

LANE COUNTY EQUITY LENS TOOLKIT



Updated Feb. 2022

*Adapted from Ottawa Equity
Lens Handbook*



Acknowledgment

This toolkit is adapted from the Equity & Inclusion Lens Handbook from the City of Ottawa and City for All Women Initiative (CAWI). We have reproduced parts of their work, and adapted the Equity Lens and toolkit, in order to further equity and inclusion in Lane County, Oregon. Thank you so much to the City of Ottawa and CAWI for the tremendous foundation you have provided, and to the E2 Committee and Equity Lens subcommittee for the initiative in adapting and developing new materials for Lane County, Oregon.



Additional Acknowledgements

This work was adapted and developed by an interdepartmental workgroup established through the Lane County Equity & Education Committee. We learned from early efforts in various departments of Lane County, from Multnomah County, and from the Equity & Access Coordinator in Lane County.

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Equity in Lane County

Introduction page/letter from Steve Mokrohisky.

Letter from the Board of County Commissioners



LANE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Joe Berney
Jay Bozievich
Heather Buch
Pat Farr
Laurie Trieger

A Message from the Lane County Board of County Commissioners

These are challenging times we live in. From COVID-19 to the Holiday Farm Fire in the McKenzie area and many other difficult adversities, many people have been negatively impacted. There are people and groups in our communities in Lane County that face systemic oppression which results in outsized inequities and disparities in many areas, from economic health to education to health care and even death rates. For example, it is well-documented that residents of high poverty neighborhoods have more health problems, more difficulty with accessing quality healthcare, and a reduced overall life expectancy.

The Lane County Board of Commissioners is excited to share with you the launch of Lane County's *Equity Lens*. We believe that the Lens will become an important decision-making tool that can improve the work of elected officials, staff and advisory bodies. It can, in short, meet the County's purpose of improving lives. We must take full advantage of the opportunity that this tool provides to make better, more inclusive decisions and to ensure that the County is working for ALL who are here.

The *Equity Lens* was developed by an interdepartmental work group in partnership with the County's Equity and Access Advisory Board. This tool will give a consistent and coherent equity focus to the County's decision making by encouraging all of us to ask and answer a few direct and valuable questions.

By applying the Lens to our work we will:

- generate better solutions by incorporating diverse perspectives and being deliberately inclusive of systemically under-served and marginalized populations – particularly communities of color;
- take positive steps to identify and remove systemic barriers, promote inclusion and community engagement by expanding access to resources and services, and empower people; and
- create a more positive and respectful work environment by increasing awareness and understanding of diverse peoples and cultures.

Lane County has an opportunity to further diversity, inclusion, and equity by making meaningful and substantive changes to policies, processes, and decision-making. As leaders, staff, and residents of Lane County, we have the power and the responsibility to center racial justice and equity and promote better conditions and opportunities for everyone.

We should all make the Lens a part of our daily work and make a new reality of systemic vitality and sustainable change. Let's take the next step together to make Lane County a great place to live, work and play – for all of Lane County's people and communities.

Joe Berney, Chair
Lane County Board of Commissioners

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Why we lead with race

We lead with race in recognition that the creation and perpetuation of racial inequities has been steeped in the history and policies of American government, including that of Lane County. As our community experiences deep and pervasive racial inequities across all indicators for success, we are choosing to be direct and diligent in shifting our trajectory and working to address these disparities. Of course, it is abundantly clear that many individuals and groups continue to experience marginalization based on additional factors like ability, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, geography, sex, and income to name just a few. Leading with race does not mean we do not support, listen to, or work to decrease disparities these groups experience, but it means that we do not ignore race and racial inequities as we do so. Centering race, or leading with race, is important as:

- To have maximum impact it is necessary to have focus and specificity. Strategies to achieve racial equity differ from those to achieve equity in other areas and “one-size-fits all” strategies are rarely successful.
- A racial equity framework that is clear about the differences between individual, institutional and structural racism, as well as the history and current reality of inequities, has application for additional marginalized groups, and for members of those groups impacted by racial inequity.
- Race and racial inequity can be a divide that keeps communities, including those experiencing marginalization, from effectively coming together. An approach that recognizes the inter-connected ways in which marginalization takes place will help to achieve greater collaboration and cooperation between communities.

While an equity lens is important in the critical work of addressing all areas of marginalization, we ask that you join the county wide effort to ensure race is at the center of our focus. As we collectively deepen our ability to eliminate racial inequities in areas like education, housing, finances, health care, community services, law enforcement, the justice system, and the environment, we will impact individuals across all marginalized groups. Taking deliberate and focused steps to lead with race in the use of our Equity Lens is a shared strategy across Lane County that is needed to equitably achieve our purpose: To improve lives.

What is an equity lens?

An equity lens is a set of questions we ask ourselves when we plan, develop or evaluate a policy, program or decision. An equity lens helps us identify potential impacts on under-served and marginalized individuals and groups, and to identify and potentially eliminate barriers. The purpose of an equity lens is to be deliberately inclusive as we make decisions and to support us as we strive towards more equitable outcomes. It is explicit in drawing attention to the inclusion of under-served and marginalized populations, with an emphasis on communities of color, and can be adapted to focus on other communities. An equity lens will not tell us what action to take. Rather, the Lens helps us discuss and reflect on equity considerations as we act and make decisions.

The Lane County EQUITY LENS

Each situation requires unique considerations, and we are constantly evolving in our capacity to be responsive to the equity and inclusion needs of our community. For these reasons, an equity lens cannot be a static document, or a one size fits all tool. As a starting place this 'toolkit' includes the following tools:

[Lane County Equity Lens: Brief Version](#)

[Lane County Equity Lens: Expanded Version](#)

[Situation Specific Tools](#)

The situation-specific tools starting on page 16 give us a framework to go further in a number of areas including communications, engaging community & staff, and planning. A comprehensive list is on page 15.

LANE COUNTY EQUITY LENS

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An equity lens will not tell us what action to take. Rather, the Lens helps us discuss and reflect on equity considerations as we act and make decisions.

When applying an equity lens ask yourself (or your work group):

What are we trying to do? What is our goal?	PURPOSE
Who will be impacted and are they being included in the process?	INCLUSION
How might this decision increase, decrease, or ignore equity? Consider race Also consider: Gender Identity, Age, Country of Origin, Geography, Disability, Class/Socio-Economic Status, the Balance of Power, etc. Once you've determined what action you will take, ask yourself (or your work group):	OUTCOMES
How will we ensure communication to those affected takes place in an inclusive and culturally sensitive manner?	COMMUNICATION
How will we know if we have accomplished our goal?	EVALUATION

LANE COUNTY EQUITY LENS: EXPANDED VERSION

1. PURPOSE & ASSUMPTIONS:

What are we trying to do?

What is the issue, policy, or process being examined?

What assumptions are we bringing into the issue?

2. INCLUSION / REPRESENTATION

Who is included in this process?

