# Office of Equity and Diversity: A Framework for the City of Asheville

## What is Equity?

Equity is when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs and advance their well-being. Equity occurs where residents of all incomes, ages, races, genders and ability participate in and benefit from decisions that shape the places where they live.

The City of Asheville is committed to:

- Maximizing racial equity in City programs and services to make tangible differences in people's lives.
- Engaging with community-based organizations to end institutional racism.
- Supporting regional and national networks for racial equity through partnerships with other governments, institutions, the private sector and philanthropic organizations.

## What We Currently Do

The City of Asheville actively promotes equity and diversity throughout its internal and external programs and policies. With respect to City administered programs and policies, this includes the areas of hiring and human relations, purchasing and procurement, community relations and public engagement, sustainability, public safety and community and economic development. The City also has programs and policies related to partnerships with non-profit, public and private stakeholders including CDBG, HOME, and Strategic Partnership grantees as well as partners in the areas of arts and events, affordable housing development, public safety, education, groups interested in specific focus areas and neighborhoods.

A detailed inventory of current programs, partnerships and collaborations is included in **Attachment A**.

## Best Practices

In 2006, the City of Seattle implemented the first practical effort to address institutional racism in a United States' municipality. This effort is a model nation-wide, and is known as the Seattle Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative. In the 10 years since Seattle's program began, many other cities and counties have followed their lead, establishing goals and subsequent work plans that institute policies and programs to ensure racial equity internally and across the community.

North Carolina cities include Greensboro, Durham and Raleigh. Nationwide, Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth, MN, Dubuque, IA, Madison, WI, Multnomah County, OR, Fairfax County, VA, Tacoma, WA, Ottawa County, MI, Portland, OR and Alameda County, CA are among the growing number of municipalities working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.

**Attachment B** provides a brief summary of four municipalities' efforts.

## Action Plan for Equity Initiative

A proposed plan of action for Asheville to implement policy, programs and partnerships to achieve racial equity includes internal and external assessment and engagement in creating practical, achievable outcomes that work toward racial equity.

Three areas of focus are supported by identified Council priorities: 1) Operations and Administration 2) Policy 3) Community. Listed below are the Council priorities related to these 3 focus areas.

1. Operation and Administration

   - Goal 1: Institute a racial equity toolkit (per the Governmental Alliance on Race and Equity)
   - Goal 19: Find additional resources for the management of the transit system

2. Policy

   - Goal 2: Review goals and programming in Parks & Recreation and determine the role that it should play in meeting needs of citizens and achieving racial equity
   - Goal 13: Continue to work with partners to redevelop Lee Walker Heights
   - Goal 14: Implement the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (Explore innovative homes, tiny homes & container housing)
   - Goal 15: Analyze city owned land and establish a strategy for sale of lease of affordable housing
   - Goal 16: Complete redevelopment of the former Parks Maintenance Property; a)Complete relocation of Parks Maintenance Property, b)Complete redevelopment of the former Parks Maintenance property
   - Goal 18: Continue to implement the transit master plan, to include an analysis of opportunities to expand transit into the County.
   - Goal 25: Research and recommend a portfolio of options toolbox for small business support (Zoning, Retention, Minority Business, Econ Incentives, Communication regarding the work opportunity tax credit)
   - Goal 27: Identify and implement strategies to get more diversity on city boards and commissions

3. Community

- Goal 3: Develop/formalize partnership with Asheville City Schools Foundation to support middle school and after school programs that close the achievement gap
- Goal 4: In partnership w/others, participate in community dialogue and potential strategies to honor history and contributions of the African American community in Asheville, beginning with a community led effort to install a monument to African American heritage
- Goal 24: Develop and implement Buncombe Community Capital loan program, with an emphasis on minority business
- Goal 32: Support the development and implementation of a more effective Council state legislative agenda

## Additional Policy Options

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On-going programs are listed in Attachment A. Additional options for Council to consider are listed below.

