Racial Equity Instrument
to assess policies, programs and budget decisions

City of Boulder Racial Equity Instrument

The City of Boulder will advance racial equity in all elements of our local government. The city defines racial equity as the elimination of racial disproportionalities so that race can no longer be used to predict success, and the ability of all community members, regardless of race, to experience a high quality of life and access to opportunity.

The Racial Equity Instrument is a tool to help staff who have completed the “Advancing Racial Equity: the Role of Government” training improve city operations by viewing and planning projects through a racial equity lens. It establishes a process and set of questions to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of City of Boulder policies, programs, practices, procedures, and budget issues to advance racial equity.

When Do I Use It?

Early in any Decision-Making Process. Apply the instrument to any decision-making process regardless of size or scope, to align with racial equity goals and desired outcomes.

How Much Time Does It Take?

Enough time to ensure a comprehensive racial equity analysis. Scale the time allocation to fit the complexity of the decision-making process. A concise, simple internal decision might only require 4-5 total hours. A more complex departmental or city-wide project decision might require several months or more to complete.

How Do I Use It?

With inclusion. The six-step analysis should be performed by a group of people with different racial perspectives to check our assumptions and improve the way we do business.

Step by step. The Racial Equity Instrument is made up of six steps:
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**Step 1: Establish Outcomes**
Identify desired community outcomes toward achieving racial equity.

**Step 2: Collect Data**
Gather data relative to racial equity and the decision-making process.

**Step 3: Determine Benefit & Burden**
Analyze the issue for impacts and alignment with racial equity outcomes.

**Step 4: Develop Strategies**
Develop strategies to make progress toward racial equity and reduce unintended consequences.

**Step 5: Implement & Evaluate**

**Step 6: Report Back**
Share information learned from analysis and unresolved issues with project leadership.
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Title:
Description:

Department: Contact:
☐ Policy ☐ Program ☐ Budget Issue

Step 1: Establish Outcomes.

Identify the desired result, outcomes and indicators toward achieving racial equity.

Desired Community Result: a community-level condition of well-being. "All Boulder residents..."
Organizational Outcome: what will happen as a result of an action under the city’s control.
Indicator: a measure which helps quantify the achievement of a desired result and outcomes.

Example desired community result: All babies are born healthy.

Example organizational outcome: Reduced cost barriers for prenatal health care and other direct services; increased cultural competence and health equity practices among service providers; increased city support for social determinants of health.

Example indicators: Positive changes in maternal mortality disaggregated by race, prenatal health by neighborhood, healthy births by race, infant health by race and by neighborhood.

1a. What are the desired community results?

1b. What are the intended organizational outcomes?

1c. What indicators will you use to measure the outcomes?

1d. What populations might be impacted by this proposal?

☐ Infants ☐ Children ☐ Teens ☐ Students ☐ Older adults
☐ Men ☐ Women ☐ LGBTQIA ☐ Immigrants ☐ Undocumented
☐ Low-income ☐ Homeless ☐ Disabled ☐ Health-impacted ☐ Other ________

☐ African American/Black ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Other ________
☐ Mixed-Race ☐ Native American ☐ White
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1e. What issue areas might be affected by this proposal?

☐ Community Engagement
☐ Civic Engagement
☐ Criminal/restorative justice
☐ Economic development
☐ Education
☐ Environment
☐ Food access and affordability
☐ Government decision-making processes
☐ Health
☐ Housing / Homelessness
☐ Human services
☐ Jobs
☐ Parks and recreation
☐ Planning / development
☐ Procurement
☐ Technology systems
☐ Transportation
☐ Utilities
☐ Workforce policies
☐ Other specific City departments

Step 2: Collect Data.

Gather data relative to racial equity and the decision-making process. What does the data say? What does the data tell us?

Data resources: [https://work.bouldercolorado.gov/racial-equity/data-sources](https://work.bouldercolorado.gov/racial-equity/data-sources)
Inclusive Engagement resources: [https://work.bouldercolorado.gov/communications/community-engagement](https://work.bouldercolorado.gov/communications/community-engagement)

*Example: The city does not routinely collect prenatal or infant health data. However, county public health data indicates that African American, Native American and Latino babies tend to have lower birth-weight and a higher rates of illness resulting in doctor or emergency room visits. Most people of color live in specific neighborhoods. Some city residents testify that they do not have health insurance and are nervous about visiting doctors that don’t speak Spanish or other non-English languages.*

2a. Will the proposal impact specific geographic areas in Boulder (neighborhoods, areas or regions)?

☐ All of Boulder
☐ Boulder Civic Area
☐ Boulder Plaza Subarea
☐ Crossroads East/Sunrise Center Area
☐ Gunbarrel Community Center
☐ Junior Academy Area
☐ North Boulder
☐ Transit Village Area Plan/Boulder Junction
☐ University Hill Area Plan
☐ Other (ex: manufactured home community)
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2b. What are the racial demographics of people impacted by this issue? Be Specific.