Who is not included in this process? And why?

How are we intentionally engaging multiple perspectives?

How have barriers to participation been addressed?

3. IMPACT / OUTCOMES

What are the outcomes we are hoping to create?

What are potential unintended outcomes? How will we address these?

Who is being affected by this decision (Policy, Issue, and Process)?

How might this decision increase, decrease, or ignore equity?

Consider race.

Also consider Gender Identity, Age, Country of Origin, Geography, Disability, Class/Socio-Economic Status, Language, the Balance of Power, etc.

4. PROCESS / COMMUNICATION:

How and when will the process be communicated?

How will you ensure communication takes place in an inclusive, culturally sensitive and responsible manner?

5. EVALUATION / FEEDBACK:

Are we accomplishing our initial goal?

What barriers prevented more equitable outcomes? How will you address these?

How will we incorporate this learning next time?

- How will feedback from staff and stakeholders be collected?
- Who will we share evaluations with?
- What did we learn from this?
- How will you use evaluation and learning to raise racial awareness?

Why do we use an equity lens?

The Equity Lens is like a pair of glasses. It helps you see things from a new perspective. It helps you be more effective in your everyday work by getting a clearer focus and more complete view. This way, you can contribute to the full inclusion and participation of all residents and employees so that everyone can benefit from a vibrant community.



You can use the equity lens to:

- Become more aware of diversity around you
 - Incorporate a diversity of perspectives to strengthen the capacity of work teams and help them generate better solutions
 - Create a positive, respectful, and inclusive work environment
- Create a workforce and provide services that are relevant to and representative of the community
 - Address systemic barriers and inequities people face
 - Evaluate decisions, policies, practices, and procedures with a focus toward more equitable outcomes
 - Anticipate the un-intended consequences of decisions, policies, programs, etc.; especially as they affect marginalized or under-represented communities.

Who is the Lens for?

The Lens is for everyone.

- County commissioners or other elected leaders
- Leaders including Directors, Managers, and Supervisors
- Boards, advisory groups, committees/subcommittees
- Teams (department, division, sub-division, project-based, etc.)
- Any employee who makes decisions (or contributes to decision-making processes that impact personnel, allocation of resources, etc.)
- Community partners, consultants, and businesses providing services in conjunction with or on behalf of the County
- External groups or community agencies that choose to use the Lens

When do we use an equity lens?

An equity lens is most important with actions/decisions that have a major impact either internally or externally, and it is most effective when used to review a specific action or decision.

Consider Impact;

We know that the Equity Lens is most important with decisions and actions that have a major impact (internally or externally), but how do we evaluate impact? Some considerations could be:

How many people are impacted?

Are those impacted already experiencing systemic barriers (consider power relationships, historical oppression, access to resources, etc.) and/or experiencing disparities in outcomes?

How severe are the impacts and how long do the impacts last?

How might this action or decision increase or decrease the impact on the affected groups?

Some standard areas likely to have a significant equity impact include personnel decisions, allocation of resources/funding, delivery of and access to services, decisions impacting employees on the lower end of the pay range, legal and judicial matters, and many others. The more impact, the more need there is for an equity lens!

Be Specific;

Most decisions or actions that have major impact are complex and multi faceted. It is important to recognize that when the scope is broad, like in the initiatives of 'revising hiring practices', 'fire recovery,' or 'addressing racial equity in outreach,' the impact is likely to be improved by using an equity lens at many decision points or as many actions are identified within each initiative.

When you attempt to use an equity lens for a more broad idea or complex action the process is often more like a brainstorming session, with more ideas generated but less direction. This can be useful and valuable if the intent is to generate ideas for specific actions and decisions so you can later review those specific ideas/actions through an equity lens. That said, if the hope is to engage once with an equity lens and then move forward, it may feel like an indirect process with insufficient consideration of each individual idea, and may even feel overwhelming.

If you have significant limits on your individual or group's time and capacity and/or you are prioritizing forward movement, starting with a broad idea or complex action may not get you where you want to be. One solution is to narrow down your question or action item to something more specific before embarking on use of the Equity Lens. For an example, instead of asking 'How do I increase equity in outreach?' take on a more specific action item or question, like 'How can I make my program's brochure accessible to a specific underserved community?' This certainly won't fully address the broader question or address every element of equity in outreach, but is more likely to result in considerations that are actionable within the parameters of time and capacity. The process will also improve our collective skill set in applying an equity lens, which is likely to serve us as we more fully address the broader goals of functioning more equitably as an organization and community.

How do we use an equity lens?

An equity lens is a tool, intended to help us more effectively discuss and reflect on important equity considerations as we act and make decisions. When we use an equity lens on our own, we take the time to reflect on what we ourselves already know and identify areas where we can learn more. When we use an equity lens as part of a group, we incorporate broader and more diverse perspectives and apply them to the topic at hand. By doing so, we gain knowledge, understanding, and insight from each other, and grow in our capacity to use an equity lens effectively.

The simple mechanics of using an equity lens might be to;

1. First identify a decision point or course of action.
2. Consider bringing the decision point/course of action to a group in order to collectively go through the Equity Lens.
3. Go through each question and think about or discuss the answers.
4. Follow up to get more information to answer the questions with greater depth.
5. Factor the answers into decision making and actions moving forward.
6. Loop back to Communication and Evaluation questions once you have taken action or made your decision.

This set of simple instructions, however, only gets you through the mechanics of how to apply the equity lens tool. Of much greater importance are the knowledge, capacities, and equity framework that each of us brings to the practice of applying the lens. There is a great deal more to applying an equity lens than just going through motions.

The more we engage with equity work, the more we learn. We make real progress when we lean into that learning, discard any shame that may arise from what we did not already know, and commit to continue moving forward. It is also important to learn from those who have already been engaged in the work, who have lived experiences that we do not have, and who can share what pitfalls to avoid. We cannot possibly list all such lessons here, but one important consideration is to use care when asking for more diverse representation in any given group. For example, it's important to avoid pulling the same person in too many directions; to not recognize or compensate someone for the value of this labor; or to ask one individual to speak for an entire population. We can remind ourselves that having diverse representation at the table means little if we do not ensure a safe environment for those often silenced in the past and by current systems, so that they can speak and be heard in the present. We can do the work required to actively listen, take in, and learn from perspectives that are different from our own.

Since the user's knowledge, capacities, and framework around equity are what make an equity lens effective and impactful, when we ask: 'How do we use an equity lens?' the answer

necessarily involves increasing our own knowledge and capacity around equity. Every one of us is starting from a different place, but at Lane County, Oregon we are all on a journey together to move forward from where we are individually and collectively, and to engage with equity in a deeper way.

We recommend that each of us take account of where we are on our own equity journey, and connect with training and resources to build our competencies as we learn how to use an equity lens!

