteworthy procedural change to spending accountability, and it makes a statement that equity will be forthright in the impacts of all County initiatives. The equity impact assessment will take time and deliberation to develop – especially given the wide-ranging applications of equity. Despite those upfront costs, the procedure should be easy to maintain as it becomes institutionalized. The County might leverage domain-specific toolkits, such as the Racial Equity impact assessment in developing its own system,⁵⁴ but it should be careful that it tailors its assessment to a more comprehensive understanding of equity. Stakeholder support is likely to be stronger here because it entails structural change, though some internal resistance is expected as this change requires longer spending approval times.

Establish an Equity Office and Chief Equity Officer

Perhaps the most visible and structurally impactful change Cook County can make is to create an Equity Officer that is responsible for holding the County accountable to equitable conditions. The Office would support the Officer in conducting research,

generating data, launching campaigns, and crafting a comprehensive plan to address equity county-wide. This option also allows you to enlist the Officer to incorporate the previous recommendations into their work. It is highly recommended that this office function independently from the County Executive so as to mitigate politicization and serve as a check and balance on elected officials; similar to how Inspector General offices ensure lawfulness within government agencies. Appointments to this office will nevertheless likely rely on elected executives.



Although the most difficult and resource intensive option, establishing an Equity Office would expectedly receive the most stakeholder support because it visibly and structurally commits Cook County to equity. This option also provides the most flexibility in addressing equity: The Officer can also be responsible for crafting a comprehensive equity plan for Cook County, which can be updated on a recurring basis, and which highlights campaigns, policy changes, and/or other initiatives for the County. For example, King County in Washington has developed its own Office of Equity & Social Justice and a five-year pro-equity strategic plan.⁵⁵ Cities such as New Orleans and counties like Multnomah County have either Equity Officers or impressive equity plans that Cook County can use as models.

The long-term viability of such an office is uncertain as these are all relatively new initiatives. Nevertheless, Cook could implement an annual report that presents a theoretical “return on investment” from Office operations, much like Inspector General reports to Congress. Also, the County will need to find a way to fund the office and its staff. All of the studied counties and cities funded their offices through their general funds or by repurposing existing executive positions within their executive offices. Consider starting with a competent, capable Officer before expanding the actual office size.

Conclusion

Cook County has made significant progress in improving the overall conditions of its constituent communities. But given persistent concerns with gentrification, affordable housing, localized crime, and access to essential goods like mental health services, it is clear that a comprehensive plan is needed to address equity more broadly. In this report, I provided context on this issue, surveyed the literature on equity, performed interviews and case studies on equity models from around the country, and presented recommendations that would establish a clear and far-reaching commitment to equity in Cook County.

Although my analysis points to uncertainty on the effectiveness of an Equity Officer, I nevertheless recommend that the County pursue establishing a Chief Equity Officer alongside a comprehensive framework for defining, measuring, and addressing equity. Funding an office with sufficient capacity to carry this out will be a challenge, but the ongoing efforts within the Office of the President on racial equity can be leveraged to build the momentum to accomplish this. Furthermore, the recommendations presented here can help garner a wider amount of stakeholder support for equity, especially from the community groups that have advocated for systemic change and from potential resisters that otherwise are left out of a narrow racial equity focus. Moreover, establishing an Equity Office would assign clear responsibility to dedicated officials with the authority to oversee the development and implementation of a strategic plan, and accountability to equity data. Thus, establishing an Equity Office is likely the best option for ensuring a long-term, sustainable commitment to high equity standards in Cook County that benefits the regional economy, government relations, and the wellbeing of all County residents.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix

Appendix I: Case Studies

New Orleans, Louisiana

City info

Population

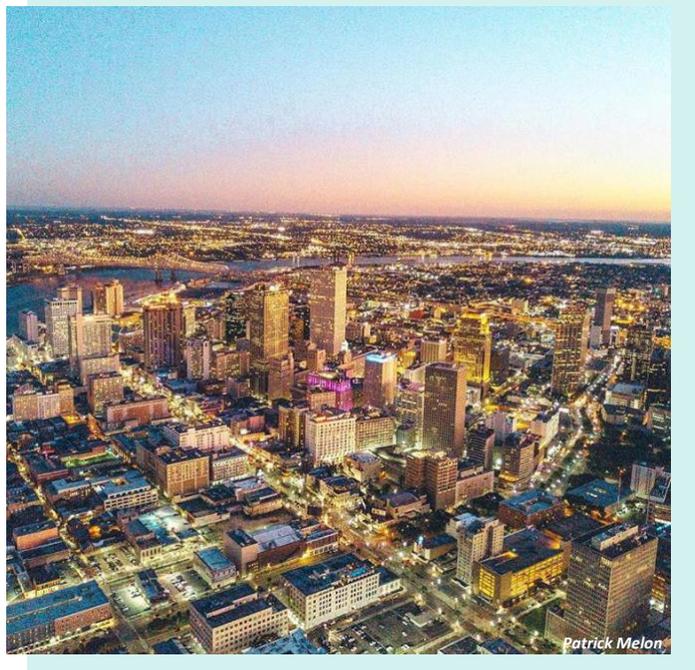
393,292 (2017)

Mayor

LaToya Cantrell (elected 2018)

Equity Officer(s)

n/a



Demographics:

White population	30.60%	High school degree	85.90%
Black population	59.80%	College degree	36.50%
Hispanic population	5.50%	Labor force participation	61.40%
Asian population	3.00%	Poverty rate	25.40%
Female population	52.30%	Owner occupied housing	47.10%
Population under 18	20.30%	Median gross rent	\$954/mo
Population over 65	12.90%	Median household income	\$39K

Source: US Census, QuickFacts 2017; All dollar figures are presented in 2017 dollars

Key Equity Statistics:

67% of residents were people of color in 2014, 47% of jobs are low wage, 27% of African Americans live in high poverty tracks compared to 8% of Whites, \$18.4B more in regional GDP if racial gaps were close (2014).

Initiative start date: May 2016

Motivation to launch equity initiative

Former Mayor Mitch Landrieu launched the EquityNewOrleans initiative citing that people of color, in particular, continue to face many disadvantages such as higher incarceration rates, poorer health, and poorer educational outcomes. He further provides that many of these outcomes result from past decisions that continue to amplify and extend those disadvantages for generations. Such disparity keeps the people of New Orleans apart and unable to realize their full potential. Thus, this ambitious initiative is meant to mend that divide once and for all.



Approach to equity

Definition

New Orleans defines an "equitable government" as one that "acts with purpose to achieve just and fair inclusion, ensuring that all residents participate, prosper, and reach their full potential." It goes on to add that such a government dismantles discrimination where it exists, implements strategies to address inequities, and deliberately includes all peoples in the decision-making process.

Initiative development process

The following list provides an overview of New Orleans' development process:

- Reviewed best practices from peer cities
- Facilitated community listening sessions to hear from residents
- Held over 300 stakeholder interviews both internal and external to City government
- Engaged with local and national equity experts
- Completed city employee survey on the topic
- Defined "equitable government" and instituted "equity" as a City value
- Held equity trainings for City department heads and managers

Measurement and data

New Orleans analyzed data sources and developed key indicators to measure progress of their forthcoming equity program. Such data includes:

-
- Primary data from community surveys, focus groups, whose data was aggregated and coded for analysis to identify patterns
 - Secondary data collection from internal and external data reports that highlighted social and economic disparities. The leveraged data analysis practices from other cities and worked with PolicyLink's Equity Profile of New Orleans to fully grasp their equity needs.



Enforcement and accountability

The City of New Orleans began addressing enforcement and accountability by identifying priorities and assigning associated actions. In particular, the City created the “Road to Equitable Government” plan which includes:

- Establishing an equity office to provide direct guidance within City departments and produce measurable improvements via City policies, programs, and service delivery
- Taking Executive & Legislative action to declare Equity as a fundamental value and goal to be pursued by the City
- Requiring all city departments to develop plan to address equity within their scope of influence
- Instituting equity and social impact assessments in the budgeting process
- Implementing an Equity Assessment Tool to evaluate potential equity impacts on proposed policies, programs, or initiatives at the front-end of decision making
- Establishing Equity Teams that work as "champions" to help advance the practice of equity in policy
- Establishing an Equity-focused performance management program that includes equity as an identifiable and trackable indicator for progress
- Creating a Racial Equity Community Roundtable to include leaders from all sectors in informing the City's work to advance equity within communities and business
- Creating a City workforce demographics dashboard to promote workforce equity and help develop specialized HR equity training tools

-
- Requiring all city government employees to receive racial equity training through a "train the trainer" model to build internal capacity
 - Developing a guide that uses equity best practices to better inform outreach and public engagement, ensuring no one is left out
 - Launching a public awareness campaign for the EquityNewOrleans initiative

Equity priorities

- ⇒ Racial disparities
- ⇒ Education and job training
- ⇒ Employment and income

Unique or standout feature from this case

Comprehensive approach; includes an Equity Office, impact assessments, performance management, and in-house training. The inclusion of a Community Roundtable is also unique to the New Orleans approach and embodies great potential path toward establishing strong and lasting community ties.

Boston, Massachusetts

City info

Population

685,094 (2017)

Mayor

Marty Walsh (elected 2014)



Amtrak Downeaster

Equity Officer(s)

Chief Diversity Officer: Danielson Tavares

Chief Resilience Officer: Dr. Atya Martin

Demographics:

White population	44.90%	High school degree	86.10%
Black population	25.30%	College degree	47.40%
Hispanic population	19.40%	Labor force participation	68.80%
Asian population	9.50%	Poverty rate	20.50%
Female population	51.90%	Owner occupied housing	35.30%
Population under 18	16.30%	Median gross rent	\$1,445/mo
Population over 65	11.00%	Median household income	\$62K

Source: US Census, QuickFacts 2017; All dollar figures are presented in 2017 dollars

Initiative start date

September 2015 (Chief Resilience Officer hired)

Motivation to launch equity initiative

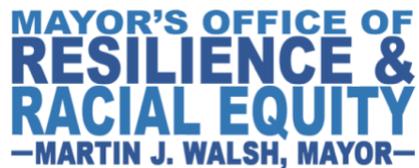
In 2014, Boston was selected as one of the 100 Resilient Cities under the Resilience Initiative. Under this plan, the city highlighted key shocks and stresses it faced that it would work to address in order to make the city a safer and better place to live for all Bostonians. Through the process, it was clear that its racial equity was a central component to many of the city's challenges. Hence, the plan evolved to readily

integrate the equity lens into the process. Mayor Marty Walsh adds to this that many Bostonians continue to face daily and compounded pressures of financial insecurity, lack of affordable housing access, health inequity, and so on. Such challenges are compounded by the systemic racial inequity that the city has the opportunity and obligation to address with the Resilience Initiative to ensure growth benefits all regardless of race, class, or neighborhood.

Approach to equity

Definition

Boston focuses on racial equity and defines it as an effort to "close the gap" so that race does not predict one's success. It considers equity as achieving fair outcomes and considering history and bias in equality of opportunity. Furthermore, the city recognizes that racial equity is not merely the absence of racial discrimination, but the presence of policies and practices that provide everyone with the support needed to improve their lives.



Initiative development process

Boston's Chief Resilience Officer, Dr. Atyia Martin, convened several open dialogues with public and private sector leaders and 5000+ community members. This was all done in effort to shape the Resilience Strategy. Given the urgency of the conversation around racial equity, the city released a blueprint to preview the related strategies of the resilience effort. Aside from that, the process closely tracked the Resilience Strategy Development process, provided by the Resilience Initiative. This included:

- Utilizing the Resilience Framework to prioritize Boston-specific challenges and opportunities
- Developing aspirations for the city through stakeholder engagements
- Designing achievable goals, implementable initiatives, concrete actions, targets, and timeframes
- Embedding racial equity into existing city plans, such as Imagine Boston 2030

Measurement and data

Resilience framework metrics used for data tracking.

Community focus group, survey data were used in creating the Resilience plan.

Enforcement and accountability

Created a racial equity lens for assessing resilience initiatives on those grounds

Organized final initiatives into four "vision" categories for the city:

1. Reflective, stronger people
2. Collaborative, proactive governance
3. Equitable economic opportunity
4. Connected, adaptive city

Going forward, Boston will leverage the above framework to track, measure, and report progress on all initiatives.

Equity priorities

- ⇒ Racial disparities
- ⇒ Health inequity
- ⇒ Economic inequality

Unique or standout feature from this case

Leverages its Resilience Initiative to integrate racial equity as part of a broader social and economic agenda.



San Antonio, Texas

City info

Population

1,511,946 (2017)

Mayor

Ron Nirenberg (elected 2017)

Equity Officer(s)

Interim Chief Equity Officer: Alejandra Lopez

Former Chief Equity Officer (2017): Kiran Bains



Demographics:

White population	25.10%	High school degree	82.00%
Black population	7.00%	College degree	25.70%
Hispanic population	64.00%	Labor force participation	63.50%
Asian population	2.70%	Poverty rate	18.60%
Female population	50.80%	Owner occupied housing	54.50%
Population under 18	25.40%	Median gross rent	\$918/mo
Population over 65	11.60%	Median household income	\$49.7K

Source: US Census, QuickFacts 2017; All dollar figures are presented in 2017 dollars

Initiative start date

In 2017 the City of San Antonio adopted its first annual budget incorporating equity budget concepts over rough proportionality for key city services, such as street maintenance and animal care.

Motivation to launch equity initiative

Though not clearly articulated by city documents, the City of San Antonio's Equity Office serves as a structural commitment to the long-term impacts it expects the work to produce. These include:

-
- City services will make the greatest impact towards San Antonio’s vision of prosperity;
 - The City will actively foster a mission-driven culture, aligning everyday work with the core values of professionalism, integrity, teamwork, and innovation; and
 - Residents will increasingly trust that the City is responsive and accountable to the community.

Approach to equity

Definition

To San Antonio, Equity means "...that our policy-making, service delivery, and distribution of resources account for the different histories, challenges, and needs of the people we serve. Racial equity means we eliminate racial disproportionalities so that race can no longer be used to predict success, and we increase the success of all communities."



Initiative development process

The Chief Equity Officer position was first held by Kiran Bains in 2017 under the previous Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Media articles report that the initial motivation was to ensure that all City functions – including garbage pickups, policing, and fixing potholes – would be carried out with the goal of advancing equity and eliminating implicit bias. The first official use of an "equity lens" was applied to the 2018 City budget which officially passed City Council on September 14, 2017. Since then, this office has evolved into the current Office of Equity.

Measurement and data

The City of San Antonio's data collection and analysis strategy is unknown. However, City documents state that the Office sets goals and measures against them to track progress "with the recognition that strategies must be targeted to close the gaps."

Enforcement and accountability

In addition to explicitly making equity a goal for the City of San Antonio, the Office of Equity further breaks this down into four annual goals that are built into City operations. These goals encourage the City to:

1. Advance equity in budgeting, community engagement, and high priority service delivery
2. Build awareness and involvement in the office through transformational community engagement
3. Collaborate with other institutions to achieve San Antonio's vision of prosperity
4. Improve services for community members submitting discrimination complaints

Equity priorities

See above



Caption: Former Chief Equity Officer Bains presenting on applying an Equity Lens to City Council's budget process

Unique/standout

The San Antonio budget making process applies an "equity lens" which affects the rough proportionality, and hence fairness, with which public resources are distributed for city services. The Office of Equity also improves services for community members submitting discrimination complaints. Lastly, As part of the City's commitment to equity and inclusion for everyone, the Office of Equity works closely with Ivalis Meza, the Senior Policy Advisor, Deputy Communications Director, and Liaison to the LGBTQ+ Community in the Office of the Mayor.

King County, Washington

County info

Population

2.189 million (2017)

County Executive

Dow Constantine (elected '09)



Equity Officer(s)

Director, Office of Equity & Social Justice: Matias Valenzuela

Demographics

White population	60.00%	High school degree	92.70%
Black population	6.80%	College degree	50.30%
Hispanic population	9.70%	Labor force participation	69.50%
Asian population	18.20%	Poverty rate	9.30%
Female population	49.90%	Owner occupied housing	57.40%
Population under 18	20.40%	Median gross rent	\$1,379/mo
Population over 65	13.00%	Median household income	\$83.6K

Source: US Census, QuickFacts 2017; All dollar figures are presented in 2017 dollars

Initiative start date

Launched by King County Executive Ron Sims in 2008 and formalized by Executive Dow Constantine and the Metropolitan King County Council via ordinance in 2010, Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) is an integrated part of the County's work, and is supported by the ESJ Office since it was established in early 2015.

Motivation to launch equity initiative

Before 2008, many of King's departments and agencies focused on disparities and disproportionality in various realms, such as health and criminal justice, which were generally not coordinated across the County. In early 2008, then-King County Executive Ron Sims launched Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) as an initiative aimed to intentionally

use an equity lens in departments’ policies and decisions, organizational practices and engagement with community.

Starting in 2010 with new King County Executive Dow Constantine and the County Council, Equity and Social Justice became an integrated part of the County’s work with the countywide Strategic Plan and ESJ ordinance. This new ordinance named the Inter-Branch Team as the coordinator and facilitator of the County’s equity work and formalized systems and frameworks, including the Determinants of Equity.

The Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan is a blueprint for change, mutually created by King County employees and community partners. The shared vision that was developed out of this process is consistent with the overall vision of King County’s Strategic Plan: A King County where all people have equitable opportunities to thrive.



Approach to equity

Definition

King County views Equity as fundamental to the society it seeks to build. Its end goal is for full and equal access to opportunities, power and resources so that all people can achieve their full potential. Furthermore, the County recognizes that being “pro-equity” requires the dismantling remaining systems of privilege and oppression that led to inequitable decision-making processes and the uneven distribution of benefits and burdens in our communities.

Initiative development process

The Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan is a blueprint for change, mutually created by King County employees and community partners. From the outset, the planning process was designed to hear from people across sectors, geography and populations before developing a draft. More than 600 County employees and 100 local organizations— including community organizations, education, philanthropy, labor, business and local governments—shared their insights and expertise on where

progress has been made, where persistent challenges still exist, and possible solutions toward achieving equity.

The overall framework that King County landed on is one with a vision of "a King County where all people have equitable opportunities to thrive" and with strategies that advance Equity & Social Justice by:

- Investing upstream where needs are greatest,
- Investing in community partnerships,
- Investing in employees,
- And doing all of this with accountable and transparent leadership.

Measurement and data

The King County Strategic Plan defines a Pro-Equity Policy Agenda aimed at expanding access to the County's preset "Determinants of Equity:"

- child and youth development,
- economic development and jobs,
- environment and climate,
- health and human services,
- housing,
- information and technology,
- justice system,
- and transportation and mobility.

These determinants are used both for understanding the state of equity in King County, for organizing policy actions that the County will take over its 3-5 year plan to advance equity, and for tracking its progress over time.

Enforcement and accountability

In addition to highlighting pro-equity policy actions that the County will take, King County has integrated and implemented pro-equity practices into its major functions of government, including:

1. Leadership, operations & services
2. Plans, policies & budgets

-
3. Workplace & workforce
 4. Community partnerships
 5. Communication & education
 6. Facility & system improvements

For each of the equity improvement areas listed above, the King County plan further details the following:

- Overall goals for the area
- Ideas for investing upstream where needs are greatest
- Ideas for investing in employees
- Ideas for investing in community partnerships
- A plan for accountable and transparent leadership

Lastly, King County launched a new [public reporting platform](#) for its Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan to help them monitor, track and share how well they are doing to advance equity and social justice in our community. Combining stories with data, the goal is to give communities, employees and the public at large an open, honest and robust view of actions they are taking to achieve important outcomes in equity and social justice

Unique/standout

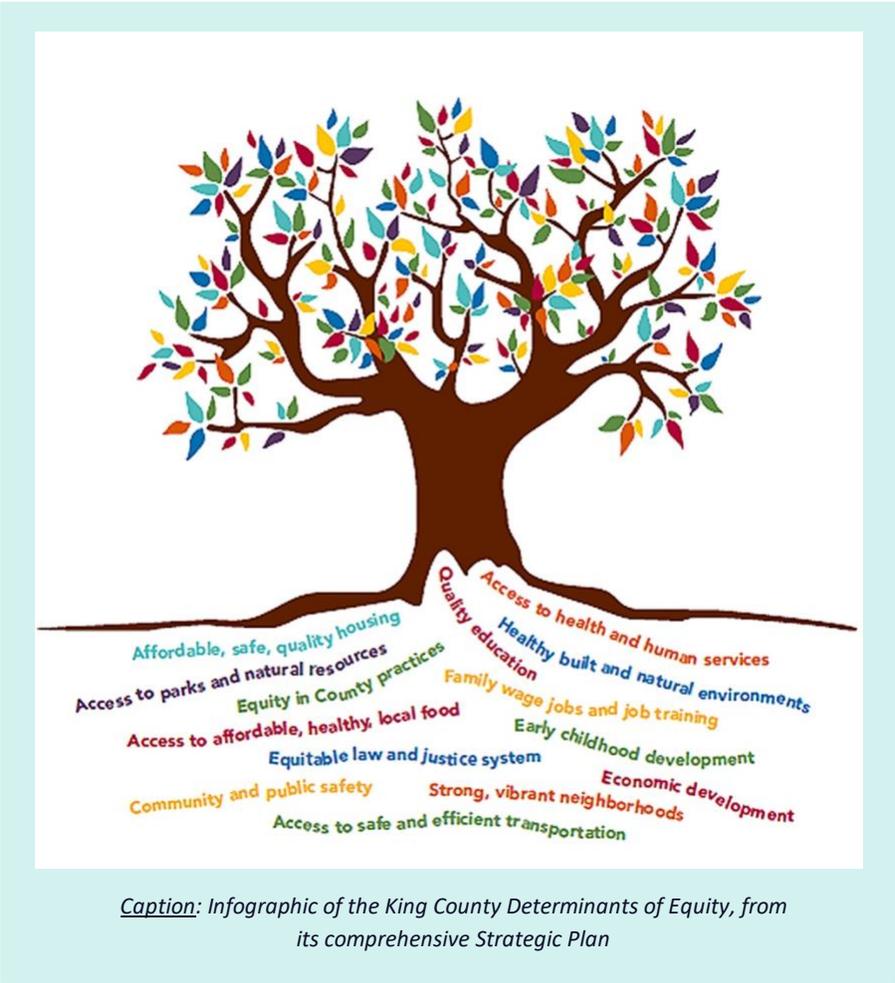
The dynamic between OESJ and the County's Inter-Branch Team:

The Office of Equity and Social Justice works hand-in-hand with the Inter- Branch Team, the original facilitator of the County's equity work and framework development, to support the work of all County employees and agencies. The office also serves as the backbone and coordinator of key County efforts to advance equity in the organization and community. Although there is now an ESJ Office, every County agency and employee is still ultimately responsible for advancing and being accountable to ESJ activities and deliverables.

An equity-based Theory of Change:

King County incorporates a Theory of Change in their equity framework to guide their work. Using a “stream” metaphor, the County views the problem as the downstream

results of inequities that exist in social, physical and economic conditions in its communities. As people are not all situated the same, with the same opportunities to thrive, pro-equity policies and practices are designed to account for these differences. Finally, the County adds that “...ultimately, we seek a course where race and place are eliminated as predictors of prosperity and quality of life for the residents of King County.”



Fairfax County, Virginia

County info

Population

1.148 million (2017)

Board Chairman

Sharon Bulova (elected '09)

Equity Officer(s)

Chief Equity Officer: Karla Bruce



Demographics

White population	50.80%	High school degree	92.00%
Black population	10.40%	College degree	60.70%
Hispanic population	16.20%	Labor force participation	70.90%
Asian population	20.00%	Poverty rate	6.70%
Female population	50.40%	Owner occupied housing	67.80%
Population under 18	23.40%	Median gross rent	\$1,823/mo
Population over 65	13.10%	Median household income	\$117.5K

Source: US Census, QuickFacts 2017; All dollar figures are presented in 2017 dollars

Key Equity Statistics

Research institutes PolicyLink and the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity at the University of Southern California studied the economic impact of inequity in Fairfax County. It found that the county's gross domestic product would have been \$26.2 billion higher in 2012 if its racial gaps in income were closed.

Initiative start date

Equitable Growth Profile was developed in 2015

The One Fairfax Resolution was adopted in July of 2016

The One Fairfax Policy was enacted in November of 2017

Motivation to launch equity initiative

The initiative will help county and school leaders to look intentionally, comprehensively and systematically at barriers that may be creating gaps in opportunity. One Fairfax recognizes equity is also an economic imperative. Economic research shows that counties with greater social and racial inclusion have:

- Stronger and longer periods of economic growth.
- Faster per capita income growth.
- Increased wages as adults for children who grew up in lower—and higher— income families.

For us to compete in the global economy, it is vital to help people reach their highest level of personal achievement. Not only does it create greater economic security for families, but also it generates increased business revenues and jobs.

