

# RACIAL EQUITY PLAN

ADOPTED | 2023-2027

Oregon Department of Revenue  
January 2023



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DEPARTMENT  
OF REVENUE

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## Land Recognition

We would like to acknowledge the many tribes and bands who call Oregon their ancestral territory, including: Burns Paiute, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw, Confederated Tribes of Cow Creek Lower Band of Umpqua, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation, Coquille Tribe, and Klamath Tribes; and honor the ongoing relationship between the land, plants, animals, and people indigenous to this place we now call Oregon. We recognize the continued sovereignty of the nine federally recognized tribes who have ties to this place and thank them for continuing to teach us how we might all be here together, and we continue to strive to work on a government-to-government basis with the nine federally recognized tribes.



## Commitment from Revenue Leadership Team

The Oregon Department of Revenue is not neutral about racism. Fulfilling our mission of together, collecting the revenue Oregon counts on requires us to recognize, address, and eliminate institutional racism and discrimination.

The Revenue Leadership Team is committed to continuously addressing equity and racism and creating an inclusive environment where all employees are safe, regardless of their identity. We value the diversity of our employees and the communities we serve. We stand firmly against hate, bigotry, and prejudice.

We acknowledge that Revenue employees are at various points along the continuum of anti-racism work. We understand that racism is not only conscious prejudice, but rather a social system embedded in culture and its institutions meaning that no one is exempt from its forces. Dismantling racism requires intentionality, discomfort, accountability, courage, and compassion. The Oregon Department of Revenue will act with the intent to change systems and institutional policies, practices, and procedures that have racist effect. The department will also purposefully strive to identify, discuss, and challenge issues of race, color, and ethnicity and the impacts they have on employees and community members.

As Revenue leaders, we hereby commit to centering equity in all of our decisions, actively implementing the objectives and actions identified in this plan, and committing the resources necessary to uproot policies and practices that perpetuate inequity and systemic racism.



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**Diversity** means honoring and including people of different backgrounds, identities, and experiences collectively and as individuals.



**Racial Equity** means closing the gaps so that race can no longer predict any person's success, which simultaneously improves outcomes for all. To achieve racial equity, we must transform our institutions and structures to create systems that provide the infrastructure for communities to thrive equally.

**Equity** acknowledges that not all people, or all communities, are starting from the same place due to historic and current systems of oppression.



**Inclusion** is a state of belonging when persons of different backgrounds, experiences, and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably as decision-makers, collaborators, and colleagues.

# INTRODUCTION

## **We are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.**

The State of Oregon is committed to establishing strong leadership to eradicate racial and other forms of disparities in all aspects of state government.

Equity is about creating the conditions for all to have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive, so identities cannot predict outcomes.

The racial equity plan incorporates the State of Oregon's diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies into the Oregon Department of Revenue.

## Background

As described in the State of Oregon's 2021 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan: A Roadmap to Racial Equity and Belonging, historically and currently underserved and under resourced communities in Oregon include Oregonians who identify as:

- Native American, members of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, American Indian, Alaska Natives
- Black, African, African American
- Latina, Latino, Latinx, Hispanic
- Asian
- Pacific Islander (including Compact of Free Association Citizens)
- Immigrants, Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Deferred Status Holders, Temporary Protected Status
- Undocumented, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, "Dreamers," Nonimmigrant Visa Holders
- Linguistically diverse, English language learners (ELL)
- Economically Disadvantaged
- People with disabilities
- LGBTQIA2S+
- Farmworkers, Migrant Seasonal Workers

We recognize that individuals often identify with multiple communities and are impacted by compounding systems of oppression, also known as intersectionality. Using equity as a guiding principle means centering the needs of community members who have been historically underserved and underrepresented. In designing policies, practices, and processes that explicitly serve these culturally specific groups, the department can create conditions that benefit all community members. By improving outcomes for community members with the least access to resources and opportunities, the department is able to best serve all Oregonians.