To use an equity lens we;

- A.** Consider our own perspective
- B.** Check our assumptions
- C.** Build our competencies
 - 1.** Training & resources
 - 2.** Glossary

Consider our own perspective

As a consequence of systemic barriers and inequities, we all have experienced exclusion in some areas of our life, but inclusion in others. Each of us has multiple factors at play in our lives. For example, a middle-aged female manager with a disability has different life experiences from a recently hired indigenous male university student.

Who we are can contain a variety of life experiences, multiple social factors, and cross-overs with many groups. It is this intersection, or crossover of our identities, that affects how we experience the County.

This is called **intersectionality**.

This is made visible on the Diversity Wheel on the following page.

THE **first circle** represents your **LIFE EXPERIENCES**.

THE **second circle** contains the **SOCIAL FACTORS** that influence your life experiences:- sexual orientation, indigenous ancestry, age, education, social class, education, sex, race/ethnicity, gender identity, religion/spirituality, length of time in the community, geographic location, marital/family status, disabilities, place of origin, language, income, immigration status, and other factors.

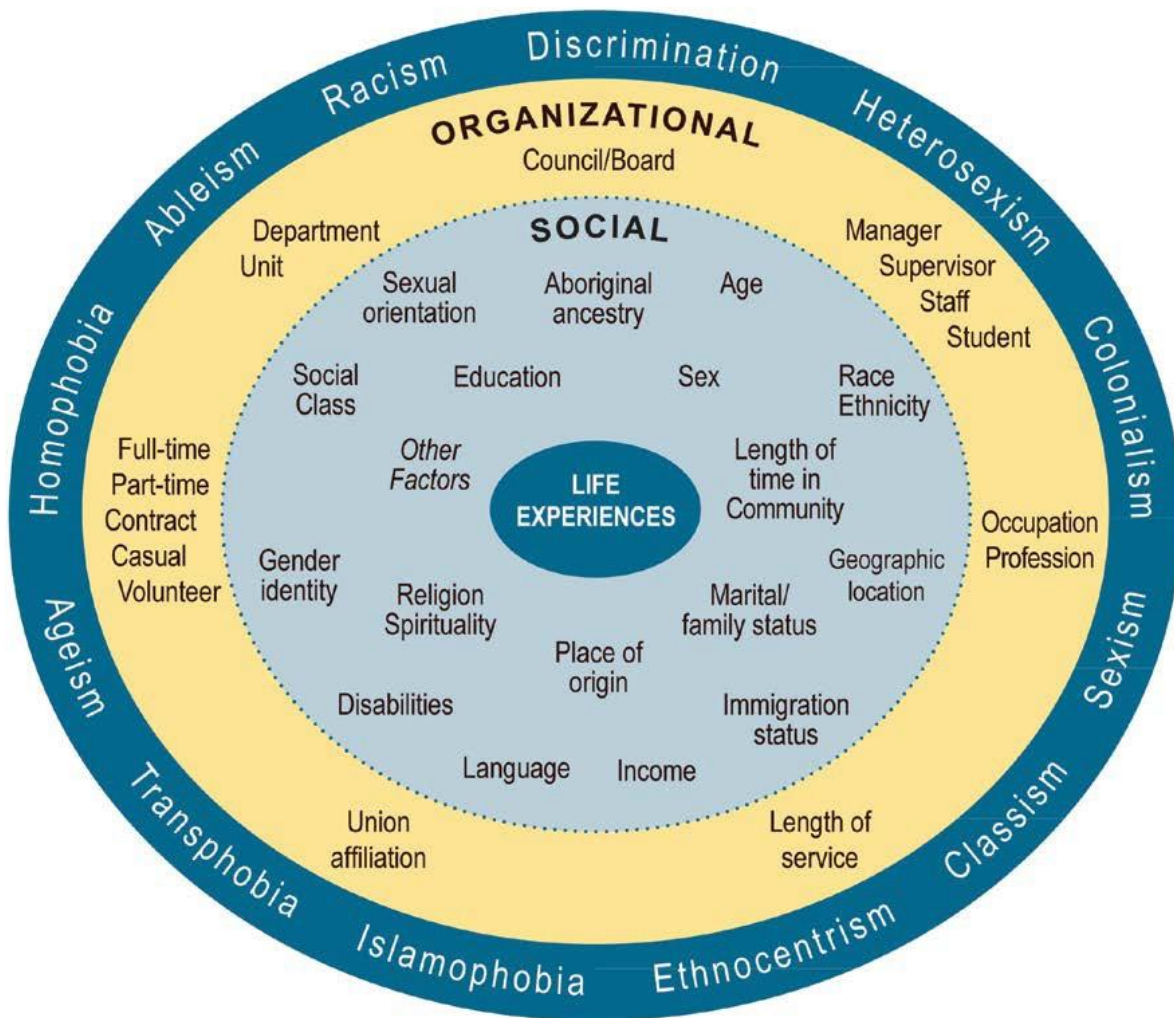
THE **third circle** shows the **ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS** that might add a layer to how you experience the County: your participation on a council/board; your position as a manager, supervisor, staff or student; your occupation and profession; your length of service; your union affiliation; whether you are full-time, part-time, contract, casual or volunteer; and your department/unit.

THE **outermost circle** lists the **“ISMS” or overarching systems of power** that indirectly and directly impact your life such as: racism, discrimination, heterosexism, sexism, classism, ethnocentrism, transphobia, ageism, homophobia, or ableism.

When we reflect on our own experiences, we can go the next step to ask to what extent this relates to the degree to which we will experience inclusion or exclusion (privilege or marginalization) in a given situation or context. Sometimes we experience both.

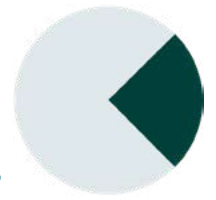
Take a few moments to identify areas in your life where you have had advantages or disadvantages. In some areas of your life, you may find that a factor has been both an advantage and disadvantage.

