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)
“I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.”

~ Martin Luther King Jr.
A strong connection exists between health, income, place, and race.

Source: King County Equity and Social Justice - [https://kingcounty.gov/equity](https://kingcounty.gov/equity)
Phases of Equity and Social Justice at King County

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

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

2015
Office of Equity and Social Justice created

2020
Racism as a Public Health Crisis

2016 – 2022
Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan

Equity work uncoordinated countywide
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

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

CONDITIONS— Past policies, systems and practices have resulted in adverse social, physical and economic conditions

The “Unhealthy Stream” Creates Inequities —
Source: King County Equity and Social Justice
https://kingcounty.gov/equity
Pro-equity Systems

**PRO-EQUITY POLICIES, PRACTICES & SYSTEMS**— For greatest and most effective impact, King County is focusing “upstream” to address root causes and be pro-equity

**CONDITIONS**— Pro-equity systems and policies result in improved community conditions, also known as “determinants of equity”

**OUTCOMES**— Individuals and families thrive regardless of race and place

The “Healthy Stream” Creates Equity — Source: King County Equity and Social Justice
https://kingcounty.gov/equity
# Pro-equity Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targeted universalism</th>
<th>Dismantle systems of injustice</th>
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- **Targeted universalism**
  - Focus on people and places with greatest needs

- **Dismantle systems of injustice**
  - Process equity
COVID-19, Racism, and Health Disparities

RACISM IS A PANDEMIC
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 rates of high-risk chronic conditions (37%), followed by Black adults (26%) and multiple-race adults (24%)

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

Source: Communities Count Data Tool - https://www.communityscount.org/covid19vulnerable
COVID-19 in Seattle & King County

Confirmed cases per 100,000 residents (age-adjusted)

Source: Public Health – Seattle King County Covid-19 Data Dashboards
www.kingcounty.gov/covid/data
June 26, 2020

Abbreviations:
AI/AN = American Indian/Alaska Native
NHPI = Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
Other = Other or multi-racial

Race groups are mutually exclusive, and Hispanics are counted as a race unless stated.

The black lines represent the 95% confidence intervals (error bars). You can hover over the bars/lines to see more details.

Cases missing age were excluded from this analysis so overall counts may be different.
Rates are age-adjusted using the King County 2019 population.
COVID-19 in Seattle & King County

Percent by race compared to the King County population

Source: Public Health – Seattle King County Covid-19 Data Dashboards
www.kingcounty.gov/covid/data
June 26, 2020

Abbreviations:
AI/AN = American Indian/Alaska Native
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2,288 (23.6%) cases are missing race/ethnicity
COVID-19 in Seattle & King County

Source: Public Health – Seattle King County Covid-19 Data Dashboards

www.kingcounty.gov/covid/data
June 26, 2020

Abbreviations:
AI/AN = American Indian/Alaska Native
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Percent of cases by race/ethnicity over time
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
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

In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist; we must be anti-racist.

#BLM
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
  - Policies
  - Workforce
  - Workplace
- Pursue regional collaboration on equity
## Community Engagement Continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Informs</th>
<th>County Consults</th>
<th>County Engages in Dialogue</th>
<th>County and Community Work Together</th>
<th>Community Directs Action</th>
</tr>
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<td>County initiates effort, uses different channels to inform community to take action</td>
<td>Gathers information from the community to inform county-led interventions</td>
<td>King County engages community members to shape county priorities and plans</td>
<td>Community and County share decision-making to co-create solutions</td>
<td>Community initiates and directs strategy and action with participation and technical assistance from County</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Sample Characteristics:

- **One-way communication**
  - *Example:* Media releases
  - *Example:* Focus groups, surveys, etc.

- **Two-way communication**
  - *Example:* Forums, boards, etc.
  - *Example:* Co-led community meetings, coalitions
  - *Example:* Community-led activities, partnerships, coalitions

### From a primarily white racial narrative → Towards liberatory racial narratives

Source: King County Equity and Social Justice - [https://kingcounty.gov/equity](https://kingcounty.gov/equity)
Equity Impact Review Process

Process is:
- Guided by community priorities
- Informed by current equity conditions
Key Takeaways

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
“We will share power and resources and work on community-defined problems using community-driven solutions. We commit to 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
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
https://healthequityguide.org/case-studies/king-county-transforms-county-practice-to-advance-equity/