# OREGON'S HISTORY

This plan acknowledges and makes visible many historic instances of oppression and violence in our state, specifically based on race and ethnicity. As depicted in the State of Oregon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan, the below timeline of Oregon's history illustrates some, but not all, statewide and federal policies and actions perpetuating racial inequities.

Year	Policies and Actions Perpetuating Racial Inequities
1790	<b>Naturalization Act:</b> This act prohibited non-whites from accessing U.S. citizenship by limiting it to white immigrants (primarily from Western Europe) who had resided in the U.S. at least two years and with children under 21 years of age. The act also granted citizenship to children born to U.S. citizens while abroad.
1844	<b>Exclusion:</b> The first Black exclusion law in Oregon, adopted in 1844 by the Provisional Government, mandated that Blacks attempting to settle in Oregon would be publicly whipped — thirty-nine lashes, repeated every six months — until they departed.
1855	<b>Statehood:</b> After the gold strikes in southern Oregon, pro-slavery forces advocated forming a new state in southern Oregon and northern California. It failed when Californians rejected the idea of reducing the size of their state.
1856	Rogue River Indian Wars ended with the surviving Native Americans sent to two newly created reservations: the Siletz and the Grand Ronde.
1857	<b>State Constitution:</b> The Oregon constitution, adopted in 1857, banned slavery but also excluded Blacks from legal residence, owning property, making contracts, voting, or using the legal system.
1859	Like earlier exclusion laws, the constitutional slavery ban adopted in 1857 took effect when Oregon became a state in 1859. It was not retroactive, which meant that it did not apply to Black people who were legally in Oregon before the ban was adopted.
1862	<b>Color Tax:</b> Oregon adopted a law requiring all residents who were Black, Chinese, Hawaiian (Kanakas), and Mulatto (an archaic term referring to people of mixed ethnic heritage) to pay an annual tax of \$5. If they could not pay this tax, the law empowered the state to press them into service maintaining state roads for 50 cents a day. Also, interracial marriages were banned in Oregon. It was against the law for whites to marry anyone who was one-fourth or more Black.
1866	<b>Miscegenation:</b> Oregon banned all interracial marriages, extending the 1862 law to prevent whites from marrying anyone who was one-fourth or more Chinese, or Hawaiian, and one-half or more Native American. It was previously illegal for white and Black people to marry.

