

Centering Equity & Racial Justice in Disaster Recovery

Oregon Disaster Housing Task Force

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Statewide Housing Plan – Equity & Racial Justice Priority

- In 2019, OHCS launched Statewide Housing Plan (SWHP) with Equity and racial justice as a foundational guiding principle and priority
- By centering racial equity into all housing and community development strategies we strive to ensure that Tribal Nations and Black, Indigenous, & People of Color (BIPOC) communities are centered instead of disproportionately burdened by our policies and practices
- No more important time to be laser focused on this priority than now – the deep impacts of COVID-19 and the wildfires require us all to be centering those who are most deeply impacted

Level – Setting: *What* It Means to Center Equity & Racial Justice

Centering: to give a central focus or basis (Source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>)

Equity: fairness, justice and focus on outcomes that are most appropriate for a given group, recognizing different challenges, needs, and histories. It is distinct from diversity, which can simply mean variety (the presence of individuals with various identities). *It is also not equality, or “same treatment,” which doesn’t take differing needs or disparate outcomes into account.*

Racial Justice: The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures (Source: Race Forward, Race Reporting Guide <https://www.raceforward.org/reporting-guide>)

Racial Equity: when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcomes for all groups are improved. Equality and equity are sometimes used interchangeably, but actually convey significantly different ideas. Equity is about fairness, while equality is about sameness. (Source: Center for Assessment and Policy Development - <http://www.capd.org/>)

Key Definitions



Who We Center

- **State of Oregon Equity Framework** definition of historically and currently underserved communities include:
 - Native Americans, members of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, American Indians, Alaska Natives;
 - Black, Africans, African Americans;
 - Latinx, Hispanic;
 - Asian, Pacific Islanders;
 - Immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers;
 - Undocumented, DREAMers;
 - Linguistically diverse;
 - People with disabilities;
 - LGBTQ+;
 - Aging/older adults;
 - Economically disadvantaged;
 - Agricultural workers, migrant workers; and
 - Living in rural parts of the state

Who Are We Centering



Why We Need to Center Equity & Racial Justice

- Despite the resilience of Tribal Nations and Black, Indigenous, & People of Color (BIPOC), in most cases, the emergency response and recovery efforts do not include, or ignore, the needs of the very communities most impacted by natural disasters
- Before disaster hits our communities, we need to understand that Tribal Nations and BIPOC communities are already dealing with existing disparities (i.e. higher rates of homelessness, high housing burden, lack of wealth generation, lack of health care access, etc.) disproportionately
 - *Tribal Nations and BIPOC communities have the worst outcomes no matter the link to other areas of oppression (LGBTQ+, gender identity, disability status, etc.)*
- We are navigating a multi-layered set of crises: lack of housing supply, COVID-19 and wildfire devastation
- When we center those most impacted, everyone benefits

Why We Center Equity & Racial Justice



Why We Need to Center Equity & Racial Justice

- “The outcomes of major disasters are nearly always inequitable, which increases the vulnerability of those who struggled before the disaster and often displaces large portions of communities - as disasters become more frequent and severe, it is more important than ever to determine what can be done to promote more just and equitable disaster recovery.” (Source: Jerolleman, Alessandra. 2019. “Disaster Justice for All: The Need for a More Equitable and Just Recovery Lens.” Research Counts 2(16). Boulder, CO: Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado Boulder. <https://hazards.colorado.edu/news/research-counts/disaster-justice-for-all-the-need-for-a-more-equitable-and-just-recovery-lens>.)
- Rural communities – place and space: unique challenges, including infrastructure, education, health care access, housing supply, and broadband connectivity

How We Center Equity & Racial Justice

- **Nothing for us or done to us, without us**
 - *It is critical that local, community-based organizations, particularly culturally-specific organizations, at the planning and decision-making table from the beginning*
- **Communicate, communicate...and communicate some more**
 - Not just about getting information out but includes the how – center language access and literacy. Multilingual community members must have materials and communication translated in a clear, and culturally & linguistic way that is responsive to the community you are working with (i.e. culturally specific media outlets, YouTube videos)
 - Communication includes ensuring people with disabilities also have access to information in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Collaborate with organizations who have trusted relationships with the communities you are trying to connect with
 - Be clear about what measures you are taking to ensure the safety of community members – zero acceptance of racism, xenophobia, violence, hate crimes or discrimination – be explicit!