Administrative and Operations:

- Chief Equity Officer hired to establish and oversee benchmarks for equity workplan in alignment with Council goals, working with City Manager's Office and cross-departmental team. **Year 1**
- Disparity study conducted to provide disparity analysis, identify revisions necessary to the Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) program, and make recommendations for programmatic changes, including enhancements. **Year 1**
- Racial Equity Toolkit *(Government Alliance on Race and Equity)* utilized to train City staff in racial equity, increasing City workforce ability to practice cultural competence. **Year 1**
- Human Resources expands outreach for hiring and retention practices, resulting in more racially diverse workforce at all staffing levels. **Year 2**
- MWBE contracting and procurement expands to produce higher numbers of minority-owned businesses contracting with City programs and services. **Year 2**
- Asheville Police Department (APD) formalizes recruiting plan aimed at increasing diversity to better reflect City's population. **Year 1**

- Asheville Police Department's Chief of Police leads work group comprised of staff and community members to engage citizen input on APD's Use of Force Policy revision. **Year 1**
- CAPE team expands communication and public engagement tools to increase communication and engagement with underserved neighborhoods, producing more inclusive feedback to City staff and Council on proposed actions as well as on-going programs. **Year 1**

Policy:

- Form Community Capital Loan program to expand access to capital for minority and underserved entrepreneurs. **Year 1**
- Support Riverfront Redevelopment and related projects including Clingman Forest and Town Branch Greenways and Livingston Complete Streets to increase multi-modal transportation options for underserved neighborhoods. In addition, partner with local agencies and contractors to ensure local access to the jobs created by RADTIP development projects. **Year 1, 2, 3**
- Partner with the Asheville Housing Authority to transform the Lee-Walker Heights neighborhood into a mixed-income, mixed-used development that provides critically needed housing for very low-income households and increased access to jobs, schools and services for minority and under-served households. **Year 1, 2, 3**
- **(If referendum is set and passes)** Allocate General Obligation Bond resources to complete Dr. Wesley Grant Center and other Parks and Recreation improvements in underserved neighborhoods to increase access to supportive programming and recreation opportunities; invest GO Bond resources to increase affordable housing units for low-moderate income households and enhance multi-modal infrastructure to expand access to jobs, services and education. **Year 3**

Community:

- Establish Human Relations Commission to work with the Equity Office, City Council and other partners in increasing equity across the City of Asheville. **Year 1**
- Partner with existing and new collaborations to increase community engagement and investment in equity-based policies, programs and projects (i.e., Invest Health, UNCA, WNC Diversity Engagement Coalition). **Year 1**
- Increased workforce development impact through CDBG-funded Economic Development and Mountain Area Workforce Development Board projects to expand job placement and sustainability for underserved and minority households. **Year 2**
- Support collaborative community planning process in the Parks and Recreation Department's efforts to gain inclusive neighborhood input into redevelopment and upgrade of Walton Street Park and Pool, and additional planning processes in Parks and Recreation Master Plan. **Year 1**

## Attachment A

### City of Asheville Programs Inventory

| Administration | Race | Gender | Income | Disability |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Hiring and Human Relations** | | | | |
| Required diversity training for all staff | x | x | x | x |
| Community outreach for open positions which also includes recruiting among diverse populations via advertising, affinity organizations, and other sources | x | x | x | x |
| Interview training for all staff engaged in hiring | x | x | | x |
| City-wide Wellness program | | | x | x |
| Culture of Leadership | x | x | x | x |
| Public Works Director Employee Mentoring (equal access for all employees working for the department. Random process through employee ID number. | x | x | x | x |
| Supervisor Training by HR Department | x | x | x | x |
| "Ban the Box" initiative incorporated into hiring practices | x | x | x | x |
| HR review of screening activities to foster correlation with position requirements and consistency (e.g., interview questions, etc.) | x | x | x | x |
| **Purchasing, Procurement & Minority Business Program** | | | | |
| MWBE Policy compliance required in all procurement | x | x | | x |
| Reporting on MWBE performance | x | x | | |
| Disparity study to be performed in FY 2017 | x | x | | |
| **Services** | **Race** | **Gender** | **Income** | **Disability** |
| **Sustainability** | | | | |
| Recycling in public housing | x | x | | x |
| "How Low Can You Go?" Campaign | x | x | | x |
| **Purchasing, Procurement & Minority Business Program** | | | | |
| One-on-one assistance given to potential new minority contractors | x | x | | |
| Public contracting training for small, MWBE and artists | x | x | x | x |
| **Access** | | | | |
| ART Bus Routes, 30 minute service, Sunday Service | x | x | | x |
| SimpliCity Internet Portal | x | x | | x |
| Neighborhood Greenways | x | x | x | x |
| Discounted Bus Passes | x | x | x | x |
| Bike Lanes | x | x | x | x |

