

EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN

2016-2022



King County

KING COUNTY EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2022

For many in our region, King County is a great place to live, learn, work and play. Yet we have deep and persistent inequities—especially by race and place—that in many cases are getting worse and threaten our collective prosperity. Launched by King County Executive Ron Sims in 2008 and formalized by Executive Dow Constantine and the Metropolitan King County Council via ordinance in 2010, Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) is an integrated part of the County's work, and is supported by the ESJ Office since it was established in early 2015.

The Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan is a blueprint for change, mutually created by King County employees and community partners. From the outset, the planning process was designed to hear from people across sectors, geography and populations before developing a draft. More than 600 County employees and 100 local organizations—including community organizations, education, philanthropy, labor, business and local governments—shared their insights and expertise on where we have made progress, persistent challenges that exist, and solutions toward achieving equity.

OUR EQUITY VISION AND STRATEGIES

The shared vision we developed out of this process is consistent with the overall vision of King County's Strategic Plan: A King County where all people have equitable opportunities to thrive. Our four strategies as One King County to advance Equity and Social Justice are to invest:

- Upstream and where needs are greatest
- In community partnerships
- In employees

And we do this with **accountable and transparent leadership**.

Our Equity and Social Justice shared values will guide and shape our work. We are:

- Inclusive and collaborative
- Diverse and people focused
- Responsive and adaptive
- Transparent and accountable
- Racially just
- Focused upstream and where needs greatest

Equity is fundamental to the society we seek to build. It is an ardent journey toward well-being as defined by those most negatively affected. Our end goal is for full and equal access to opportunities, power and resources so all people may achieve their full potential. The process of advancing toward equity will be disruptive and demands vigilance.

Being "pro-equity" requires us to dismantle deeply entrenched systems of privilege and oppression that have led to inequitable decision-making processes and the uneven distribution of benefits and burdens in our communities. Similarly, we must focus on those people and places where needs are greatest to ensure that our decisions, policies and practices produce gains for all.

OUR PRO-EQUITY POLICY AGENDA AND REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE

Long-term, sustainable changes within our organization and the community require a comprehensive 'pro-equity' approach for all of King County government. This plan defines a Pro-Equity Policy Agenda aimed at expanding access to the County's Determinants of Equity: child and youth development, economic development and jobs, environment and climate, health and human services, housing, information and technology, justice system, and transportation and mobility.

We learned through our engagement for the strategic planning process that there is a broad range of equity-focused activities in our region. However, there is a need for increased coordination and cross-sector solutions that match the scale of inequities we face. Together we are

stronger. As a result, King County government is committed to advancing a Regional Equity Collaborative with partners from community organizations, philanthropy, business, labor, local governments and education in the coming months and years.

BECOMING PRO-EQUITY

We understand that how we approach our work is just as important as what we seek to accomplish. Pro-equity means being racially just and inclusive, and consistently taking action to eliminate the root causes of inequities. We adopt systems and standards that allow us to consistently engage with and build the capacity of our residents, partners and employees.

To achieve better outcomes in the community, we will integrate and implement pro-equity practices in our major functions of government where we can effect change, including:

- Leadership, operations & services
- Plans, policies & budgets
- Workplace & workforce
- Community partnerships
- Communication & education
- Facility & system improvements

HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

King County's Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan 2016-2022 provides a framework and direction for how the County will use the four strategies of the Plan within and across the Pro-Equity Policy Areas, the Regional Equity Collaborative and the Goal Areas. Each Policy and Goal Area has an analysis of our current situation, plus how we will make a difference, including specific actions or goals.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Policy Areas are in three-year cycles, and the Goal Areas are in two-year cycles. The two-year cycle for the Goal Areas is aligned with the County's biennial budget process and builds our organization's capacity in ESJ 'adaptive management.' We incorporate design, management and monitoring to advance our strategies in the various functions of government; then we continuously and systematically adapt and learn. As a government, we have to practice adaptive management to be coordinated and responsive to our communities and employees. This means:

We listen deeply to know how and why assets, priorities, expectations and concerns of our communities and employees—especially those most in need—change with time. We use this knowledge to coordinate and try different approaches toward achieving better outcomes and monitor the results.

We look at root causes and adapt by understanding what and why efforts are working or not working.

We respond by making appropriate and timely changes.

We learn and share regularly what is happening around us so that we can engage responsibly. We learn and stay current with what and how our residents and partners are doing so we can co-create effectively and with transparency.

Summary of Goals, Objectives and Strategies by Goal Area

LEADERSHIP, OPERATIONS & SERVICES

Goals

1. Develop effective and accountable leadership for advancing ESJ
2. Develop an organization where all employees are change agents
3. Visibly and public display progress on ESJ
4. County operations, programs and services are pro-equity and reflect ESJ values

Invest upstream and where needs are greatest

- ESJ values guide department and agency operations, programs and service delivery
- Operations and services – including allocation of resources – reflect our ESJ values of investing upstream and where needs are greatest

Invest in employees

- Increase employee sense of responsibility to advance ESJ
- Improve staff and leadership proficiencies in delivering services that respond to changing demographics

Invest in community partnerships

- In County operations, programs and services, collaborate with other King County and external service providers
- Technical assistance and resources deployed to community organizations, in support of services and operations

With accountable and transparent leadership

- Elected leaders and directors are ultimately responsible for ESJ
- Visibly display progress on plan
- Bi-annual “Plan – Do – Check – Adjust” of ESJ Strategic Plan with implementation plans