Year	Policies and Actions Perpetuating Racial Inequities
1867	<b>School Segregation:</b> Even though the total Black population in Oregon in the 1860s numbered 128, Portland assigned Black and Mulatto children to a segregated school.
1868	<b>No Citizenship:</b> The Oregon Legislature rescinded the state's ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, endowing African Americans with citizenship — this despite the fact that the amendment had just become federal law.
1875	<b>Page Act:</b> This law prohibited the importation of unfree laborers and women brought for “immoral purposes.” It was enforced primarily against Chinese due to anti-Chinese xenophobia around the U.S. as an early effort to restrict Asian immigration via select categories of persons whose labor was perceived as immoral or coerced.
1877	<b>Military Action:</b> The Nez Perce Tribe clashed with the U.S. Army in their Wallowa homeland in northeast Oregon. Chief Joseph and his people refused to go to a reservation. Instead, Chief Joseph tried to lead 800 of his people to Canada and freedom.
1879	Chemawa Indian Boarding School opened in Salem, Oregon as the third such boarding school in the nation. These schools were designed to assimilate Indian children into white culture and teach them vocational skills. Students were prohibited from speaking their Tribal languages or practicing any of their traditional customs or culture.
1880	By this date, the U.S. government had forced most Indigenous and Native people of the Northwest onto reservations.
1882	<b>Chinese Exclusion Acts:</b> Due to anti-Chinese xenophobia and bigotry, the federal government passed a 10-year moratorium on Chinese labor immigration, which was renewed in 1892 for another 10 years as part of the Geary Act. Chinese Americans already in the country challenged the constitutionality of the discriminatory acts, but the federal government did not listen. The exclusion law was made permanent in 1902 with added restrictions requiring Chinese residents to register and obtain a certificate of residence, or else face deportation. In China, merchants organized an anti-American boycott in 1905, which the American government pressured the Chinese government to suppress. The Chinese Exclusion Acts were not repealed until 1943.
1887	<b>Violence and Intimidation:</b> Of the many acts of intimidation and violence committed against early Chinese immigrants in the American West, one of the most brutal occurred at Deep Creek on the Oregon side of the Snake River in Hells Canyon. In May 1887 as many as 34 Chinese gold miners were ambushed and murdered for their gold by a gang of horse thieves and schoolboys in Wallowa County. Of the six men indicted: Three men fled and were never caught, and three others were declared innocent by a jury on September 1, 1888. No one was found guilty of the crime.
1919	<b>Redlining:</b> Portland Board of Realty approved a “Code of Ethics” prohibiting realtors and bankers from selling property in white neighborhoods to people of color or providing mortgages for such purchases.
1923	<b>Alien Land Laws:</b> There was growing hostility towards Asian farmers, most notably Japanese farmers in the Hood River Valley. The Oregon Legislature, dominated by members of the Klan, passed a number of restrictive laws. The Alien Land Law prevented first generation Japanese Americans from owning or leasing land. The Oregon Business Restriction Law allowed cities to refuse business licenses to first generation Japanese Americans. Alien land laws grew in popularity in the West, even in states with very small, isolated Asian populations.
1934	<b>Non-unanimous Jury Verdicts:</b> Oregon voters amended their constitution to allow for non-unanimous jury verdicts in criminal cases. Its intent was to weaken the influence of non-white jurors.

Year	Policies and Actions Perpetuating Racial Inequities
1935	<b>Segregation:</b> Oregon law officially segregated Mexican students on the basis of being of “Indian” descent. It made clear to exempt “White Mexicans” those fair-skinned descendants of the Spaniards who do not have “Indian blood”.
1937-1945	Oregon passed a number of laws restricting Indians, mostly concerning the possession of alcohol.
1942	<b>WWII:</b> Japanese Americans started to lose their homes, livelihoods and freedom, and were forced to report to a facility to be relocated to inland internment camps for the duration of WWII. <b>The Oregon Plan:</b> In May 1942, Malheur County became the site of the first seasonal farm labor camp where internees went on leave from internment camps to work in the sugar beet fields. Numerous Japanese Americans remained in Malheur County after an order excluding them from the West Coast was lifted in January 1945, and remained in Malheur to build a sizeable Japanese American community in Ontario and Nyssa to this day.
1945	The Oregon House of Representatives passed a Joint Memorial calling on President Roosevelt to prevent the return of Japanese Americans “for the duration of the present war with Japan.”
1948	<b>Redlining:</b> Oregon realtors followed the “National Realtors Code” (based on an earlier state law) that proclaimed that a realtor shall never introduce into a neighborhood members of any race or nationality whose presence will be detrimental to property values.” This practice continued until the 1960s, when the civil rights movement led to the Fair Housing Act and later, in 1977, to the Community Reinvestment Act, when the federal government began to address these racist wrongs. “But even then, communities of color – particularly African Americans – continued to be displaced as investments in urban renewal and community plans resulted in gentrification, which still occurs today.”
1954	<b>Treaty Termination:</b> Congress terminated federal aid granted by treaties with 109 tribes, dissolving the Klamath, Grand Ronde, and Siletz reservations and sanctioning the selling of their Tribal lands. Tribes lost control of their land and water rights, oil, and other natural resources. The Secretary of the Interior was a former Oregon governor.
1981	Two police officers dumped dead opossums at an African American-owned restaurant in Portland. The incident evoked ugly KKK imagery and touched off one of the most contentious disputes between police, city government, and the public. As a result, a citizen’s committee to review police actions in Portland was created.
1994	Measure 11 was passed by Oregon voters to establish mandatory minimum sentencing for several crimes; it was reaffirmed in 2000.
2008	<b>Oregon Driver’s License Bill:</b> SB 1080 was passed requiring all applicants for Oregon driver licenses, instruction permits, or identification cards to provide acceptable proof of U.S. citizenship or lawful presence in the country. This bill created significant hurdles for Oregonians, including citizens, to obtain driver license or identification cards.
2014	<b>Measure 88 Defeated:</b> The Oregon Alternative Driver Licenses Referendum subjected Senate Bill 833 to a popular vote through Measure 88. If it had been upheld, SB 833/ M88 would have made 4-year driver licenses available to those who cannot prove legal presence in the United States. The campaign opposed to the referendum was managed by Oregonians for Immigration Reform, an anti-immigrants’ group in the state, as well as Protect Oregon Driver Licenses.