## Attachment A

| Services | Race | Gender | Income | Disability |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Community & Economic Development** | | | | |
| Technical Assistance, Webinar for federal grant applicants | x | x | | x |
| Housing Trust Fund emphasis on rental housing for Section 8 voucher holders | x | x | x | x |
| Affirmative Marketing, Section 3 | x | x | x | x |
| Alternatives to Gentrification Report | x | x | x | x |
| Minority Business Outreach, include 1:1 Technical Assistance, MED Week Support and partnering with Business Service Provider agencies on training, support and resources (i.e. Mountain Biz Works, Self Help, etc.) and overview of City contracting & purchasing activity. | x | x | x | x |
| Equitable Development EPA supported program | x | x | x | x |
| Lee Walker Heights re-development support | x | x | x | x |
| Progress towards ending chronic homelessness | x | x | x | x |
| **Community** | **Race** | **Gender** | **Income** | **Disability** |
| **Community Relations and Engagement** | | | | |
| Diverse use of Grant Center | x | x | x | x |
| Inclusive community meeting process, sensitive to location, marketing and content | x | | | |
| Boards and Commission reporting on gender, race and location | x | x | | |
| Neighborhood Advisory Committee | x | x | | |
| City Recreation Centers | x | x | x | x |
| Weed & Seed office was in Pisgah View & Burton St | x | x | x | x |
| East of the Riverway office was in Southside neighborhood | x | x | x | x |
| Annual Government-Business CONNECT (City's Reverse Vendor Fair) | x | x | | |
| Housing Fair at Stephens-Lee Center | x | x | x | x |
| SimpliCity Internet Portal | x | x | | x |
| "Permit in a Day" Process – Project in conjunction with Small Business Administration grant | | | | |
| Circle Forward (Dynamic Governance) Training for Residents' Council | x | x | x | x |
| Homeless Camp Protocol | x | x | x | x |
| Affordable Housing Water and Sewer Rebate - rebate a portion of the connection fees for qualifying affordable housing projects. | | | | |
| Neighborhood Sidewalk Policy | | | x | x |

## Attachment A

| Community | Race | Gender | Income | Disability |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Community & Economic Development** | | | | |
| CAYLA (City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy) and youth engagement | x | x | x | |
| Alternatives to Gentrification Report | x | x | x | x |
| Strategic Partnership Grant Funding directly supports Council Strategic Goals | x | x | x | x |
| "In Real Life (IRL) funding directly supports low-income student participation at Asheville Middle School | x | x | x | x |
| **Public Safety** | | | | |
| APD Homeless camp protocol, downtown presence | x | x | x | x |
| Community Policing | x | x | | x |
| Partnership with Housing Authority and HACA Residents' Council | x | x | x | x |
| APD engagement with Shiloh Center Afterschool Program, and several additional initiatives with at-risk children and youth in lower income neighborhoods | x | x | x | x |
| APD Thanksgiving Turkey give-away at Rescue Mission | x | x | x | x |
| APD partnership with DOJ and My Daddy Taught Me That | x | x | x | x |
| Partnership with Changing Together | x | x | x | x |
| Getting Back to the Basics – APD (in collaboration with community partners) camp to improve decision-making for at-risk kids | | | | |
| Smoke Detector door-to-door campaign | x | x | | x |
| Summer Fire Camp | x | x | x | x |
| Fire Explorers | x | x | x | x |
| Girl Scouts | x | x | x | x |
| Citizens Fire Academy | x | x | x | x |
| Citizens Police Academy | x | x | x | x |
| **External Partners with the City on Achieving Equity CDBG, HOME and Strategic Partnership Grantees including:** | | | | |
| Mountain Housing Authority | x | x | x | x |
| Green Opportunities | x | x | x | x |
| Homeward Bound | x | x | x | x |
| Eagle Market Streets Development Corporation | x | x | x | x |
| Helpmate | x | x | x | x |
| Habitat for Humanity | x | x | x | x |
| OnTrack | x | x | x | x |