- Underline advantages
- Circle disadvantages

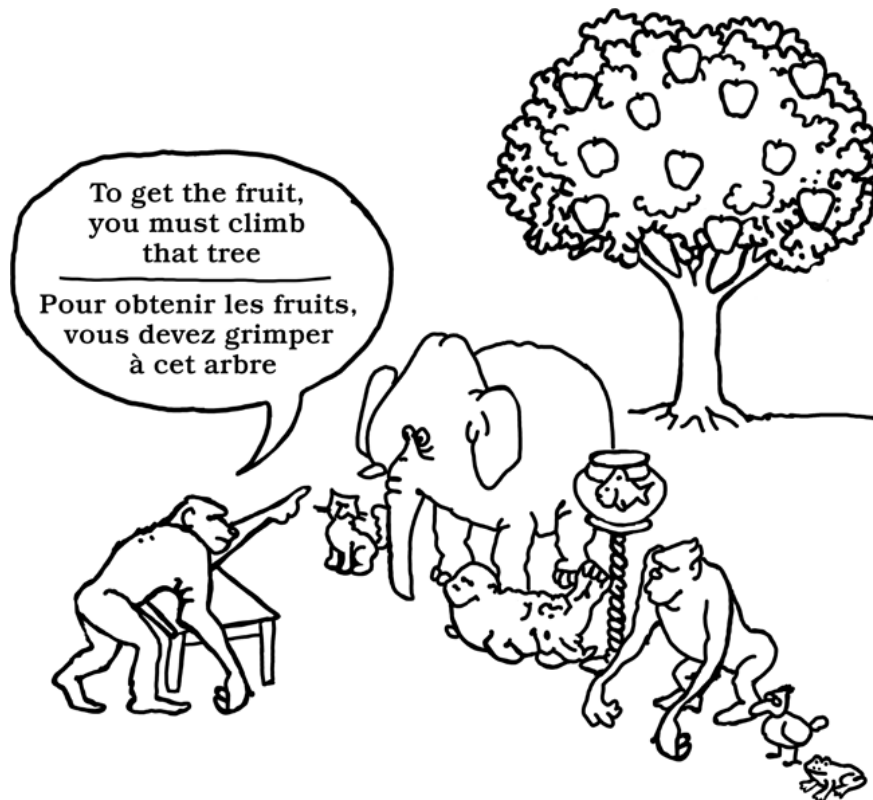


How can you use your experiences to understand and become an ally for people experiencing exclusion in your work?

Check our assumptions



The Equity Lens offers several ways to check our assumptions:



What are some assumptions taking place here?

Does this happen in our workplace?

Does this happen in the services we provide?

Considering a situation from the perspective of those who risk exclusion is a key step in promoting equity and inclusion. It is an on-going learning process for everyone.

Check assumptions! • Be Curious! • Stay Curious!

Build our competencies

Equity Competencies

COMING SOON! A subcommittee of Lane County's Equity & Education Committee (E2) is finalizing a set of competencies for Lane County staff and associated trainings where those competencies can be built and fortified. Please stay tuned and take advantage of this resource when it becomes available.

Training to Build our Competencies

- [Lane County's Learning Management System \(LEAP\)](#) has currently available trainings. Trainings that support learning competencies around equity have the word 'diversity' in the title and will respond to a search for the term 'diversity'. Go to My Training, then Course Catalog, and type 'Diversity' into the Text Search.

These trainings are updated regularly so keep an eye out for e-mail updates or log in periodically to search for upcoming trainings.

Resources for Equity Education

[Here](#) are some resources that will help you learn more about racial equity. Our lists will never be as up-to-date as we would like but we think that this is a good starting place.

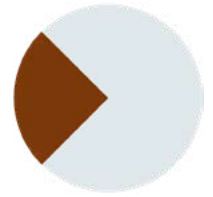
If you're new to this, start [here](#).

If you've been exploring racial equity for a while, start [here](#).

Glossary of Equity-related Terms

Please click [here](#) to see a glossary of equity related terms created by the Equity & Access Advisory Committee

Apply to Our Work



After going through the Equity Lens questions start to apply these answers to your work.

To help us apply equity and inclusion to a specific area of work, we can ask some practical questions and learn from examples (Promising Practices) of how others have applied the Lens.

- **Communications** (pp. 17)
- **Engaging Community and Staff** (pp. 19)
- **Gathering Information / Research** (pp. 21)
- **Leading and Supervising** (pp. 23)
- **Monitoring and Evaluation** (pp. 25)
- *Planning: Services, Projects, Events* (pp. 27)
- **Policy Development** (pp. 29)
- **Recruiting and Hiring** (pp. 31)
- **Strategic Planning** (pp. 33)
- **Training** (pp. 35)
- **Working with People** (pp. 37)

When diversity, equity and inclusion is reflected throughout the organization, we benefit from a diversity of insights and are better prepared to address the needs of the populations we serve. From strategic planning to managing human resources to direct service, equity and inclusion matters.

Select the area or areas of work that best relate to the work you are doing now. This includes both internal and external work.

one

Read through the questions to consider which ones can inform your work.

two

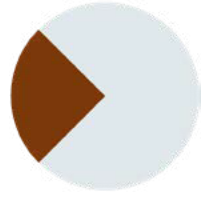
Consult the Promising Practices provided to learn from the experience of others.

three

Consider what you are already doing and what you can do differently to ensure inclusion. Note your ideas on the [worksheet](#) (pp. 23.)

Apply to Our Work

Equity and Inclusion Worksheet



Who is not included in the work you do?

What could contribute to this exclusion?

What are you already doing to promote inclusion?

What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Indigenous Peoples

LGBQIA

Transgender people

Immigrants

Older Adults

Persons with disabilities

Persons Living in Poverty

People of Color

Rural Residents

Women

Youth

Who Else?

COMMUNICATIONS



When we apply equity and inclusion to all communications, we take action to ensure that everyone is heard and informed.

1. Have we considered all possible target audiences? Who might be at risk of exclusion?
2. What specific communication strategies are needed to reach them?
 - i. (e.g., working with community leaders, bulletin boards, community newspapers, social media)
3. Do our communication materials get out to the community organizations and networks that serve the diverse populations we need to reach? Do we check periodically to ensure materials are being shared, are stocked and being used?
4. How do the messages we are communicating foster inclusion, respect and equity?
5. Are there concepts or terms that may be culturally specific and need to be changed to make them more accessible?
6. Is the medium easily accessible and understood by the full diversity of our target audience? (e.g., plain language, accessible formats, graphics, multiple languages, both online and print, voicemail)
7. Have we considered what populations will be missed by only using certain methods? (e.g., online or social media communications) What other approaches might we use?
8. Have we considered if there is a budget or alternative resources for translation services?
9. Do images represent the full diversity of employees or residents?
 - Do they capture the diversity within specific communities of people?
 - Will the people portrayed in the images relate to and feel included in the way they are represented?
 - Is everyone portrayed in positive images that promote equity and break stereotypes?
Consider: who is active and passive, who is at the center, who is serving and being served.

Ask About Inclusion

Who is not included in the work you do?

What could contribute to this exclusion?

What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Promising Practice

Communications

LEAD PIPE REPLACEMENT

The Lead Pipe Replacement Program is offered by the City to assist property owners to replace lead drinking water services on a cost-sharing basis. Owners within areas of the City suspected of having lead services were notified of the process for service replacement, and families with children under the age of six and/or expectant mothers were given priority.

Staff assessed who was at risk of not being reached in their communications. They then reviewed their communications strategy on an on-going basis so that staff became aware of the need to:

- communicate with residents in clear, plain language;
- reach out to the public through other means than direct mail, such as brochures placed in key locations; and
- consider other means of communicating the program to the public.

A list of community agencies and organizations was prepared to intentionally reach out to targeted populations. The letter and brochure were written in plain language and distributed to these agencies and organizations who could assist their clients in accessing and understanding LRP program information.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS AN EQUITY AND INCLUSION PRACTICE?