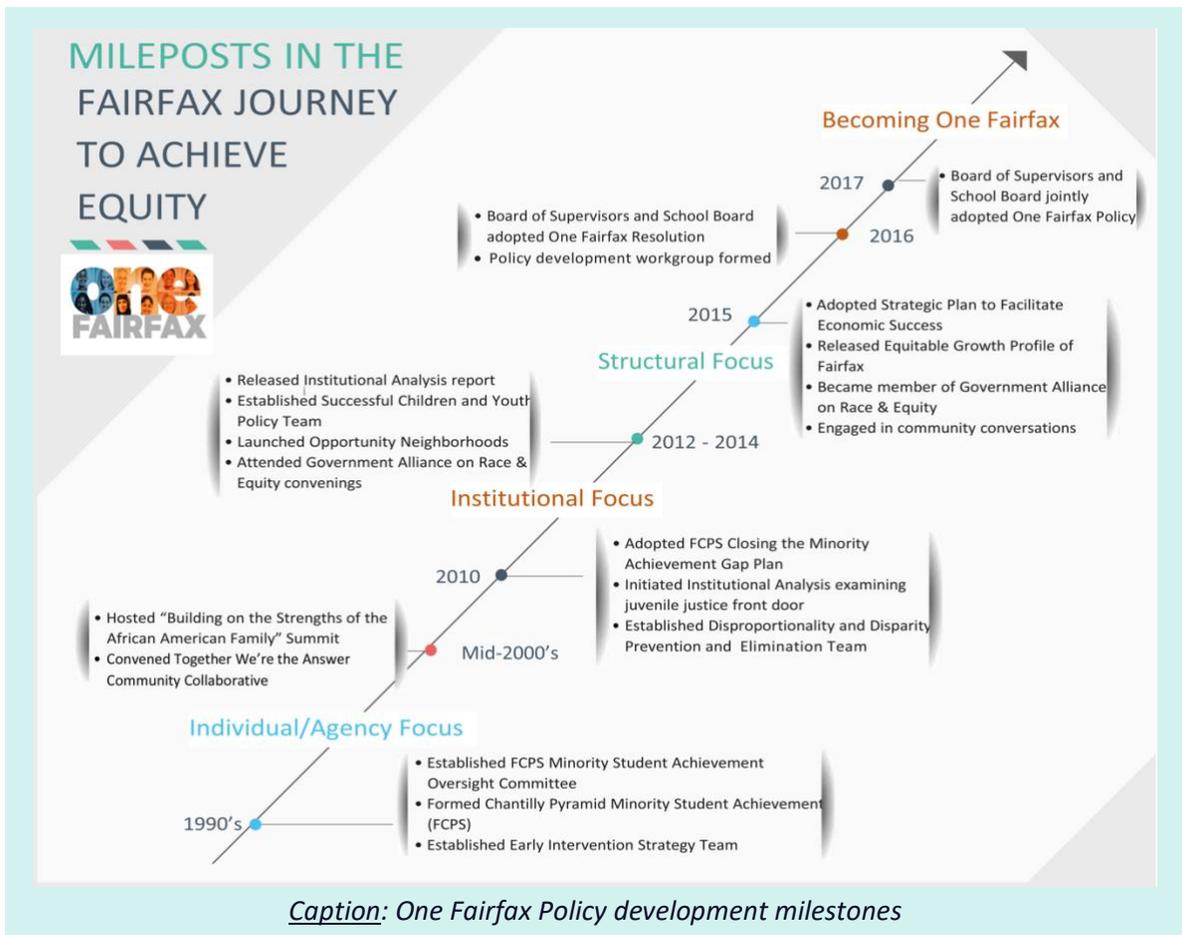
Approach to equity

Definition

One Fairfax defines equity as: "The commitment to promote fairness and justice in the formation of public policy that results in all residents – regardless of age, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, socio-economic status or neighborhood of residence or other characteristics – having opportunity to fully participate in the region's economic vitality, contribute to its readiness for the future, and connect to its assets and resources."

Initiative development process

Below is a depiction of the process that Fairfax County underwent in developing the One Fairfax Policy. This is then followed by an outline of the process the County will follow under this Policy to achieve equity and advance opportunity for all.



To advance equity under One Fairfax:

- Community Engagement
 - To foster civil discourse and dialogue, community engagement shall ensure that the breadth of interests, ideas, and values of all people are heard and considered. Outreach and public participation processes will be inclusive of diverse races, cultures, ages, and other social statuses. Effective listening, transparency, flexibility, and adaptability will be utilized to overcome barriers (geography, language, time, design, etc.) that prevent or limit participation in public processes. Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will engage with sectors such as higher education, business, nonprofit, faith, philanthropy, civic and others to collectively address barriers to opportunity.
- Training and Capacity Building
 - Training will be designed for individual and collective learning with an emphasis on building competencies and skills to implement strategies that

promote racial and social equity in employees' daily work. Foundational training will include, but will not be limited to: an understanding of implicit bias; institutional and structural racism; and the use of equity tools. Additional training for role and business area specific training will also be provided.

- Applying Equity Tools
 - Consideration will be given to whole community benefits and burdens, identifying strategies to mitigate negative impacts, and promoting success for all people in planning and decision making. Equity tools such as structured questions, equity impact analyses, disparity studies, etc. will be used to ensure that equity is considered intentionally in decision-making and the One Fairfax policy is operationalized.
- Racial and Social Equity Action Planning
 - All organizations and departments within Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will conduct analysis, devise plans, set goals, and take actions through specific practices, policies, and initiatives within their purview.
- Accountability Framework
 - Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will incorporate data and publish performance measures that can be analyzed, quantified, and disaggregated to evaluate the extent to which our systems are achieving goals identified through the racial and social equity action planning.

Measurement and data

Worked with PolicyLink to develop an Equitable Growth Profile for the County.

Enforcement and accountability

The Chief Equity Officer provides overall management of the One Fairfax strategic framework by serving as the county's racial and social equity liaison, engaging stakeholders and partners and advising and supporting the Board of Supervisors, executive leadership and department Leadership in shaping and directing policy and practice to create equitable opportunity for all Fairfax County residents.

Furthermore, the One Fairfax Policy delineates the following roles to advance its equity initiatives:

- The Board of Supervisors, School Board, and One Fairfax Executive Leadership Team to provide strategic, collective leadership in support of the equity-informed planning and decision-making processes prescribed by this policy and the development and pursuit of identified equity goals; and
- A multi-department, cross-systems equity staff team to facilitate coordination of racial and social equity action planning, collective action, and shared accountability across and within county and schools organizations.
- Boards, Commissions, Authorities and Advisory Committees to promote stakeholder engagement and input in support of equity informed planning and decision making.



Equity priorities

The OneFairfax Policy outlines 17 areas of focus to promote equity, including:

- ⇒ Equitable community development
- ⇒ Housing access
- ⇒ Workforce development
- ⇒ Early childhood education

Unique/standout

The development of a resolution and policy that provided basic guidelines for the County Board and Equity Officer to advance equitable growth initiatives through more comprehensive strategies.

Motivation to launch equity initiative

Dane County is often considered one of the best places to live and raise a family in America. In 1996 *CNN/Money Magazine* listed Madison as the best city to live in America; in 2007, Middleton also received the honor of being the top city to live in America by *CNN/Money Magazine*; and 2011 *Men's Health Magazine* ranked Madison as the most educated city in America. Despite these and other positive attributes, Dane County repeatedly ranks near the bottom in national studies on the extent of racial disparities in economic status, health, education, justice and child welfare for African Americans as well as for Hispanics and Asians. The fact that African Americans constitute less than 7% of the county's total population means that their poor outcomes are obscured by the generally very positive outcomes experienced by the far larger white population.

The county's aggregate "success" has actually made it harder to build and sustain a broad awareness and sense of urgency about the much more negative experience of our minority population. Hence, following the early success of a nonprofit led equity initiative known as Race to Equity, and following the equity-focused work of the region's Public Health department, the City of Madison launched its Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative (RESJI).

Approach to equity

Definition

According to city documents, equity is defined as "just and fair inclusion in which all, including all racial and ethnic groups, can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Equity gives all people a just and fair shot in life despite historic patterns of racial and economic exclusion." This definition follows that of PolicyLink.

Initiative development process

In the beginning of 2012, the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, launched a multi-year initiative known as Race to Equity. The central goal of the project was to explore, measure, and analyze the extent and pattern of racial disparities on key well-being and outcome measures between African Americans and whites living in Dane County, Wisconsin. The long-term

aspiration is to use this data and analysis as a foundation for advancing collective action towards solutions.

To date, the Project has highlighted four activities as part of its logic model which will help reduce racial disparities in the County:

1. Gather information about and learn from what has been done in the past.
2. Identify and disseminate the relevant data in health, education, child welfare and criminal justice to all stakeholders.
3. Provide tools for the analysis, evaluation and prioritization of both problems and solutions.
4. Create mechanisms for engagement, resulting in more coordinated and comprehensive actions and investments aimed at reducing racial disparities.

Soon after this program launched, the Madison and Dane County Public Health department launched its own equity initiative to target health-based equity results. This eventually prompted the city to formalize its own equity program that would span all of its government functions; it created the Racial Equity and Social Justice initiative which is housed within the Office of Civil Rights. The County followed shortly after by creating its own Office for Equity and Inclusion.



Measurement and data

The Race to Equity Project now functions as a research arm and community engagement lead for the city and county's broader equity work. Over the years, Race to Equity Project has released several reports including a Baseline Report revealing the realities of white/black disparities in Dane County on over 40 well-being measures. More recently, the Project also published a "Roadmap to Equity" which uses its data to provide a comprehensive, results-based plan that identifies the actions, services, policies, system reforms and investments they believe the County must undertake to

meaningfully address the racial inequity crisis. These actions are broadly categorized into the following interrelated goals:

- Significantly increase the employment, income and wealth of Dane County's low-income families of color.
- Expand and improve supports for low-income working families of color to better enable them to balance the twin challenges of parenting and success on the job.
- Expand and improve supports for children and youth of color to assure that a far larger percentage of them meet early childhood developmental milestones, enter kindergarten ready to learn, and succeed throughout their school careers.

Additionally, the City of Madison publishes the results of RESJI in city activities in a "snapshot" document which highlights all of the projects analyzed with an equity lens, hours spend doing equity work, equity trainings held, and so on.

Enforcement and accountability

From the city side, Madison has implemented Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative tools into the development of City policies, plans, programs and budgets. Each department within the city publicly lists the RESJI tools it uses to uphold its equity focus; these tools include Racial Equity Analysis tools, Equitable Hiring guides, and Equitable Workforce Planning guides. These are published online and accessible to the public. Transparency is key to their accountability strategy.

Furthermore, the Race to Equity Roadmap provides target numbers that the County would be held accountable to if its policy and initiative recommendations were adopted. Also, the Race to Equity Project's work is valued highly enough to comprise an active team that works at the County office and whose roles include:

- Director of Race to Equity Project
- Research, Data and Policy Associate
- Communication and Development Manager
- Project and Community Engagement Associate
- Policy Associate

Equity priorities

Racial equity across the board. The City of Madison highlights the following focus areas:

- Equity in City Operations
- Equity in City Policies and Budgets
- Equity in the Community

Unique/standout

Race Forward functions as an independent nonprofit apparatus that provides research and analytics and performs community engagement to inform the city and county's development of equity-advancing policies. The City and County do their part by focusing internally on equity-based operational improvements, and equity-informed policy and budget analyses.

Appendix II: Interview Guide

Below I provide a sample of the questions posed during the expert interviews that were conducted for this report:

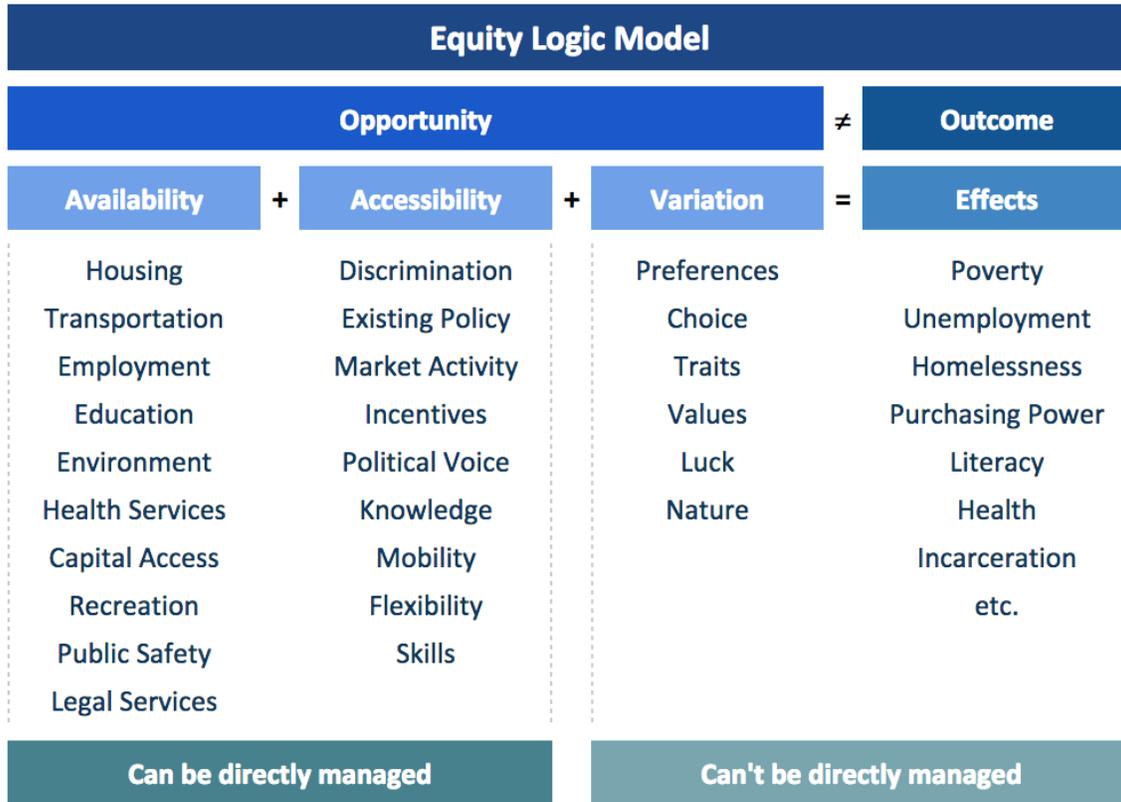
- How do you think about defining and measuring equity?
- What was the primary motivation for launching your equity initiative or creating your equity office?
- Did you consider alternatives to accomplishing that goal other than an equity office/officer?
- How did you manage to agree on this strategy? Was there widespread support or a need to build a support coalition?
- How is the office/your work funded?
- What does your equity office do day-to-day?
- What authority does your equity office have and how does it fit into the pre-existing governmental structure?
- Who does your equity officer(s) report to and was there any internal resistance from incorporating a new reporting structure (if applicable)?
- Do you incorporate equity impact assessments? If so, how? And have they been effective?
- How do you work with cities or counties that are proximal to your jurisdiction?
- Has your work been successful? Is there any data available yet to verify?
- What challenges have you experienced through the setup process or with the ongoing work of the office?
- Are there any resources you would advise us to take a look at for support?
- Any other thoughts, concerns, ideas, or suggestions on launching a successful equity initiative?

Expert interviews comprised the following organizations:

- Race to Equity
- Government Alliance on Race and Equity
- PolicyLink
- Cook County, Commission on Social Innovation
- Cook County, Office of the President
- King County (WA), Office of Equity and Social Justice
- Fairfax County, Equity Office (VA)
- City of Madison (WI), Office of Civil Rights
- Dane County (WI), Public Health Equity Initiative
- Multnomah County (OR), Office of Diversity & Equity
- San Antonio (TX), Office of Equity
- Metropolitan Planning Council

Appendix III: Preliminary Equity Framework

This equity framework was built by incorporating the findings of the study and the advice provided by the interviewed Equity Officers.



Notes

- Availability:** Refers to the availability of key resources necessary for a baseline level of well-being & productivity.
- Accessibility:** Denotes barriers to access of available resources, or things that are needed to access them. For example: existing policy could be burdening access to key resources, or market activity fails to produce resources, or people lack knowledge of their presence.
- Variation:** Points to natural variation that can not be managed directly. This includes individual preference, choices that people make, unique traits, luck, and natural phenomena, i.e., the presence of unique natural resources or environmental conditions.
- Effects:** Refers to measured outcomes of interest such as poverty, unemployment, literacy rates, homelessness, and so on.

Appendix IV: Equity Dataset Example

As we learned, focusing on Outcomes lends itself to finding unusual disparities, but does little to explain their causes or ways to address them. The key to getting equity “right” is working with robust & quality data that pinpoints inequities at their source; upstream in the Opportunity area (See Appendix III) and where they can be managed.

Below is a framework for how equity data might be constructed based on Availability and Accessibility metrics and how those relate to Groupings such as Identity, Place, and Class.

		Grouping		
		Identity	Place	Class
Domain	Availability metrics	Availability metrics	Availability metrics	Availability metrics
	Accessibility metrics	Accessibility metrics	Accessibility metrics	Accessibility metrics

This framework builds on a definition of equity as “a state in which all residents have verifiable access to essential goods & services, and face no discriminatory treatment based on identity, location, or class.” Outcome metrics will nevertheless need to be tracked and compared to changes in Availability and Accessibility metrics to study the efficacy of one’s equity initiatives.

		Grouping				
		Identity	Place	Class		
Domain	Availability metrics	Availability metrics	Availability metrics	Availability metrics	Managed	
	Accessibility metrics	Accessibility metrics	Accessibility metrics	Accessibility metrics		
	Outcome metrics	Outcome metrics	Outcome metrics	Outcome metrics		Tracked

Identity, Place, and Class can be sliced in several different ways. For example, with Identity: race, gender, age group, and so on. Furthermore, the data will need to effectively control for confounding factors that may obfuscate the true causes of disparities. For example: research finds that a higher proportion of black people compared to white populations receive speeding tickets. However, the same data finds that a higher proportion of black drivers are found to speed excessively than other groups.⁵⁶ Furthermore, younger people are more likely to speed than older people; as it turns out, black groups have lower median ages compared to whites.⁵⁷ Hence, age differences serves as one of many confounding factors that needs to be accounted for. Thus, the data categorization and “data crunching” process will require careful deliberation by the equity initiative leadership.

Below, I provide an example dataset slice for the Identity grouping that builds on the County’s prioritization of race and the datatracking structure of Resilience Initiatives.

Grouping	#	Subgroup	#	Domain	#	Sub-domain	#	Qualitative Question	Metric		
Identity	1	Race	1.1	Availability	1.1.1	Housing	1.1.1.1	To what extent does the county have an adequate supply of safe and affordable housing?	# homeless people per 100,000 population, by race		
							1.1.1.2	To what extent are there mechanisms in place for effective planning for emergency shelter and temporary housing?	% population that could be served by city's shelters for 72 hours, by race		
							1.1.2.1	To what extent is there affordable, reliable public transportation available?	Avg. proximity of public transportation for household, by race		
					1.1.2	Transportation	1.1.2.2	To what extent is there adequate, reliable infrastructure for private transportation via bike or automobile?	Avg. # of pothole fixes or roadway complaints by residents, by race Avg. % bike ridership by residents, by race		
							1.2.1	Political voice	1.2.1.1	To what extent are voting places made readily accessible to residents?	Avg. proximity to local voting place for households, by race
									1.2.1.2	To what extent are residents satisfied with being heard by local politicians?	% residents satisfied with local political receptivity, by race
			1.2.2	Discrimination	1.2.2.1	To what extent are residents being subject to discrimination in government or the marketplace?	# of discrimination complaints filed by residents, by race				
					1.2.2.2	To what extent are laws available to protect residents from discrimination?	% of discrimination suits won by residents, by race				
			1.3	Outcomes	1.3.1	Economy	1.3.1.1	To what extent are residents able to purchase the goods and services they need?	Median purchasing power (or net income) of residents, by race		
							1.3.1.2	To what extent are residents experiencing upward economic mobility?	% likelihood of moving up income ladder from parental income class, by race		
					1.3.2	Education	1.3.2.1	To what extent are residents graduating high school?	% graduation rate of residents, by race		
							1.3.2.2	To what extent are residents able to provide early childhood education to their children?	% enrollment in qualified early childhood education center for households, by race		

Appendix V: Equity Toolkit Example (Madison)

Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative RESJ Tool: Fast-Track Version



INSTRUCTIONS

This abbreviated version of the full RESJ Tool is intended for issues on a short timeline or without a widespread impact.

- Examples:
- single piece of legislation already drafted and introduced.
 - creation of a single position description and job posting for an open position
 - development of a single budget item proposal

For broader policies and legislation in its beginning phase, please use the full version of the RESJ Toolkit.

This tool should be completed by people with different racial and socioeconomic perspectives. When possible, involve those directly impacted by the issue. Include and document multiple voices in this process. The order of questions may be re-arranged to suit your situation.

Mission of the Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Initiative: To establish racial equity and social justice as core principles in all decisions, policies and functions of the City of Madison.

Equity is just and fair inclusion into a society in which all, including all racial and ethnic groups, can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Equity gives all people a just and fair shot in life despite historic patterns of racial and economic exclusion (www.policylink.org).

The persistence of deep racial and social inequities and divisions across society is evidence of bias at the individual, institutional and structural levels. These types of bias often work to the benefit of White people and to the detriment of people of color, usually unintentionally or inadvertently.

Purpose of this Tool: 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.

The "What, Who, Why, and How" questions of this tool are designed to lead to strategies to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts and unintended consequences on marginalized populations.

BEGIN ANALYSIS

Name of topic or issue being analyzed:

Main contact name(s) and contact information for this analysis:

Names and affiliations of others participating in the analysis:

1. WHAT

a. What does the policy, plan or proposal seek to accomplish?

b. What do available data tell you about this issue? (See page 3 for guidance on data resources.)

c. What data are unavailable or missing?

2. WHO

a. 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?

3. WHY

a. What are potential unintended consequences (social, economic, health, environmental or other)?

4. HOW: RECOMMENDATIONS SECTION

a. Describe recommended strategies to address adverse impacts, prevent negative unintended consequences and advance racial equity (program, policy, partnership and/or budget/fiscal strategies):

Appendix VI: Sample Equity Policy (Fairfax)

ONE FAIRFAX POLICY – November 21, 2017

I. PURPOSE

Fairfax County embraces its growing diverse population and recognizes it as a tremendous asset but also knows that racial and social inequities still exist. This policy defines expectations for consideration of racial and social equity, and in particular, meaningful community involvement when planning, developing, and implementing policies, practices, and initiatives. It provides a framework to advance equity in alignment with our stated visions and priorities. This policy informs all other policies and applies to all publicly delivered services in Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools.

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION

This is a new policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

Equity: The commitment to promote fairness and justice in the formation of public policy that results in all residents – regardless of age, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, socio-economic status or neighborhood of residence or other characteristics – having opportunity to fully participate in the region's economic vitality, contribute to its readiness for the future, and connect to its assets and resources.

Equity Tools: Information and processes used to identify who is affected by a decision, policy, or practice; how they are affected; and to guide recommendations to encourage positive impacts and/or mitigate negative impacts.

Publicly delivered: The services provided by government or public schools either directly (through the public sector) or through financing the provision of services.

Race: A socially constructed category of identification based on physical characteristics, ancestry, historical affiliation, or shared culture.

Racial Equity: The absence of institutional and structural barriers experienced by people, based on race or color that impede opportunities and results.

Social Equity: The absence of institutional and structural barriers experienced by people, based on other societal factors such as age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, socio-economic status, neighborhood of residence, that impede opportunities and results.

IV. AREAS OF FOCUS TO PROMOTE EQUITY

Helping people reach their highest level of personal achievement is vital to our county's successful ability to compete in the global economy. Linking our residents and families to opportunities including education, workforce development, employment, and affordable housing helps ensure lifelong learning, better health, resilience, and economic success. The systems, structures, and settings in which our residents and families live, work, play, and learn, create an equitable community and are, in part, a product of policy and resourcing decisions.

Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools, working in conjunction with higher education, business, nonprofit, faith, philanthropy, civic and other sectors, will give particular consideration to these initial areas recognizing that additional areas of focus may emerge based on changing factors and that assessment and prioritization are necessary to guide and inform collective actions to support a thriving community and promote equity with a goal of achieving the following:

1. Community and economic development policies and programs that promote wealth creation and ensure fair access for all people.
2. Housing policies that encourage all who want to live in Fairfax to be able to do so, and the provision of a full spectrum of housing opportunities across the county, most notably those in mixed-use areas that are accessible to multiple modes of transport.
3. Workforce development pathways that provide all residents with opportunity to develop knowledge and skills to participate in a diverse economy and earn sufficient income to support themselves and their families.
4. An early childhood education system that ensures all children enter kindergarten at their optimal developmental level with equitable opportunity for success.
5. Education that promotes a responsive, caring, and inclusive culture where all feel valued, supported, and hopeful, and that every child is reached, challenged, and prepared for success in school and life.
6. Community and public safety that includes services such as fire, emergency medical services, police, health, emergency management and code enforcement that are responsive to all residents so that everyone feels safe to live, work, learn, and play in any neighborhood of Fairfax County.
7. A criminal justice system that provides equitable access and fair treatment for all people.
8. Neighborhoods that support all communities and individuals through strong social networks, trust among neighbors, and the ability to work together to achieve common goals that improve the quality of life for everyone in the neighborhood.
9. A vibrant food system where healthy, accessible, and affordable food is valued as a basic human necessity.
10. A health and human services system where opportunities exist for all individuals and families to be safe, be healthy and realize their potential through the provision of accessible, high quality, affordable and culturally appropriate services.
11. A quality built and natural environment that accommodates anticipated growth and change in an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable and equitable manner that includes mixes of land use that protects existing stable neighborhoods and green spaces, supports sustainability, supports a high quality of life, and promotes employment opportunities, housing, amenities and services for all people.