## Attachment A

| Community | Race | Gender | Income | Disability |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Support Center | x | x | | |
| Mountain BizWorks | x | x | | |
| Asheville City Schools Foundation | x | x | | |
| Pisgah Legal Services | x | x | x | x |
| Women's Well-Being Foundation | x | x | x | x |
| **Arts and Events Partners** | | | | |
| Asheville Arts Council | x | x | | |
| YMI Cultural Center | x | x | | |
| Appalachian Regional Commission | | | x | |
| LEAF | x | x | x | x |
| **Strategic Partnership Grantees** | | | | |
| Homeward Bound | x | x | x | x |
| Green Opportunities | x | x | x | x |
| WNC Diversity Engagement Coalition (City is a founding member) | x | x | x | x |
| **Affordable Housing Development Partners** | | | | |
| Mountain Housing Opportunities (MHO) | x | x | x | x |
| Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity | x | x | x | x |
| Givens Estates | x | x | x | x |
| Beaucatcher Partners | x | x | x | x |
| Grace, Inc. and Biotat LLC | x | x | x | x |
| Asheville Housing Authority | x | x | x | x |
| Kassinger Group | x | x | x | x |
| Compact Cottages | x | x | x | x |
| Children First / Communities in Schools | x | x | x | x |
| Buncombe County | x | x | x | x |
| Private Sector developers providing affordable housing | x | x | x | x |
| Land of Sky Association of Realtors | x | x | x | x |
| **Education Partners** | | | | |
| Asheville City Schools | x | x | x | x |
| Asheville City Schools Foundation | x | x | x | x |
| UNC-Asheville | x | x | x | x |
| Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College | x | x | x | x |
| **Neighborhood Partners** | | | | |
| Burton Street Community Association | x | x | | x |
| Shiloh Neighborhood Association | x | x | | x |
| Southside Advisory Board | x | x | | x |
| HACA Residents' Council | x | x | x | x |
| East End / Valley Street Association | x | x | | x |
| Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods | x | x | | x |

## Attachment A

| Other Partners | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Banks and Financing Institutions | x | x | x | x |
| Federal Agencies such as HUD, EDA, EPA, Federal Reserve Bank | x | x | x | x |
| Other Institutional Partners such as Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta | x | x | x | x |
| Community and Economic Development Agencies such as IEDC, NCCDA | x | x | x | x |
| Leadership Asheville – strives to develop more diverse classes and instruct on diversity as part of coursework. | x | x | | |

## Attachment A

| Community | Race | Gender | Income | Disability |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Key Stakeholders** | | | | |
| Advocates for Social Justice | x | x | x | x |
| Homeless housing location specialists | x | x | x | x |
| Education and other funders, collaborators | x | x | x | x |
| Students, Student families, educators | x | x | x | x |
| Public Housing Resident Council | x | x | x | x |

**Attachment B**

## Minneapolis www.minneapolismn.gov (Pop 382,000)

Office of Equity and Inclusion established to implement Racial Equity Action plan and Promise Zone initiative.

**Internal Focus** Supports equity and inclusion efforts in hiring, recruiting, supplier diversity and contracting. Includes 12-month training module on racial equity for all city employees.

**External Focus** Works with community partners to address Promise Zone goals of revitalizing high-poverty communities by reducing racial inequities in public services and institutions, reducing serious and violent crime, reducing the racial achievement gap, building a more inclusive economy, creating jobs and promoting stable housing.

## Dubuque, IA www.cityofdubuque.org (Pop 58,253)

**Department of Human Rights** Handles the traditional fair housing or other discrimination complaints. The Department's statement: *"we work with residents, other City departments, and community institutions to develop fair and equitable access to government and community services and to support a more inclusive community."* Working with partners, the department provides opportunities for residents to be involved with local government, and supports residents in contributing to their community and solving community problems. The department works with individuals and organizations on workforce development, recruitment, retention, and offers workshops addressing cultural differences in the workplace. The department also offers options for addressing discrimination and neighborhood disputes.

City Council endorsed the **Inclusive Dubuque** initiative, which is a network of local leaders dedicated to advancing justice and social equity in the community. By building a network of partners dedicated to equity and inclusion, Inclusive Dubuque aims to organize people, identify opportunities and take action to challenge and change social and economic structures. http://Inclusivedbq.org

## Madison, WI www.cityofmadison.com (Pop 243,000)

Established **Racial Equity and Social Justice Team**, with representatives from 16 city departments. Full team of 30 City employees meets monthly. Co-led by Public Health and Department of Civil Rights staff. Recommendations and strategies to eliminate racial and social inequities focus on 3 main areas:

1. Equity in city policies and budgets
2. Equity in city operations
3. Equity in the community

Training plan for City staff, elected officials and community partners and creation of an Equity Impact Assessment Tool.

**Attachment B**

## Durham, NC https://durhamnc.gov (Pop 245,475)

Equal Opportunity/Equity Assurance Department: Implements the City's Equal Business Opportunity Ordinance under the Equal Business Opportunity Program. This program is designed to provide city contracting for socially and economically disadvantaged persons doing business in the city's contracting market place.

Additionally, Durham is home to the iNvictus Office Center – A CoWorking Community Space for the HUD of Minority Entrepreneurship. www.iNvictusOffice.com

Durham's Human Relations Commission was established "to improve human relations among the people of Durham." In Asheville, some of the Durham Commission functions were performed in the past by the Asheville-Buncombe Community Relations Council.