# ACTION PLAN

The department examined and applied the State of Oregon DEI Action Plan's ten strategies to the planning process.

## Strategy 1 – Agency Specific Racial Equity Plan

The Oregon Counts on Us: Oregon Department of Revenue 2022-2027 Strategic Plan affirms the organizational commitment to racial equity, diversity, equity, and inclusion. The State of Oregon is committed to establishing strong leadership to eradicate racial and other forms of disparities in all aspects of state government. We look to center equity in budgeting, planning, procurement, and policymaking. We work to strengthen public involvement through community engagement, access to information, and decision-making opportunities. We work to improve equitable access to our services, programs, and resources. We work to foster an inclusive workplace culture.

Through the strategic planning process we learned that many of the department's customers face barriers that interfere with their ability to voluntarily comply with the tax system, and appeal or pay amounts owed. Lack of trust in the system, fear of taxes, complex tax situations, language barriers, inability to access tax help sites, and individual hardships can prevent people from filing their taxes and from receiving other benefits they may be eligible for based on tax filing status.

This Racial Equity Plan is a five-year plan. The Racial Equity Strategic Plan will be monitored, evaluated, and updated in alignment with the agency's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan.

## Action



**1.1** Restart the department's Revenue Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (RCDI). This committee will act as a steering committee for the Racial Equity Plan's action plan.

## Strategy 2 – Agency Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Infrastructure

Department diversity, equity, and inclusion infrastructure is critical to the success of the implementation of DEI initiatives within the agency. Currently the department does not have dedicated resources for implementing DEI initiatives within the agency. We are working to secure investments in our 2023-2025 budget process to expand our capacity to understand our work through a racial equity lens.

### Actions



2.1 Invest in data analysis to understand how our customers are experiencing the tax system.



2.2 Invest in Human Resources capacity to understand how our hiring practices and employee experiences impact communities of color.



2.3 Review and improve the Oregon Department of Revenue’s external website navigation, level of program information provided, program contact information, and forms searchability. Upgrade to the newest available website platform.



## Strategy 3 – Inclusive Communications

We are working to secure investments in our 2023-2025 budget for a community engagement program that will improve the accessibility of the department's programs, activities, materials, and media.

### Actions



3.1 Language access and literacy: Ensure multilingual Oregonians with limited English proficiency (LEP) and English language learners (ELL) have access to translated material in appropriate languages.



3.2 Evaluate interpretation and translation service needs for each program. Determine gaps that exist and develop a plan for addressing gaps.



3.3 Translate important information and guidance in a timely way. Information should be communicated clearly, in ways that are culturally and linguistically responsive to the intended community.



3.4 Shift focus from written to spoken word and other ways of sharing information: Language access also means not always relying on the written word to convey meaning, so consider video and audio recordings for communities who cannot read or write.



3.5 Assess communication materials for racial bias and review to ensure materials reflect the diversity of the community served.



