Olympia

Applying an "Equity Lens"

- **The purpose of this framework is to apply a basic equity lens to a proposed action or project to analyze and summarize its equity impacts.**

- Foundational to an equity analysis is to identify: 1) *those who will benefit* from an action, 2) *those who will be burdened*, and the 3) *disparities* that inform how the action could be made more equitable.

- **The difference between *equality* and *equity*:** Simply put, *equality* is treating everyone the same ("equally"), while *equity* takes into consideration how past or current injustices may have created unequal starting points or differing needs. Applying an equity lens to City work means asking questions that enable us to serve those for whom equal *treatment* does not amount to an equal *outcome*.

Asking the right questions:

The questions in this framework are designed to clarify the possible equity impacts of a proposed action. Try not to get overwhelmed by the unknowns or the complexities of the issues. Ultimately this is a simple framework for understanding and communicating what is inevitably complicated and nuanced work. No one has all the answers, but we strengthen our ability to act equitably when we train ourselves to ask the right questions about the work we are doing. That is what it means to apply an equity lens to our work.

This framework will help you:

1. Identify groups impacted	**GROUPS**
2. Identify existing demographic data	**DEMOGRAPHICS**
3. Identify and address disparities	**DISPARITIES**
4. Summarize the equity impacts of a proposed action	**SUMMARIZE**

Reporting:

You will not need to share your responses from the **Groups**, **Demographics**, and **Disparities** sections. Use the answers to the four questions on the **Summarize** page as the outline of your equity analysis for your staff report.

GROUPS

Identify groups impacted.

- **It's essential to identify the specific groups that are impacted, whether positively or negatively.** In many cases, a project or action that is intended to benefit one group burdens another. Negative impacts are not always immediately obvious. Without careful consideration, a project may burden – or exclude from benefits – a group that has been historically deprioritized or forgotten.

- **Sample Proposed Action:** The creation of a new waste management facility further outside town will impact waste management customers, employees, the neighborhood where the new facility is being built, and programs making use of the old facility.

  - Customers **benefit** from a more efficient system.
  - Employees **benefit** from more efficient system, but are also **burdened** by longer drives.
  - Programs **benefit** from use of old facility.
  - Neighborhood **burdened** by noise and smell from construction and garbage trucks.

1. In the space below, identify any groups or individuals impacted by the proposed action and indicate whether they will benefit or burdened. If an action may have both positive and negative impacts on a specific group, check both boxes.

Groups impacted:

	Benefits	Burdened	Unsure
_____	☐	☐	☐
Summary: _____			
_____	☐	☐	☐
Summary: _____			
_____	☐	☐	☐
Summary: _____			
_____	☐	☐	☐
Summary: _____			
_____	☐	☐	☐
Summary:			

Identify existing demographic data.

- **Demographic data helps bring the equity impacts of a proposed action into focus.** Whenever possible, it should be gathered and assessed to further understand the makeup of the impacted groups.

- **It's important to be aware of any direct impacts a proposed action has on commonly marginalized groups.** That includes groups that have been marginalized by race (Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, Multiracial, or other communities of color), by sexual orientation (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer, or Asexual), by gender (Cisgender Women, Transgender Women, Transgender Men, or Non-binary people), and other marginalized groups, such as Disabled people, Immigrants, and people who are Working Class, in poverty, or experiencing homelessness.

- Commonly used data sources include event registration details, contract bids, client files, service utilization records, community feedback/input collected, program evaluations, and more. **Not all data sources include demographic information.**

1. List existing data sets/sources, indicating which demographic data each includes:

Data Source:

	Race	Sexual Orientation	Gender (trans inclusive)*	Gender (trans non-inclusive) *	Disability	Immigration	Houselessness or poverty	None of the above
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

*Gender data is trans inclusive when options indicate if someone is trans or not AND whether they are a man, woman, or non-binary (preferably the five options of: cisgender woman, cisgender man, transgender woman, transgender man, or non-binary).

If you do not have any relevant data sets... We recommend two helpful resources that can provide valuable insights into specific neighborhoods in our community:
- United States Census Bureau Explore Census Data [tutorial]
- Thurston County Stormwater Equity Index Map

2. Which types of demographic data do you have for each of the impacted groups identified in the Groups section?

Group impacted: (auto-populate from Groups section)

	Race	Sexual Orientation	Gender (trans inclusive)*	Gender (trans non-inclusive) *	Disability	Immigration	Houselessness or poverty	None of the above
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Gender data is trans inclusive when options indicate if someone is trans or not AND whether they are a man, woman, or non-binary (preferably the five options of: cisgender woman, cisgender man, transgender woman, transgender man, or non-binary).

3. How does the existing data shape the picture of who benefits and who is burdened? What data is missing that limits your ability to assess possible equity impacts? Have you noticed areas in which marginalized groups have not participated, are not represented, or are not otherwise benefitting?

DISPARITIES

Identify and address disparities.

- A *"disparity"* is a difference in treatment, burden, or outcome for different groups that can be seen as unfair.

- Disparities exist in housing, employment, healthcare, the justice system, and other areas. **Whenever possible we should look for places where disparities may be influencing our work and find ways to counteract them.**

- For example, it is a known disparity that people with disabilities and people of color (especially Black people) have significantly lower levels of home ownership. A program or project that benefits only homeowners, will disproportionately benefit White and non-disabled people. **What adjustments or alternatives could you consider that would make the action more equitable?**

- In many cases, disparities are not obvious – especially when demographic data or feedback from impacted groups is limited. One of the best ways to identify possible disparities is to **invite two or three colleagues familiar with the proposed action to review data and discuss possible impacts on marginalized groups.** The more diverse perspectives you invite into the conversation, the less likely you are to overlook ways that your project could reinforce, or provide relief from, an existing disparity.

1. Could the proposed action create disparities or accentuate existing disparities?

2. Is there anything you are doing, or could do, to reduce or eliminate disparities? Have you identified options that would distribute the benefits and burdens more equitably?

Now that you have applied a basic equity lens to the proposed action or project, it's time to share what you've learned. Use the answers to these four questions as the outline of your equity analysis for your staff report.

1. Who will benefit from this action, and how? Include the impacted groups and their demographics, highlighting any historically marginalized communities that will be benefitted or burdened.

2. Who will be burdened by this action, and how? Include the impacted groups and their demographics, highlighting any historically marginalized communities that will be benefitted or burdened.

3. How did demographic data shape the picture of who benefits and who is burdened? Note any areas where data was missing or limited.

4. How does the project impact known disparities in our community? What is being done or could be done to make the proposed action more equitable? Are the benefits and burdens distributed equitably?