12. A healthy and quality environment to live and work in that acknowledges the need to breathe clean air, to drink clean water now and for future generations.
13. A parks and recreation system that is equitable and inclusive by providing quality facilities, programs, and services to all communities; balancing the distribution of parks, programs and facilities; and providing accessible and affordable facilities and programs.
14. A multi-modal transportation system that supports the economic growth, health, congestion mitigation, and prosperity goals of Fairfax County and provides accessible mobility solutions that are based on the principles associated with sustainability, diversity, and community health.
15. Digital access and literacy for all residents.
16. Intentional, focused recruitment efforts that bolster a diverse applicant pool; hiring and evaluation practices, and processes for employee feedback, to achieve and preserve a culture of equity and fairness for all employees.
17. Policies that prohibit all forms of discrimination under Federal and State law in county and school system activities, and ensure that all practices provide fair treatment for all employees, contractors, clients, community partners, residents, and other sectors who interact with Fairfax County including higher education, business, nonprofit, faith, philanthropy, and civic.

V. PROCESS

To achieve equity and advance opportunity for all, Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will work in partnership with others and utilize the influence of each respective institution to leverage and expand opportunity. Organizational capacity in the following areas will enable the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies, programs, and practices that advance equity:

a. Community Engagement

To foster civil discourse and dialogue, community engagement shall ensure that the breadth of interests, ideas, and values of all people are heard and considered. Outreach and public participation processes will be inclusive of diverse races, cultures, ages, and other social statuses. Effective listening, transparency, flexibility, and adaptability will be utilized to overcome barriers (geography, language, time, design, etc.) that prevent or limit participation in public processes. Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will engage with sectors such as higher education, business, nonprofit, faith, philanthropy, civic and others to collectively address barriers to opportunity.

b. Training and Capacity Building

Training will be designed for individual and collective learning with an emphasis on building competencies and skills to implement strategies that promote racial and social equity in employees' daily work. Foundational training will include, but will not be limited to: an understanding of implicit bias; institutional and structural racism; and the use of equity tools. Additional training for role and business area specific training will also be provided.

c. Applying Equity Tools

Consideration will be given to whole community benefits and burdens, identifying strategies to mitigate negative impacts, and promoting success for all people in planning and decision making. Equity tools such as structured questions, equity impact analyses, disparity studies, etc. will be used to ensure that equity is considered intentionally in decision-making and the One Fairfax policy is operationalized.

d. Racial and Social Equity Action Planning

All organizations and departments within Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will conduct analysis, devise plans, set goals, and take actions through specific practices, policies, and initiatives within their purview.

e. Accountability Framework

Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will incorporate data and publish performance measures that can be analyzed, quantified, and disaggregated to evaluate the extent to which our systems are achieving goals identified through the racial and social equity action planning.

VI. ROLES

Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will designate and support staff members to lead the implementation of the One Fairfax policy. These staff members will work in conjunction with:

- The Board of Supervisors, School Board, and One Fairfax Executive Leadership Team to provide strategic, collective leadership in support of the equity-informed planning and decision-making processes prescribed by this policy and the development and pursuit of identified equity goals; and
- A multi-department, cross-systems equity staff team to facilitate coordination of racial and social equity action planning, collective action, and shared accountability across and within county and schools organizations.
- Boards, Commissions, Authorities and Advisory Committees to promote stakeholder engagement and input in support of equity informed planning and decision making.

Related policies and regulations:

Fairfax County Public Schools Policy 1450 – Nondiscrimination
Fairfax County Government Procedural Memorandum 39-06 – Harassment
Fairfax County Government Procedural Memorandum 39-04 – Reasonable Accommodation in Employment
Fairfax County Government Procedural Memorandum 39-05 – Reasonable Accommodation of Services and Devices
Fairfax County Government Procedural Memorandum 02-08 – Language Access Policy
The Code of Fairfax County, Virginia – Chapter 11 – Human Rights Ordinance

Appendix V: Endnotes

- ¹ “The Equity Manifesto.” PolicyLink. Available at: <http://www.policylink.org/about-us/equity-manifesto>
- ² Lopez, Linda. (2017). “Latino Residents Are Being Displaced From Transit-Friendly Buildings in Albany Park.” Available at: <https://chi.streetsblog.org/2017/12/04/latino-residents-are-being-evicted-from-transit-friendly-buildings-in-albany-park/>
- ³ Lopez, Linda. (2017). “Landlord Is Blocking Relocation Deal for Tenants Displaced by TOD Plan.” Available at: <https://chi.streetsblog.org/2017/01/03/landlord-is-blocking-relocation-deal-for-tenants-displaced-by-tod-plan/>
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- ⁵ Bellware, Kim. (2017). “A Wave of Closures Has Left Some Neighborhoods in a “Pharmacy Desert.” Chicago Mag. Available at: <http://www.chicagomag.com/city-life/October-2017/A-Wave-of-Closures-Has-Left-Some-Neighborhoods-in-a-Pharmacy-Desert/>
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COOK COUNTY COMMITTEE
ON ADDRESSING
**BIAS, EQUITY, &
CULTURAL COMPETENCY**

APPENDIX E

EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN

2016-2022



King County

OFFICE OF EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

OFFICE OF KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE DOW CONSTANTINE

kingcounty.gov/equity

401 Fifth Ave, Suite 800 Seattle, WA 98104

206-263-9600 / TTY Relay: 711



Alternative formats available

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We are grateful to the following organizations and coalitions for their time and insights. Without their contributions, neither this plan nor equity in our region is possible.

350 Seattle
African American Advisory Council to the City of Seattle
Police Department
All Girl Everything Ultimate Program
American Friends Service Committee-Seattle
Asian Pacific American Advocates
Asian Pacific Directors Coalition
Assistance League of Seattle
AtWork
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound
Black Emerald City
Black Prisoners' Caucus
Blue Pony Youth Program
Bulgarian Cultural & Heritage Center of Seattle
Capitol Hill Housing
Catholic Community Housing Services of Western Washington
Center for MultiCultural Health
Centerstone
Child Care Resources
CHI Franciscan Health
Chinese American Citizens Alliance-Seattle
Church Council of Greater Seattle
City of Kent
City of Seattle Community Technology Program
City of Seattle Mayor's Council on African American Elders
City of Seattle Office of Arts & Culture
City of Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
City Vision
Coalition of Immigrants, Refugees and Communities of Color
Community Café Collaborative of Washington
Community for Youth
Compassionate Seattle
Connecting Communities Consortium
Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Seattle
Council on American-Islamic Relations Washington
Croatian Fraternal Union-Seattle
Delta Dental of Washington
Downtown Emergency Service Center
Digital Equity Action Committee
Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition/Technical Advisory Group
EarthCorps
Earth Ministry
ECO Net
Equal Start Community Coalition
Equal Justice Coalition
El Centro de la Raza
Ending the Prison Industrial Complex-Seattle

ENSO
EnvirolIssues
Environmental Professionals of Color
Ethnic Heritage Council
Faith Action Network
Federal Way Public Schools – Native American Education Program
Feet First
Fellowship of Reconciliation Youth
Filipino Community Center
Forterra
Friends of Youth
Gay City
Gender Justice League
Germans from Russia Heritage Society
Global Health Alliance
Got Green
Governing for Racial Equity Network
Green Lake Association for Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy and Painting
Green River Coalition
Green River College
Healthy Auburn Task Force
Highline Community College
Hopelink
Housing Development Consortium Resident Services Affinity Group
of Seattle/King County
India Association of Western Washington
Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness
Iranian American Community Alliance
Irish Heritage Club
Kent Cultural Diversity Initiative Group
Kent School District
King County Children and Youth Advisory Board
King County Coalition of Unions
King County Promotores Network
King County Refugee Forum
King County Youth Advisory Council
Latino Northwest Communications
Leadership Eastside
LeadersUp
LGBTQ Allyship
Leif Erikson Lodge
Multi-Service Center
National Association for Black Veterans-Seattle
National Association of Asian American Professionals
Native American Women's Dialogue on Infant Mortality
Neighborhood House
Nordic Heritage Museum
Northwest Folklife
OneAmerica
Open Doors for Multicultural Families
Pacific American Advocates
Para Los Niños

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Park Directors Network of King County
Polish Home Association
Pride Foundation
Project Feast
Puget Sound Clean Air Agency
Puget Sound Educational Service District
Puget Sound Sage
Race and Climate Justice
Ravensdale Park Foundation
Red Eagle Soaring Native Youth Theatre
Regional Equity Network
Rising Tide Seattle
Russian Community Center of Seattle
SeaTac-Tukwila Food Innovation Network
Seattle Children's Hospital
Seattle CityClub
Seattle Colleges
Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities
Seattle Design Festival: Design for Equity
Seattle Foundation
Seattle Goodwill Industries
Seattle Indian Health Board
Seattle People of Color and Indigenous Peoples Group
Seattle Public Utilities
Seattle Sister Cities Association
Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative
SEIU 1199NW
Senior Services
Shoreline Community College
Sierra Club
Skyway Youth Network
Skyway Solutions
Snoqualmie Tribe
Snoqualmie Healthy Community Coalition
Somali Health Board
Somali Youth and Family Club
South King Council of Human Services
South King County Human Service Planners Group
South Park Information and Resource Center
South Park Neighborhood Association
South Park Senior Center
Southwest Youth and Family Services
Soy Source
St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church
State of Washington Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs
Sustainability Ambassadors
Swedish Club
Teamsters Local 117
Technology Access Foundation
The Arc of King County
The Nature Conservancy
The North American Post
Transportation Choices Coalition

Tri-County Refugee Planning Committee
Turkish American Cultural Association of Washington
United Indians of All Tribes
United Way of King County
University of Washington
University of Washington School of Nursing and Health Studies
Vashon Social Services Network
Washington Defender Association
Washington Global Health Alliance
Washington State Department of Early Learning
West Hill Community Association
White Center Community Development Association
Wing Luke Museum
Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County
YMCA of Greater Seattle
YWCA Seattle / King / Snohomish
YouthCare

We are grateful to the King County employees within departments, agencies and offices, and at all levels of our organization, who contributed their ideas and energy to this plan and are committed to realizing the social justice dream of our County's namesake, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Department Adult & Juvenile Detention
Assessor's Office
Department of Community & Human Services
King County Council
District Court
Department of Elections
Office of Equity & Social Justice
Executive's Office
Department of Executive Services
Department of Information Technology
Department of Judicial Administration
Department of Natural Resources & Parks
Office of Performance, Strategy & Budget
Department of Permitting & Environmental Review
Prosecuting Attorney's Office
Department of Public Defense
Public Health - Seattle & King County
Sheriff's Office
Superior Court
Department of Transportation

King County acknowledges the support and inspiration of the Collaboratives for Health Equity, a national initiative designed to empower leaders and communities to identify and address social, economic, and environmental conditions that shape health and life opportunities.

KING COUNTY EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2022

For many in our region, King County is a great place to live, learn, work and play. Yet we have deep and persistent inequities—especially by race and place—that in many cases are getting worse and threaten our collective prosperity. Launched by King County Executive Ron Sims in 2008 and formalized by Executive Dow Constantine and the Metropolitan King County Council via ordinance in 2010, Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) is an integrated part of the County’s work, and is supported by the ESJ Office since it was established in early 2015.

The Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan is a blueprint for change, mutually created by King County employees and community partners. From the outset, the planning process was designed to hear from people across sectors, geography and populations before developing a draft. More than 600 County employees and 100 local organizations—including community organizations, education, philanthropy, labor, business and local governments—shared their insights and expertise on where we have made progress, persistent challenges that exist, and solutions toward achieving equity.

OUR EQUITY VISION AND STRATEGIES

The shared vision we developed out of this process is consistent with the overall vision of King County’s Strategic Plan: A King County where all people have equitable opportunities to thrive. Our four strategies as One King County to advance Equity and Social Justice are to invest:

- Upstream and where needs are greatest
- In community partnerships
- In employees

And we do this with **accountable and transparent leadership.**

Our Equity and Social Justice shared values will guide and shape our work. We are:

- Inclusive and collaborative
- Diverse and people focused
- Responsive and adaptive
- Transparent and accountable
- Racially just
- Focused upstream and where needs greatest

Equity is fundamental to the society we seek to build. It is an ardent journey toward well-being as defined by those most negatively affected. Our end goal is for full and equal access to opportunities, power and resources so all people may achieve their full potential. The process of advancing toward equity will be disruptive and demands vigilance.

Being “pro-equity” requires us to dismantle deeply entrenched systems of privilege and oppression that have led to inequitable decision-making processes and the uneven distribution of benefits and burdens in our communities. Similarly, we must focus on those people and places where needs are greatest to ensure that our decisions, policies and practices produce gains for all.

OUR PRO-EQUITY POLICY AGENDA AND REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE

Long-term, sustainable changes within our organization and the community require a comprehensive ‘pro-equity’ approach for all of King County government. This plan defines a Pro-Equity Policy Agenda aimed at expanding access to the County’s Determinants of Equity: child and youth development, economic development and jobs, environment and climate, health and human services, housing, information and technology, justice system, and transportation and mobility.

We learned through our engagement for the strategic planning process that there is a broad range of equity-focused activities in our region. However, there is a need for increased coordination and cross-sector solutions that match the scale of inequities we face. Together we are

stronger. As a result, King County government is committed to advancing a Regional Equity Collaborative with partners from community organizations, philanthropy, business, labor, local governments and education in the coming months and years.

BECOMING PRO-EQUITY

We understand that how we approach our work is just as important as what we seek to accomplish. Pro-equity means being racially just and inclusive, and consistently taking action to eliminate the root causes of inequities. We adopt systems and standards that allow us to consistently engage with and build the capacity of our residents, partners and employees.

To achieve better outcomes in the community, we will integrate and implement pro-equity practices in our major functions of government where we can effect change, including:

- Leadership, operations & services
- Plans, policies & budgets
- Workplace & workforce
- Community partnerships
- Communication & education
- Facility & system improvements

HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

King County's Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan 2016-2022 provides a framework and direction for how the County will use the four strategies of the Plan within and across the Pro-Equity Policy Areas, the Regional Equity Collaborative and the Goal Areas. Each Policy and Goal Area has an analysis of our current situation, plus how we will make a difference, including specific actions or goals.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Policy Areas are in three-year cycles, and the Goal Areas are in two-year cycles. The two-year cycle for the Goal Areas is aligned with the County's biennial budget process and builds our organization's capacity in ESJ 'adaptive management.' We incorporate design, management and monitoring to advance our strategies in the various functions of government; then we continuously and systematically adapt and learn. As a government, we have to practice adaptive management to be coordinated and responsive to our communities and employees. This means:

We listen deeply to know how and why assets, priorities, expectations and concerns of our communities and employees—especially those most in need—change with time. We use this knowledge to coordinate and try different approaches toward achieving better outcomes and monitor the results.

We look at root causes and adapt by understanding what and why efforts are working or not working.

We respond by making appropriate and timely changes.

We learn and share regularly what is happening around us so that we can engage responsibly. We learn and stay current with what and how our residents and partners are doing so we can co-create effectively and with transparency.

Summary of Goals, Objectives and Strategies by Goal Area

LEADERSHIP, OPERATIONS & SERVICES

<p>Goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop effective and accountable leadership for advancing ESJ 2. Develop an organization where all employees are change agents 3. Visibly and public display progress on ESJ 4. County operations, programs and services are pro-equity and reflect ESJ values 	<p>Invest upstream and where needs are greatest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ESJ values guide department and agency operations, programs and service delivery ■ Operations and services – including allocation of resources – reflect our ESJ values of investing upstream and where needs are greatest 	<p>Invest in employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase employee sense of responsibility to advance ESJ ■ Improve staff and leadership proficiencies in delivering services that respond to changing demographics 	<p>Invest in community partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In County operations, programs and services, collaborate with other King County and external service providers ■ Technical assistance and resources deployed to community organizations, in support of services and operations 	<p>With accountable and transparent leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Elected leaders and directors are ultimately responsible for ESJ ■ Visibly display progress on plan ■ Biennial “Plan – Do – Check – Adjust” of ESJ Strategic Plan with implementation plans
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PLANS, POLICIES & BUDGETS

<p>Goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Department and agency business plans include analyses of equity impacts 2. Policy guidance incorporates ESJ values and analysis 3. Budget decisions, rates, and allocations reflect the values and strategies of the ESJ strategic plan 	<p>Invest upstream and where needs are greatest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide new resources on demographic conditions for planners, analysts and project managers ■ Develop improved equity analysis tools for plans, policies, and budgets ■ Ensure budget instructions and decisions support upstream investments ■ Assess all fees and rates to identify opportunities to create a more equitable structure 	<p>Invest in employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Train leaders, planners, analysts, and project managers on the use of demographic data and equity impact tools ■ Ensure budget allocation leads to a more equitable workplace 	<p>Invest in community partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase use of community engagement guide in planning and policy processes ■ Explore and pilot a participatory budgeting process 	<p>With accountable and transparent leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide coaching and tools for agency leadership to develop explicit policy guidance ■ Develop measurement tools and a public reporting framework for ESJ Strategic Plan implementation ■ County advocacy at the State results in a more equitable funding structure for services most needed by residents
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WORKPLACE & WORKFORCE

<p>Goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require an equitable, engaged and racially just workplace culture 2. Do systematic and equitable workforce development at all levels 3. Have and resource equitable employee development and access to opportunities 4. Build an organization of equitable access to and shared decision making 	<p>Invest upstream and where needs are greatest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop ‘people managers’ to lead a racially just, engaged and inclusive culture ■ Eliminate barriers to high salaried employment opportunities for People of Color, Native Peoples and immigrant populations ■ Invest in restorative conflict resolution strategies 	<p>Invest in employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Invest in lower salaried employees through active employee development plans ■ Expand equitable access to resources and decision-making for all employees ■ Develop career paths toward a racially equitable workforce 	<p>Invest in community partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Invest in partnerships with historically disadvantaged communities and expand hiring pipelines ■ Invest in school-to-work pipelines for youth with greatest barriers to employment 	<p>With accountable and transparent leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mature as a racially just organization using equity to assess progress ■ 360-type assessment tool to measure inclusive, equitable leadership competencies ■ Ensure all disciplinary policies and practices are equitable and racially just
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Summary of Goals, Objectives and Strategies by Goal Area

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

<p>Goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systematically provide resource support to community-based organizations to leverage their expertise toward advancing ESJ outcomes 2. Create pro-equity contracting processes that are visible and accessible to contractors of varied size and capacity 3. Provide non-monetary support to community-based partners that build their internal capacities 	<p>Invest upstream and where needs are greatest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Invest in partnerships that allow the County to apply early, upstream and preventative solutions ■ Adopt contracting practices that stimulate economic development in underserved communities ■ Build community capacity as a strategy to foster full and equitable civic participation 	<p>Invest in employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create hiring and advancement opportunities via Community Liaison network ■ Eliminate barriers for staff seeking to promote equitable contracting ■ Situate community capacity building as professional development opportunities 	<p>Invest in community partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Invest in partnerships to steadily inform decision-making ■ Expand and diversify the County's vendor pool ■ Connect County resources and expertise to capacity development of community partners 	<p>With accountable and transparent leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrate inclusion of historically underrepresented communities in program and budget planning ■ Report an increase in the number of historically underrepresented businesses servicing external contracts ■ Report technical assistance provided to community-based partners
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COMMUNICATION & EDUCATION

<p>Goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focused on languages, update tools for public-facing communication and education to align with demographic changes 2. Develop tools for better engagement and access to services 3. Focused on technology access, improve use of internet, social media and mobile tools to engage and hear from under-served residents 4. Increase collaboration and language-related resources for employees to ensure inclusive engagement of residents in decision-making 	<p>Invest upstream and where needs are greatest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Update tools to better connect with today's community demographics ■ Move from iterative, project-based outreach to ongoing engagement ■ Provide resources for staff to improve communication and collaboration with limited-English speaking (LES) communities ■ Invest in translation and/or interpretation as needed for public hearings and other engagement opportunities 	<p>Invest in employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Training and resources for staff, esp. for improved internal collaboration on engagement issues, and language-related tools and resources ■ Supervisory staff have additional ESJ training ■ Prioritize and reward language skills 	<p>Invest in community partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partner with community organizations to guide improvements and facilitate consistent engagement with communities ■ Publicize civic engagement opportunities via community media outlets and organizations ■ Provide information in multiple languages 	<p>With accountable and transparent leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Home pages of every department on County website available in six top tier languages ■ Increased investment in availability and use of pro-equity technologies
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FACILITY & SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS (CIP)

<p>Goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Master and Line of Business (LoB) plans include clear objectives to advance ESJ 2. Capital development policy, budgets, portfolios and programs are pro-equity and contribute to improved community conditions 3. Responsibility for pro-equity progress is clearly defined at agency/department, division and section levels 	<p>Invest upstream and where needs are greatest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Embed 'pro-equity system build-out vision' into long-term, master, and LoB plans – which precedes, informs and enables capital programs and projects to be pro-equity by defining intended system-scale outcomes 	<p>Invest in employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Train and provide ESJ information resources to master planners, LoB planning teams, capital portfolio managers, and project managers so facility and system development components work in an integrated manner 	<p>Invest in community partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Build partnerships and partnering abilities by supporting the LES community liaison network ■ Capital projects have objectives for community engagement and ESJ in benefits/burden distribution – which are documented via the King County Sustainable Infrastructure Scorecard 	<p>With accountable and transparent leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Project scopes have explicit ESJ objectives that align to system goals as described in master/LoB plans ■ Guide, recognize, and account for progress via King County Sustainable Infrastructure scorecard and Capital Project Management Work Group
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For many in our region King County is a great place to live, learn, work and play. We have some of the most prosperous communities in the world. However, a closer look at the distribution of resources and wealth reveals that we have deeply entrenched social, economic and environmental inequities—by race and place—that in many cases are worsening and threaten our collective prosperity.

An array of historical and societal factors drives these inequities including unequal access to the determinants of equity, institutional and structural racism, as well as gender and socioeconomic bias. These factors, while invisible to some of us, have profound and tangible impacts on all of us—both in the community and within our own organization.

PHASES OF OUR WORK

King County's work on equity and social justice can be described as fitting into distinct phases. Before 2008, many of our departments and agencies focused on disparities and disproportionality in various realms, such as health and criminal justice, which were generally not coordinated across the County. In early 2008, then-King County Executive Ron Sims launched Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) as an "initiative." Based out of the Executive Branch, this initiative aimed to intentionally use an equity lens in departments' policies and decisions, organizational practices and engagement with community.

Starting in 2010 with new King County Executive Dow Constantine and the County Council, Equity and Social Justice became an integrated part of the County's work with the countywide Strategic Plan and ESJ ordinance. This new ordinance named the Inter-Branch Team as the coordinator and facilitator of the County's equity work and formalized systems and frameworks, including the Determinants of Equity.

This last year represents the latest phase for King County Equity and Social Justice with two major developments: the creation of the Office of Equity and Social Justice and the launch of the first ESJ Strategic Plan process. Established on January 1, 2015, the new Office of Equity and Social Justice works hand-in-hand with the Inter-Branch Team to support the work of all County employees and agencies. The office also serves as the backbone and coordinator of key County efforts to advance equity in the organization and community. Although there is now an ESJ Office, every County agency and employee is still ultimately responsible for advancing and being accountable for ESJ activities and deliverables.

Our strategies as One King County to advance Equity and Social Justice are to invest:

- **Upstream and where needs are greatest**
- **In community partnerships**
- **In employees**

And we do this with accountable and transparent leadership.

Our next phase—guided by this Strategic Plan—is based on our understanding that how we approach our work on Equity and Social Justice is just as important as what we seek to accomplish. We will become pro-equity in County practices and governance by using an equity lens in our actions, processes and decisions. We will invest upstream and where needs are greatest, addressing root causes and smartly allocating our public resources. We will also invest in community partnerships as a strategy to better understand and address equity impacts throughout our region. We will invest in our employees to create a strong,

racially diverse workforce and workplace at all levels that is best positioned to advance equity in our region. Moreover, we recognize that the success of this plan and progress on equity is fundamentally tied to visible and accountable leadership in King County government.