January 2016

# RACE TO EQUITY

## Racial Equity Community Impact

In October 2013, we released the Race to Equity Report documenting the significant racial disparities in Dane County. The continuous dissemination and discussion of its findings and recommendations has not only resulted in a vastly expanded awareness of the disparity crisis, but a broad, deep and heartening increase in political and public will and actions to do something about it. To better understand the scope of these promising efforts, Race to Equity is compiling a list of racial equity initiatives that have been implemented in Dane County since the release of the report.

This list is not exhaustive and represents preliminary efforts to capture a broad overview of the initiatives that have been developed in our community. We compiled this inventory in order to acknowledge, affirm and applaud our community's expanding efforts to improve conditions in Dane County for children and families of color. The hope is that it will serve as a useful resource to: track progress as a community; identify areas that need further attention; and, most importantly, hold the community accountable for making sustained progress toward real racial equity in the county. In its current form, the list emphasizes efforts aimed at reducing disparities faced by African-American families in Dane County, as this population was the focus the report. However, there are many similar initiatives going on in communities and organizations all over the county, and we need the community's help to improve this list. Please let Race to Equity know of these initiatives by visiting Race to Equity's website and submitting any racial equity initiatives or policy reforms that aren't included in this list. With your help, a fuller and more accurate measure of the community's growing commitment to make Dane County a more equitable place to live, work, and grow can be obtained.

# CITY OF MADISON AND DANE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## 2013/2014

- The public announcement that reducing racial disparities in economic status will be Mayor Soglin's top priority for his administration.
- The adoption of ordinances by both the Madison Common Council and the Dane County Board of Supervisors to require Equity Impact Assessments of proposed policy, legislative, and budget decisions.
- The establishment of the Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Team, consisting of representation from most city departments. The team has provided recommendations and strategies around eliminating racial and social inequities in three main areas: equity in city policies and budgets, equity in city operations, and equity in the community.
- A national grant is awarded to Dane County from the American Bar Association to reduce racial disparities in the criminal justice system.
- The creation of a mayoral employment initiative to support the hiring of 1,500 unemployed or underemployed people of color by public- and private-sector employers in the city over the next five years.
- The creation of the Employee Engagement and Equity Initiative to identify and address issues of bias or discrimination that can impede the performance of city employees.
- The Early Childhood Zone, created by Dane County Executive Joe Parisi and United Way, is expanded to Westside Elementary in Sun Prairie and Sugar Creek Elementary in Verona. The program aims to close the racial achievement gap by identifying impoverished minority families with pre-school children, or in which the mother is pregnant, and offering a range of services to prepare children for school.

## 2014

- An increased public-sector emphasis (supported by increased appropriations) on early childhood initiatives, at-risk youth work, and neighborhood strengthening that are all designed to address the needs of both the children and their parents—a two-generation approach to disparity reduction.
- The announcement by the Madison Police Department of a new initiative to strengthen police relations with middle schoolers, with the explicit goal of reducing the arrest and detention rates for African-American youth.
- Dane County's creation of a community court along with additional funding for Restorative Practices as preventive approaches to reducing racial disparities in schools and the criminal justice system.
- The city's ongoing efforts to remove minimum qualification requirements and screening criteria that have been shown to create barriers to employment for some groups of otherwise qualified applicants.

Elimination of these barriers ensures that potential candidates are not screened out, increases the diversity of employees, and promotes equity in the employment process.

