

Proposal: Race Equity Lens

Equity is important and engaging in equity work requires us to move away from the historical ways we engage with our communities towards a model that understands and prioritizes their needs, particularly those most affected by inequity. To become equitable, the work of equity must be understood.

At DCBS, a crucial component of collective leadership is to value, respect, and celebrate diversity in its many forms: race, ethnicity, national origin, ability, class, faith, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, and experience.

To accomplish this, we must apply an equity lens that allows us to see and understand the existing structures of racism and conditions that create inequities, as well as the changes that are necessary to create more equitable procedures, policies, and actions.

Changing these systems and achieving our mission will happen only if we act with explicit intent. With that in mind, DCBS has begun a journey of critically examining and improving our culture, norms, and stakeholders-facing approaches by creating this diversity, equity, and inclusion lens.

Shifting gears

Shifting from a historical lens that upholds structural racism to an equitable that creates opportunities and fair access for all. Undertaking this will require using a shared lens that essentially involves changes or re-imagining what we could look like and achieve as an agency.

Historical



Equity Lens



Exclusive

Engages in conversations about others' partial abilities. Prioritizes voices of loudest and powerful.

Inclusive

Participates in conversations no matter backgrounds, this creates fairness and accessibility. Prioritizes underserved and underrepresented groups.

Maintain opportunity gap:

Resources are allocated equally. By setting high criteria to education, home ownership, and employment (recruiting, hiring, and promotion) opportunities, it creates barriers to access.

Mitigates opportunity gap:

Resources are allocated on a group's greatest need. It eliminates barriers that inhibit access to education, home ownership and employment (recruitment hiring and promotion) opportunities by creating opportunities with a purpose.

Without an equity lens, we will maintain the opportunity gaps we are working to mitigate. We must apply the equity lens to every equity challenge we seek to solve in order to disrupt the status quo and opens doors for change.

Applying the equity lens helps us to determine what high-impact change ideas we need to implement to ensure that all Oregon residents meet or obtain the resources and services we provide without causing a burden. The equity lens provides descriptive, conceptual understanding of what equity work requires of people and agencies, and how we can think and act in service, especially to those most affected by inequity and historically underserved and underrepresented people.

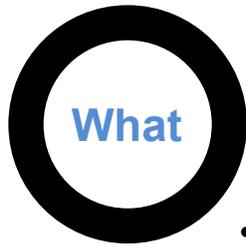


What does the equity lens do?

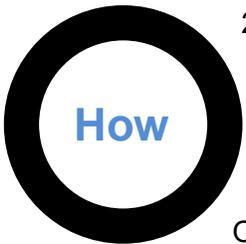
The equity lens helps DCBS move into action by allowing us to make decisions based on the reflected needs of people, acknowledge historical barriers, identify ways for everyone to participate, and understand how and why exclusion happens, and results in actionable steps to take.

We identify the components of equity lens barriers by where they occur, eliminate barriers by making adaptations that reflect the lived experience of those affected, consider data, and create new ways of working by considering inclusion at the earliest stages rather than at the end.

The first step to eliminating barriers is through the Equity Impact Assessment Tool:



1. **What** is the program, policy, action, and practice in question?
 - What beliefs, values and assumptions (some of which will be cultural) guide how the topic is being considered?
 - What is the real impact likely to be for different communities who are important to the agency?
 - What assumptions are at the foundation of the issue?
- What is the plan to evaluate and monitor the policy, practice, or decision to ensure equity in the short- and long-term?
 - What are the impacts on:
 - Contract/procurement equity
 - Culturally specific programs and services
 - Immigrant and refugee access to services
 - Inclusive communications and outreach
 - Workforce
 - Equity other: _____



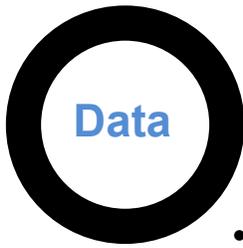
2. **How** does exclusion happen and how does DCBS mitigate it?
 - How is the decision being made?
 - How can participatory structures can be added to hear from more voices, to balance participation, and use elements of consensus?
 - If available, how can they be included?
 - How do we ensure our communications and messaging are getting to all Oregonians?



3. **Who** (person or group) gets excluded or is missing?
 - Who or what informs their thinking on the issue?
 - Who is the lens for?
 - Who is most affected by these decisions and should be at the table?



4. **Why** do the disparities exist?
 - Why use an equity lens?
 - Why are we seeking to collect data?



5. What does the **data** show?
 - Is our data subjective and accessible?
 - Will this data be made publicly available as open data to support the state's vision for transparency?
 - Is data generated as a tool in service to equity, rather than obstacles?
 - How is demographic data being woven into program decision-making?
- What are the racial demographics of those living in the area or affected by the program?

Recognizing this, our approach is to have an ongoing, two-way process of building relationships and working collaboratively with all members of underserved and underrepresented communities. This can provide the desired transformative results that benefit us all.

At DCBS, we recognize that even apparently race-neutral policies can continue to enable discrimination. The only way to improve something is to measure it. So, to be committed to equity in our policies, rules, and operation, it must include equity in its Performance Management System.

Equity Lens Tools

- [Lane County Equity Lens Toolkit](#): Each situation requires unique considerations, and we are in constant evolution in our capacity to be responsive to the equity and inclusion needs of our community.
- [Government Alliance on Race & Equity](#): An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity
- [Nonprofit Association of Oregon](#): Equity and Inclusion Lens Guide