OUR VISION

The Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan is a blueprint for change, mutually created by King County employees and community partners. From the outset, the planning process heard from people across sectors, geographies and populations including those who experience the most negative effects of inequities and are working to remove barriers to opportunity. More than 600 employees at all levels of County government and 100 local organizations, including community organizations, philanthropy, labor, education, business and local governments, shared their insight and expertise on our progress, persistent challenges, and solutions toward achieving equity.

The shared vision we developed through this process is consistent with the overall vision of King County's Strategic Plan:

A King County where all people have equitable opportunities to thrive.



Race and place impact quality of life in King County. People of color, low-income residents and immigrants and refugees persistently face inequities in key educational, economic and health outcomes. Our responsibility to remedy these conditions is not only a moral imperative; inequities undermine our collective prosperity and threaten our region's ability to remain globally competitive. As long as race and place are predictors of well-being, our vision for a King County where all people have equitable opportunities to thrive remains elusive.

We also recognize that many of our government policies and practices have historically been designed to react to problems and crises in our communities after they arise. Using a "stream" metaphor, these problems are the downstream results of inequities that exist in social, physical and economic conditions in our community (also known as our "determinants of equity"). Moving upstream allows us to examine the root causes of these conditions and create

solutions that operate at a systems and structural level, ultimately preventing crises and problems from occurring and leading to healthier, more equitable outcomes.

As people are not all situated the same, with the same opportunities to thrive, pro-equity policies and practices are designed to account for these differences. Focusing on the people and places where needs are greatest leads to improved outcomes for everyone.

“The prosperity of our region depends on every person having a fair chance to fulfill his, her or their potential.”

Executive Dow Constantine

Our Equity and Social Justice Theory of Change promotes investment in approaches that are pro-equity and move us upstream and where needs are greatest. Moreover, adopting this theory of change ensures that our strategies are consistently evaluated based on their equity outcomes, not just their intent. Ultimately, we seek a course where race and place are eliminated as predictors of prosperity and quality of life for the residents of King County.

A PRO-EQUITY POLICY AGENDA AND REGION

This Strategic Plan defines a Pro-Equity Policy Agenda aimed at advancing regional change and building on our work and lessons learned thus far, while deepening and expanding access to the County’s determinants of equity: child and youth development, economic development and jobs, environment and climate, health and human services, housing, information and technology, justice system, and transportation and mobility.

The strategic planning process also created an opportunity for partner organizations to share and discuss important equity-focused work currently underway in our region, including a need for increased coordination and cross-sector driven solutions that match the scale of inequities we face. In addition to meeting our own strategic and operational responsibilities toward advancing Equity and Social Justice,

King County government commits to advancing a Regional Equity Collaborative with partners from community organizations, philanthropy, business, local governments and education in the coming months and years.

HAVING PRO-EQUITY GOVERNANCE

To become pro-equity in our County practices and governance, we need systems and standards that build on our best practices and learnings from our equity journey to date. We need both to lead as necessary and to respond consistently to our residents, partners and employees.

In our different areas of government, we need to ensure that our decisions, policies and practices produce gains for all, while targeting many of the benefits where needs are greatest.

We need new processes that are inclusive and open, and in particular raise the voices and power of those in the community and our organization who have been historically sidelined by those who have traditionally exercised power. This is why the solutions in this plan are defined by those affected.

We are also challenging business as usual. The journey toward equity is necessarily disruptive. We must question existing systems of power and privilege by undoing the systems that have perpetuated unfair outcomes, and creating new spaces for learning and growth.

To achieve better outcomes in the community, we will integrate and implement pro-equity practices in our major functions of government where we can effect change. These include:

- **Leadership, operations & services**
- **Plans, policies & budgets**
- **Workplace & workforce**
- **Community partnerships**
- **Communication & education**
- **Facility & system improvements**

HOW KING COUNTY IS BUILDING EQUITY...

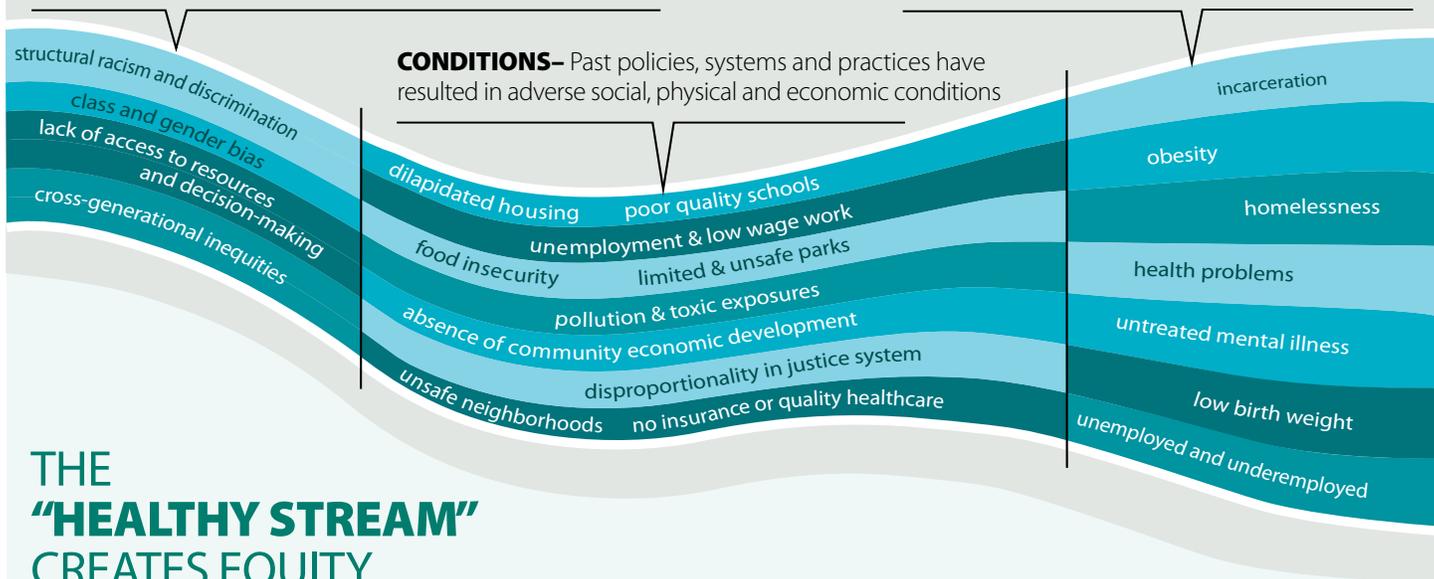
RACE AND PLACE MATTER IN KING COUNTY.

People of color, low-income residents and immigrants and refugees persistently face inequities in key areas, such as education, income and health.

THE “UNHEALTHY STREAM” CREATES INEQUITIES

POLICIES, PRACTICES & SYSTEMS– Policies, structures and systems – including those in government – have sustained and even contributed to inequities

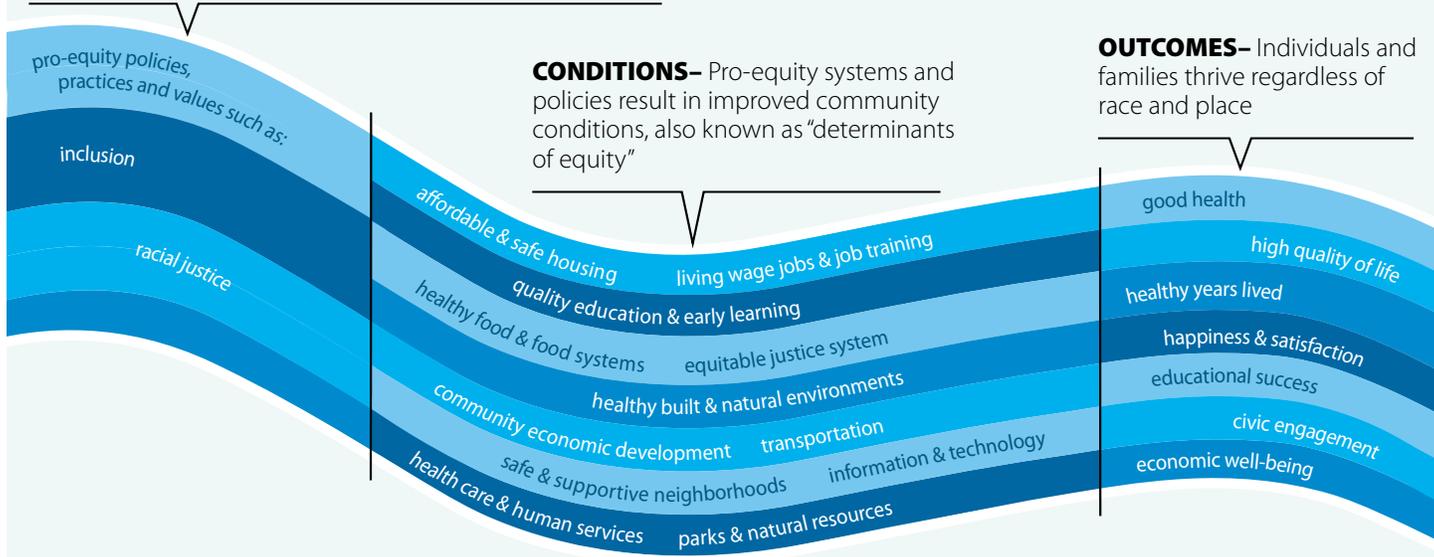
OUTCOMES– Organizations and their programs historically have tended to react to problems and treat poor individual and family-level outcomes



THE “HEALTHY STREAM” CREATES EQUITY

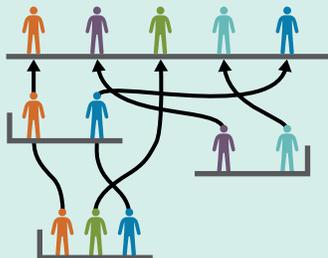
PRO-EQUITY POLICIES, PRACTICES & SYSTEMS– For greatest and most effective impact, King County is **focusing “upstream” to address root causes and be pro-equity**

OUTCOMES– Individuals and families thrive regardless of race and place

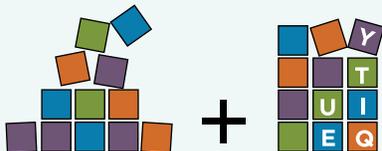


AND ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE...

PRO-EQUITY MEANS



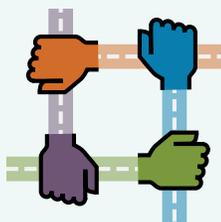
Defining outcomes for all, identifying obstacles faced by specific groups, and tailoring strategies and building on assets to address barriers (targeted universalism).



Dismantling systems of power, privilege and racial injustice in favor of equitable access to resources and decisions.



Focusing on the people and places where needs are greatest – such as low-income communities, communities of color, and immigrant and refugee populations.



Creating inclusive processes and including people early, continuously and meaningfully.

KING COUNTY'S PATH TOWARD PRO-EQUITY



Investing in a child's early development – building on the assets of each community – to establish a strong foundation for lifelong health and well-being so all children and families experience improved outcomes and thrive, regardless of who they are and where they live.



Removing barriers to jobs at King County government for historically disadvantaged communities by improving employment practices like prioritizing language skills, building school-to-work pipelines, having clear, accessible career pathways, and taking out needless educational requirements.



Providing low-income populations more equitable access to public transportation and other public assistance programs with King County's ORCA LIFT Reduced Fare Program.



Partnering with communities most impacted by inequities in shared decision-making and acting on resident priorities, Communities of Opportunity is changing policies and systems to improve health, social, racial and economic outcomes.

SO ALL PEOPLE HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO THRIVE

KING COUNTY INVESTS...



Upstream, and where needs are greatest,



in community partnerships,

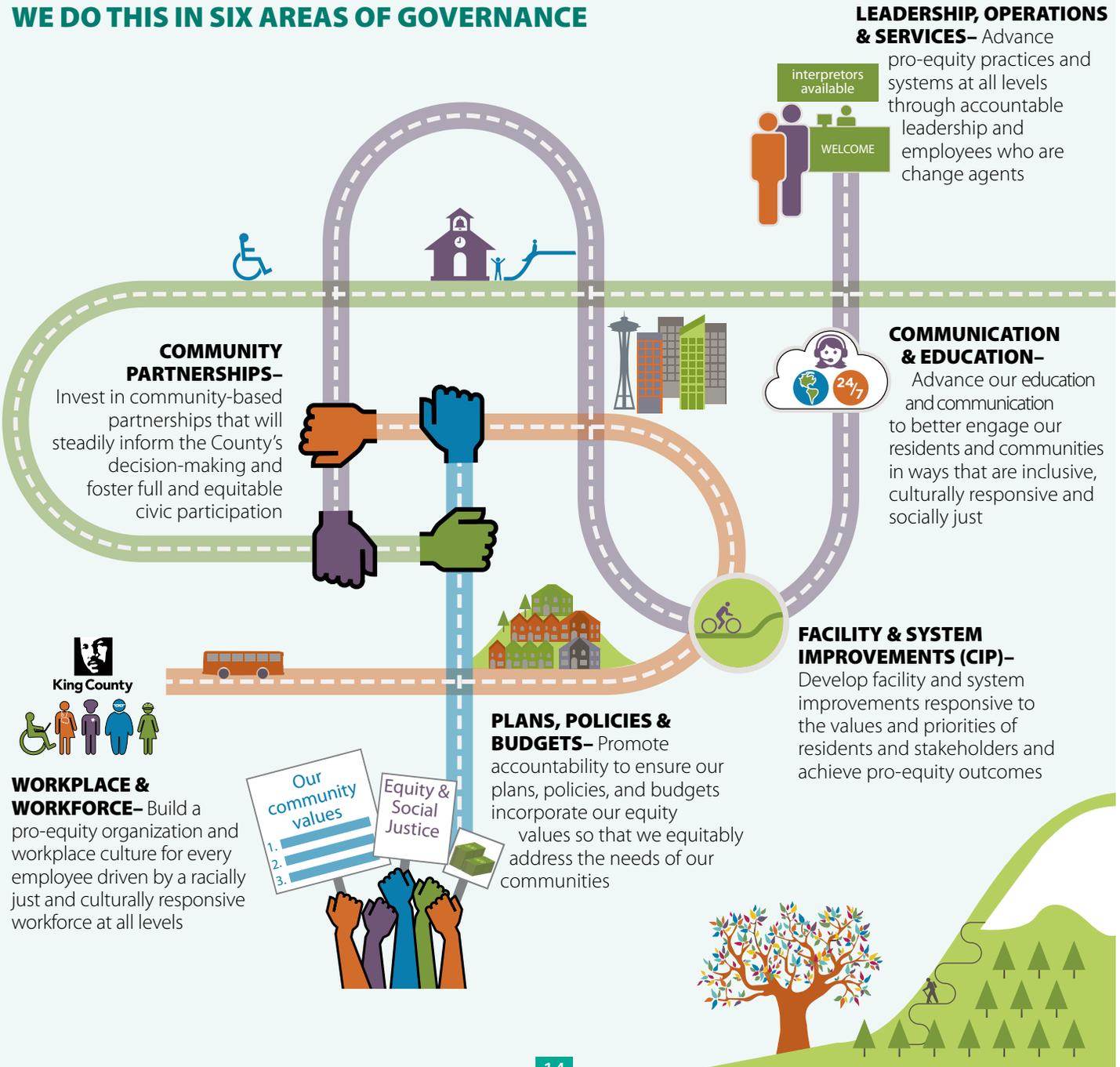


and in employees,



with transparent and accountable leadership.

WE DO THIS IN SIX AREAS OF GOVERNANCE



THEORY OF CHANGE

OUR STRATEGIES

INVEST UPSTREAM & WHERE NEEDS ARE GREATEST



Moving upstream means

- focusing on early childhood investments that prevent mental, behavioral and physical issues later in life;
- preventing crises and problems from occurring instead of treating the after effects; and
- continuing and expanding strategies that reduce involvement in the criminal justice system and keep families together.

The equity frame demands that we focus on where the needs are greatest—geographic areas and low-income populations, people of color, and immigrants and refugees.

We acknowledge that universal approaches that apply to a whole population can still result in unacceptable gaps. Instead, we must approach with targeted universalism—where we define goals for all, identify the obstacles faced by specific groups, and tailor strategies and build on assets to address the barriers in those situations.

INVEST IN EMPLOYEES



King County government's greatest asset is our approximately 14,000 employees who are dedicated to improving the lives of the county's more than two million residents.

They are the experts in providing the best services because they know and work with our communities every day.

King County's ambition is to become the best-run government in the nation with a workforce that is racially diverse and culturally responsive at all levels. To achieve this, we must ensure that every employee is valued for her, their or his unique assets and experiences and we invest in growing their talent—regardless of who they are, where they come from and where they are in the organization.

We are committed to focus our efforts on employees who have historically lacked equitable access to jobs and development opportunities, and employees at lower pay ranges.

INVEST IN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



King County has a history of community engagement, but those interactions are often ad hoc, with insufficient compensation for the time and expertise of people and organizations, and without investment in organizations' capacities to continue and expand work.

This plan is designed to move the County from these occasional interactions to strategic investment in community partnerships that will inform the County's programming, service delivery and budgeting and provide equitable opportunity for all residents to advocate in their own behalf and influence the decisions that impact their lives. This strategy is rooted in the principle that those affected have the right to define decisions.

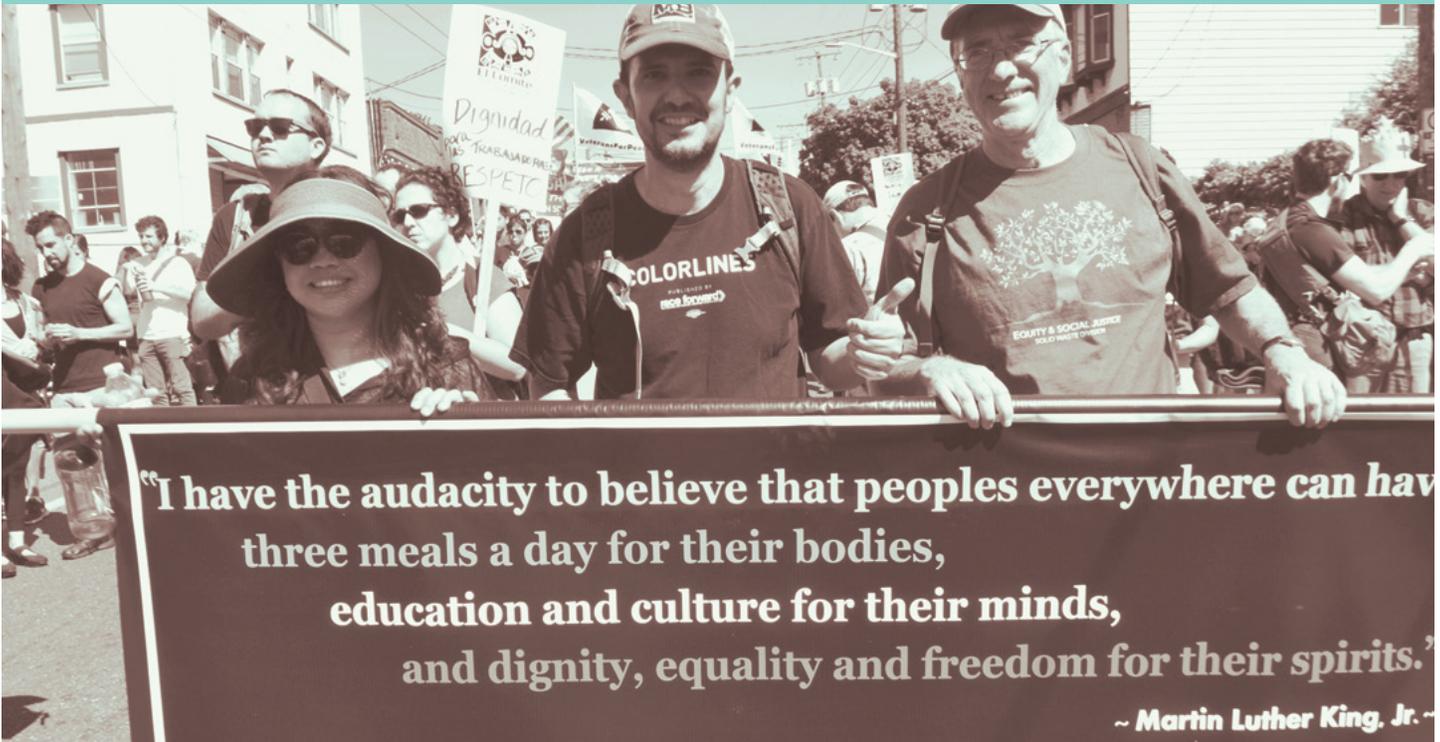
ACCOUNTABLE & TRANSPARENT LEADERSHIP



Accountable and transparent leadership is critical to effectively implementing the ESJ Strategic Plan. The success of this Plan and considerable progress on equity is fundamentally tied to consistent and visible leadership at all levels around a shared vision for ESJ within and across King County government and the region.

All employees are change agents, though the County's top leaders are ultimately responsible for championing and advancing ESJ. A government that is rooted in equity and social justice means that leaders hold themselves and each other accountable, while working openly with residents, employees and community partners.

THEORY OF CHANGE OUR SHARED VALUES



WE WILL INSTILL OUR SHARED VALUES OF EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ALL OUR WORK. WE ARE:

Inclusive and Collaborative

We achieve better outcomes by engaging and including employees and communities early, continuously and meaningfully; we maximize opportunities and our collective potential by breaking down silos, partnering and convening across government and organizations.

Diverse and People Focused

We represent the mosaic of our communities at all levels of the organization to innovate and better serve; we nurture respect and dignity by valuing every person's leadership, strengths and assets.

Responsive and Adaptive

We are culturally and linguistically responsive to and driven by employees and community.

Transparent and Accountable

We build trust and common understanding by being transparent and accountable in our actions, processes and measures.

Racially Just

We dismantle systems, policies and practices that perpetuate structural racism, inequities and different forms of discrimination based on power and privilege.

Focused Upstream and Where Needs Are Greatest

We focus upstream on root causes and sustainable solutions—where returns are greatest—and on populations and places with the greatest needs.

Consistent with our ESJ Ordinance and the historical and persistent patterns of inequities, King County focuses on equity impacts on communities of color, low-income populations, and limited English-speaking residents. Our approach is comprehensive, and true opportunity requires every person have access to the benefits of our society regardless of race, gender and gender identity, class, geography, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age, or other aspects of who we are, what we look like, where we come from, where we live and what we believe in.

THEORY OF CHANGE

OUR COMMON LANGUAGE

INEQUITIES:

Differences in well-being that disadvantage an individual or group in favor of another; these are systemic, patterned and must be changed.*

INEQUITIES ARE NOT RANDOM:

Inequities are caused by past and current decisions, systems of power and privilege, policies, and implementation of those policies.*

RACE IN THE U.S.:

Race and racial categories in the U.S. are a social construction created by the dominant group with the intent to determine Dominant and Subordinate categories and access to resources; they have an assigned meaning. Racial categories have changed over time and thus how various communities experience race has changed over time.**

STRUCTURAL RACISM: The interplay of policies, practices, programs and systems of multiple institutions which leads to adverse outcomes and conditions for Communities of Color compared to White communities, that occurs within the context of racialized historical and cultural conditions.***

EQUITY: A SYSTEM OF FAIRNESS.

Equity is the full and equal access to opportunities, power and resources so that all people achieve their full potential and thrive. Equity is an ardent journey toward well-being as defined by those most negatively affected.***

SOCIAL JUSTICE:

All aspects of justice—including legal, political, economic and environmental—and requires the fair distribution of and access to public goods, institutional resources and life opportunities for all people.*

DETERMINANTS OF EQUITY:

The social, economic, geographic, political and physical environments and conditions in which people live. Full and equal access to the determinants of equity are necessary to have equity for all people regardless of race, class, gender, language spoken and geography.*

TARGETED UNIVERSALISM:

Led by those most affected and lifting up their assets, we define goals for all; identify obstacles faced by specific groups, and tailor strategies to address the barriers in those situations.***

*Definitions from King County Equity and Social Justice Ordinance (16948)

**As defined by Hackman Consulting

***Developed by King County using multiple sources

PRO-EQUITY POLICY AGENDA



FOR THE EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR PRO-EQUITY POLICY AGENDA

The Community Engagement Report for the King County Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan summarizes current states and visions for a range of issue areas, from health and human services to jobs, economic development and transportation.

At the same time, other parts of this Strategic Plan lay the groundwork for a Regional Equity Collaborative, which will be a vehicle for King County to work with partners, institutions and organizations to advance shared equity goals, strategies and interests.

King County, however, is committed to more immediate and shorter-term actions and policies which will move us toward a state of greater equity. In this section of the ESJ Strategic Plan we present our Pro-Equity Policy Agenda, which is our King County commitment to advancing equity in the next three years in the following areas:

- **Child & youth development**
- **Economic development & jobs**
- **Environment & climate**
- **Health & human services**
- **Housing**
- **Information & technology**
- **Justice system**
- **Transportation & mobility**

CHILD & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



OUR CURRENT SITUATION

King County is a region where health and wellbeing indicators are strong: overall, our health indicators are high and our unemployment rate is among the lowest in the nation. However, these overall positive trends mask widening and troubling disparities in our county by race and place. Health outcomes vary widely by race and across communities in King County, for example in infant mortality, chronic diseases and life expectancy. For the first time in recent history, our middle class is shrinking. Of the over 80,000 households added in King County since 2000, nearly all of the increase has been split between the top and the bottom of the income spectrum; less than four percent of the increase in households has occurred in income brackets between \$35,000 and \$125,000. Over 20 percent of our young people do not graduate from high school.