3.6 Ensure communications are accessible, are messaged in appropriate medium, use trusted messengers, are trauma-informed, and involve communities in the development of communications.



3.7 Align messaging with other agencies for mutually reinforcing vision and language about successes to set up the kind of repetition that is needed for people to feel the change happening and spread the word.



3.8 Proactively illustrate how structural inequities, including structural racism, create inequitable contexts and outcomes.



3.9 Language matters, be intentional in the words we use to identify, assist, and move the work.

## Strategy 4 – Community Engagement

We are seeking investments in our 2023-2025 budget for a community engagement program to provide outreach and opportunities for community members to be involved, collaborate, and co-create ideas and solutions with the department.

### Actions



4.1 Create infrastructure that actively listens to the concerns of community members and culturally-specific community-based organizations and invites them into the decision-making and budget processes.



4.2 Create a community engagement team to engage with community members and culturally-specific community-based organizations.



4.3 Appoint advisory boards and community-based groups to provide guidance on budget, policy, and program development.



4.4 Create a policy on compensation for community members involved in community engagement work.



4.5 Ensure community-based organizations understand how to access and participate in decision-making and budget processes.



4.6 Ensure community-based organizations understand how to access services for their clients or community members.



4.7 Create a feedback loop so information coming from communities is documented, shared with DOR leadership, and addressed. Communicate how Revenue incorporated community input back to the community.

## Strategy 5 – Disaggregated Data as a Lever for Change

Confidentiality of taxpayer information and information security is critical to the work of the department. Under current law tax returns do not include race or ethnicity data. Tax policy analysis across such demographic groups is generally limited.

In 2021, the Oregon Legislature explored the possibility of the department allowing taxpayers to voluntarily report their race and ethnicity as they file an annual personal income tax form. Under Senate Bill 1569 (2021), the department would offer people a choice of race and ethnicity categories as developed by the Oregon Health Authority for use on their Race, Ethnicity, Language, and Disability (REALD) forms. This legislation did not pass, however, if it had passed it would have made the Oregon Department of Revenue the first in the nation to collect race and ethnicity on personal income tax forms.

In January 2022, the department implemented a Racial Equity Impact Statement (REIS) process. It is important to examine and understand the impact that administrative actions and policy decisions have on affected customers. The racial impact statement process provides a way to formalize and focus analysis on communities that have historically been harmed by unintended impacts of administrative actions and policies.

### Actions



5.1 Prepare to collect customers race and ethnicity data if authorized by the Oregon Legislature.



5.2 Increase awareness of racial bias and equity impacts associated with new proposed revenue streams through conducting Racial Equity Impact Statements.

## Strategy 6 – Equitable Budget, Inclusive Budget Process and Investing in Target Communities

For the development of the 2023-2025 Agency Request Budget the Oregon Department of Revenue reached out to 28 community organizations and has met with the Black American Chamber of Commerce, Professional Business Development Group, Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs, Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Oregon, Oregon Community Foundation, Our Children Oregon, United Way, Somali American Council of Oregon, and Pride Northwest. In addition to getting to know each other, we asked each organization what is working well, what is challenging, and what is one thing the Department of Revenue can do to improve Oregonians' experience with state taxes.

Overall, we heard that the department needs to start being in community, we need to have tables at community events and be in front of people in a human, personable way. As we got to know each other in these meetings we often discovered opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships between the department, community organizations, and the communities they serve. These opportunities were not immediately obvious to either the department or the community organizations without first having conversations and establishing ways a relationship could be beneficial. Resourcing and exploring those opportunities will be critical to building relationships with community organizations and connecting with and providing services to the community members they serve. Community organizations recommended the department dedicate resources to community outreach where that is their total focus. The department has not previously had dedicated community affairs staff. Increasing language accessibility services and gaining a cultural awareness around different communities' culture around paying taxes is also important for the department.