PLANS, POLICIES & BUDGETS

Goals

1. Department and agency business plans include analyses of equity impacts
2. Policy guidance incorporates ESJ values and analysis
3. Budget decisions, rates, and allocations reflect the values and strategies of the ESJ strategic plan

Invest upstream and where needs are greatest

- Provide new resources on demographic conditions for planners, analysts and project managers
- Develop improved equity analysis tools for plans, policies, and budgets
- Ensure budget instructions and decisions support upstream investments
- Assess all fees and rates to identify opportunities to create a more equitable structure

Invest in employees

- Train leaders, planners, analysts, and project managers on the use of demographic data and equity impact tools
- Ensure budget allocation leads to a more equitable workplace

Invest in community partnerships

- Increase use of community engagement guide in planning and policy processes
- Explore and pilot a participatory budgeting process

With accountable and transparent leadership

- Provide coaching and tools for agency leadership to develop explicit policy guidance
- Develop measurement tools and a public reporting framework for ESJ Strategic Plan implementation
- County advocacy at the State results in a more equitable funding structure for services most needed by residents

WORKPLACE & WORKFORCE

Goals

1. Require an equitable, engaged and racially just workplace culture
2. Do systematic and equitable workforce development at all levels
3. Have and resource equitable employee development and access to opportunities
4. Build an organization of equitable access to and shared decision making

Invest upstream and where needs are greatest

- Develop ‘people managers’ to lead a racially just, engaged and inclusive culture
- Eliminate barriers to high salaried employment opportunities for People of Color, Native Peoples and immigrant populations
- Invest in restorative conflict resolution strategies

Invest in employees

- Invest in lower salaried employees through active employee development plans
- Expand equitable access to resources and decision-making for all employees
- Develop career paths toward a racially equitable workforce

Invest in community partnerships

- Invest in partnerships with historically disadvantaged communities and expand hiring pipelines
- Invest in school-to-work pipelines for youth with greatest barriers to employment

With accountable and transparent leadership

- Mature as a racially just organization using equity to assess progress
- 360-type assessment tool to measure inclusive, equitable leadership competencies
- Ensure all disciplinary policies and practices are equitable and racially just

Summary of Goals, Objectives and Strategies by Goal Area

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

| Goals | Invest upstream and where needs are greatest | Invest in employees | Invest in community partnerships | With accountable and transparent leadership |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systematically provide resource support to community-based organizations to leverage their expertise toward advancing ESJ outcomes 2. Create pro-equity contracting processes that are visible and accessible to contractors of varied size and capacity 3. Provide non-monetary support to community-based partners that build their internal capacities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Invest in partnerships that allow the County to apply early, upstream and preventative solutions ■ Adopt contracting practices that stimulate economic development in underserved communities ■ Build community capacity as a strategy to foster full and equitable civic participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create hiring and advancement opportunities via Community Liaison network ■ Eliminate barriers for staff seeking to promote equitable contracting ■ Situate community capacity building as professional development opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Invest in partnerships to steadily inform decision-making ■ Expand and diversify the County's vendor pool ■ Connect County resources and expertise to capacity development of community partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrate inclusion of historically underrepresented communities in program and budget planning ■ Report an increase in the number of historically underrepresented businesses servicing external contracts ■ Report technical assistance provided to community-based partners |

COMMUNICATION & EDUCATION

| Goals | Invest upstream and where needs are greatest | Invest in employees | Invest in community partnerships | With accountable and transparent leadership |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focused on languages, update tools for public-facing communication and education to align with demographic changes 2. Develop tools for better engagement and access to services 3. Focused on technology access, improve use of internet, social media and mobile tools to engage and hear from under-served residents 4. Increase collaboration and language-related resources for employees to ensure inclusive engagement of residents in decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Update tools to better connect with today's community demographics ■ Move from iterative, project-based outreach to ongoing engagement ■ Provide resources for staff to improve communication and collaboration with limited-English speaking (LES) communities ■ Invest in translation and/or interpretation as needed for public hearings and other engagement opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Training and resources for staff, esp. for improved internal collaboration on engagement issues, and language-related tools and resources ■ Supervisory staff have additional ESJ training ■ Prioritize and reward language skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partner with community organizations to guide improvements and facilitate consistent engagement with communities ■ Publicize civic engagement opportunities via community media outlets and organizations ■ Provide information in multiple languages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Home pages of every department on County website available in six top tier languages ■ Increased investment in availability and use of pro-equity technologies |

FACILITY & SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS (CIP)

| Goals | Invest upstream and where needs are greatest | Invest in employees | Invest in community partnerships | With accountable and transparent leadership |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Master and Line of Business (LoB) plans include clear objectives to advance ESJ 2. Capital development policy, budgets, portfolios and programs are pro-equity and contribute to improved community conditions 3. Responsibility for pro-equity progress is clearly defined at agency/department, division and section levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Embed 'pro-equity system build-out vision' into long-term, master, and LoB plans – which precedes, informs and enables capital programs and projects to be pro-equity by defining intended system-scale outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Train and provide ESJ information resources to master planners, LoB planning teams, capital portfolio managers, and project managers so facility and system development components work in an integrated manner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Build partnerships and partnering abilities by supporting the LES community liaison network ■ Capital projects have objectives for community engagement and ESJ in benefits/burden distribution – which are documenting via the King County sustainable infrastructure scorecard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Project scopes have explicit ESJ objectives that align to system goals as described in master/LoB plans ■ Guide, recognize, and account for progress via King County Sustainable Infrastructure scorecard and Capital Project Management Work Group |