- ✓ Assessed who was at risk of not being reached in current communications
- ✓ Identified ways to reach specific populations
- ✓ Used a range of methods to get the word out
- ✓ Realized importance of using plain language, elimination of the passive voice in text
- ✓ Plan to apply the principles learned in other programs

ENGAGING COMMUNITY AND STAFF



When we welcome the diversity of perspectives of staff and community, we take action to ensure everyone benefits.

1. What approaches and outreach will help ensure that everyone is able to fully participate? How can we create opportunities for people least likely to be heard to ensure they share their specific concerns? (e.g., use of multiple techniques such as online surveys and focus groups, kinds of questions asked, simultaneous interpretation, sign language, anonymous feedback)
2. Is our team representative of the diversity of the population we are engaging? What steps can we take to ensure we are inclusive of the diversity of perspectives?
3. Which employees, department or community agencies with experience in these specific communities can help us do outreach?
4. Is there a history – between County and community, or between communities – that you need to consider? How will we ensure everyone is heard?
5. Is the language we use in our promotion materials and communication strategy plain and easily understood by diverse audiences?
6. What steps can we take to remove barriers to people's full participation? (e.g., dependent care, transportation, safety, language, accessible location, time, multiple formats, avoid religious and cultural holidays, culturally appropriate)
7. Is the environment welcoming to participants who may be reluctant to share their views? If not, what can we do to change this? (e.g., pair up a new participant with an experienced one to help those new to the process feel encouraged to participate). Does the pace, format and language of the engagement accommodate everyone including participants who are least likely to speak up and for whom the information may be new?
8. Are the insights from groups who face systemic barriers and inequities reflected in the report and the final product?
9. How will we report back the findings to the full diversity of people who were involved in the engagement activity?

Ask About Inclusion

Who is not included in the work you do?

What could contribute to this exclusion?

What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Promising Practice

Engaging Community

PRESTO IMPLEMENTATION

In 2012 Transit Services began planning for the Presto card implementation as this was a significant change for our customers and staff. Employees recognized that particular segments of the population may have more questions and unique needs in order for them to successfully embrace the Presto card. Community consultations were held with community agencies, City employees worked with target groups and members of diverse communities to ensure that their concerns were addressed from the beginning.

The Presto implementation team outreached to Aboriginal Peoples, women, older adults, youth, people living on low-income, people with disabilities, and immigrants.

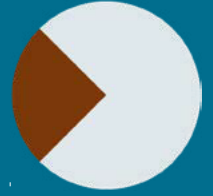
The consultation was conducted through stakeholder group meetings, focus groups and meetings with target groups. Whenever possible, consultations were conducted at existing meetings or in the community to allow for higher turnout. Suggestions were received about communications, outreach, and design.

The feedback received from these sessions directly influenced the outcome of the roll out of the Presto card. The Presto roll out was extremely successful due to the consultation and considerations given to these particular segments. All groups were appreciative of the extra efforts made to reach out to them to ensure that they understood the new technology and were given the opportunity to learn and ask questions in an environment that they were comfortable with.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS AN EQUITY AND INCLUSION PRACTICE?

- ✓ Considered diversity within the population from the onset of the project
- ✓ Developed an outreach plan that specifically targeted diverse groups and stakeholders
- ✓ Used multiple methods to obtain information from target groups
- ✓ Went to the community and used existing meetings to consult with diverse groups
- ✓ Took into consideration the findings of the targeted consultations in the Presto implementation plan
- ✓ Tailored the community outreach to specific target groups

GATHERING INFORMATION / RESEARCH



When we consider diversity in conducting environmental scans, needs assessments or collecting data, we take action to be inclusive of everyone

1. Will our data gathering plan identify specific areas where we may unintentionally limit equity and inclusion?
2. What current statistics or demographic data would help us understand the people or communities that face systemic barriers and inequities in relation to the issue in question?
3. Will data gathered capture the diversity of the population? (i.e. broken down to make differences visible e.g. - “disaggregated”)
4. When using gender-neutral language (people, head of household, the homeless, sole-support parent, immigrants), are we also distinguishing differences between women and men in that specific group? (e.g. female heads of household versus male heads of household)
5. Do the research questions help us identify who may be excluded and what is needed to ensure they will benefit?
6. Are we making any assumptions that we need to verify? (e.g., all parents in a program will be heterosexual)
7. How might you consult with the people most affected by this issue to ensure the reliability of your data, approach and findings? (e.g. ask community leaders about the cultural appropriateness of the data or approach)
8. Have we consulted with other staff, departments or community leaders with experience in this area? If not, how will we do this?
9. Does our final report include the findings on the specific equity and inclusion concerns we identified?
10. How will we report back the findings to people who were involved in the research?

Ask About Inclusion

Who is not included in the work you do?

What could contribute to this exclusion?

What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Promising Practice

Gathering Information and Research

OLDER ADULT PLAN

In October 2012, the City of Ottawa adopted the Older Adult Plan (OAP); an action plan containing 74 concrete actions to enhance municipal infrastructure, policies and services for older adults across 8 age-friendly domains.

Staff consulted the Equity and Inclusion Lens to identify groups of older adults that may have unique needs that should be considered and integrated at every step of the project. Eight groups were identified including: Franco-phones, immigrants, Aboriginal people, rural residents, persons with disabilities, gay and lesbian residents, isolated residents, and residents living on low income.

When acquiring the information on demographic trends and projections, the 8 groups were considered for their potential unique situations that may require varying courses of action. Statistics and trends were determined for each group, considering gender differences, to help guide the focus of the Older Adult Plan influence the design and outreach for the extensive consultations conducted in 2011.

Consultations were conducted to identify older adult issues and priorities under each of the 8 age-friendly domains. In addition to general sessions held across the city, the consultation plan included focus groups with each of the sub-groups of older adults with unique needs organized with partner community agencies. The exercise yielded rich information on the specific needs and priorities of these older adults which was then considered by staff during the development of the OAP.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS AN EQUITY AND INCLUSION PRACTICE?

- ✓ Considered diversity within the older adult population from the beginning of the project
- ✓ Gathered information and statistics on diverse groups to help paint a comprehensive picture of the community
- ✓ Decided to identify the unique needs of older adults belonging to diverse groups across 8 age-friendly domains (from infrastructure to programs and services)
- ✓ Developed a consultation plan that specifically targeted a number of sub-groups within the older adult population
- ✓ Engaged community agencies serving each of the sub-groups of older adults to host focus groups
- ✓ Took into consideration the findings of the research and consultations in the development of the final plan

LEADING AND SUPERVISING



When we become champions for equity and inclusion in the way we lead, we take action to model a county that utilizes everyone's diverse talents and skills.