Centering Equity & Racial Justice



How We Center Equity & Racial Justice

- **Data is key to decision-making**
 - Prioritize ***disaggregated data collection*** and share what you know
 - Data collection is not used to screen out or exclude anyone, but rather to get a clear understanding of the need, focus resources to most impacted communities, and to tackle inequities
 - It all counts – qualitative and quantitative
- **Communities are experts – *listen and invest***
 - Collaborate with curiosity; people know what they need, and we should invest resource, funds, and build capacity to meet the needs
 - Make no assumptions of what people need to recover – ask!
- **Consider unintentional impacts – *will people truly be better off?***
 - Ask intentional questions about potential intended impacts of decision making
 - Ground truth your decisions with impacted communities and stakeholders


What Is A Racial Equity Framework?

- A support **structure** or **system** that allows you to think and act intentionally, with a disciplined laser focus on how race and ethnicity, and other places of identity, shift your analysis of problems, identification of solutions, and understanding of outcomes.
- Why **framework** & not lens?
 - “We need people to ditch the lens and get equity Lasik. We want folks looking through an equity framework all the time, not just when it’s convenient or popular or political.”
(Source: Blogpost by Sippin the EquiTEA - <https://medium.com/@eec/can-we-stop-using-an-equity-lens-c3425e0aa5da>)


Equity Framework



What Is A Racial Equity Framework?

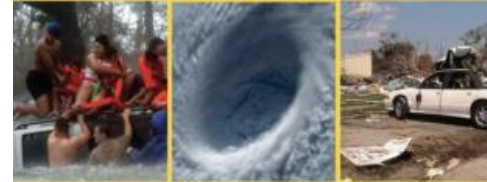


State of Oregon
Equity Framework in COVID-19
Response and Recovery
Office of Governor Kate Brown



In the Eye of THE STORM
A People's Guide to Transforming Crisis & Advancing Equity in the Disaster Continuum

ACTION TOOLKIT



NAACP
Environmental & Climate Justice Program

Equity Framework



A Sampling of Key Questions to Consider

- Whose voices and perspectives are not at the table? What can we do to ensure they are part of our decision-making process?
- How do we collect and respond to feedback? How are we ensuring these partnerships do not exploit the communities we seek to engage?
- What data or evidence guides the policy/decision/program/practice/etc.?
- What impacts do Tribal Nations, Black, Indigenous and People of Color, immigrants, and refugees experience in the areas of environmental, economic and social justice?
- How are public resources and investments distributed geographically (such as funding, housing, education, transportation)?
- How does the policy, decision, program, practice build community capacity and power in communities most affected by inequities?

Sample of Key Questions



Oregon Health Authority – Community Engagement

- OHA stands up team to work with over 170 community-based organizations around the state
 - COVID-19 contact tracing
 - ***Outreach & community engagement***
 - ***Social services/wraparound supports***
- **Webpage:** <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/ABOUT/Pages/Community-Engagement.aspx>

Community Engagement



Let's Hear from Community

- ***Gustavo Morales***, Executive Director of Euvalcree

Hearing from Community



Resources:

- **Report:** State of Oregon Equity Framework in COVID-19 Response & Recovery - https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policy/Documents/EquityFrameworkCovid19_2020.pdf
- **Article:** Disaster Justice for All: The Need for a More Equitable and Just Recovery Lens – <https://hazards.Colorado.edu/news/research-counts/disaster-justice-for-all-the-need-for-a-more-equitable-and-just-recovery-lens>
- **Example of an Equity Lens:** Multnomah County Equity & Empowerment Lens - <https://multco.us/diversity-equity/equity-and-empowerment-lens>
- **Toolkit:** NAACP Toolkit on Advancing Equity in the Disaster Continuum - <https://naacp.org/climate-justice-resources/in-the-eye-of-the-storm/#::~:~:text=The%20%E2%80%9Ceye%E2%80%9D%20refers%20to%20how,and%20take%20action%20on%20inequities.>

Thank you!

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Contact Information & Thank You!

