

# Oregon Department of Human Services: Child Welfare League of America Workshop Presentation Worksheet

## Purpose

Workshop attendees can use this worksheet to engage in the presentation and identify areas of their organization/agency which have opportunities for addressing systemic inequities. The worksheet will provide space in which the attendee can share ideas and thinking alongside each step of the Equity Micro-Lab process map.

## OEMS Regional Equity Micro-Lab

Regional Equity Micro-Labs will support the review of policy, practice, rules, etc. and will serve as a think-tank to improve practice and service delivery where needed. Once fully implemented, these will be opportunities for all Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) programs to utilize.

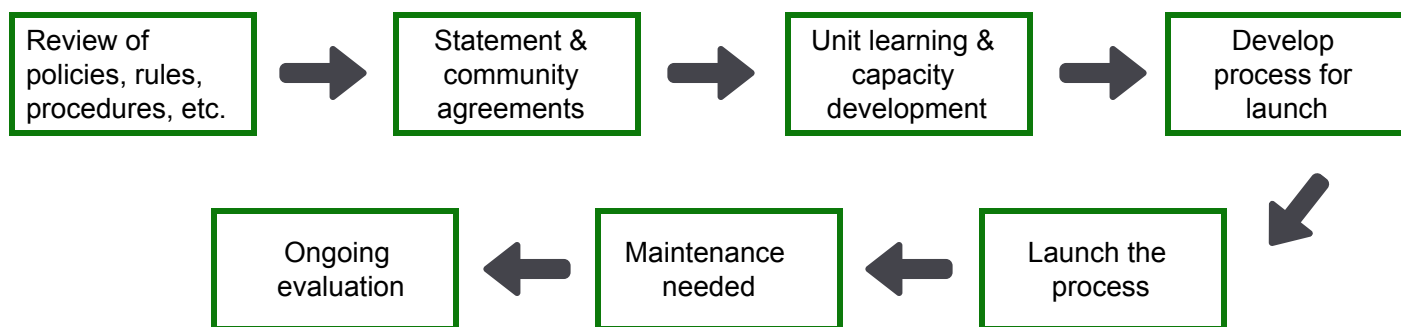
Regional Equity Micro-Labs are a commitment by the ODHS Office of Equity and Multicultural Services (OEMS) which will involve specific steps, communication, and processes, including skilled facilitated sessions. Regional Equity Micro-Labs use data-informed and evidence-based practices.

## Identified systemic inequities

What systemic inequities would be beneficial to run through a Equity Micro-Lab with the goal of improving practice and service delivery?

*ODHS Example: The Washington County's local child welfare permanency committee process was identified as having areas of improvement needed, specifically around enhancing the prioritization and understanding of cultural connections for children.*

## Equity Micro-Lab Process Map



The process map for the Equity Micro-Lab should remain fairly consistent regardless of what organizational practice is being run through the Equity Micro-Lab. There may be additional steps identified or needed based on the organization, agency, or state.

There was a core group of employees identified who would be involved in the process. Throughout each of the steps within the process map, this group of employees met regularly with the Office of Equity and Multicultural Services, Child Welfare Service Equity Manager to develop materials, communications, and next steps. Regular meetings and engagement of the group was crucial to the implementation.

### **Review of policies, rules, procedures, etc.**

Prior to beginning the Equity Micro-Lab process, any relevant state laws/rules, organizational policies, procedures, protocols, and other important information should be identified and gathered. This information is crucial to the process and each person involved in the Equity Micro-Lab should have a robust understanding of these pieces of information.

*ODHS Example: Oregon Administrative Rule, Oregon Child Welfare Procedure Manual, Oregon Child Welfare policies, and additional Washington County local protocols were reviewed prior to beginning the work on the local permanency committee process.*

**What state rules/laws, organizational policies, procedures, protocols, or additional information is important to review and understand?**

## Community agreement and statement development

Community agreements for those involved in the process should be developed. Community agreements help identify the desired behaviors for the group, including during times when dissenting opinions and uncomfortable conversations may occur. These agreements operate as a way to set expectations and accountability measures when the group is convening.