1. What steps do I take to create a respectful and inclusive environment?
 - a. Do I clearly communicate to staff and volunteers that
 - i. *inappropriate behaviors such as offensive jokes, and negative comments are not acceptable?*
 - b. How can I actively gather input and ideas from staff or volunteers from diverse perspectives?
 - c. How can I encourage staff to contribute positively in creating an inclusive workplace?
2. Do I utilize support systems for employees that have been harassed, treated in a disrespectful manner or discriminated against by co-workers, supervisors or clients?
3. Are there policies, procedures and/or practices and attitudes that unintentionally prevent some people from fully engaging in our work? (e.g., schedules conflicting with religious holidays, workload or schedule conflicting with family responsibilities) What alternatives are possible?
4. Am I aware of our commitments to inclusion and accommodation and do I ensure that staff are equally informed?
 - a. Do I engage our departmental Diversity Champions to assist?
5. Is equity and inclusion incorporated into criteria for evaluating candidates for promotions or management positions? If not, how might we include it?
6. What opportunities could I create to enable people from under-represented groups
 - i. *to bring new perspectives to our team, acquire experience and move into higher-level positions? (i.e. internships, job shadowing, students)*
7. Is equity and inclusion incorporated into our staff performance review?

Ask About Inclusion

Who is not included in the work you do?

What could contribute to this exclusion?

What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Promising Practice

Leading and Supervising

EMERGENCY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

As the General Manager of Emergency and Protective Services, Susan Jones is responsible for overseeing Fire, Paramedic, Security and Emergency Management and By-law and Regulatory Services. She began her career as a municipal law enforcement officer then rose through the ranks. She is a strategic manager who is able to engage staff, politicians and the community to work together in support of a respectful and inclusive environment.

In 2011, and due in large part to Susan's commitment, the department's diversity champion program was recognized with the E.A. Danby Award for Excellence in Municipal Administration. This program explores innovative and effective ways to reach out to diverse communities and designated groups (e.g. women, racialized people, Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, queer & trans). The outreach program is committed to improving mutual trust, providing a safe and inclusive work environment; while providing equitable and inclusive services to the community. Two specific initiatives were Camp FFIT (Female Firefighters in Training) and the paramedic camp for youth in the Muslim Community.

Susan was instrumental in the launch of Fire Service Women Ontario (FSWO). Susan not only supports FSWO's mission but also lives it - to encourage, promote, and advance women as well as inspire positive change; encourage the development of a diverse workforce; develop potential through effective networking and foster supportive professional and personal relationships.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS AN EQUITY AND INCLUSION PRACTICE?

- ✓ Took steps to create a welcoming environment
- ✓ Identified practices that unintentionally excluded some people
- ✓ Was pro-active in developing staff teams representative of the population
- ✓ Created opportunities for under-represented people to acquire experience

MONITORING AND EVALUATION



When we consider equity and inclusion in how we measure success, we take action to ensure that all benefit from the process and its outcomes.

1. Have we considered what populations will be missed by only using certain methods? (e.g., online surveys, general public consultations) What other approaches might we use?
2. Are those designing and implementing the evaluation representative of the target groups who will participate in the evaluation? How can we ensure their perspectives are included?
3. Do the evaluation questions allow for consideration of the experiences of a diversity of residents?
4. Would it be useful to include those who stopped using the service and potential clients who never used it, in order to assess any unknown biases?
5. Can we hold interviews or focus groups at a location where the target
 - i. population is most comfortable? (e.g., Centro Latino, Trans*Ponder)
6. Can we make it easier for respondents to participate by using interviewers from the same population, providing transportation and childcare, and/or offering an honorarium for focus groups?
7. Can we interview in the language in which the people are most comfortable or have a cultural interpreter available? (i.e. spoken language, braille, sign language)
8. When analyzing our data, did we maintain a diversity of perspectives in the findings?
9. Have we validated the findings with the community so as to minimize any biases?
10. How can we report back to the people who participated in the evaluation process?

Ask About Inclusion

Who is not included in the work you do?

What could contribute to this exclusion?

What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Promising Practice

Monitoring and Evaluation

FIELD TESTING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

The involvement of OPH and ESL staff from diverse ethno cultural origins guaranteed the inclusion of a variety of perspectives on lesson plans content and format.

All lesson plans were field tested prior to dissemination with over 200 adult learners from 45 countries participating. Multiple methods were used to ensure participation, including validation with partners, classroom observation and targeted surveys of learners, ESL instructors, and OPH staff.

Language proficiency, cultural appropriateness, ease of use and learner engagement were all considered and reviewed. To ensure broad applicability while reaching low-income immigrants where they live and learn, the field tests were conducted in a variety of school and community settings (e.g., adult high schools, community centers). There were no costs incurred by partners or learners as the field test was conducted with them in their real life settings.

All points of view and comments were considered. Lessons plans were reviewed to reflect this input, such as enhancing tips and images to further reflect cultural diversity.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS AN EQUITY AND INCLUSION PRACTICE?

- ✓ Involved partners and staff in the design
- ✓ Drew upon the perspectives of staff from diverse backgrounds
- ✓ Used multiple methods to ensure participation
- ✓ Reached people in their own setting
- ✓ Ensured informants did not assume costs
- ✓ All perspectives were considered in the revised lesson plans

PLANNING — Services, Projects/Programs, Events



When we consider the range of equity issues, we take action to eliminate barriers so that everyone can benefit.

1. Do the expected outcomes of the service, project/program, or event reflect equity and inclusion goals?
2. How will the service or project/program build upon the strengths of the people it serves?
3. Will the service or program contribute to more equitable access to resources and benefits in the wider community?
4. Have the primary target groups been consulted (See Engaging Community and Staff).
5. How is the proposed service, project/program or event designed to ensure that a full diversity of people can participate and benefit with dignity? (i.e., accessibility for mobility devices, visual and hearing impairments, child or dependent care, transportation, safety concerns, language).
6. Does the time of the event or hours of the service consider potential demands on people's time? (i.e. religious and cultural holidays, harvest time, family responsibilities)
7. Have we considered and made note of equity and inclusion considerations in our business plans and project management plans?
8. Are the long term needs of residents from different equity groups considered in our long term planning?
9. Are there good equity and inclusion practices in other counties, departments or community organizations that can inform the implementation?
10. What human and financial resources are required to address equity and inclusion in the implementation of this service, project/program or event?

Ask About Inclusion

Who is not included in the work you do?

What could contribute to this exclusion?

What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Promising Practice

Planning: Services, Projects, Events

YOUTH CITY CONNECT

The Youth Summit Action Plan is made up 34 actions over eight categories. The action plan is based on feedback received at the Mayor's Youth Summit and other inputs. One of identified actions was the development of a program that exposes Ottawa youth to a career options in municipal government by shadowing City staff. Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department employees gathered a working group to plan the program from inception to implementation.

As part of the planning, the working group considered the sub-groups of youth who may be interested in the program, such as Aboriginal youth, immigrant youth, youth in existing City programming, youth living on low income, homeless youth, rural youth, and youth with disabilities, as well as youth of different age groups (i.e. high school versus post-secondary or out of school).