Currently, much of the County's funding has been in response to negative outcomes—severe mental illness, homelessness, chronic illness, and youth who have already dropped out of school or who have been involved in the juvenile justice system. However, research tells us that promoting well-being, decreasing risk factors, intervening early when issues arise and making strategic investments at critical points in young people's development before age 24 are the most effective and least expensive ways to prevent these problems from arising.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In 2014, King County staff began examining how the County could improve outcomes and allow individuals and communities to achieve their full potential. The resulting [Best Starts for Kids \(BSK\)](#) ballot measure was approved by the voters in November 2015. As a promotion, prevention and early intervention initiative, BSK investments will balance other County investments through [Mental Illness and Drug Dependency \(MIDD\)](#) funding and the [King County Veterans and Human Services Levy](#).

BSK is a strengths-based approach, which will maximize the assets and knowledge of our richly diverse county and its many communities and cultures. It reflects the County's adopted policy direction and was developed within the context of the King County Strategic Plan, the Equity and Social Justice Ordinance, the Health and Human Services Transformation Plan and the [2015 Youth Action Plan](#).

Results for Best Starts for Kids:

- Babies are born healthy and establish a strong foundation for lifelong health and well-being.
- King County is a place where everyone has equitable opportunities to progress through childhood safely and healthy, building academic and life skills to be thriving members of their communities.
- Communities offer safe, welcoming, and healthy environments that help improve outcomes for all of King County's children and families, regardless of where they live.

PRO-EQUITY POLICY AGENDA

CHILD & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

In the next six years, King County will take action in the following key areas:

1. Invest early: Prenatal to 5 years of age

Highlights:

- Support new parents, families and caregivers through community-based programs, peer support and home visiting.
- Assure parents and caregivers have access to: screening to assure the healthy development of their children; resources for help if developmental issues arise; and effective linkages to treatment if the need arises.
- Cultivate caregiver knowledge, develop outreach resources and referral, and provide information on healthy child development to parents and caregivers.
- Support high quality childcare in homes and in centers, and in licensed and unlicensed settings.

2. Sustain gains from 5 to 24 years of age

Highlights:

- Build resilience of youth and reduce negative risky behaviors.
- Help youth stay connected to their families and communities.
- Meet the health and behavior needs of youth.
- Help young adults who have had challenges successfully transition into adulthood including re-engaging in education opportunities and job skills development.
- Stop the school to prison pipeline.

3. Communities of Opportunity

Highlights:

- Support priorities and strategies of place-based collaboration in communities with much to gain.
- Engage multiple organizations in policy and system change.
- Foster innovations in equity through a regional learning community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & JOBS



OUR CURRENT SITUATION

King County offers abundant economic opportunity in which many populations and areas of the County are thriving. At the same time, not all populations are able to take advantage of this prosperity; many low-income and communities of color in particular face barriers to well-paying jobs and economic opportunity. For example, unemployment rates for Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and Native American/Alaska Native residents have recently been nearly double that of the unemployment rate for White residents.

Gaps in education persist and continue to produce disparate labor market outcomes. For example, low-income students have on-time graduation rates 15 percentage points below the average. Federal, state and local funding for training is small relative to the need for it to help individuals access better job opportunities. At the same time, businesses face gaps in filling jobs and are importing talent from other regions of the country and the world.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

King County has followed three approaches to expanding access to economic opportunity to residents. First, as a social service provider, the County led development of Best Starts for Kids, a comprehensive, voter-approved set of investments in early childhood and youth that will help ensure they all have the opportunity to fulfill their potential. Second, King County provides an array of workforce training and development programs. We have focused on improving the effectiveness of those programs both in reaching certain populations, such as youth and veterans, and in ensuring their training results in job placement, particularly in key industries such as aerospace and manufacturing.

Finally, King County is leveraging its roles as one of the largest employers and contractors in the region. We are dedicated to eliminating bias in our hiring practice and promoting better access to jobs, promotions and contracting opportunities for people of color within King County; establishing policies that support family wage jobs and benefits such as sick leave and paid family leave; and using our influence through contracting and in the labor market to encourage other employers to do the same. King County is proud to be a union county—with nearly 85 percent of our employees union members.

In the next three years, King County will take action in four key areas to further improve pathways to good jobs and make sure that all residents benefit from a thriving economy. They include:

PRO-EQUITY POLICY AGENDA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & JOBS

1. Ensure that private and government employment opportunities are accessible to all groups

Highlights:

- Reduce barriers to hiring more people with criminal records; expand hiring of veterans through improved translation of veteran skills.
- Expand hiring of people with developmental disabilities under the Supported Employment Program.
- Support regional 100% Talent initiative on gender-wage equity, with particular emphasis on gender-wage equity for women of color.
- Expand access to transportation and affordable housing that connects people to job centers and employment opportunities.
- Eliminate bias in our own hiring practices, and support similar efforts countywide.

2. Expand opportunities for disadvantaged populations to build skills that will help them acquire better jobs

Highlights:

- Collaborate with the Workforce Development Council to expand services for individuals with barriers to employment, as described in the new federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- Partner with the City of Seattle and the Workforce Development Council to provide summer employment opportunities to King County youth and expand business participation in the program.
- Play leadership role in cross-sector initiatives to increase access to middle-wage jobs and career ladders.
- Support the expansion of apprenticeship programs as an evidence-based way to provide opportunities for higher-paying jobs both in County government and in the region.

- Create local policies around making new funds available to help employers train employees in ways that lead to substantial wage gains.
- Create programming for low-income middle-school students that exposes them to careers available in the area.

3. Leverage the County's role as a large employer and contractor to promote jobs that pay family-support wages and support upward mobility

Highlights:

- Require paid sick leave among County contractors.
- Pilot a County-paid parental leave program.

4. Support entrepreneurship and help small businesses grow

Highlights:

- Continue to expand participation of small businesses in County procurement through work orders and other contracting processes.
- Use more small businesses in construction projects.
- Seek opportunities to further expand the number of employers participating in the small contractors and suppliers certification program.

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE



OUR CURRENT SITUATION

King County has an extensive network of regional trails, active parks, natural areas and open spaces. Five major river systems and numerous creeks cross rural and urban landscapes, while many working farms and forests are found in the eastern half of the county. While King County is widely recognized for its clean water and air as well as access to abundant recreation opportunities and fresh, healthful local produce, these benefits are not enjoyed equitably by all county residents. Some may not live close to a park, trail, open space or farmers market opportunity, or have safe and easy access via bus, trail or car. Forests and trees—and the benefits they provide for shade, air and water quality, and habitat—are not distributed evenly across communities.

Additionally, the historical contamination of soil and water, as well as ongoing air and water pollution from urban industry and development, vehicles and polluted runoff from roads, are more concentrated in urban areas with higher percentages of communities of color, lower income residents and people with pre-existing health conditions. The South Park and Georgetown communities, along the Lower Duwamish River, are examples of communities that are disproportionately impacted by historic contamination of the river, soils, fish, and shellfish, as well as air quality impacts from vehicles and industry.

Climate change impacts, like longer and more frequent heat events, urban flooding and natural disasters, are areas where low-income communities and communities of color are likely to be disproportionately impacted. Lower income populations have the least resources to mitigate impacts resulting from increased frequency of heat events and flooding through actions like flood proofing, home insulation, air conditioning, or easily accessing a shady park or air-conditioned community center. Language can also be a barrier to information on flood and storm disaster preparedness.

Many of the actions needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions can also serve as powerful opportunities to address broader inequities. For example, investments that better integrate transit and land use and expand commute options will increase access to work, education and health care. Development and adoption of well-designed green building standards can make homes more comfortable during heat events, improve indoor air quality and reduce utility and repair costs. Expanded open space protection and linking regional trails to transit expands access to healthy recreation options. Specific actions to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change are outlined in [King County's 2015 Strategic Climate Action Plan \(SCAP\)](#).

While King County has a long history of strong public support for open spaces, water quality, and farmland preservation bond measures and programs, representation on environment and open space-related advisory committees and the leadership of County water, parks, and open space programs does not reflect the county's racial and economic diversity.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

All county residents should have equitable access to clean air and water, and the health and recreation benefits of King County's extensive network of regional trails, open spaces, and working farms and forests. Our investments in cleaning up historic contamination, upgrading water quality infrastructure, protecting open spaces, and building a clean energy economy should assess and address disproportionate environmental burdens and promote the equitable access to environmental benefits and resulting economic opportunities. To accomplish this, we need to build opportunities and pathways for communities of color and populations with low incomes to participate in defining environmental problems, solutions and priorities through shared leadership models.

Over the next three years, King County will take the following actions to advance environmental justice:

1. Increase diversity and inclusion in climate/environment governance processes, partnerships, program development, and contracted services

Highlights:

- Partner with workforce development, non-governmental organizations, and businesses to strengthen internship and mentorship programs in environment-related fields.
- Improve racial, gender, age, and location diversity on environmental boards and commissions by removing barriers to inclusion, such as requirements for professional certifications.
- Implement priority hire or related policies that increase economic justice through contracting for infrastructure development and natural and built environmental improvements (like green infrastructure installations).
- Define equity and social justice outcomes and criteria for grant programs including Waterworks grants and community grants for recreation facility improvements.

2. Drive equity considerations into long-term improvements to built and natural environments, systems and policy

Highlights:

- Use demographic data and knowledge gained through partnerships and community engagement to drive pro-equity planning for open spaces, habitat, trails, trees, green infrastructure, energy conservation and climate response.
- Ensure that equity considerations, as outlined in the ESJ Ordinance, are applied to siting and design of major infrastructure like combined sewer overflow facilities.
- Build on King County's Local Food Initiative to advance food system improvements (e.g. institutional purchasing practices, policy innovations, incentives, partnerships, and code adjustments) that reduce disparities in food access and security.

3. Ensure that programs supporting investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy are widely available, and prioritize climate change preparedness efforts that enhance resiliency for those most vulnerable to—and at risk—for climate change impacts

Highlights:

- As recommended in the updated SCAP, increase capacity to work with communities to better understand priorities for addressing climate impacts and jointly develop community solutions that will build community resilience.
- Implement Workforce Equity Goal, objectives and minimum standards across King County departments and agencies (see Workplace & Workforce Goal Area).
- Strengthen connections between community-based organizations, housing programs and utilities to increase access to energy and water efficiency grants and incentives in low-income communities.
- Support inclusion of green building and other energy efficient elements to affordable housing developments.
- As part of the "1 Million Trees" initiative, work with partners to prioritize the planting of trees in communities where residents lack tree canopies and face higher temperatures because of concentrated paved and built areas.
- Carry out "heat event" exercise with health care providers, community centers, emergency responders and community organizations to address the needs of populations with pre-existing health conditions during a heat event.
- Publish information on storm and flood preparedness in multiple languages and use non-traditional communication channels to reach communities that are likely to be most impacted.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES



OUR CURRENT SITUATION

In King County, we have some people and communities that are among the healthiest and longest living in the world. However, this experience is not universal, and where people live, how much they earn, and the color of their skin are major predictors of life experiences and the chances of living well and thriving. Significant numbers of people in the King County have been left behind as demographics have shifted, and the region now experiences some of the greatest inequities among large US metropolitan areas.

When comparing outcomes by census tracts (lowest and highest 10 percent), life expectancy ranges from 74 years to 87 years, smoking ranges from 5 percent to 20 percent, and frequent mental distress ranges from 4 percent to 14 percent. Reasons for this disproportionality related to health and human services provision include inequitable access to services; a lack of services that meet the needs of all individuals, families, and communities; the historical underrepresentation of important voices in policymaking that determines how and where health and human services are delivered; and inequities in numerous determinants of equity – from housing to jobs – that lead to worse outcomes for some communities. These growing inequities are occurring a time when significant funding challenges for Public Health, mental health and substance use services, human services, and affordable housing threaten to exacerbate these disparities.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

King County's plan to advance equity and social justice in health and human services is outlined in the Health and Human Services Transformation Plan, with a goal that by 2020 the people of King County will experience significant gains in health and well-being because our community worked collectively to make the shift from a costly, crisis-oriented response to health and social problems, to one that focuses on prevention, embraces recovery, and eliminates disparities. In recent years, King County's approach has included increasing equitable access to services with intentional use of the equity lens; focusing on

prevention and outcome-oriented approaches to improve health and well-being and reduce, over time, the number of residents who experience crisis; using data to ensure we are addressing the leading causes of death, disability, and well-being and targeting disparities; integrating services to improve access and outcomes; developing deep community partnerships, including targeted investments to support locally driven solutions; and advocacy at the state and federal levels.

Signature work that exemplifies these approaches include:

- **Best Starts for Kids**, which invests in prevention and early intervention for children, youth, families, and communities;
- **Communities of Opportunity**, an effort launched with The Seattle Foundation to address inequities in health, social, and economic outcomes, through the lens of equity and social justice, via place-based and policy/system change solutions with community partners playing key roles in shaping solutions;
- **Familiar Faces**, a community partnership focused on improving systems of health and social support services, and crisis prevention, for jail-involved individuals who have mental health and/or substance use conditions, and often experience homelessness;
- Integrating physical health care, mental health and substance use services, with the goal of making those systems more responsive to consumer needs and demands, while improving the quality and cost of care for King County residents;
- Leveraging the public health approach to address critical issues such as gun violence, disease outbreaks, enrolling the uninsured population of King County into newly available health insurance; and the King County Accountable Community of Health (ACH), a new, multi-stakeholder, regional collaboration committed to improving health for the entire community.

In the next three years, King County will undertake specific actions in five key areas related to the health and human services priority areas outlined above:

1. Raise community voices

Highlights:

- Increase community engagement in department and Countywide initiatives (including identification of needs, selection of priorities and development of implementation strategies), as modeled by Best Starts for Kids and Communities of Opportunity.
- Support increased capacity for engagement and participation of community partners, and target more grassroots agencies, networks and interested consumers in planning and implementation.
- Systematically and regularly work with community partners, stakeholders and health and human services providers to identify community assets and opportunities to inform strategic plans, programs and service delivery.

2. Contract for equity and outcomes

Highlights:

- Modify King County contracting requirements so that small non-profit organizations (especially those serving low-income populations, people of color and immigrants/refugees) can fairly and effectively compete for contracts and participate in initiatives.
- Establish incentives and performance measures in contracts to spur collaborative approaches to building healthy, safe and thriving communities.
- Increase King County investments in prevention across health and human services to target, in universal and tailored ways, the underlying causes of poor health and well-being.

3. Invest in partnerships

Highlights:

- Invest in the creation of cross-sector, community collaborative partnerships and linkages, within the County and at the community level, that foster equity and focus on improving outcomes for residents and communities.
- Support the integration of physical and behavioral health in the County workforce by building connections at all staff levels throughout Public Health and Department of Community and Human Services, as well as with other County work units and within the community.

4. Expand use of data to address inequities

Highlights:

- Use data to identify and address emerging and significant causes of death and poor health—with a specific focus on disparities—and expand disaggregation of data to ensure we know what is impacting all populations.
- Support the Data Across Sectors for Health (DASH) grant to integrate affordable housing and health data, which will track how public health interventions work for residents of affordable housing.
- Invest in best as well as promising practices and use data to build an evidence base for innovative practices that support communities with the most to gain.

5. Prioritize the public's health

Highlights:

- Work with elected officials and partners across the state for sustainable public health funding.
- Grow the role of the Accountable Community of Health (ACH) to guide health prevention investments in King County.
- Work with state and local partners to design and implement an integrated system for behavioral health and substance use treatment with primary care.

HOUSING



OUR CURRENT SITUATION

King County is experiencing tremendous economic and population growth, and many areas of our region are thriving. However, as a result for households, rents and home prices have increased far ahead of wage growth, making it difficult for them to meet their basic housing needs.

Housing affordability and homelessness have become crises that are worsening in King County. In addition, there are broad race and socio-economic disparities in access to housing. Low income renter households make up 70 percent of King County households earning less than 50 percent of King County's median household income (less than \$43,400 for a family of four) and face the greatest risk of housing instability.

In general, housing is considered to be affordable when a household pays no more than 30 percent of their income towards the cost of housing. Nearly 65,000 households earning between \$26,040 and \$43,400 pay more than half their income toward rent and are consistently extremely rent burdened; within this group, Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino households are disproportionately represented. One adverse event (illness, accident, reduced work hours) can easily launch these vulnerable households into severe risk of homelessness. Each household has different housing needs; there is no one-size-fit-all solution. Access to a variety of housing options is needed.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In response to the housing affordability and homelessness crises, King County is using a multi-pronged approach to address the housing needs of all residents and eliminate barriers to stable housing for all. First, King County will increase and target its limited resources to match investments with the highest priorities and needs across the region, increasing access to housing for all populations. Second, King County will work to create partnerships with private developers, cities and regional partners to explore innovative housing models to meet the diverse needs of households across the County. Finally, King County will look to develop strategies to prevent homelessness and increase housing stability.

In all programs, housing data and population trends will be analyzed to ensure that the strategies are addressing the region's ever changing housing needs and that all residents have equitable access to affordable, safe and stable housing.

In the next three years, King County will implement the Affordable Housing Strategy, which is organized into five categories:

1. Target resources

Highlights:

- Target capital funding to address specific affordable housing needs, ensuring that regions and populations receive the appropriate type of housing intervention.
- Continue implementation of the homeless coordinated entry for all system, ensuring that each homeless individual or household receives the appropriate level of service, allowing for the prioritization and efficient use of both housing stock and services.
- Invest in transit-oriented development housing around high capacity transit sites and partner with King County Metro and Sound Transit on service expansion to incorporate affordable housing around transit stations and into redevelopment plans of underutilized publicly-owned property.

2. Seek innovative partnerships and housing models

Highlights:

- Pilot new approaches to homeless housing on County-owned property, such as micro modular housing, rotational homeless encampments with service access and shelter with permanent supportive housing.
- Explore incentivizing the production of accessory dwelling units, through exploring mechanisms for design, permitting coordination and financing.
- Explore partnerships with market-rate developers to include affordability in new market-rate projects.
- Support a change in state law to allow for the adoption of Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) for unincorporated areas, to provide a tax subsidy for apartment developers willing to dedicate a portion of their units toward affordable housing.

3. Increase housing funding

Highlights:

- Dedicate Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) tax to housing resources to create affordable housing for residents experiencing mental health or substance use disorders.
- Explore increased Veterans and Human Services Levy funding in 2017 renewal for housing to assist both veteran and non-veteran households.
- Issue hotel/motel tax bonds for transit-oriented affordable workforce housing.

- Consider a County-wide affordable housing Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) to generate large, dependable capital funding sources for affordable housing.
- Amplify the impact of housing resources by connecting them to other County initiatives, such as the Health & Human Services Transformation Plan’s Communities of Opportunity and Familiar Faces, King County’s behavioral health programs, employment programs, public health programs and criminal justice strategies.

4. Increase housing stability

Highlights:

- Implement the Best Starts for Kids levy funds that includes \$19 million to prevent and divert youth and families from homelessness.
- Consider adopting additional tenant protections to increase housing stability.
- Preserve affordable housing through existing and new models, such as the 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credit and the Regional Equitable Development Initiative Fund (REDI).

5. Analyze housing and population trends to address changing housing needs

Highlights:

- Analyze housing and population trends to inform how funding is directed through the Request for Proposals (RFP) processes.
- Utilize data to identify housing need changes and revise the County’s housing strategy.

INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY



OUR CURRENT SITUATION

At 81.9 percent Washington State has the highest in-home broadband adoption rate in the country, according to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. With a booming economy, King County is home to a technology literate society that relies increasingly on broadband internet access. But even within King County, 16 percent of households do not have access to the Internet—a resource so essential it is being called the “electricity of the 21st century.” King County residents who earn less than \$50,000 per year are 5.5 times less likely to have internet access at home.

The inability for people in our communities to use this resource limits access to government services, such as health care information, health insurance registration and participation in the online marketplace. It also limits opportunities to apply for jobs, the basic ability to do homework from home, social engagement opportunities, and the ability to engage in other aspects of our economy and society. Not having internet access at home means people must travel to libraries, community centers or schools to find information and access services, often placing an additional financial burden on those who are least able to bear it.

This inequity is often driven by poverty and other factors that limit access. For example, there are some communities, such as White Center in our county and parts of Snohomish County, where broadband services are limited due to their lack of perceived profitability by private carriers.

In response to the digital equity issue, a number of cities nationally, including the city of Seattle locally, are adopting action plans aimed at ensuring disadvantaged residents and communities are not left behind but are participating and benefiting in the opportunities provided by advancements in technology and the internet.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Access to information and technology is a fundamental social justice goal. Ensuring equal opportunity and access to the Internet for all residents, regardless of age, income or ability, allows everyone to participate in our economy and society. King County plays an important role—both as a service provider and as a regional convener—in connecting people to the resources they need to succeed in our increasingly digital world.

Some examples that illustrate the strides King County has already made in the areas of digital equity and inclusion are:

- Accessible websites for blind, deaf and hearing-impaired residents
- Open data made available to software developers and interested residents, helping our communities transparently share information about County services and trends
- Digital communications portals like the Assessor’s Parcel Viewer that help people learn about King County services and make decisions that are important to them
- Institutional Network (I-Net), which provides affordable broadband Internet services for education, municipalities, and nonprofits, benefitting students, teachers, government workers and non-governmental organizations.
- The creation of a social media tool kit that all agencies and departments can use for enhanced and more effective resident interaction through social media.

In the next three years, King County will take action in three key areas to improve digital equity in our communities, so that everyone has the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the digital world of the future.

1. Develop and implement a Digital Equity Plan in collaboration with regional partners in King County.

Highlights:

- Develop a digital equity vision along with goals, strategies, approaches and initiatives that comprise an action plan for King County and our regional partners.
- Identify local, state and federal funding sources to support digital equity initiatives.
- Integrate the ESJ Strategic Plan, Best Start for Kids, Youth Action Plan, 311, Smart Cities and other services with the County's Digital Equity Plan.

2. Increase residents' opportunities for digital interaction and engagement

Highlights:

- Target a reduction from 16 percent to fewer than 10 percent of homes in King County without broadband Internet access as part of our public performance scorecard.
- Identify and pilot public/private partnerships that increase the delivery of broadband services to underserved communities in King County, especially low-income qualifying residents and students.
- Increase the number of King County services provided online (as opposed to in-line) throughout County government to make it easier for those with broadband access to get the services they need.

3. Collaborate and integrate with regional partners to better utilize existing capabilities, develop new capabilities, and extend the impact of those capabilities more broadly

Highlights:

- Collaborate with Connecting Community Consortium (c3), a regional 23-member municipal, education and nonprofit organization, to activate a fiber network around Lake Washington that provides low-cost access to high speed connectivity and member-managed services.
- Perform convener and collaborator roles with regional private, public and community partners to identify successfully implemented Digital Equity solutions for re-use replication across King County communities.
- Expand I-Net fiber to more schools, government and nonprofit organizations throughout the county. Additionally, integrate I-Net assets with partner assets to more effectively deliver broadband and wireless connections to rural areas and underserved populations.
- Evaluate the creation of a digital equity investment bank to stimulate digital equity infrastructure by helping to fund community-driven digital equity initiatives.

JUSTICE SYSTEM



OUR CURRENT SITUATION

King County's criminal justice system has long been an innovator in serving the public safety needs of residents. At the same time, King County recognizes that as a nation we often have criminal justice responses to behaviors that have their roots in social, educational and community conditions. In addition, we know that harm often results from criminal justice involvement, and in many situations prevention—versus incarceration—can be more effective in terms of costs, developing human potential, and increased public safety.

Law enforcement is required to respond to harmful behavior and protect people and property from further harm. Law enforcement's work requires understanding human behavior issues, mental health, substance use, developmental disabilities, poverty, homelessness, and those who are purposeful in causing violence and property destruction. Law enforcement seeks to continually build trust between the community and law enforcement, which is essential to safe communities. Law enforcement must have crisis intervention training along with their usual protection and safety training and must be provided with resources to have alternative options to arrest and incarceration based on their experiences and perceptions of proper harm response.

Courts are required to ensure both public safety and a fair and just adjudication of the cases that come before them. Courts must comply with existing laws on due process and punishments, and provide consequences for harm caused. Courts seek to impose judgments that meet those obligations while at the same time providing a pathway out of the revolving door of criminal justice involvement, including advancing the use of therapeutic courts. Courts need the resources to timely process cases and exercise discretion on consequences and monitor behavior when alternatives to jail are imposed.

The Prosecutor is required to review and determine who is charged and with what type of charge. Prosecutors need adequate resources to review and process cases, advise criminal justice partners on issues, engage and participate with communities and systems, design and implement diversions and alternatives, and keep up with changes in laws and processes.