- Modifications to the city's civil service system: including creating trainee positions for applicants with potential but without previous experience; expanding posting rights for city interns; modifying referral rules; and, updating Personnel Rules to allow limited-term- employee transfer rights.
- The adoption of the Ban the Box Initiative to remove questions regarding criminal background from city job applications, ensuring that hiring decisions are based on relevant work qualifications.
- A new city directive to ensure that the oral panels used during the hiring process of top city positions are diverse in gender, race, and ethnicity.
- The launching of an initiative by the City of Madison and the Urban League to increase the diversity of the applicant pool for seasonal city positions.
- City of Madison's Human Resources (HR) new collaboration with the Department of Civil Rights to update the mailing list that targets advertising of job opportunities to more diverse organizations. Also, publication of a new manual entitled "Navigating the City of Madison Hiring Process" on the city's HR website to help individuals through the process of applying for city jobs.
- The Parks Divisions offers exams in Spanish for open positions and looks to possibility of offering exams in other languages for certain positions.
- Training extended to most city departments on engagement and equity. Many departments have created internal culture and engagement teams that have developed feedback tools, custom training for employees, and internal newsletters.
- The ongoing implementation and development of Madison's Police Department's Trust Based Initiatives and collaborative efforts with Madison's diverse communities. Recent initiatives include the creating of Black and Latino Youth Academies to create trust, build relationships, and interest kids in law enforcement.
- The reorganization of the City of Madison's Supervisor Manual to focus on the four pillars of the city's Equity and Engagement Model: building trust, equipping employees, developing employees, and connecting to purpose. Each chapter provides new tools for supervisors to help foster engagement and equity.
- A policy conference called for city leaders covering many topics related to their role in advancing racial equity and social justice.
- The city's commissioning of the Public Works Contracting Disparity Study to determine whether firms owned by minorities and women are at a disadvantage when it comes to winning public works contracts.
- The city's efforts to improve internet access to challenged neighborhoods and availability of computers in the Madison Municipal School District.
- A city-funded internship program for high school students in need of work experience and greater career opportunities.
- The launch of "Project Big Step" to connect skilled employees, especially minority residents, with contractors and trade unions who need workers for upcoming Dane County projects.

## 2015

- The Center for Social Inclusion and the Government Alliance for Racial Equity released a report that details five recommendations to be implemented over four years to transform Dane County into a racially equitable institution.
- Creation of the Black Leadership Council composed of Madison African-American community leaders and African-American based organizations. The aim of the council is to advise government on a broad range of issues affecting the local African-American community, including disparities in the criminal justice system, the educational achievement gap, economic empowerment and living wage jobs; affordable health care; youth mentoring and programming.
- The focus of the Dane County 2016 budget on improving access to mental health resources, expanding employment opportunities, helping those recently released from prison re-acclimate to society. One of the biggest initiatives in the budget is the creation of the Office for Equity and Inclusion to institutionalize the county's efforts to reduce racial disparities within county government and outside of it.
- Dane County Executive Joe Parisi signed a resolution to provide funding for three of his new "Access to Opportunity" initiatives. These initiatives include providing 50 low-income teenagers with free drivers education; assisting those who have lost their driver's license to regain their license through the "Driver's License Recovery Program" at the YWCA; and supporting an evidence-based transitional jobs program operating in Southwest Madison that helps residents with multiple barriers to employment find jobs.
- The County Board's approval of a $22K grant to fund racial equity and implicit bias training for County law enforcement personnel.
- Madison's first racial equity coordinator was hired to develop, administer, and implement city-wide policies and procedures involving racial equity and social justice.
- Changing the city's funding process to make it more inclusive and responsive to community-identified needs.
- The creation of a special committee to examine the Madison Police Department's culture, training, policies and procedures. The committee will make final recommendations to the mayor, City Council, Police and Fire Commission, and the Madison police chief by July 2016.
- Issues of racial equity in education, employment, and incarceration surfaced as a main focus of the 2015 Madison mayoral race.
- The 2015 election season drew more candidates of color than prior election seasons and city voters elected the first two African-American females to the Common Council.
- In the State Assembly, the Speaker's Task Force on Urban Education was created to study teacher recruitment and retention, discuss best practices to address truancy, below-average academic performance and low graduation rates, and explore ways to improve access to technology in high poverty urban areas.

- Madison Police Department collaborated with YWCA and Dane County TimeBank to create a program that offers youth ages 12 to 16 who violate municipal ordinances the option of going through restorative justice, instead of receiving fines and a conviction record.
- A workshop at the YWCA Racial Justice summit highlighted various efforts by the Wisconsin State Public Defender's office regarding racial justice, including the creation of the agency-wide Racial Disparity Team and trainings about implicit racial bias and responding to racism effectively.

# NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

## 2013/2014

- Numerous nonprofits begin reviewing and revising their mission statements to more centrally focus on equity as an organizational priority, including commitments to diversify their governance and workforces.
- Local funders, including the United Way, the Madison Community Foundation, the Evjue Foundation, the CUNA Mutual Group Foundation, Great Lakes Higher Education, and Forward Community Investments, increase their commitments to equity efforts.
- The opening of an Early Childhood Initiative office in the Leopold Elementary School neighborhood to provide home visiting services and link families with the resources they need to eliminate household instability and ensure their children get a healthy start in life.
- The publishing of Rev. Dr. Alexander Gee's essay headlined "Justified Anger," that described the racism he and others had encountered in Madison, and his frustrations at the city's failure to address the marginalization of the African-American community.

