Addressing Racism and COVID-19

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Question for the Viewers

Does your organization have a strategic plan for addressing equity in your jurisdiction?

A. Yes, we have developed a plan
B. We are working on a plan
C. No, we have not developed a plan
D. Other (please type in chat)
Origins of Equity Work in King County

I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirit.

– Martin Luther King Jr.

Seattle & King County in Context

A strong connection exists between health, income, place, and race

Lowest

Average

Highest

Phases of Equity and Social Justice at King County

2008
King County Executive Ron Sims launches Equity and Social Justice Initiative

2009
Office of Equity and Social Justice created

2016–2022
Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan

2010
Executive Dow Constantine and County Council integrate equity work through 2010 ordinance

2015
Equity work uncoordinated countywide

Racism as a Public Health Crisis

Source: King County Equity and Social Justice - https://kingcounty.gov/equity
Vision:
A King County where all people have equitable opportunities to thrive.

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

Anti-equity Systems

Pro-equity Systems
Pro-equity Approaches

- Targeted universalism
- Dismantle systems of injustice
- Process equity
- Focus on people and places with greatest needs

COVID-19, Racism, and Health Disparities

COVID-19 Data Tool: Significant Findings

Older adults:
- West Seattle, Downtown Seattle, and Shoreline neighborhoods had the largest numbers (more than 13,000) of older adults

Populations with health conditions:
- AI/AN adults in King County had the highest rate of high-risk chronic conditions (27%), followed by Black adults (26%) and multiple-race adults (24%)

Access to care:
- Hispanics/Latinos (28%) and American Indian/Alaska Native (21%) adults are the most likely to be uninsured
- 32% of Asian residents and 28% of Hispanics/Latinos do not speak English very well

Source: Communities Count Data Tool - https://www.communitiescount.org/covid19vulnerable
Conclusions from Data

From an equity perspective, key areas of concern in the COVID-19 pandemic include:

- Health care access
- Underlying health conditions
- Root causes / social determinants of health
- Living and working conditions
- Essential workers

Question for the Viewers

Consider the following strategies for approaching equity and social justice work. Which area does your organization need to focus most on?

A. Building internal capacity
B. Teaming with other government agencies
C. Engaging community partnerships
D. Other (please type in chat)

Strategies for Equity During Two Pandemics
Strategic Plan Features

Major features of King County's Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan:

- Lead with racial equity
- Promote a pro-equity policy agenda
- Target specific goal areas, including:
  - Leadership
  - Operations
  - Services
  - Workforce
  - Workplace
- Pursue regional collaboration on equity

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Equity Tools: Community Engagement

Community Engagement Continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Initiates</th>
<th>County Consults</th>
<th>County Engages in Dialogue</th>
<th>County and Community Work Together</th>
<th>Community Drives Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-way communication Examples: Media releases</td>
<td>Two-way communication Examples: Forums, community-led initiatives</td>
<td>Community and County share decision-making leading to co-created solutions</td>
<td>Community includes and shares ideas and solutions with co-creation and technical assistance from County</td>
<td></td>
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Sample Characteristics:

- From a primarily white racial narrative
- Towards a liberatory racial narrative

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Equity Impact Review Process

Process is:

- Guided by community priorities
- Informed by current equity conditions

1. Determine Scope of Project
2. Begin Analysis & Decision Process
3. Participates in Ongoing Learning
4. Implement Change
5. Participates in Ongoing Learning
How can you concentrate your work on equity in times of crisis?

- Seek commitment from leadership and include all team members
- Link your work to all policies, practices and strategic planning
- Lead work from values as well as empirical and qualitative data (community voice)
- Apply available tools and frameworks
- Focus on concrete, clear actions defined by those most negatively affected

King County
Best Starts for KIDS

Communities of Opportunity

Declaration of Racism as a Public Health Crisis

“We will share power and resources and work on community-defined problems using community-driven solutions. We cannot stop working side-by-side with anti-racist organizations, driven by people most negatively impacted by racism. We commit to convening other jurisdictions and agencies across sectors and to creating shared, measurable accountability.

White privilege and anti-blackness cannot be fully addressed until the same systems that have “worked just fine” for white people while acting as the foot of oppression for indigenous,Black and brown communities are dismantled. In its place, we need new systems coming from the communities most affected by racism, oppression, and colonization.”

— King County Executive Dow Constantine & Public Health Director Patty Hayes

June 11, 2020

A Chat with Matías Valenzuela

Allene Mares  
Matías Valenzuela

QUESTIONS?

To ask a question, please click the icon in the Zoom toolbar to open your Q&A Pod.

Resources

Communities Count  
COVID-19 Vulnerable Communities Data Tool  
https://www.communitiescount.org/covid19vulnerable

COVID-19 Dashboard  
Public Health – Seattle & King County  

Health Equity Guide  
Case Study on King County's Transformation of Practices to Advance Equity  