We will be incorporating this feedback into our agency request budget, specifically seeking more community engagement resources to be in community. To continue this work and to incorporate it on an ongoing basis we are working to secure investments in our 2023-2025 budget for a community engagement program to provide outreach and opportunities for community members to be involved, collaborate, and co-create ideas and solutions with the department.

### Actions



6.1 Increase community engagement in the budget process.



6.2 Incorporate feedback from community into budget requests and department operations.

## Strategy 7 – Contract Equity and Improving Agency Procurement Processes

The department applies equitable contracting and purchasing practices to promote recovery and community economic development for minority-owned, women-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned, and emerging small businesses.

### Actions



7.1 Ensure practices are in place to increase contracting opportunities for minority-owned, women-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned, and emerging small businesses (MWESB).



7.2 Conduct proactive outreach with COBID vendors in Business Oregon’s database when contracting opportunities are available.



7.3 Ensure that all procurement documents have a DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) statement.



## Strategy 8 – Diversifying the Workforce and Creating an Inclusive Workplace

We are working to secure investments in our 2023-2025 budget for additional Human Resources capacity to understand our hiring practices and employee experiences for community of color. We currently use disaggregated data by race to track and monitor hiring processes, including recruitment, interview procedures, and hiring outcomes.

### Actions



8.1 Review and update position descriptions to include state equity vision, values, and goals and use gender neutral language.



8.2 Build a comprehensive, inclusive, and accessible employee training program that enhances recruitment and retention, and positions employees to achieve success, including opportunities for promotion. (2022-2027 Strategic Plan Goal)



8.3 Create career development pathways for current employees, and knowledge retention and transfer processes for new employees. (2022-2027 Strategic Plan Goal)



8.4 Create a recruiting and marketing strategy for hiring people from historically and currently underserved and under resourced communities in Oregon, those from non-traditional fields and academic programs, and any intersection of these.



8.5 Track, measure, and report changes in the demographics of agency employees to reach parity with the diversity of Oregon.

## Strategy 9 – No tolerance for Racism, Hate, and Discrimination

The department can help to ensure the safety of all Oregonians by protecting civil rights and taking active measures against harassment, discrimination, racism, xenophobia, stigmatization, violence, and hate crimes. Our agency's values include seeking dignity and inclusion for all, that includes not tolerating racism, hate, or discrimination toward our employees or our customers. The department has adopted clear processes for sharing and reporting racial discrimination complaints.

### Actions



9.1 Ensure the agency has structures in place to provide all staff with safe space to communicate concerns or ideas related to equity.



9.2 Ensure a written and followed internal process for responding to acts of racial discrimination toward Revenue staff, with zero tolerance for hostility, macro or micro.

## Strategy 10 – Urgency, Transparency, and Accountability in All Operations

The department must put in place real accountability and transparency in our equity-driven work. Without these two things, it is all too possible to deprioritize the urgent needs based on budget cycles and limited resources. Conditions will never be perfect. And while conditions may improve in the budget and through enterprise-level efforts, we must act on what we can do right now to reduce harm and help the people we serve.

### Actions



10.1 The department develops, tracks, measures, and analyzes performance and progress towards equity actions in the Racial Equity Plan.