2c. What other quantitative data do you have, that can help understand racial disparities associated with this issue (think about the indicators noted in Step 1)? How have you involved community members to gather and understand this data?

2d. What qualitative data – including community conversations, public meeting comments – should be taken into consideration? Based on that data, what concerns or experience with the proposal, might people of color have?

2e. What data gaps exist? If you lack adequate data, how can you obtain more or better data to analyze the proposal with a racial equity lens?
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Step 3: Determine Benefit and Burden.

Analyze the issue through a racial equity lens and consult with partners and community members, to determine expected and unexpected impacts, and to ensure alignment with racial equity outcomes.

Example: The city initially thought that a marketing campaign is the most effective way to address maternal and infant health. However, focusing on individual behavior change could increase stress on people of color if they don’t have adequate income or social supports, or if they would still have to engage with bias and racism in the health care system. Cost and cultural competence are systemic barriers the city can address. Community members have previously described these concerns, and we have survey data to affirm these concerns. Check-in with city staff and community partners affirms that these situations still exist.

3a. How might the policy, program, or budget issue increase or decrease racial equity?

3b. Challenge your thinking. Consider one of the indicators from Step 1 and ask why a racial disparity might exist. Then, why else? Why else? Why else? Do the same exercise for another indicator.

3c. With which city and community partners will you engage, to listen and understand diverse perspectives, center lived experience, and further deepen your analysis of benefits/burdens associated with this issue? Refer to the city’s Engagement Strategic Framework and Outreach Outpost resources to ensure alignment with city best practices. Don’t hesitate to reach out to Engagement Team staff if you’re feeling stuck.

3d. Given your answers to 3b – 3c, are the potential benefits aligned with the desired community results that were defined in Step 1? If not, how might you modify the organizational outcome to avoid creating an additional burden on people of color? Or, what issues should you keep in mind as you design Strategies in Step 4?
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**Step 4: Develop Strategies.**

Identify activities that advance racial equity outcomes and minimize harm through unintended consequences. Describe the specific strategies, tasks, necessary resources and people responsible to help ensure the activity will advance racial equity.

*Example: Design marketing campaign focused on wellness education; self-efficacy for health care. Provide implicit bias training sessions for health care providers. Collaborate with people of color parent groups to co-design research and support group to identify key social determinants of health for maternal and infant care.*

4a. Use the chart below to plot strategies related to your policy, program or budget issue that can help reduce disparity and increase equity for people of color in our community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Action/Task</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Resources Needed</th>
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Check to ensure your plan is:
- Realistic;
- Adequately funded;
- Adequately resourced with personnel;
- Adequately equipped to utilize community resources with mechanisms to ensure successful implementation and enforcement;
- Adequately resourced to ensure on-going data collection, public reporting, and community engagement;
- Addressing root causes of racial disparity, explored in Step 3; and
- Likely to help meet the outcomes and desired result outlined in Step 1.

4b. What complementary program or policy strategies - or city departmental or community partnerships - exist that could help maximize positive impacts in the community? How will you partner with these stakeholders for long-term positive change?

4c. Are the impacts aligned with your desired community results and organizational outcomes defined in Step 1? If not, how will you re-align your work?
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**Step 5: Implement & Evaluate.**

Track impact on communities of color, communicate and involve stakeholders. Document unresolved issues.

*Example: The city will coordinate with health professionals and parent groups on pre/post survey to determine improvement in individual behaviors and institutional behaviors, policies and practices. City will also work with county to assess longer-term changes in maternal health, infant birthweight and other indicators defined in Step 1.*

5a. What data collection tools and evaluation methods will you use to track the indicators noted in Step 1, and determine the impact of your strategies?

5b. How will you ensure and retain meaningful community engagement in this process, to move beyond “informing” and toward shared, equitable engagement in decision-making? Refer again to the City’s Community Engagement Strategy.

5c. What issues are unresolved? What additional resources/partnerships might help achieve the desired result?
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**Step 6: Report Back.**

Be accountable. Share information learned from analysis and unresolved issues with project leadership.

*Example: Results will be released through presentations and discussions with parent groups, at neighborhood clinics and childcare centers.*

6a. What evidence can you compile and share to demonstrate the successful impacts or shortcomings of the proposal to advance racial equity?

6b. What ongoing communication and engagement strategies will you use to report the proposal results and community impacts, particularly to people most directly impacted?

6c. How will you continue to partner, build trust, and deepen relationships with people of color and other populations to make sure your work to advance racial equity is effective and sustainable for the long-haul?

6d. Other ideas:
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SHAREd CITY-WIDE DEFINITIONS OF RACIAL EQUITY TERMS

Using shared definitions of key terms in the city’s racial equity work provides clarity and consistency across all bureaus, which leads to better analysis of how institutional racism functions and is maintained. We can then be more effective in deconstructing these mechanisms that support institutional racism and begin constructing ones that produce equitable outcomes.