Public defense must protect individual rights to due process and protect the rights and liberty of those accused of a crime. Public defense needs adequate resources to investigate, prepare, and present each client's case and know their stories. Public defense must keep up with changes in the law and sentencing as well as understand alternatives and mitigations for their clients. Public defense works with stakeholders to create alternatives and suggest changes which lessen the harm to individuals involved with the criminal justice system.

Adult and juvenile detention must provide a safe and secure environment for clients and their own staff while the accused are awaiting trial or serving time imposed by a judge. They need the ability to manage this population while also working with individuals to change behavior which may lead to future criminal involvement. They need to provide training in trauma-informed practices, crisis intervention, mental health and substance use, and developmental disabilities.

Furthermore, even though in King County we have made significant strides in reducing the overall numbers of youth and adults we incarcerate, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino and Native American/Alaska Native populations are increasingly over-represented in the courts, jails, and prisons.

This trend points to our need for an explicit racial equity approach in our criminal justice work.

People of color and people who are economically disadvantaged—who are overrepresented in the criminal justice system—also suffer from the stigma that comes from involvement in that system. Arrests and convictions present significant barriers to housing and employment, perpetuate economic disparity, and often leave individuals with insurmountable barriers to achieve economic independence and well-being. In addition, Washington has the nation's highest rate of property crimes and is experiencing an increase in crimes involving the use of firearms. Victims of these crimes are primarily economically disadvantaged or people of color.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE AS A SYSTEM

King County's criminal justice agencies are working collaboratively on three areas of equity focus: Partner with schools, youth, families and community organizations to reduce youth criminal justice involvement; enhance reentry planning and programming to reduce recidivism; work upstream and take a public health approach to public health problems, such as by providing people with mental health and chemical dependency support and taking a trauma-informed approach to all our criminal justice work.

1. Partner with community, schools and justice system to end the school-to-prison pipeline and prevent youth from entering the criminal justice system.

In 2015, King County leaders committed to making a paradigm shift away from detention and toward alternatives for youth. The County brought together the Juvenile Justice Equity Steering Committee (JJESC) consisting of community members, youth, local leaders, law enforcement, school district superintendents, faith based representatives, judges, prosecutor and public defense. JJESC is committed to a paradigm shift in how we approach system

change for youth who get trapped in the criminal justice system. The revolution at the heart of this paradigm shift is the development of collaborative relationships. That includes breaking the institutional decision-making habits that end up pitting community organizations against one another and system against system, particularly when it comes to funding decisions when there is not enough funding to meet all the needs. JJESC has been diving deeply into the disproportionality data and root causes and is currently exploring a number of actions and will be issuing recommendations.

Highlights:

- Establish short- and long-term actions to help end disproportionality in King County's juvenile-justice system.
- Identify root causes of disproportionality and specific solutions needed to address them in individual communities.
- Engage communities by sharing information, then collecting and incorporating feedback.

2. Work upstream to prevent criminal system involvement by addressing underlying needs that result in criminal justice involvement

Engage in the Familiar Faces and Community Alternatives to Boarding Task Force work with the Department of Community and Health Services, health providers and clients.

Highlights:

- Advance the use of evidence-based harm reduction in therapeutic courts, and support the work of the Familiar Faces team, which has committed to providing trauma-informed and harm reduction services to individuals who have been booked into the jail four or more times in a year.
- Support community-based mental health and chemical dependency treatment that can prevent justice system involvement.

3. Enhance community safety by providing trauma-informed criminal justice responses

A high percentage of justice involved youth and adults have experienced serious trauma through their lifetime. The reverberation effects of traumatic experiences can challenge a person’s capacity for recovery and create significant barriers to accessing services, often resulting in an increased risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system.

King County criminal justice agencies and our state and local criminal justice partners will be trained as trainers on “How Being Trauma Informed Improves Criminal Justice System Responses” with the intention to:

- Increase understanding and awareness of the impact of trauma.
- Develop trauma-informed responses.
- Provide strategies for developing and implementing trauma-informed policies, including designing reentry assessments and programming which focus on needs and outcomes.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE AS INDEPENDENT CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES

Examples of programs and policies King County’s criminal justice agencies are pursuing in support of equity and social justice:

KING COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE (KCSO)

- Hire from a myriad of communities, for example, KCSO has adopted a 10% hiring preference for candidates who speak a second language or who have served in the Peace Corps.
- Appointment of a captain to oversee diversity in our recruiting efforts, especially female candidates.

- New deputies attend the Criminal Justice Training commission, which focuses on a “guardian” rather than a “warrior” approach to policing. This training is reinforced after graduation with a KCSO class, Listen and Explain with Equity and Dignity (LEED).
- Implementing training and policies for transgender members of KCSO, as well as policies for contacting transgender individuals in public.
- Ensure that forms for undocumented immigrants seeking U-Visas are completed in as timely fashion as possible.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY’S OFFICE (PAO)

- FIRS (Family Intervention Reconciliation Services), a youth diversion crisis intervention program that diverts youth who have been arrested due to a domestic violence interaction with a parent or sibling.
- 180 Diversion Program, in collaboration with community leaders, hosts motivational workshops for youth arrested for misdemeanors.
- Decriminalized Driving While License Suspended (DWLS) 3 cases by making reducing them from criminal charges to civil infractions. Persons with a DWLS 3 matter are economically disadvantaged and the PAO made this change to address the inequities associated with prosecuting these cases.

KING COUNTY DISTRICT COURT (KCDC)

- Problem solving courts, including Regional Mental Health Court and Veterans Court, and developing a therapeutic community court.
- Pre-trial judge-supervised probation in lieu of cash bail, for the purposes of public safety and reduced recidivism.
- Regionalized relicensing through an agreement among district and municipal courts to allow people to get relicensed at any participating court.
- Improved access to the courts through the use of video.

KING COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT (KCSC)

- Problem-solving courts, including adult, juvenile and family drug courts.
- Functional family and multi-systemic therapy from probation services.
- School engagement and truancy interventions, for example, working with King County Alternative Dispute Resolution on a restorative justice-based program training youth to mediate peer disputes in schools.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC DEFENSE (DPD)

- Proposed a Theft 3 Diversion program (to be launched this summer), which seeks to connect youth accused of low-level crimes to a service provider immediately
- Raising Our Youth As Leaders (ROYAL) program, an evidence-based approach which seeks to serve high-risk youth of color and reduce their criminal justice involvement.
- State law requires that children accused of certain crimes be tried as adults; they are currently housed in a unit at the adult facility in the Maleng Regional Justice Center. Along with DAJD, DPD will pursue the goal of housing all detained children at the Youth Services Center.

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT AND JUVENILE DETENTION (DAJD)

- Re-entry transitional support programs, like the Veteran’s pilot project, providing programming while inside and connecting them to service providers on the outside to maintain continuity of care.
- Educational and vocational classes, for example, GED and vocational training for janitorial programs; partnerships with community colleges and the Seattle Education Access program to ensure students start their classes while incarcerated and focus on what happens next as they transition out; pilot program in Juvenile funded by the Andrus Family Foundation and Seattle University that allows post-adjudicated youth to participate in developing gardening work and culinary skills using the produce they’ve helped grow.
- Drug and alcohol support, for example, AA and NA courses as well as the Transitional Recovery Program.

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY



OUR CURRENT SITUATION

King County has an expanding transportation system and infrastructure that meets the transportation needs of many in the community. Although our system connects many people to opportunity, gets them to places they need to go, and links together our growing cities, mobility is one of the top concerns of King County residents. According to a recent study, our region ranks sixth worst in the nation for traffic congestion. In addition, there are transportation barriers, in terms of service and transportation options, that limit access to opportunities for people who live and work in rural areas, are seniors, are non-English speaking, have disabilities, are transit dependent, work during non-peak travel periods, or live in areas with predominately low-income residents and people of color.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

King County recognizes that transportation is a key factor in accessing education, jobs and services that allow our residents to fulfill their potential and that our region's prosperity is dependent upon the ability of workers and freight to move throughout the region. To enhance mobility and access to transportation for everyone, we have followed four approaches.

First, ensure that we get the most service out of every dollar and that the system responds to the transportation needs of the community. For example, King County Transit partially addresses issues of gentrification in the Service Guidelines by looking at how concentrations of low-income populations shift throughout the county and measuring the extent to which low-income areas use transit. King County also supports and encourages land use, policies and practices that promote equitable transit-oriented development.

Second, build an intentional equity focus into the delivery of transportation services. Transit's Long Range Plan team has worked closely and extensively with jurisdictions throughout the county to identify future transportation needs. Our community outreach and planning process also engages with low-income residents and communities of color to identify where the transportation system is not serving them well. King County Metro not only looks at ways to deliver better service options to disadvantaged communities, it also offers low income residents a more affordable way to travel through our [ORCA LIFT](#) pass program which provides a new, reduced fare on Metro Transit buses, Sound Transit services, King County Water Taxi and the Seattle Streetcar.

PRO-EQUITY POLICY AGENDA

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

Third, develop alternative services to respond to the specific needs of those who live in communities that do not support traditional service (e.g., rural communities). To help meet the needs, alternative service projects have been implemented to provide customized service to help residents travel to the places they need to go.

Finally, create broader and more meaningful access to transportation through improved engagement with communities and provide translations into many languages, as we prepare to offer service that connects more neighborhoods with high capacity transit. In every Link Connections public engagement effort, Metro Transit seeks to engage a representative group of people who reflect the bus riding population in the affected project area in each phase of outreach, including race, ethnicity, income, age, disability, and language spoken at home. Some of the things that have been done include: recruiting a diverse community advisory group, translating a project description into 12 languages other than English and maintaining voice message lines in all 12 languages, hosting multilingual briefings, mailing project information for posting at local libraries, schools and community centers, and providing information in formats beyond the web—including printed pieces, stop specific placards, and phone and in person.

In the next three years, to further advance transportation equity, King County will focus efforts on the following:

1. Investments in service improvements

Highlights:

- Examine ways to increase service frequency in underserved areas such as transit corridors running through southeast Seattle, South County along the I-5 and SR 167 corridors, the University District, and pockets of north Seattle and Shoreline
- Look at ways to provide more frequent service that connects disadvantaged communities to major transit hubs by partnering with transportation agencies to integrate service.
- Explore opportunities to better understand how access to education, jobs, social services, health care and healthy food varies by location and use that information to increase access to opportunity to riders and potential riders—particularly those who have been historically disadvantaged—when revising transit service.
- Test new ways to provide rural mobility and access during non-peak times, such as using new technologies to match riders with drivers (TripPool) and exploring partnerships with transportation network companies to provide evening service from transit hubs, as well as enhance our paratransit service.
- Develop a more actively managed park-and-ride program which may make new areas available for people to park and access transit, and implement a permit system that would ensure parking availability at park-and-rides at later times of the morning, benefiting transit-reliant populations and those who work during non-peak hours.
- Implement our Right Size Parking program (improving the bike and walk environment) to encourage more transit supportive design for all groups—particularly people who rely on public transit.

PRO-EQUITY POLICY AGENDA

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

2. Investments in community partnerships

Highlights:

- Work with smaller employers, through outreach and incentive programs, to expand ORCA and ORCA LIFT distribution to low income workers.
- Partner with the City of Seattle and Seattle Public Schools to provide an ORCA card to students that qualify for the Free Reduced Lunch program and live one to two miles from their assigned schools. This partnership will provide low-income students who attend a school in the Seattle Public School district the same pass benefit as students who attend school in districts that are able to provide passes to all students as needed.
- Via translated materials and messages to low-income populations and communities of color, promote and educate travelers through our In Motion program about the benefits of active transportation, and utilize Metro's community-based outreach programs to encourage transit, ridesharing, biking and walking.
- Partner with local jurisdictions as they plan for "complete streets"—their community's transit, bike and walk plans—with a particular focus on those who may rely on public transit or don't have access to cars.
- Work with Washington State Ferries and the City of Seattle to create a new fully accessible multimodal terminal facility at Colman Dock on the central Seattle Waterfront, providing connectivity to many forms of transportation for all.
- Foster partnerships with communities to create alternative transportation options such as shuttles, real-time rideshare, vans or other innovative ways to provide mobility that is responsive to community needs in areas where the County cannot support efficient, fixed-route service.

3. Investments in the places and people with greatest needs

Highlights:

- Continue to implement and expand Community Access Transportation (CAT) program to create mobility options for people with disabilities and seniors.
- Partner with senior centers, non-profits or advocacy groups to provide vans through Fleet surplus and/or Vanshare programs.

4. Leverage the County's role as a major employer

Highlights:

- Focus on historically disadvantaged youth for public service career opportunities at King County Metro Transit, market apprenticeship programs to disadvantaged groups, and recruit at career fairs, community centers, and events in communities that serve low income residents and people of color.
- Partner with labor unions in efforts to achieve comprehensive equity throughout the work environment.

A REGIONAL EQUITY COLLABORATIVE



MOVING TOWARDS A REGIONAL EQUITY COLLABORATIVE

King County government engaged more than one hundred organizations during the Equity and Social Justice strategic planning process, many of whom have made serious commitments to equity issues and who to varying degrees and in varying ways are advancing their pro-equity knowledge, strategies, policies and initiatives. These organizations include local and regional governments and entities, community and civic organizations, educational institutions, philanthropy, businesses, labor and others.

A major conclusion from these interactions with partner organizations is that—though there are a number of important equity-focused collaborations underway—**as a region there is a need for increased coordination and cross-sector activities on solutions that are commensurate with the scale of the challenge of our inequities.** In essence, together we are stronger. Institutional commitment exists among various organizations throughout the region, and many organizations have expressed an interest in being part of an effort greater and bigger than any one of us as individual organizations.

This collaborative—with shared ownership—could lead to the creation of a “Regional Equity Compact,” where organizations would commit to collaborations across sectors, reducing overlapping efforts to achieve more coordinated and effective community advocacy and systems-wide changes. Some common areas of interests for such a regional equity collaborative include:

- **Jobs and workforce**—Expanding opportunity to well-paying jobs, especially for people and youth of color, and making sure that all residents benefit from a thriving economy
- **Data**—Improving data collection, analyses and platforms with an emphasis on improved data disaggregation and community assets
- **Policy agendas**—Advancing our individual and collective equity policy agendas, with a focus on the most pressing issues of our community such as education, housing and transportation
- **Racial equity**—Advancing racial equity within our institutions and the community
- **Accountability**—Holding ourselves mutually accountable.

Such a collaborative would build on some important partnerships and efforts already underway. For example:

- Among community organizations, the Regional Equity Network has been a community-led coalition that has worked in the Puget Sound Region on major areas of concern for our residents, such as transportation, economic development and housing.
- In philanthropy, major players in the Pacific Northwest, including the Seattle Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, have been taking actions to advance equity and opportunity in our region, often via multi-sector collaborative partnerships.
- In government, the Governing for Racial Equity Network has been a vehicle for local governments in the Pacific Northwest to share, learn and advance innovative and effective approaches to advancing racial equity within and by government.
- In education, efforts like the Roadmap Project work closely with institutions and community organizations to improve student achievement from cradle to college and career.
- At the university and college levels, institutions like the University of Washington have launched Race and Equity initiatives focused on institutional bias and racism, as well as engagement with communities.

In addition, there are other cross-sector efforts, like the recently launched Seattle Regional Partnerships convened under the umbrella of the Seattle Foundation with entities in philanthropy, business, community and government to focus on creating and expanding middle-wage jobs. Similarly, Best Starts for Kids is an initiative to improve the health and well-being of King County by investing in prevention and early intervention for children, youth, families and communities. As part of Best Starts for Kids, Communities of Opportunity—led by a series of community organizations with support from the Seattle Foundation and King County—engages in place-based activities to improve health, social, racial, and economic outcomes.

As our current situation and inequities demand broad and region-wide action, we as King County commit to advance a regional equity collaborative with a set of partners in the coming months and years.

SIX GOAL AREAS



FOR THE EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN

HOW TO READ THE GOAL AREAS

King County's Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan provides a framework and direction for how the County will use the four strategies of the Plan within and across our six Goal Areas. The next sections—Goal Areas—define how proposed actions will create shifts in how we govern, build our internal capacity, and intersect and coordinate with regional collaborators to become pro-equity.

Each Goal Area includes these parts:

OUR CURRENT SITUATION

Describes our current situation as a County: where we have made progress and where we have needs and opportunities.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Based on our successes and lessons learned, we have an approach in each area of how to become 'pro-equity':

■ GOALS

High-level and aspirational, these goals chart a 6-year path toward the shared vision.

■ OBJECTIVES

SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) help departments/agencies and the County as a whole, measure the progress toward each goal. Objectives will be modified and updated on a two-year cycle as we grow, learn and make progress.

■ MINIMUM STANDARDS

The proposed Minimum Standards establish a set of core expectations and standard practices necessary to sustain progress in advancing equity and social justice in each Goal Area. Many of the proposals elevate some of the best-practices underway within County departments and agencies.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Many of the goals and objectives in this Strategic Plan can and will be pursued with current levels of resourcing and by re-prioritizing. At the same time, some goals and objectives propose system, practice and policy changes that are new, significant, and/or require King County to identify significant new resources for successful implementation. As a result, elements of this Strategic Plan are contingent on appropriate resourcing, including in the biennial budgets. Therefore, the Goal Areas will be implemented using two-year cycles to build our organization's capacity in ESJ adaptive management as described in the Executive Summary. Departments and agencies will be expected to complete department/agency-level ESJ Strategic Plan Implementation Work Plans by March 2017.

LEADERSHIP, OPERATIONS & SERVICES



Metro Fares	Travel within One Zone	Travel between Zones (Child Fare)
Adults (19 and older)		
• Peak-hour trips	\$2.75	\$3.25
• Off-peak trips	\$2.50	\$2.50
Youth (5-18)	\$1.50	\$1.50
ORCA LIFT*	\$1.50	\$1.50
BRFIP** (registered seniors, Medicare, disabled, all times)	\$1.00	\$1.00
Children (through age 5)	10 to four children may ride free with a person paying adult fare.	

Advance pro-equity practices and systems at all levels through accountable leadership and employees who are change agents.

OUR CURRENT SITUATION

Employees and community organizations informing the Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan consistently stated that King County and its leadership have generally shown courage and demonstrated commitment to equity and social justice. For their part, the Executive, County elected officials, Cabinet, Operations Cabinet, the ESJ Inter-Branch Team and agency ESJ teams have taken significant steps by regularly and consistently focusing on ESJ-related projects and initiatives. At different levels of the organization, education on ESJ issues has increased with the support of regular ESJ trainings, conferences and forums, and most departments and agencies have ESJ work plans, specifying how they will integrate equity.

However, there are areas for improvement. The above-mentioned advances need to be institutionalized, and all departments and agencies need to be achieving minimum standards for ESJ, as there are inconsistencies in how ESJ is embedded and integrated within agencies. The organization needs consistent internal accountability for follow-through on ESJ action plans. Furthermore, not all departments and agencies have ESJ action plans and work teams, and in some arenas, there is a disconnect between our stated commitment to ESJ and our actions. Additionally, more could be done via the management structure of County government to get the best out of employees and build inspiration, empowerment and trust. A common theme heard from employees is that many mid-level managers need skills and clearer leadership direction to advance ESJ.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

A major emphasis of this goal area of the Strategic Plan is advance the strategy of “Accountable and transparent leadership.” This Goal Area aims to ensure that King County exhibits consistent and visible leadership at all levels and furthers a shared and actionable vision for Equity and Social Justice. All employees are change agents, though the County’s top leaders are ultimately responsible for championing and advancing ESJ. Leaders should hold themselves and each other accountable, working openly with residents and employees.

ESJ Strategies of investing in employees, community partnerships as well as upstream and where the needs are greatest should be incorporated into the development of and adjustments to operations, programs and services. Operational deployment and related resource distribution (e.g., grant awards) should reflect our equity and social justice policy intent.

Furthermore, ESJ should be a force in breaking down barriers and siloes within King County, such as among different agencies, leading to greater innovation and collaboration among agencies, programs and services. Issues around barriers to service and differential treatment of customers, as well as supporting staff culturally and linguistically to support the changing county demographics, are addressed in the “Communication & Education” Goal Area of this Strategic Plan.

GOAL 1: Develop effective and accountable leadership for advancing ESJ to drive pro-equity governance at all levels of the organization

Objective: By 2018, all supervisors, managers and directors will have ESJ measures in their performance appraisals and/or professional development plans.

Objective: Each year through 2022, there will be a 3 percent increase in employees answering positively (strongly agree or agree) to the Employee Survey question, "Department leadership does what it says it's going to do."

Objective: Each year through 2022, there will be a 3 percent increase in employees answering positively (strongly agree or agree) to the Employee Survey question, "I have the support to apply equity and social justice to my work."

GOAL 2: Develop an organization where all employees are change agents who actively apply their ESJ knowledge to their work

Objective: Each year through 2022, there will be a 3 percent increase in employees answering positively (strongly agree or agree) to the Employee Survey question, "I have the skills to apply equity and social justice to my work."

GOAL 3: Visibly and publicly display progress on Equity and Social Justice

Objective: By 2018 implement a system to display progress on the ESJ Strategic Plan at the County and department/agency levels, and then through 2022 report progress on an on-going basis.

GOAL 4: County operations, programs and services are pro-equity in our service delivery – responsive and adaptive, focused on those whose needs are greatest—and collaborate with other King County and external service providers

Objective: By 2022, all departments and agencies will use ESJ values and their guidance document (see Goal 2 in Plans, Policies & Budgets Goal Area) to develop and implement their operations, programs and service delivery.

MINIMUM STANDARDS

- Elected leaders and directors are ultimately responsible for ESJ, and other leaders and employees are responsible for implementation. For leadership minimum standards, see matrix of standard work (last page of this goal area's Implementation Plan).
- ESJ goals and measures are built into department director contracts/agreements.
- Implement a visible system of accountability and progress for ESJ Strategic Plan goals and policy areas.
- On a biennial basis, "plan, do, check, adjust" the implementation plans of the ESJ Strategic Plan.
- ESJ Strategies of investing in employees, community partnerships and upstream and where the needs are greatest should be incorporated into development of and adjustments to operations, programs and services.
- Operational deployment and related resource (e.g., grant awards) distribution should reflect our equity and social justice policy intent.

PLANS, POLICIES & BUDGETS



Promote accountability to ensure our plans, policies, and budgets incorporate our ESJ values so that we equitably address the needs of our communities.

OUR CURRENT SITUATION

The Equity and Social Justice Ordinance of 2010 directs King County to build equity considerations into all County decision-making, which includes planning, policy development, and budgeting—including setting rates for our customers. Significant strides towards implementing this responsibility are demonstrated by

- increased consideration of ESJ impacts in the analysis of biennial budget decisions;
- greater incorporation of equity considerations and community engagement in County plans and policies, such as Best Starts for Kids and the King County Comprehensive Plan; and
- guidance for incorporating ESJ considerations into capital project decision-making and into the line-of-business planning process.

Another notable achievement was the development and implementation of the very successful ORCA LIFT program, the nation's largest reduced-fare program for lower-income transit riders.

Despite these achievements, during the ESJ Strategic Plan engagement process, significant challenges and opportunities for better integrating equity considerations into the development of plans, policies and budgets were presented to King County. While many agencies across the county promote ESJ thinking and activities in their agency, this work often happens with insufficient strategic planning or coordination. What's more, this work is not routinely built into County practices.

Available resources are not allocated in a manner that supports robust upstream or preventive work. In many instances, King County's resource allocation and rates charged to customers do not reflect the stated ESJ values of the community and County leadership. In addition, there are limited or inconsistent benchmarks, targets, or ongoing measurements of progress towards meeting ESJ goals; and staff has limited knowledge, experience, and capacity to integrate ESJ into plans, policies, and budgets.

Another serious issue that is outside of King County's direct control is State and federal funding and our State's inequitable tax structure. Washington State's tax system, which is heavily focused on sales and property tax, is the most regressive tax system in the United States. This impacts equity in King County in three ways:

- 1) The poorest 20 percent of residents in Washington State pay 16.8 percent of their income in taxes, while the richest 1 percent pay just 2.4 percent of their income in taxes, thereby worsening income inequality in the State and placing an undue burden on our poorest residents. (source: www.itep.org/whopays/states/washington.php)
- 2) In Washington State, counties in particular have limited ways to raise revenue and revenue growth for basic services does not keep up with inflation and the needs of a growing population. At the same time, State and federal funding for services such as public health has also been reduced or not grown to keep up with demand. In King County, that means we have often faced cuts in services for our most vulnerable residents even while many others are prospering in a booming economy.
- 3) King County voters have raised revenues above State limitations for specific equity-focused investments such as Best Starts for Kids. But the tools the County can propose to voters to raise revenue are limited to sales tax and property tax, with the sales tax being particularly regressive. The County must carefully weigh benefits of new investments with the tax impact particularly on poorest residents, and seek innovative ways outside the tax system to lessen such impacts (the low-income fare for transit is a good example).