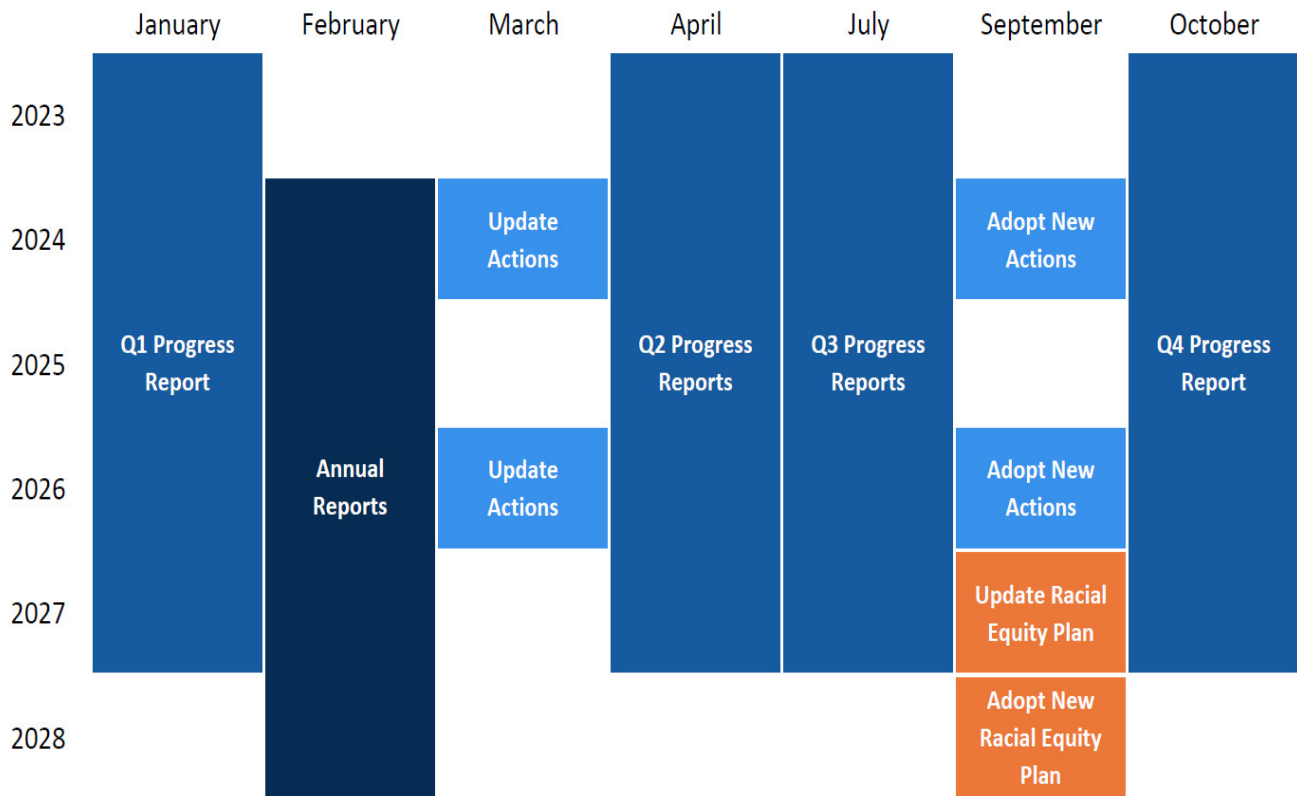


10.2 The department reports on its progress towards taking the actions in the Racial Equity Plan

## Monitoring and Evaluating

Our racial equity planning lifecycle will align with the department’s 2022-2027 Strategic Plan lifecycle including the responsibilities and frequencies of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the plan throughout the life of the plan.

The strategic planning coordinator in collaboration with Human Resources shall report quarterly progress to the Revenue Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (RCDI). The strategic planning coordinator in collaboration with Human Resources shall report annually to the Revenue Leadership Team on progress and accomplishments.



# CONCLUSION

**We are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.**

With these ten strategies and their actions established, we are positioning ourselves to not only be committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion but also be actively engaged in helping eradicate racial and other forms of disparities in state government. The development and implementation of this plan moves us from theory to action, recognizing transformation in ourselves and the policies and practices that perpetuate inequity and systemic racism. This transformation is essential in advancing racial equity and creating an inclusive environment.



# APPENDIX

[Oregon Counts on Us: Oregon Department of Revenue 2022-2027 Strategic Plan](#)

[State of Oregon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan: A Roadmap to Racial Equity and Belonging](#)

[Oregon Department of Revenue 2021-23 Affirmative Action Plan](#)

# OREGON COUNTS ON US