Accountable: Responsive to the needs and concerns of those most impacted by the issues you are working on, particularly to communities of color and those historically underrepresented in the civic process. Source: Seattle RSJ

Adverse Impacts: refers to practices or policies that appear neutral but have a discriminatory effect on a protected group. Source: Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR)

Civil Rights Title VI: refers to Federal law. No person in the United States, on the grounds of Race, Color, or National Origin, shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program, service, or activity of a public entity, like the City of Boulder, that receives federal assistance.

Communities of Color: is a term used primarily in the United States to describe communities of people who are not identified as white, emphasizing common experiences of racism. Source: OEHR

Desired Community Result: a community-level condition of well-being.

Discrimination: refers to practices or policies that may be considered discriminatory and illegal if they have a disproportionate “adverse impact” on persons in a protected class. Source: OEHR

Disparate Impacts: refers to practices or policies that may be considered discriminatory and illegal if they have a disproportionate "adverse impact" on persons in a protected class. Source: OEHR

Diversity: includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from one another. Source: UC Berkeley CEID

Ethnicity: a category of people who identify with each other based on common language, ancestral, social, cultural, or national experiences. Source: Oxford English Dictionary

Equity: When one’s identity cannot predict the outcome. Source: OEHR

Equity Lens: is a critical thinking approach to undoing institutional and structural racism, which evaluates burdens, benefits, and outcomes to underserved communities. Source: OEHR

Explicit Bias: is the evaluation of one group and its members relative to one another, expressed directly, with full awareness. Source: OEHR

Implicit Bias: is the evaluation of one group and its members relative to one another, expressed indirectly, usually without awareness. This operates in one’s subconscious. Source: OEHR

Inclusive Engagement: Processes inclusive of people of diverse races, cultures, gender identities, sexual orientations and socio-economic status. Access to information, resources and civic processes so
community members can effectively engage in the design and delivery of public services. Source: Seattle RSJI

**Indicator:** a measurable fact or trend that shows a change, or the rate or degree of change. In strategic planning, indicators help determine whether a planned activity is resulting, or is likely to result in positive outcomes.

**Institutional Racism:** occurs within institutions and systems of power. It is the unfair policies and discriminatory practices of particular institutions (schools, workplaces, etc.) Source: Race Forward, Moving the Race Conversation Forward

**Internalized Racism:** lies within individuals. These are our private beliefs and biases about race and racism, influenced by our culture. Source: Race Forward, Moving the Race Conversation Forward

**Interpersonal Racism:** occurs between individuals. These are biases that occur when individuals interact with others and their private racial beliefs affect their public interactions. Source: Race Forward, Moving the Race Conversation Forward

**Outcome:** The specific result you are seeking to achieve within the community that advances racial equity. Source: Seattle RSJI

**Performance Metrics:** measures an organization's behavior, activities, and performance. It assesses how well workers are doing their respective tasks and how companies are accomplishing their objectives. It provides hard data and gives off outcomes that appraise clearly defined quantities within a range that facilitates improvement and upgrading. Source: Wikipedia

**Privilege:** refers to the unearned set of advantages, entitlements, and benefits bestowed by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g. White privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it. Source: OEHR

**Race:** A non-scientific, social construct that divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance, ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, or ethnic classification. Source: Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin, editors. Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook. New York: Routledge.

**Racial Disparity:** A significant difference in conditions between a racial group and the White population that is avoidable and unjust. For example, African-Americans are underrepresented in City of Portland management positions when compared to the percentage of African-Americans in the general population or the representation of Whites in management positions. Source: OEHR

**Racial Equity:** when race does not determine or predict the distribution of resources, economic/political/social opportunities, and burdens for group members in society. Source: OEHR and Seattle RSJI

**Racial Equity Framework:** An understanding of the root causes of racial disparities, an analysis of the structures that perpetuate these disparities, and the ability to deploy critical strategies to undoing those structures (e.g., community self-determination, shifting power) in order to replace them with structures that produce equitable outcomes.
Racial Equity Tool: A set of strategies, procedures, and resources designed to integrate explicit consideration of racial equity and that can be implemented and applied throughout organizational policy, procedures, and operations to ensure/drive equitable process, impacts, and outcomes. Source: OEHR

Racial Inequity: Race can be used to predict life outcomes, e.g., disproportionality in education (high school graduation rates), jobs (unemployment rate), criminal justice (arrest and incarceration rates), etc. Source: GARE

Stakeholders: Those impacted by proposed policy, program or budget issue who have potential concerns or issue expertise. Source: Seattle RSII

Structural Racism: is racial bias among institutions and across society. Source: Race Forward, Moving the Race Conversation Forward

Under-served: refers to people and places that historically and currently have not had equitable resources or access to infrastructure, healthy environments, housing choice, etc. Disparities may be recognized in both services and in outcomes. Source: OEHR