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The ESJ Strategic Plan provides additional clarity for King County government plans, policies and budgets. The plan provides direction for what services and operations the County delivers, how to deliver them, and for allocation of available resources to support County operations in a more equitable and upstream manner. As part of this direction, King County government plans, policies and budgets should reflect the stated goals of inclusion, diversity and access to opportunity and services; equitably address the needs of the communities King County serves; and include explicit ESJ-related goals and measurement of progress toward these goals.

The ESJ Strategic Plan provides an integrated approach to achieving the stated vision of all people in King County having equitable opportunities to thrive. As a future state for a more equitable King County government:

- All departments, agencies and offices have developed specific policy guidance for incorporating the ESJ Shared Values from this Strategic Plan into analysis and decision making for operations and service delivery.
- King County resources target our region's greatest needs and move toward an "upstream" approach in developing services and solutions.
- Budget allocations and charged rates, County and agency plans, and written and unwritten policies reflect partnerships with and the values of our communities, and engage those communities in ongoing dialog.
- Budget decisions, resource allocation including the base budget, and rates charged to customers are tied to ESJ outcome measures and tracked.

- Budget decisions are aligned with stated ESJ priorities and facilitate greater accountability and measures of progress.
- Department and agency business plans, including line of business and other planning processes, include analyses of equity impacts from their operations, services and programs, as well as equity targets and measures of progress toward the County's equity goals.

Additionally, working with other partners, King County will advocate for changes that make our State tax structure more fair and less regressive. We will also advocate for adequate State and federal funding to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents and a growing population.

GOAL 1: Department and agency business plans, including line of business and other planning processes, include analyses of equity impacts from their operations, services and programs, as well as equity targets and measures of progress.

Objective: By 2017, develop an improved, streamlined Equity Impact Review Tool that incorporates ESJ Strategic Plan guidance and enables improved planning and budgeting to improve equity analysis and outcomes.

Objective: By 2018, demonstrate the use and value of the Equity Impact Review Tool in no less than 10 major policy, planning, budgeting or facility siting decisions.

SIX GOAL AREAS

PLANS, POLICIES & BUDGETS

GOAL 2: Policy guidance incorporates the ESJ Shared Values from this Strategic Plan, into analysis and decision making for operations and service delivery.

Objective: By 2018, 100 percent of departments and agencies will develop and publish ESJ guidance that is aligned with this plan and clearly lays out how their organization will incorporate the ESJ Shared Values from this plan, into analysis and decision making for their operations and service delivery.

GOAL 3: Budget decisions, rates, and allocation, including the base budget, reflect the values and strategies of the ESJ Strategic Plan and are tied to ESJ outcome measures and tracked.

Objective: By the 2019/2020 budget submittal, 100 percent of decision-making for the budget and rates will be backed by an equity analysis and, whenever appropriate, be tied to ESJ outcome measures.

Objective: The 2019/2020 budget submittal will include funding that is allocated using a Participatory Budgeting process.

Objective: By 2022, King County's advocacy at the State has resulted in a sustainable and more equitable funding structure for services most needed by our residents and our growing population. King County maintains growth in cost for services at or below inflation and population growth.

MINIMUM STANDARDS

- For County-level plans¹ and department-level plans, involve community organizations, partners and stakeholders early, and use the Community Engagement Guide at the beginning of the process to define community involvement.²
- County and department-level policies³ explicitly include equity and social justice as a principle and have community participation from the start.
- County and department/agencies' budget requests and decisions reflect the County's equity goals and priorities by highlighting the ESJ Strategic Plan strategies of investing in employees and community partnerships and investing upstream and/or where the needs are greatest—with transparent and accountable leadership.
- County and department/agency budget requests and decisions identify where budget changes impact communities of color, low income residents, and limited-English speaking populations; and, if the impacts are negative, identify ways to address and mitigate those impacts.

¹ Recent examples include the Strategic Climate Action Plan and Comprehensive Plan

² Community engagement and ESJ considerations are minimum standards for strategic planning as defined in [King County Strategic Planning Guidebook](#)

³ Recent examples include Best Starts for Kids, low-income transit fare

WORKPLACE & WORKFORCE



Invest in having a pro-equity organization and workplace culture for every employee, driven by a racially diverse and culturally responsive workforce at all levels.

OUR CURRENT SITUATION

King County government's greatest asset is our employees. We work to better the lives of nearly two million people who live in our county with a workforce that is 14,000 strong and diverse. Our employees are the experts in giving the best services to residents because we know and work with our communities every day.

King County has the goal to be the best-run government in the nation and an employer of choice in the region. To get closer to that goal, we must focus on two key parts:

- A workplace culture that invests in every employee by valuing and growing each person's unique experiences, assets and talent—regardless of who they are, where they come from and where they are in the organization.
- A workforce that is racially diverse and culturally responsive at all levels of the organization is able to provide equitable, high quality services to all our communities.

Research and experience shows that when we have diversity of people, cultures, ideas and experiences, we are a stronger, smarter organization and a more culturally responsive government to our communities. We are committed to focusing our efforts on those who have historically lacked equitable access to jobs and development opportunities, as well as employees at lower pay ranges.

Workplace and workforce equity—fair and just treatment and equitable access to jobs and job growth—have been identified as central to transforming King County government into an organization that is rooted in equity and social justice (ESJ).

King County has made strides on our commitment to be an organization guided by “fair and just” principles since ESJ launched in 2008. For example, we have “banned the box” on general Countywide job applications, by not asking about criminal history, which can often be a barrier to gainful employment. The County's 2014-2016 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Plan provided Human Resources professionals with best practices to deliver more equitable and fair recruitment

and hiring processes. Continued robust employee health benefits have made it easier for employees at all levels of our organization to get quality, affordable health care. We train employees on issues of race, micro-aggressions, bias in hiring, and ESJ basics, and offer “on-the-job” learning to build healthier, more diverse workplaces that help us serve our communities better.

Becoming better and more responsive means that we listen, learn, adapt and are accountable to our employees and communities. We are doing more to listen to our employees and understand their needs and priorities. For example:

- Nearly 60 percent of all King County employees participated in the 2015 King County Employee Survey—more than ever before.
- The ESJ Strategic Planning process has gone deeper into our organization, engaging with our employees to learn how well King County is doing as a “fair and just” employer. We listened to a diverse group of 600 employees (including leadership, management and frontline staff) in ESJ workshops and focus groups. They shared their experiences around workplace and workforce inequities related to some of our organizational barriers and practices.

We have learned more about how and why employee experiences vary based on factors of race, culture, class, gender and sexual identity, education, job, English-speaking skills, disability, age, income, and where an employee is on the organizational ladder.

For many employees, these factors come together to intensify their work experiences, whether positive or negative. Employees' experiences with King County as an employer strongly shape our ability to serve King County residents in equitable, culturally responsive and racially just ways.

This whole body of information points out specific areas of inequities that require our attention in achieving workplace and workforce equity:

SIX GOAL AREAS

WORKPLACE & WORKFORCE

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND INCLUSIVITY

- 2015 Employee Survey results show that 50 to 75 percent of employees responded positively to feeling recognized, respected, safe and valued, while experiencing collaborative, inclusive and equitable workplaces.

Results varied based on an employee's race, gender and place in the organization. For example, compared to white employees who responded, Black/African American employees were more engaged but responded less positively about their experiences with supervisors and peer culture.

Similar patterns were true for Hispanic employees who participated. Native Americans/Alaska Native employees responded more negatively across all categories.

- Participants in the ESJ workshops and focus groups shared that they have experienced or witnessed deeply rooted practices that create fear, uncertainty and resistance to change in some places within the organization. In such places, employees experienced varied feelings of distrust, disrespect, discomfort with issues of race, discouragement, hopelessness, and exclusion from decisions.

CAREER ADVANCEMENT, TRAINING, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- Nearly half of the employees who participated in the 2015 Employee Survey responded positively to having fair and equal access to staff advancement opportunities and receiving open and honest communication from senior leaders.

Results varied based on an employee's race, gender and place in the organization. For example, compared to white employees who responded, Black/African American employees were more optimistic about professional opportunities at work and personal influence over their work. Yet they indicated they were less likely to have had an opportunity to learn and grow in the last year.

- Employees who participated in ESJ workshops and focus groups reported that they had experienced or witnessed some of our organizational structures and systems reinforce silos, hierarchies and reward seniority, while limiting pathways for advancement, collaboration and innovation among employees.

Employees who came up against these organizational barriers, in many cases, experience insufficient, uneven and often unfair access to training opportunities especially if they are in lower paid positions. Employees said that these experiences often leave them feeling undervalued, unrecognized, uninformed and fearful of management.

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PROCESSES

- Employees who participated in ESJ workshops and focus groups shared that, in many cases, the County needed greater accountability for its varied and complex hiring, promotional and training practices. These practices are embedded in union contracts, vary by agency and can hinder successful recruitment, promotion and retention of a racially diverse and culturally responsive workforce at all levels, particularly in leadership and management positions. These employees felt that the complexity of these systems tended to unintentionally support negative practices (favoritism, bias, nepotism, etc.) that disparately affected some groups.

VISION FOR WHO & WHERE WE WANT TO BE

As One King County, we—departments, agencies, leadership, managers, staff, and labor partners—have a duty and an opportunity to help improve our employees' lives so that they can better serve our residents, by eliminating the areas of inequities listed above. This requires our shared commitment and resources to look at root causes by race and place in the organization, and change our systems accordingly to remove barriers and increase access to opportunities. We will have greater positive impact by creating standard practices that are based on promising strategies underway inside and outside of our organization. The ESJ Strategic Plan's Workplace & Workforce Equity Goal Area points the County toward values-based culture change over the next six years, and a shared vision of King County government that is inclusive and multicultural:

- Every employee experiences being regularly valued, supported to grow, and able to fulfill our equity values
- As an institution and a workforce, we reflect the mosaic of King County communities in all ways and at every level while consistently being pro-equity and racially and socially just.

THIS MEANS THAT BY 2022,

- All employees—regardless of who they are, where they come from and where they are in the organization—experience being valued, interconnected, and part of a multicultural, supportive team that is culturally sensitive to their unique assets and needs.
- Most of our workforce—at every level of all agencies / departments—consistently reflect our region's changing demographics.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The next portion of the Workplace & Workforce Equity Goal Area addresses the specific areas of inequities previously shared in the "Current Situation" section. Our efforts are on systems changes that remove barriers to increase access to resources and decision-making and result in greater opportunities for employees, regardless of race and place in the organization. The goals, objectives and actions proposed in the following pages reflect our ambitions, as well as where we have the greatest needs and opportunities to make real differences.

THE PROPOSALS FOCUS ON THREE ELEMENTS:

- Using a racial equity framework to identify gaps and prioritize actions to meet the goals and objectives below. King County's ESJ Organizational Maturity Model will help departments/agencies pinpoint how to become more equitable and racially just .
- Creating Countywide minimum standards that improve daily work lives for employees and increase their access to resources and decision-making—especially for employees most impacted by race- and place-based inequities—by lifting up some of the County's current best practices in this goal area
- Phased systems transformation that shape more equitable outcomes in recruitment, hiring, promotion and retention of a racially diverse workforce at all levels

Each department/agency shares responsibility for achieving the goals and objectives below by 2022. The Implementation Plan Guide details proposed actions, expected timeline for implementing those actions and their assigned roles and responsibilities.

SIX GOAL AREAS

WORKPLACE & WORKFORCE

GOAL 1: EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE

Require and sustain a daily workplace culture where every employee experiences trust and respect, is treated with dignity, and feels engaged and confident to perform well.

Objective: Engage all departments/agencies so that by 2022, all leadership and management are trained and practicing equitable and racially just leadership behaviors by actively removing barriers that have unintended consequences on workplace and workforce equity (see ESJ Organizational Maturity Model notes in the preliminary version of the Implementation Plan).

Progress measure: Each year through 2022, there will be a 3 percent increase in employees answering positively to (strongly agree or agree) the Employee Survey question, “My supervisor takes action to create a racially just workplace.”

Objective: Train all managers so that by 2022 they have the people-skills, cultural competencies, and their leadership support, to help any of their employees do their best work and grow professionally at the County.

Objective: Review all disciplinary policies and practices for consistency with ESJ Shared Values and take actions to eliminate disproportionate impacts on any groups.

Minimum Standards for Goal 1

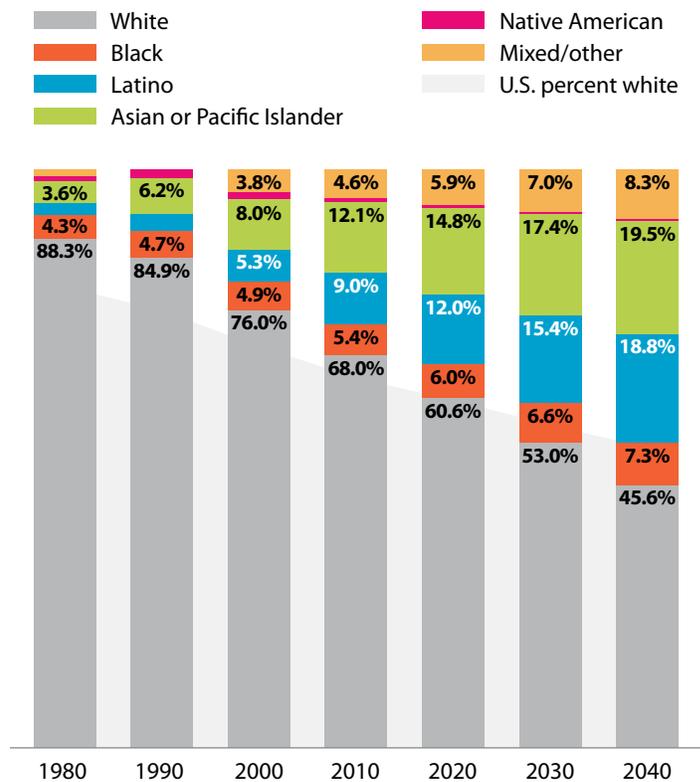
- Each department/agency tracks ESJ Strategic Plan Workplace/Workforce Goal Area action plans and metrics on their visual and performance management systems (tier boards)—working with Office of Equity and Social Justice (OESJ)—and uses ESJ adaptive management practices.
- Using 360-type or similar assessments and ongoing follow-up and coaching, all directors, deputy directors, managers and supervisors will develop and apply King County’s core competencies to create multicultural, inclusive workplaces, coaching every employee to grow. Through follow-up and coaching, they will develop a plan for reducing individual bias in decision-making. A cost-effective alternative assessment tool will be developed using existing County resources.

GOAL 2: EQUITABLE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Systematically develop and retain a more racially diverse and culturally responsive workforce at all levels: leadership, management, and staff.

Objective: By 2022, to the extent consistent with federal and state law, **all new hires and promotions in the highest salary ranges** (top 20% of the salary range or salary range 65 and higher), within each department and agency, will reflect our region’s projected workforce demographics for 2030.

Race/ethnic composition: Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA Metro Area



Source: National Equity Atlas (All ages are represented in this graph, so workforce demographics may vary.)

SIX GOAL AREAS

WORKPLACE & WORKFORCE

Objective: By 2022, all departments and agencies have fully active school-to-work pipelines from economically disadvantaged communities.

Minimum Standards for Goal 2

- All recruiting policies and hiring practices, including job classifications, are developed to “screen-in” candidates and eliminate barriers to recruitment—such as unnecessary education requirements and experience—and hiring of a racially diverse and culturally responsive workforce by shifting the hiring process to focus on the core competencies of the ideal candidate (see Language Access minimum standards for hiring from the Communication & Education Goal Area).
- All internal promotions are developed to “screen-in” candidates and eliminate barriers to recruitment—such as unnecessary education requirements and experience—by shifting the hiring process to focus on the core attributes of competitive internal candidates.
- All departments and agencies advertise in a range of places where a wide variety of candidates is more likely to look for job postings, and launch more robust outreach efforts.
- All subject matter reviewers in screening process successfully complete “Countering Bias” training and Implicit Association Test (IAT) before and after the training to identify and understand their biases.
- All hiring authorities and internal hiring panel members a) individually take the Implicit Association Test (IAT) and b) as a team, successfully complete “Countering Bias” or other approved culturally-responsive hiring training prior to being selected for hiring panels, during candidate review process, and discuss and take steps to reduce individual bias in interviews and candidate selection process.
 - All hiring panels are strongly encouraged to use “Guidelines for Multicultural Interactions” (or similar facilitation tools) in their hiring processes.
- Require diversity of race, gender and age on interview and hiring panels.

- The Human Resources Division conducts semi-annual audits of **all hires and promotions for positions in the top 20 percent of the salary range or salary range 65 and higher**, by department and agency to determine whether best practices were used to maximize opportunities to increase number of racially diverse, culturally responsive hires (Goal 2 objective).
 - **For the top 20% of the salary range or salary range 65 and higher hiring and promotion processes:** In workplaces where outcomes do not support Goal 2, hiring authorities must provide justification—prior to making an offer— about their candidates of choice, if their selections differ from those recommended by their hiring panels.

GOAL 3: EQUITABLE EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

Establish a shared commitment, resources and support—between leadership, managers, staff and labor—to grow every employee’s talent through training, development, coaching and mentoring.

Objective: By 2022, at least all employees earning in the bottom 20 percent of the salary range have active employee development plans (if they want), including a skills inventory, training and “on-the-job” exposure. Employees should jointly develop these plans with their supervisors/managers (and have support from their labor unions if applicable).

Objective: By 2022, King County has easy-to-understand career paths that employees use for equitable access to advancement opportunities in management, leadership and other County work areas.

Minimum Standards for Goal 3

- Special duty and term-limited temporary opportunities (internally offered as special duty assignments) of six (6) months or more are **advertised and open to all employees**, subject to applicable labor contract

SIX GOAL AREAS

WORKPLACE & WORKFORCE

provisions, HR policies and programs designed for employee advancement and training, and budget constraints. *Placements of less than six (6) months may be filled in accordance with clearly documented and communicated agency procedures.* (In process)

- Every employee has a development plan that includes quarterly check-ins on the employee's experience at the County and the County's role in retaining that employee, as well as an action plan (training, on-the-job exposure, etc.) for how the employee plans to grow her/their/his talent at King County—if they want.
- Managers, supervisors and HR community members successfully demonstrate their proficiencies in being able to support employees as they navigate career pathways for advancement.
- All department and agencies equitably resource employee training and development, with primary focus on employees earning in the bottom 20 percent of the salary range and those who have historically had limited access to training.
- Job classifications have transparent career paths and associated competencies, skills and training to guide employee career development.

GOAL 4: EQUITABLE ACCESS TO DECISION-MAKING

Build an organization of shared decision-making and shared-responsibility between staff, managers, leadership and labor partners that is grounded in consistent and effective communication, accountability and transparency.

Objective: By 2022, each employee at every level of the organization is given opportunities to engage in a shared decision-making process—throughout the year—to innovate and solve problems within their roles, as well as around business practices, policies, programs and decisions that impact them and our communities.

Minimum Standards for Goal 4

- All departments and agencies inform and update employees, in an equitable way, of the County's major initiatives (e.g., Equity and Social Justice, Best-Run Government, Continuous Improvement, Regional Mobility, Best Starts for Kids and Climate Change), at minimum, on an annual basis.
- Hiring panels consistently include frontline staff and community partners, where appropriate and feasible.
- Departments and agencies provide opportunities (at least quarterly) that seek process improvement ideas from individuals, teams or work units. Approved ideas receive a reasonable level of resources to meet the improvement goal.
- Work groups routinely include Continuous Improvement efforts to remove barriers for employees to drive employee engagement, contributions and innovations as a standard business practice.
- For major staff reductions (not including reduction in vacancies), the County:
 - Gathers and maintains demographic data, including race/ethnicity and gender of employees on proposed and final layoff lists.
 - Transparently communicates demographic data of proposed and final layoff lists to employees in departments/ agencies impacted by staff reductions.
 - Uses demographic trends to identify and address barriers within Labor Agreements that negatively impact the County's ability to retain a racially diverse and culturally responsive workforce at all levels.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Invest in community-based partnerships that will steadily inform the County's decision-making and foster full and equitable civic participation.

OUR CURRENT SITUATION

King County has a long-standing practice of public engagement intended to inform and seek input from the communities we serve. The County's 2010 Strategic Plan sought to formalize this work by promoting practices that would improve communication with residents and expand opportunities for them to civically engage. The County's Community Service Areas program exemplifies this objective by providing residents in unincorporated King County with resources to determine and lead projects that enhance their neighborhoods.

The County's 2015 Strategic Climate Action Plan and 2016 Comprehensive Plan both included community engagement programs designed to elicit public feedback prior to final adoption of the plans. The County also has a growing list of community-based organizations that we enlist to assist with our outreach to residents and foster community trust.

Despite the County's history of public engagement and an increasing reliance on community-based organizations to ensure our success, those interactions are often ad hoc, occur without compensation for the organization's time and expertise, and without investment in the organization's capacity to continue and expand its work.

The Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan is designed to move the County from these occasional interactions toward strategic investment in Community Partnerships that will steadily inform the County's programming, service delivery and budgeting, and will provide equitable opportunity for all residents to advocate in their own behalf and influence the decisions that impact their lives.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Community Partnerships has been identified as an essential component to the County's success in adapting to an evolving, dynamic landscape of people, their needs and their assets. Based on input from community representatives and County employees, King County's existing system of services is perceived and/or experienced as disconnected from current needs and populations in our region. Advancing equity and social justice requires a clear understanding of the conditions in our communities, where there is insufficient investment and resources, and where resources are abundant.

A commitment to Community Partnerships is equally rooted in the principle that those affected by a decision have the right to be involved in the decision-making process. Community-based organizations are poised to facilitate access to decision-making for historically under-represented communities and provide the expertise needed to remove barriers of race, cultural norms and practices, disability, and language in order to foster full and equitable civic participation.

The following objectives are intended to provide a framework for departments and agencies to develop program and staff structures that promote Community Partnerships, while allowing for diverse strategies to be employed and adapted by each department. Attached to each objective are preliminary steps to guide a department or agency in determining its current capacity for building Community Partnerships and action plans designed to sustain ongoing collaboration. Common measures (minimum standards) for each objective ensures continuity across County departments and agencies in approaching Community Partnerships as a pro-equity strategy.

SIX GOAL AREAS

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

GOAL 1: Systematically provide resource support to community-based organizations to leverage their expertise toward advancing ESJ outcomes.

Objective can be achieved by adopting **one** of the following approaches to investing in community partnerships:

Approach 1: By 2018, develop funding strategy that directs a percentage of the department's or agency's resources toward investment in community-based organizations with demonstrated success in engaging populations currently underserved by the department and least represented in the department's decision-making.

Approach 2: By 2018, develop and implement hiring plan for Community Liaison(s) to build and sustain partnerships between the department or agency and populations currently underserved by the department or agency and least represented in the department's or agency's decision-making. Liaisons will be centrally coordinated as a Countywide network to ensure continuity and efficiency in County engagement with community partners.

Objective: By 2020, department or agency can demonstrate inclusion of communities of color, limited-English speaking communities, and low-income communities in program and budget planning, and decision-making.

Objective: By 2020, department or agency will report a budget allocation toward community partnerships or staff hired to serve as Community Liaisons.

Minimum Standard for Goal 1

- Community Engagement Guide is consistently applied to all outreach activities, primarily to create opportunities for residents to express their priorities and have a meaningful role in decision-making.

GOAL 2: Expand and promote diversity among applicant pool by creating pro-equity contracting processes that are visible and accessible to contractors of varied sizes and capacities, consistent with state and federal law.

Objective: By 2018, departments and agencies adopt a process of identifying deliverables for the year that will require external support, using an equity lens to ensure that, where possible, the work is structured to encourage participation by community-based organizations, small businesses and independent contractors.

Objective: By 2018, department or agency can demonstrate expanded outreach in publicizing contracting opportunities.

Objective: By 2020, departments and agencies can report an annual increase in the number of community-based organizations and small, minority-owned/women-owned/veteran-owned businesses servicing its external contracts, consistent with state and federal laws.

Minimum Standards for Goal 2

- Augment outreach lists to include individuals and businesses from communities currently underrepresented on departments' contractors and vendors lists.
- Promote contracting opportunities via the Office of Equity and Social Justice (OESJ) website and community mailing list. Work with OESJ to provide technical assistance and other support that will eliminate barriers faced by contractors that are traditionally underrepresented in the County's applicant pool.

SIX GOAL AREAS

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

GOAL 3: Provide non-monetary support to community-based partners that builds their internal capacities.

Objective: By 2018, technical assistance programming is developed that connects department's or agency's resources to capacity development of community partners (e.g., training, data sharing, peer-to-peer network development).

Objective: By 2020, a department or agency can report technical assistance provided to community-based organizations and/or contractors serving communities of color, LES communities, and low-income communities. The report will include a survey from partners describing increased capacities and any other non-monetary benefits provided by the department.

Minimum Standard for Goal 3

- Community engagement is approached as an opportunity to ascertain capacity-building needs of current and potential community partners.