Each group presented unique needs and considerations that had to be taken into account during the planning.

The working group looked at removing as many barriers as possible, for example, using plain language and making applications as simple as possible. To further ensure that all barriers or concerns were addressed, the working group asked youth for their feedback and integrated it into the materials.

The working group has set outreach targets in order to attract diverse groups of youth, such as Aboriginal youth, immigrant youth and youth living on low income. The working group will continue to evaluate the program to ensure broad participation.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS AN EQUITY AND INCLUSION PRACTICE?

- ✓ Considered diversity from the onset of the project
- ✓ Considered barriers and address them upfront.
- ✓ Were clear about what could or could not be done
- ✓ Used plain language
- ✓ Consulted with the target population to ensure nothing has been overlooked and to make sure that all materials are understood

POLICY DEVELOPMENT



When we make policies equitable and accessible, we take action to ensure that everyone is included in county life.

1. What are the equity and inclusion concerns related to this policy issue? (e.g., accessibility, affordability, safety, culture, gender identity)
2. Have we checked existing policies that may inform how we address *i. equity and inclusion in this new policy?*
3. Have we considered and made note of equity and inclusion considerations when developing the business case for the policy?
4. Are the groups most affected by the policy consulted from the early stages of the policy development? How can we ensure their perspectives are included? (See Engaging Community and Staff)
5. What background information can aid in addressing equity and inclusion? (See Gathering information/research)
6. What human and financial resources are required to address equity and inclusion in the implementation of this policy?
7. Can we develop innovative policy solutions that draw upon the contributions and assets of those people most affected?
8. If new resources are required in the policy implementation, how can we build that in from the beginning? (e.g., partner with community groups, collaborate across departments, seek matching funds)
9. How can we communicate the policy so as to reach the full diversity of people affected? (See Communications)
10. How will we measure the extent to which the policy contributes to removing barriers or creating opportunities for people who risk exclusion? (See Monitoring and Evaluation)

Ask About Inclusion

Who is not included in the work you do?

What could contribute to this exclusion?

What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Promising Practice

Policy Development

EQUITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

In 2002, the City of Ottawa's Equity and Diversity Policy was approved by City Council. This Policy prohibits discrimination in the workplace, in the provision of goods, services, and facilities to the public and the administration of contracts as defined by human rights legislation.

The policy applies to women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority groups and people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans (LGBT). The City also made a decision to add immigrants in its data analysis as a result of the City's Municipal Immigration Strategy.

In the development of this policy, it was important to gather a variety of perspectives and information to ensure that we were addressing any potential systematic barriers experienced by staff and members of the community. The Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee played a key role in the development and implementation of the policy.

This corporate policy impacts all staff and as such it had to be communicated in a variety of ways. The policy is posted on Ozone, taught as part of mandatory new employee orientation and various other training offerings.

As a result of using inclusive practices when developing the policy and in promoting its ongoing use, we have a policy that reflects an awareness of how to be inclusive. It has assisted to create a work environment that is welcoming of a diverse population. As a result of the policy and related initiatives (i.e. diversity training and awareness), we have increased representation of the diversity groups where there is under representation in the City's workforce.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS AN EQUITY AND INCLUSION PRACTICE?

- ✓ Considered the needs of multiple groups
- ✓ Consulted with the people most affected by the policy
- ✓ Adjusted the policy to address emerging needs
- ✓ Policy communicated to staff and community through a variety of means

RECRUITING AND HIRING

Staff and Volunteers



When we integrate equity and inclusion in our hiring practices and policies, we take action to increase diverse skills and perspectives in the workplace.

1. Do staff and volunteers in our work area reflect the diversity of the community we serve? Who is under-represented?
2. What knowledge, skills, experience and diversity would enhance
 - i. *our team's capacity to serve the diversity of clients?*
3. Do job requirements and selection criteria unnecessarily limit who would qualify?
4. Are we open to considering what new perspectives people from different backgrounds could bring to the position?
5. Have we considered where best to post this employment opportunity to ensure that the widest diversity of people are able to access it? Do we encourage agencies and community partners to access the County's career site so that we can broaden the applicant pool?
6. Are interview panels composed of individuals who bring diverse backgrounds and experiences relevant to the position?
7. Have we considered ways to reduce barriers in the interview process so as to make it more welcoming and friendly (i.e. physically accessible, provide a copy of the questions)
8. Are candidates given the choice to be interviewed in language other than English?
9. Do we consider that people from specific backgrounds may present interview behaviors that are different from what we expect, but still have the skills to do the job?
10. If a candidate's references are from abroad, what strategies can we use?
 - i. *(e.g., if an English speaking reference is not available then seek translation support)*

Ask About Inclusion

Who is not included in the work you do?

What could contribute to this exclusion?

What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Promising Practice

Recruiting and Hiring

SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

The City of Ottawa's Summer Student Employment Program makes possible a large number of external hires each year. The Recruitment and Staffing Unit, that coordinates the program, is mindful of the City's goal of building a diverse and talented workforce reflective of the population when planning recruitment. Since applicants may also progress to future employment with the City, it is important to attract a diverse candidate pool, with a special focus on groups that are under-represented.

With awareness of the guiding principles in the Equity and Inclusion Lens, possible barriers to diversity in recruiting were identified, including awareness of the opportunity, knowledge of the application process, and access to a personal computer.

To address these potential barriers the following steps were taken:

- Extended posting period to provide more time to promote the program and accept applications
- Distributed bilingual posters to organizations serving youth
- Shared information about the program with community organizations via groups such as the Aboriginal Working Committee and the Employment Access Resource Network (EARN)
- Promoted the program at career events such as fairs, networking and information sessions at local post-secondary schools.
- Held information sessions for students in English and French.
- Provided information about publicly available computers

These targeted outreach practices increased general awareness of the City's employment opportunities for those who are traditionally under-represented in the workforce, removing potential obstacles to broader participation.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS AN EQUITY AND INCLUSION PRACTICE?

- ✓ Took note of who is under-represented
- ✓ Identified potential barriers
- ✓ Reached out to community organizations to promote
- ✓ Went to where the target group would be
- ✓ Provided information to overcome barriers

STRATEGIC PLANNING



When we apply a vision of equity and inclusion to our planning, we take action to create a county for everyone.

1. How does your strategic planning process promote equity and inclusion?
2. Do the long-term goals you are defining reflect this?
3. What are the current demographic trends with which the County or departmental strategic plans need to align or address?
4. What equity issues are currently being raised by residents and employees in relation to your plan?
5. What are the costs of not taking demographic trends and equity issues into account? What are the benefits?
6. Do County and departmental strategic objectives and initiatives reflect a broad vision of equity and inclusion? How can it be strengthened?
7. What human and financial resources are required to achieve equity and inclusion in this plan?
8. How do the performance measures in the County and departmental strategic plans capture the impact on people who are the most at risk of exclusion? How do they measure whether inclusion is increasing or decreasing?
9. Does the collection of data enable us to measure benchmarks and targets for increasing equity and inclusion?
10. When undertaking strategic review, what improvement opportunities are there to enhance achievement of equity and inclusion?