## 2014

- The launch of an African-American–led coalition, "Justified Anger" to advocate for strong actions to address racial disparities.
- The revival and launch of a new countywide NAACP chapter, explicitly formed to address the racial disparities described in the Race to Equity Baseline Report.
- Centro Hispano's announcement of a new strategic plan to address disparities facing Dane County's Latino community. The plan will focus on several main goals, including the promotion of greater community engagement, creation of a system for immediate job and career placement, increasing the mobility of Latino youth through career awareness and planning, and the expansion of Centro as a resource hub for the rest of the region. CUNA Mutual Foundation awards a $100,000 grant to Centro Hispano to support this plan.
- Madison Reading Project forms in partnership with the Salvation Army to increase literacy rates in Dane County for vulnerable children and encourage a love for reading. This program also provides Madison-area children the opportunity to interact with children in a Tanzanian village they are

partnered with through letters, artwork, emails, photos and videos to create an enriching educational opportunity for all.

- The awarding of expanded state and local workforce development grants to the Urban League and the YWCA, with the specific aim to improve job training for unemployed women and men of color.
- The YWCA sold out its 2014 Racial Justice summit with 565 people committed to reducing the racial disparities in Dane County identified by Race to Equity.
- The Urban League of Greater Madison adopts a new strategic plan that focuses on increasing the outreach, training, placement, retention, and advancement of 250 underemployed parents of color from 2015-2020.
- A partnership effort between the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County, Madison Metropolitan School District, City of Madison, United Way of Dane County, CUNA Mutual Group, Dane County, Metcalfe's Market, and Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin to provide 160 paid summer internships for students of color, low-income families, or first-generation high school or college students.
- The YWCA develops the "Race to Equity Toolkit" to guide community-wide conversations on our local challenges and to better equip individuals and the community to talk about race.
- The creation of the Madison Out-of-School Time (MOST) Initiative to provide youth access to high-quality, comprehensive, out-of-school time programs that promote positive youth development, educational achievement, and career and community readiness.
- YWCA partners with tech consulting company Adorable.io to launch YWeb Career Academy, a program designed to bring more women and people of color into Madison's tech community.
- Race to Equity launches a Community Ambassador Fellowship for five residential neighborhood leaders who are given Race to Equity materials to disseminate to local residents and to facilitate discussion and mobilization around issues that are most important to them. The fellowship was developed as a means to lift up the voices of those in the community whose life experience was reflected in the Race to Equity data.
- The launch of a private sector Construction Employment Initiative to help prepare low-income and disenfranchised individuals for jobs in the construction industry and the trades.
- The creation of the Step Up: Equity Matters Initiative, a year-long series of workshops for people to learn how to promote equity in their workplace.
- The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) recognizes organization and individuals working to overcome disparities with its Giraffe Award.
- WCCF creates the Race to Equity scholarship for high school students who demonstrate a passion for racial equity and social justice.
- The 15th Annual White Privilege Conference is held in Madison and focused on empowering individuals to work for equity and justice.

## 2015

- The creation of the Wisconsin Diversity Procurement Network to address the provision of critical resources that foster the growth of diverse (ethnic, minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned, disabled-owned) businesses of all sizes.
- The Northside United community group hosts a forum discussing the disparities revealed in the Race to Equity report and have held ongoing meetings to continue tackling disparity issues in the community.
- Protestors and students from all across Madison participate in multiple "Black Lives Matter" marches to protest of police violence and the shooting of Tony Robinson.
- The creation of the Student Expulsion Prevention Program (StEPP) to address the need for quality legal representation for children in the Madison Metropolitan School District facing expulsion. Low income students and students of color are disproportionately impacted by the expulsion process.
- Forward Community Investments revises its mission statement, adds Board members, and modifies its strategic plan to target its lending and grant making on organizations committed to reducing disparities.
- Forward Community Investments prepares a report identifying barriers faced by low-income, vulnerable residents in Madison and also reviewed a sample of recent reports focused on the human service context in Madison, including the Race to Equity Report. Results from FCI's analyses are intended to inform the City of Madison's Community Development Division's Policy Goals and Objectives for city investments in the social sector.
- The Association of Fundraising Professionals hosts, "Engaging Our Latino Donor Community" featuring a panel discussion by nonprofit and business leaders on the breadth and depth of the Latino experience in Dane County and how to better engage this community in nonprofit work.
- The Center for Family Policy and Practice and YWCA Madison, hired by the City of Madison, conducts community engagement sessions to solicit input and concerns about body-worn video cameras by police.
- Young Nonprofit Professionals Network hosts a discussion about creating more equitable environments in the workplace and identifying concerns of the diverse communities who are served by nonprofits.
- After leading community opposition to the building of a new jail, the Young, Gifted and Black Coalition (YGB) worked with county supervisors and a number of community organizations on an alternative resolution. This resolution formed work groups that came up with more than 30 recommendations to address mental health needs, alternatives to incarceration and length of stay.
- Justified Anger launches "Our Madison Plan," a framework for racial progress in Madison outlining strategies and goals developed by five work groups under the headings of education, economic development, incarceration, family and community wellness, and leadership capacity and development. The Evjue Foundation donated the first $150,000 to help execute the plan.