COMMUNICATION & EDUCATION

King County, Washington

Vaste Environment & Health Newsroom Documents Español Other Languages

- Spanish
- Vietnamese
- Russian
- Somali
- Chinese
- Korean
- Ukrainian
- Other Languages

do I get rid of my hazardous waste



HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL

ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH

NEWS & INFORMATION

Advance our education and communication to better engage our residents and communities in ways that are inclusive, culturally responsive and socially just.

OUR CURRENT SITUATION

Over the past 10 years, King County has been working to improve its communication and education tools and methods for connecting with both internal employee audiences and with culturally and increasingly linguistically diverse county residents, so that they gain more equitable access to King County services, programs, and engagement opportunities.

Leaders at the Executive, agency and staff levels have directed and implemented new tools for connecting with the workforce and community. They have also sought new ways to foster two-way communication and moved away from the traditional tactic of pushing information out based on County needs, with little internal coordination or consideration for employee or community interests or needs.

Internally, this included improving and increasing paper-based versions of all electronic communications to better communicate with the large number of employees without access to a computer as part of their jobs, and creating a publicly-accessible employee website that staff could access from home to receive updates, news and opportunities; increasing the frequency, consistency, and transparency of employee communications; adding new tools for sharing information, such as interactive Employee Town Halls; and adding staff with employee engagement, communications, technology, and new media expertise to create new outreach tools and approaches for more successful communications.

To improve external communications during this period, our staff worked collaboratively by selectively sharing community leader contacts, sources, and tools (which helped reduce duplication of outreach efforts to the same neighborhoods groups, or contacts), revamped the County's unincorporated area council system to increase participation, and replicated successful efforts from other agencies, such as outreach and networking events tailored to reach connectors and media outlets in underserved communities.

By increasing and improving outreach, agencies also tried to identify, eliminate, or reduce outdated barriers to participation in County activities and opportunities by smaller community organizations. During the past decade, the County used focus groups and feedback from customers and organizations to update its website by making navigation more intuitive, making the site mobile-aware in response to the increasing number of users accessing the sites pages by cell phone, creating options for the community to receive email and text updates about County news, and making it easier to locate materials online in languages other than English.

Despite those strides, there are still gaps in the application and effectiveness of the County's communication and education efforts, both internally and externally. Outreach and conversations with County employees during the Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Planning process yielded some guidance on a desired future state for communications from County leaders, and for communications between and among staff, residents and other public stakeholders.

Community representatives expressed appreciation for the County's focus on improving communication with under-served communities and strides over the past decade. But both employees and community members expressed frustration that King County's existing system of communication tools and services remains disconnected from those it serves and many steps behind as new technologies, internet-speed expectations, and changing demographics drive a need for new tools and approaches in the decade ahead. Current County outreach tools do not effectively meet those at either end of the technological spectrum equitably.

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

It is important that the County apply its continuous improvement focus to this work and identify both a new future state toward which to aim, and ways to get there over the next decade with a focus on upstream efforts where needs are greatest.

In six years, we want to be an organization where a person's access to government services, opportunities for civic engagement, and information about critical issues affecting their community are not determined by zip code, connections, citizenship status, language, disability or access to technology. Therefore, our goals and objectives are as follows.

GOAL 1: LANGUAGE ACCESS

As one in five county residents speaks a language other than English at home or is limited-English speaking (LES), update King County tools for public-facing communication and education to align with current populations, needs, and demographic changes.

Objective: By 2020, home pages of every department on the County website will be available in the six top tier languages as defined by the County demographer, based on the most recent census data. Critical documents and community notifications will also be available in the six top tier languages to provide more inclusive processes that guide the county's areas of focus and resource allocation.

Key metric to assess success: number of pages available in top six languages.

Minimum Standards for Goal 1

- By 2020, make home pages of every department on the County website available in the six top tier languages as defined by the County demographer, based on the most recent census data.
- Promote plain language and culturally-competent language as a standard for all online communications and job announcements to make translation and outreach easier.

- Prioritize language skills in hiring to increase staff ability to serve Limited-English speaking (LES) customers.
- Each department should setup an account for language interpretation services by phone and train at least one person in a public-facing role in how to access the service.

GOAL 2: ENGAGEMENT ACCESS

Develop tools for better engaging with County services and opportunities for input on County projects and initiatives, regardless of neighborhood, immigration status, disability or primary language language used for communication; and improve engagement by increasing capacity-building outreach and marketing buys with smaller, community-based organizations and media outlets.

Objective: By 2020, King County will have a consistent, shared, and proven suite of tools for effective engagement with community members on critical topics and issues.

Key metric to assess success: percentage of progress toward establishing tools for engagement.

As a major tactic, designated Web Team and communication staff in King County's Department of Information Technology will work with an employee stakeholder group, such as the County's Public Information Officers and Communication managers, to decide on a suite of tools which should be both high-touch and high-tech (e.g., meetings, phone tree, webinars, social media communities, and other emerging online engagement software tools such as Telephone Town Halls).

Minimum Standards for Goal 2

- Ensure translations for major hearings through improved coordination between outreach and communication staff in departments and with separately-elected staff.

- Departments and agencies can demonstrate improved communication with, education and outreach to, and interactions with communities of color, LES communities, and low-income communities through increased number of translated documents and materials, increased number and quality of outreach activities over the previous year, or an increase in the participation level of residents at recurring or annual activities.
- Departments and agencies can demonstrate improved employee engagement through feedback from periodic surveys or focus groups, and an increase in employee participation in engagement activities.

GOAL 3: TECHNOLOGICAL ACCESS

Given the digital divide and that many communities rely on mobile devices to bridge that gap, improve the collaborative use of mobile-optimized web pages, and social media across County agencies and services as an engagement, outreach, and feedback tool for the public.

Objective: By 2020, there is increased access to engagement, outreach, and feedback activities related to County services by the internet or mobile devices for currently under-served residents.

Key metric to assess success: increases in the total number of followers, subscribers, reach of posts through online sharing, and website traffic from posts on social media.

Minimum Standards for Goal 3

- Departments and agencies will include social media campaigns in all communication plans and increase coordination and outreach, and by having a physical presence at—or serving as monetary sponsor for—a specified number of community events each year as a way to provide engagement activities and materials, and feedback opportunities. Campaigns should include outreach to media serving LES and other traditionally under-served communities.
- Equal online access to information for all employees (in office or by personal email) through employee information in mobile-aware formats for ease of access on mobile devices.

GOAL 4: IMPROVED COLLABORATION AND LANGUAGE-RELATED TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYEES.

Improve collaboration and language-related tools and resources for employees to provide more services to those who are LES and include more of the community's voice in the policy-making process.

Objective: By 2020, King County employees will have sufficient and dedicated budgetary resources to do outreach, partnership, and evaluation work aimed at creating or expanding existing tools, and implementing emerging tools for communications and education with residents and community stakeholders. Funding level will be decided in collaboration with budget, communications, and senior leadership staff.

Key metric to assess success: employees have resources necessary to increase outreach, partnership, and evaluation work relative to baseline funding levels in 2016. The funding must result in improvements in those three areas as measured by increases in the total number of outreach contacts and successful partnerships that increase public engagement and participation or input on County services.

Minimum Standards for Goal 4

- At least one staffer in each division is trained in using standardized processes for soliciting and using a vendor for document translation and interpretation.
- Department and agencies can demonstrate inclusion of communities of color, LES communities, and low-income communities and outreach to multiple contacts within communities, not just a narrow list.
- Budget allotment for translations, interpretation for community events, and ESJ training for staff.
- Require completion of training with ESJ-approved curriculum within first six months for staff in supervisory roles.
- Departments should be encouraged to sponsor trainings and lunch-and-learns on ESJ topics and obtain buy-in and participation from senior management.

FACILITY & SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS(CIP)



Develop facility and system improvements responsive to the values and priorities of residents and stakeholders and achieve pro-equity outcomes.

OUR CURRENT SITUATION

King County manages an array of infrastructure systems for people, information, energy, transportation, water, sewage, garbage/recyclables and hazardous substances for the benefit and safety of our two million residents.

The departments that implement capital improvements to facilities and systems are Transportation, Executive Services (Facilities Management Division), Natural Resources and Parks, and Information Technology.

Improvements to these systems and facilities create opportunity for investment that can improve equity conditions in our communities. Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) is a critical tool for developing and maintaining our public infrastructure while ensuring efficient, equitable use of public funds. The process involves multiple stages of planning and implementation and is guided by input from employees, customers and affected communities.

At its best, CIP supports decision-making that is consistent with community goals and values. Based on input from community representatives and employees, King County's Capital Improvement Programs have not always included clear objectives to advance equity and social justice. Additionally, a CIP has the potential to deliver the most benefits when communities that have historically been underrepresented in the process are engaged to inform a project's development through to its implementation. These communities have also historically been less connected to contracting and job opportunities that capital projects create.

Aggressive schedules and constrained budgets associated with many projects have limited authentic community engagement when equity and social justice considerations are not an integral part of the project team's assignment or performance expectations.

Equity and social justice considerations may include:

- At the master planning level, who's needs are considered? ...whose voices inform system improvement priorities? ... how will different approaches to system improvements benefit or harm impacted communities?
- At the capital portfolio levels, what guidance on ESJ is important to provide to project teams regarding project siting, design, and construction contracting?
- At the project level, how can project development best leverage potential partners and existing community resources? how can contracting in the design, development, or construction advance economic and environmental justice?

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Our process for facility and system improvements will routinely be pro-equity (activity countering existing inequities) when:

- Equity Impact Review is employed for the master plan and capital program elements of the CIP process
- CIP resources are targeted to remedy disproportionately negative burdens from facilities and systems on impacted communities and maximize benefits for those whose access levels are most deficient
- The values, priorities, concerns, and ambitions of impacted communities are heard, understood, considered and accommodated in all levels of systems and facilities improvements
- A community liaison network is developed to ensure that impacted communities are engaged to inform and guide pro-equity approaches to system and facility improvements
- Facility and system improvements are informed by plans developed by regional collaborators (community, municipal/public, and private).

GOAL 1: Infrastructure system master plans, including line of business and other strategic planning processes, include clear objectives to advance equity and social justice that are informed by and sensitive to priority populations and key affected parties .

Objective: By 2018, all King County infrastructure systems complete and publish master planning updates that include pro-equity future state for the system that guides equity and social justice priorities and goals through the capital portfolio and capital program levels.

GOAL 2: Capital development policy, budgets, portfolios and programs are developed in accordance with community equity priorities, informed by a perspective on historic and existing inequities, and include a description of their contribution to improving equity in community conditions.

Objective: By 2018, all capital portfolio and program documents will develop and publish ESJ priorities that align to the ESJ Strategic Plan; are informed by equity impact review processes; are specific to the existing infrastructure and system conditions; and inform the ESJ approaches and characteristics of capital projects.

GOAL 3: Activities and responsibilities for pro-equity progress are clear and defined at the Dept., Division, and Section levels.

Objective: By 2018, the project charter and/or project design program conveys a project scope, schedule and budget that includes project goals for equity and social justice, addressing governance, contracting, siting, development, design characteristics, construction practices, operations, and maintenance.

Minimum Standards:

- All infrastructure and facility master plans describe the intended equity and social justice outcomes for the system (a.k.a. the pro-equity version of the system).
- All CIP program and portfolio budgets have evaluated and include a description of how equity and social justice considerations are advanced through project decisions—and provide guidance and/or direction on equity considerations and objectives on a project-by-project basis.
- Communication and engagement efforts of all capital development programs and projects are culturally appropriate.
- Funding sources (levies, bonds, etc.), siting, design, and construction of capital projects are responsive to the equity interests and priorities of historically disadvantaged communities.

Available at

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/strategic-plan.aspx>

1. [2016-2018 Implementation Plan for Six Goal Areas \(preliminary version\)](#)
2. [Community Engagement Report](#)
3. [Employee Engagement Report](#)

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- P.8:** “MLK March Seattle 2015” (CC BY-NC 2.0) by scottlum on Flickr
- P.10:** White Center celebration / photographer Mel Ponder
- P.16:** 2016 May Day March / Mauricio Martinez for King County Executive Office
- P.18:** Aerial of South King County / Ned Ahrens for King County Metro
- P.20:** Best Starts for Kids Levy passed / Metropolitan King County Council, 2016
- P.23:** Snoqualmie Tribe community event / King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
- P.26:** King County One Million Trees Partnership event / Eli Brownell for King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
- P.29:** Latino health enrollment / Public Health—Seattle & King County
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- P.52:** ORCA LIFT services / Ned Ahrens for King County Metro
- P.55:** South King County and International District bus riders / King County Metro Future Blog
- P.59:** Employee celebration / Ned Ahrens for King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
- P.66:** King County Immigrant and Refugee Task Force meeting / Metropolitan King County Council
- P.70:** Screenshot of King County Local Hazardous Waste Management Program’s website home page
- P.74:** South Park Bridge Opening / Ned Ahrens for King County Metro

OFFICE OF EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

**OFFICE OF KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE
DOW CONSTANTINE**

kingcounty.gov/equity

401 Fifth Ave, Suite 800 Seattle, WA 98104

206-263-9600 / TTY Relay: 711



Alternative formats available

King County



COOK COUNTY COMMITTEE
ON ADDRESSING
**BIAS, EQUITY, &
CULTURAL COMPETENCY**

APPENDIX F

Survey Summaries

Gender:

- ◆ 65.7% of respondents identified as male and 34.3% identified as female.

Location:

- ◆ Most respondents reported living in a neighborhood within the City of Chicago. The list of neighborhoods includes Archer Heights, Back of the Yards, Brighton Park, Humboldt Park, Gage Park, Little Village, Pilsen, and Uptown. Respondents living outside of Chicago reported living in Chicago Ridge, Cicero, Garfield Ridge, Lansing, Oak Park, and Lyons.
- ◆ Most respondents, about 27.8 %, reported living in Little Village. The second-largest group of respondents reside in Cicero (11.4%).

Interaction with Cook County:

- ◆ Nearly half of the respondents (45.7%) have interacted with Cook County through Cook County Health.
- ◆ The second most common form of interaction with Cook County was through the Forest Preserves/Brookfield Zoo/ the Botanic Garden (22.9%).
- ◆ One in five respondents (20%) reported interacting with Cook County through the Commissioner's Office.
- ◆ Respondents also interacted with the Assessor's Office (11.4%), the Criminal Justice System (11.4) Cook County Board meetings, (2.9%) and the County's Public Health Department (2.9%).

Experience with Cook County Staff:

- ◆ Respondents reported having relatively moderate experience with Cook County Staff. On a five-point Likert scale, 51.4% rated their experience a 3.
- ◆ While, 25.7% of residents consider their previous experience with Cook County staff to have been the best, 5.7% claimed to have had the worst.

Quality of Cook County Facilities:

- ◆ Respondents expressed mixed feelings regarding the quality of Cook County's facilities. Nearly half (45.7%) rated the spaces a 3 and another 11.4%, rated them a 2, 2.9% considered the quality of Cook County facilities to be "extremely bad," 17.1% considered them to be "amazing."

Access to interpreter services:

◆ Most respondents were able to speak with staff in their preferred language (74.3%), however more than one fourth of residents reported not having access to this service.

Access to accommodations:

◆ Among the third (34.3%) of respondents claimed that accommodations were available for differently abled individuals, and 22.9% claimed they were not. The question did not apply to the remainder of the respondents.



COOK COUNTY COMMITTEE
ON ADDRESSING
**BIAS, EQUITY, &
CULTURAL COMPETENCY**

APPENDIX G

Cook County Staff Equity Survey

I have confidence that my office/agency/ County will take appropriate action in response to issues regarding equity, bias, and cultural competency.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

My office has the tools necessary to address issues regarding equity, bias, and cultural competency

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

To what extent has bias created an obstacle for potential applicants seeking to access employment opportunities in your office/agency/ in the County?

- 1 2 3 4 5

Very Little

To a Significantly Large Extent

I have received training related to bias and cultural competency

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

a. What was the topic of your training

What types of training can Cook County employ in order to promote a more equitable County?

Is your office or agency currently developing initiatives to address issues of equity, bias and cultural competency?

In what ways can Cook County ensure equitable access to services provided for residents?

Please use this space to provide additional feedback regarding equity, bias, and cultural competency in Cook County government?



COOK COUNTY COMMITTEE
ON ADDRESSING
**BIAS, EQUITY, &
CULTURAL COMPETENCY**

APPENDIX H



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	19-4285	Version:	2	Name:	
Type:	Resolution	Status:		Approved	
File created:	6/24/2019	In control:		Health & Hospitals Committee	
On agenda:	6/27/2019	Final action:		7/25/2019	
Title:	PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ITEM 19-4285				

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS DECLARING RACISM AND RACIAL INEQUALITIES A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS IN COOK COUNTY

WHEREAS, Public Health Awareness raises awareness of the relationship between the health of individuals and the health of their communities; and

WHEREAS, African Americans comprise 1.3 million of Cook County's total population, the largest in any County, and Latin Americans comprise a comparable percentage of Cook County's population; and

WHEREAS, race is a social construction with no biological basis; and

WHEREAS, studies link racism to negative health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, areas falling under the public health category include healthy communities, violence prevention, rural health, technology, public health, climate change, and global health; and

WHEREAS, the promotion of healthy communities directly relates to the health of individuals, and encourages expanding public health support networks to decrease racial disparities in health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, communities of color are disproportionately impacted by social detriments to health, such as: increased exposure to lead; poor air quality; lack of safe places to walk, bike, run, live, and inadequate health education; and

WHEREAS, Cook County is the 2nd largest County in the United States, with health disparities among its racial populations, and

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions, including individual racism and systemic racism; and

WHEREAS, individual racism is internalized or interpersonal, which may manifest in microaggressions against others based on race; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism is an institutional or structural system based on structuring opportunity and assigning value through the social interpretation of one's race; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism unfairly disadvantages individuals, businesses, and communities while simultaneously depleting the strength of society through the wasteful use of human resources; and

WHEREAS, an emerging body of research demonstrates racism is a social detriment to health caused by racial discrimination in housing, education, employment, transportation, and criminal justice; and

WHEREAS, studies show African Americans have the highest death rate at every life stage; and

WHEREAS, Cook County's Department of Public Health's most recent data indicates the average infant mortality rate in Cook County is 6.6 infant deaths per 1000 live births. However, compared to their Hispanic and Non-Hispanic White counterparts, African American mothers experienced the highest rate, and double Cook County's average rate, of infant mortality at 13.6 infant deaths per 1000 live births; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 the diabetes diagnoses rates for African Americans was 1.9 percent higher than non-minorities and Latinos diabetes diagnoses rates was 1.7 percent higher than non-minorities; and

WHEREAS, County Health Rankings (using 2018 data) places Cook County as the 52nd healthiest county in the State of Illinois out of 102 counties; and

WHEREAS, Cook County must address the persistent disparities in health outcomes and the social, economic, educational, and environmental inequities contributing to them; and

WHEREAS, Cook County will commit to achieving health equity; and

WHEREAS, while there is no epidemiologic definition of "crisis", the health impact of racism clearly rises to the definition proposed by Galea, "[t]he problem must affect large numbers of people, it must threaten health over the long-term, and it must require the adoption of large-scale solutions;" and

WHEREAS, the County will create the Office of Health and Social Equity within the Cook County Dept of Public Health to serve in an integral role in recognizing and aiding in the resolution of the County's racial inequities for the benefit of all of its citizenry, and for the county to achieve its full potential; and

WHEREAS, with support from community partners the Office of Health and Social Equity, it is the County's responsibility to address racism, including seeking solutions to reshape the discourse and actively engage all citizens in racial justice work; and

WHEREAS, the Health and Hospital Committee will recommend solutions to overcome racism.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Cook County will: Assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire society; Assess internal policy and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element of the County; led by the Cook County Board President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners (County Board), in collaboration with The Office of Health and Social Equity and other relevant parties;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County will work to create an inclusive organization identifying specific activities to: (1) increase diversity across its workforce and in leadership positions; (2) incorporate inclusion and equity into organizational practices; (3) work with Human Resources to offer educational trainings/activities to expand employees' understanding of how racism affects individuals; and (4) work with marginalized populations to provide tools to assist employees across Cook County to engage actively and authentically with communities of color, (5) Advocate for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and (6) support local, State, and Federal initiatives that advance social justice, while encouraging individual employee, and advocate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County will encourage other local, State, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County Board hereby supports the efforts to address public health disparities due to racial inequities throughout Cook County.

Sponsors:

DENNIS DEER, ALMA E. ANAYA, SCOTT R. BRITTON, JOHN P. DALEY, BRIDGET DEGNEN, BRIDGET GAINER, BRANDON JOHNSON, BILL LOWRY, DONNA MILLER, STANLEY MOORE, KEVIN B. MORRISON, TONI PRECKWINKLE (President), PETER N. SILVESTRI, DEBORAH SIMS, LARRY SUFFREDIN, JEFFREY R. TOBOLSKI, LUIS ARROYO JR

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
7/25/2019	1	Board of Commissioners	approve as substituted	Pass
7/24/2019	2	Health & Hospitals Committee	recommend for approval as substituted	Pass
7/24/2019	1	Health & Hospitals Committee	accept as substituted	Pass
6/27/2019	1	Board of Commissioners	refer	Pass

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ITEM 19-4285

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS DECLARING RACISM AND RACIAL INEQUALITIES A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS IN COOK COUNTY

WHEREAS, Public Health Awareness raises awareness of the relationship between the health of individuals and the health of their communities; and

WHEREAS, African Americans comprise 1.3 million of Cook County’s total population, the largest in any County, and Latin Americans comprise a comparable percentage of Cook County’s population; and

WHEREAS, race is a social construction with no biological basis; and

WHEREAS, studies link racism to negative health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, areas falling under the public health category include healthy communities, violence prevention, rural health, technology, public health, climate change, and global health; and

WHEREAS, the promotion of healthy communities directly relates to the health of individuals, and encourages expanding public health support networks to decrease racial disparities in health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, communities of color are disproportionately impacted by social detriments to health, such as: increased exposure to lead; poor air quality; lack of safe places to walk, bike, run, live, and inadequate health education; and

WHEREAS, Cook County is the 2nd largest County in the United States, with health disparities among its racial populations, and

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions, including individual racism and systemic racism; and

WHEREAS, individual racism is internalized or interpersonal, which may manifest in microaggressions against others based on race; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism is an institutional or structural system based on structuring opportunity and assigning value through the social interpretation of one’s race; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism unfairly disadvantages individuals, businesses, and communities while simultaneously depleting the strength of society through the wasteful use of human resources; and

WHEREAS, an emerging body of research demonstrates racism is a social detriment to health caused by racial discrimination in housing, education, employment, transportation, and criminal justice; and

WHEREAS, studies show African Americans have the highest death rate at every life stage; and

WHEREAS, Cook County's Department of Public Health's most recent data indicates the average infant mortality rate in Cook County is 6.6 infant deaths per 1000 live births. However, compared to their Hispanic and Non-Hispanic White counterparts, African American mothers experienced the highest rate, and double Cook County's average rate, of infant mortality at 13.6 infant deaths per 1000 live births; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 the diabetes diagnoses rates for African Americans was 1.9 percent higher than non-minorities and Latinos diabetes diagnoses rates was 1.7 percent higher than non-minorities; and

WHEREAS, County Health Rankings (using 2018 data) places Cook County as the 52nd healthiest county in the State of Illinois out of 102 counties; and

WHEREAS, Cook County must address the persistent disparities in health outcomes and the social, economic, educational, and environmental inequities contributing to them; and

WHEREAS, Cook County will commit to achieving health equity; and

WHEREAS, while there is no epidemiologic definition of "crisis", the health impact of racism clearly rises to the definition proposed by Galea, "[t]he problem must affect large numbers of people, it must threaten health over the long-term, and it must require the adoption of large-scale solutions;" and

WHEREAS, the County will create the Office of Health and Social Equity within the Cook County Dept of Public Health to serve in an integral role in recognizing and aiding in the resolution of the County's racial inequities for the benefit of all of its citizenry, and for the county to achieve its full potential; and

WHEREAS, with support from community partners the Office of Health and Social Equity, it is the County's responsibility to address racism, including seeking solutions to reshape the discourse and actively engage all citizens in racial justice work; and

WHEREAS, the Health and Hospital Committee will recommend solutions to overcome racism.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Cook County will: Assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire society; Assess internal policy and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element of the County; led by the Cook County Board President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners (County Board), in collaboration with The Office of Health and Social Equity and other relevant parties;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County will work to create an inclusive organization identifying specific activities to: (1) increase diversity across its workforce and in leadership positions; (2) incorporate inclusion and equity into organizational practices; (3) work with Human Resources to offer educational trainings/activities to expand employees' understanding of how racism affects individuals; and (4) work with marginalized populations to provide tools to assist employees across Cook County to engage actively and authentically with communities of color, (5) Advocate for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and (6) support local, State, and Federal initiatives that advance social justice, while encouraging individual employee, and advocate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County will encourage other local, State, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County Board hereby supports the efforts to address public health disparities due to racial inequities throughout Cook County.