A background statement along with a statement of the intended goal(s) should be created with the members involved in the Equity Micro-Lab process. These statements will be guiding the direction of the process, as well as information that shares the importance of the intended practice shifts.

*ODHS Example: Oregon developed robust community agreements and statements related to supporting and promoting culture, cultural humility, and cultural connections for children and families, as well as acknowledging the life-long impact of the decisions being made in permanency committees.*

**What community agreements would you want included in your Equity Micro-Lab?**

**Brainstorm a background and goal statement(s).**

## Unit learning and capacity building

Unit learning and capacity building is crucial to creating practice shift. This could include technical skill development and learning, as well as learning on different concepts. These learnings should be directly related to the topic being reviewed through the Equity Micro-Lab process. Additionally, there should be a plan identified for the implementation of the learning, with identified action steps.

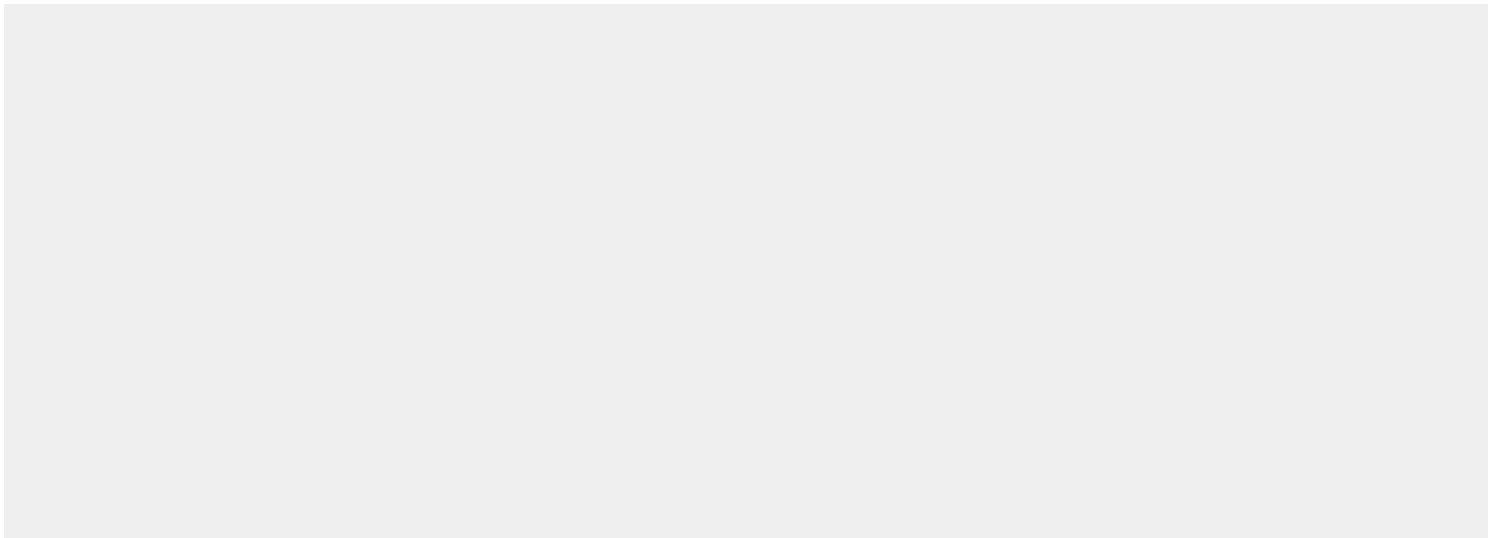
*ODHS Example: The Office of Equity and Multicultural Services developed a Facilitator Cohort for employees within Washington County Child Welfare. This cohort included skill development and learning related to facilitation, having difficult conversations, setting expectations, and using community agreements. Additionally, this cohort engaged in learning discussions on equity topics, such as cultural humility, intersectionality, system norms (bias, egos, positionality, hierarchy, etc.), as well as understanding systemic oppression and racism. Leadership in Oregon Washington County Child Welfare championed the Facilitator Cohort and shared expectations for supervisors supporting employee engagement in the cohort.*