Ask About Inclusion

Who is not included in the work you do?

What could contribute to this exclusion?

What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Promising Practice

Strategic Planning

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

For the 2011 – 2014 Term of Council Strategic Priorities, the Community and Social Service Department used the Equity and Inclusion Lens to review demographic information, concerns raised by the community, trending statistical information and the needs of diverse communities when developing proposed strategic priorities for inclusion in Council's Strategic Plan.

As a result, several priorities which consider the needs of specific and diverse groups were included in the 2011

– 2014 Strategic Plan. The Older Adult Plan, the Housing and Homelessness Initiative, the Equity and Inclusion Lens implementation, and the Municipal Immigration Strategy are all examples of initiatives that were approved as Strategic Initiatives.

The vision set by City Council and the Equity and Inclusion Lens used as a planning tool for researching and analyzing information contributed to a Strategic Plan that directly addresses the needs of diverse groups.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS AN EQUITY AND INCLUSION PRACTICE?

- ✓ Considered demographic information, trends and research from other levels government and academia, that spoke to the needs of the 11 diversity groups
- ✓ Reviewed consultation and evaluation information
- ✓ Paid special attention to the equity claims of diverse groups
- ✓ Explicitly considered diverse populations in the overarching vision and priorities

TRAINING

Staff and Volunteers



When we apply equity and inclusion to all stages of the training process, we take action to create an environment where everyone can contribute.

1. Have we included sensitivity to equity and inclusion issues when staffing for internal trainers and hiring external consultants?
 - i. (i.e. able to reduce biases and work respectfully with diverse people)
2. Have we included this sensitivity to equity and inclusion in our procurement documents when sourcing external trainers?
3. Can we recruit trainers from diverse backgrounds so they reflect the population we serve?
4. Will the learning objectives be designed to influence participants' awareness and consideration of individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds?
5. Will participants develop competency and skills to work sensitively and effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds?
6. Is everyone able to fully participate in the training? Is specific outreach required to include them? Are barriers addressed? (e.g., safety, language, accessible location, time, avoid religious and cultural holidays, culturally appropriate, accommodation needs)
7. Have we welcomed the diverse perspectives of people who have specific equity concerns or needs, even if they may not be obvious? (e.g., indigenous ancestry, LGBTQ identities, dietary, auditory, language needs or preferences)
8. Is the content sensitive to the experience of participants who may experience systemic barriers?
9. Does it include the perspectives of residents or staff who will be accessing the service?
10. In the evaluation of the training, do we ask whether there were any barriers to participation or whether they found the facilitator to be inclusive of the diversity of participants?

Ask About Inclusion

Who is not included in the work you do?

What could contribute to this exclusion?

What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Promising Practice

Training Staff and Volunteers

TRAINING ON ACCESSIBILITY

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Council direction, the City of Ottawa is required to train all of its 17, 000 staff and volunteers on accessible customer service and other aspects of the legislation.

The Corporate Accessibility Office was responsible for developing and implementing a training program to meet the compliance requirements.

To ensure the training met the requirements and was meaningful for all those involved, the following steps were taken:

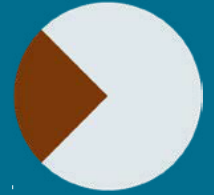
- Training was offered in a variety of formats including on line and facilitated sessions.
- The suggested activities could be adjusted to suit the needs, learning styles and experiences of both groups and individuals. The development of the training also took the needs of the trainers into account and allowed for adjustments to be made in the delivery to accommodate various training styles and abilities.
- Community co-facilitators, people with disabilities, were also trained and invited to be part of the training process, to share their experiences, as those most directly impacted by accessibility and their interactions with City staff.
- All feedback was reviewed and adjustments were made to ensure that any identified barriers in training or follow up questions were addressed.

As a result of using equitable and inclusive practices in the training, participants were engaged and able to apply information learned in the training, ensuring accessible practices and positive interactions with both the public and internal clients.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS AN EQUITY AND INCLUSION PRACTICE?

- ✓ Offered training in a variety of formats
- ✓ Training design was flexible and customized to meet specific needs
- ✓ Took into account differing abilities
- ✓ Created opportunity for people with disabilities to bring their expertise to the training
- ✓ Set out to address barriers to training

WORKING WITH PEOPLE



When we treat people with respect, we are taking action to create a welcoming workplace and quality service.

1. When I interact with people, do I check assumptions?
 - a. Do I hold assumptions about people that get in the way of how I work with them?
 - b. Do I avoid stereotypes so I can see the individual for who they really are?
 - c. Am I able to respect our differences and yet recognize what we have in common?
 - d. Do I recognize their contributions?
2. Am I paying attention to those who are not expressing their ideas?
3. How do I encourage feedback and full participation from everyone present?
4. Am I raising issues in a way that encourages dialogue?
5. Do I consider potential barriers in each situation, and work to minimize them? (e.g., language, prejudice, sexual or racial discrimination)
6. If I am not sure what barriers may exist, do I ask my colleagues or the people I serve?
7. Do I discourage jokes, insults and negative comments that are offensive to people?
8. Do I recognize and build on the strengths and assets of all individuals?
9. Are there procedures, policies and practices in place that limit my capacity to be inclusive? Are there others that support my capacity to be inclusive?
10. What action can I take to address this or to bring awareness to the supportive policies?

Ask About Inclusion

Who is not included in the work you do?

What could contribute to this exclusion?

What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Promising Practice

Working with People

LEARNING CENTRE

The Learning Centre delivers training and development support to thousands of employees each year so as to assist them in various aspects of their employment including: orientation, training courses, career development tools and intact team training/delivery.

With the focus on working with people, the Learning Centre creates a supportive learning environment by applying equity and inclusion in the following ways:

- Consideration of religious holidays and observances in scheduling of training and activities.
- Registration confirmation that invites participants *to share any supports needed.*
- Meeting accommodation requests in order to remove *barriers for participants.*
- Work with contract vendors at start of their contract *period to ensure:*
 - Course materials are AODA compliant and vendors complete the online AODA training.
 - They understand the need and approach to accommodating participants such as ensuring space for mobility devices, translators etc.
 - Expectations are reviewed regarding use of techniques that support different learning styles and respect for participants.
 - Vendors are informed about the Equity and Inclusion Lens, asked to read it and incorporate relevant information to their courses.

Through these and other processes the inclusive environment is developed and the experience is positive and respectful for the people we are working with in the County.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS AN EQUITY AND INCLUSION PRACTICE?

- ✓ Asked the client about supports needed
- ✓ Considered potential barriers and worked to minimize them
- ✓ Directed contract vendors to comply with AODA and apply Equity and Inclusion Lens
- ✓ Used techniques that encourage everyone to participate