**What capacity building and unit learning is important for your identified systemic inequities?**

## Development of launch process

Being strategic in the development of the process is an important step in the Equity Micro-Lab process. This involves communication on what changes are being made, ensuring materials are developed and reviewed, as well as identifying estimated timeframes for full implementation.

*ODHS Example: During the Oregon proof of concept process, one-page guides were developed for participants in the local permanency committee process, including external members. Additionally, presentations and conversations occurred with the entire Washington County Child Welfare leadership team, with intentional time to answer questions, concerns, and receive feedback on materials/process. Leadership team members were given materials and conversation points to share with their caseworker teams. A timeframe was developed in partnership with leadership on when the identified practice shifts would be tested, along with steps to receive feedback on those shifts.*



## Launch of process

When the launch of the process and practice shifts occur, it will be important for participants involved to take note of what went well, what are the improvement opportunities and what additional adjustments may be needed.

*ODHS Example: During the launch of the practice changes in the local permanency committee process, the Office of Equity and Multicultural Services Child Welfare Service Equity Manager partnered with Washington County leadership to gather feedback from employees' experiences. Observations from those who sat in the local permanency committee process were gathered for evaluation.*

**What ideas do you have for the launch of your Equity Micro-Lab process?**

## Equity Micro-Lab Maintenance

It is important to set time to discuss the launch of the process, any observations from members who experienced the process, and what additional actions may be needed.

*ODHS Example: Ongoing meetings were set by the Washington County Child Welfare leadership team and the Office of Equity and Multicultural Services Child Welfare Service Equity Manager to learn about how the changes were going, including any challenges arising. This information was reviewed by the team involved in the Equity Micro-Lab process and any needed changes were identified, along with steps to make those changes.*

**What ideas do you have for the maintenance of your Micro Equity-Lab process?**

## Ongoing Evaluation

It is important to have opportunities to continuously evaluate the process once the practice shifts have launched. Understanding the impact of those practice shifts, along with any identified measurables or data points that can be gathered for long-term impact information will be important.

*ODHS Example: The Oregon team has identified several key areas for evaluation. Enhancements to the Family Time observation notes, adding specific intersections for the coaching guide within pre- and prep meetings, and ongoing facilitator cohorts for 2024 are several of these areas. Additionally, an evaluation form will be completed after every local permanency committee by the ODHS Program Manager or designee to continue to identify strengths and improvement opportunities within the local process.*

**What ideas do you have for the ongoing evaluation of your Equity Micro-Lab process?**

## Contact information



**Molly Miller**

Child Welfare Deputy Director  
Oregon Department of Human Services  
503-467-1295 phone  
molly.s.miller@odhs.oregon.gov



**Laurie Hernández**

Child Welfare Program Manager, Washington County  
Oregon Department of Human Services  
503-318-9205 phone  
laurie.k.hernandez@odhs.oregon.gov



**José González**

Child Welfare Supervisor, Washington County  
Oregon Department of Human Services  
503-681-6918 phone  
jose.a.gonzalez@odhs.oregon.gov



**Ashley Wortman**, she/her/hers

Child Welfare Service Equity Manager, Office of Equity and Multicultural Services  
Oregon Department of Human Services  
971-719-0537 phone  
ashley.m.wortman@odhs.oregon.gov



**Aprille Flint-Gerner**, she/her/hers

Child Welfare Director  
Oregon Department of Human Services  
503-945-5600 phone  
aprille.flint-gerner@odhs.oregon.gov