- Brotherhood Group, an African-American youth group, begins conducting a collaborative research project looking into reasons for disproportionate representation of African-American males in the criminal justice system and the lack of black teachers in the Madison Metropolitan School District.
- The holding of the Cultural Context of Corporal Punishment Conference at which expert faculty presented on the significant negative impact of corporal punishment on child development. The community-based professionals who attended the conference had the opportunity to examine their implicit biases that may negatively impact their ability to objectively assess a family's situation and develop strategies to reduce the impact of bias in their work.
- United Way of Dane County organizes a Delegation to Create Economic Stability for Young Families to examine poverty in Dane County, evaluate successful solutions, and create a plan to mobilize the community to help young families become self-sufficient.
- Community Shares of Wisconsin hosts a Cultural Competence Leadership Institute for nonprofit organizations, educators, government agency staff, individuals, and businesses to learn how to serve diverse communities.
- Community Shares of Wisconsin staff and board commit to making organization, member organizations, and board of directors more diverse.

### 2016

- The creation of the Wisconsin Diversity Procurement Network to address the provision of critical resources that foster the growth of diverse (ethnic minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned, disabled-owned) businesses of all sizes.

## SCHOOLS

### 2013

- The adoption of a new Behavior Education Plan by the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) with the aim of reducing racial disparities in suspension and expulsion rates.
- MMSD creates its strategy for improvement, the Strategic Framework. The framework is a long-term, inter-related strategy to raise achievement for all and close gaps. It now guides all of the district's work and is aimed at closing the gaps in opportunity that lead to disparities in achievement.
- Every Madison school develops a targeted school improvement plan with measurable goals for all students and for specific goals. For example, 44 of 50 schools now have African American students as specific focus group.
- The creation of a new, more rigorous principal selection process to find the best leaders at every Madison school and increase diversity.
- Completion of a zero-based budgeting process and reallocation of $2 million from the central office to Madison schools to support overall strategy to raise achievement and close gaps.

## 2014

- The MMSD English department restructures their curriculum, actively seeking out different reading materials that are more culturally diverse and culturally relevant to students of color.
- State Superintendent Tony Evers forms a statewide task force of educators and others to identify promising strategies in schools across the state to close the achievement gap between students of color and their peers.

## 2015

- The Madison Board of Education approves a new plan designed to reduce the significant gap in achievement faced by English Language Learners (ELLs) compared to native English speaking students. The plan aims to provide better, research-based services for ELL students, distribute ELL services more equitably across the district, expand the existing Spanish-English Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs to additional elementary schools, and prepare the educator workforce to teach the growing number of ELL and bilingual students in Madison schools.
- Madison school leadership teams, school principals and district leaders work with the National Equity Project to do explicit work around examining racial equity and implicit bias.
- Verona Area High School students in the Minority Student Achievement Network host a national conference for the organization earlier this fall in Madison and came out of the event with an action plan to solve disparities in their own school. The plan has three main components: behavioral management, closing the achievement gap and improving multicultural awareness.
- MMSD provids targeted professional development and computer adaptive software aimed at enhancing early literacy skills for students at the district's 13 highest needs elementary school, which serve 67% of the district's students of color.
- MMSD is creating a comprehensive recruitment strategy to use this hiring season to recruit and hire more teachers of color and especially African American teachers.
- The Middleton High School Student Voice Union, a student-run social justice group, conducts a community forum on race issues in Dane County. Poverty reduction and education achievement were discussed as important strategies in reducing racial disparities.
- Madison schools are building systems and support to keep ninth grade students, especially students of color, on track to graduate.
- The first African American female was elected to serve on Sun Prairie's School Board.
- MMSD works with community partners to provide mentoring for African American students.
- Verona Area School District hosts the Minority Student Achievement Network Student Conference at which student leaders from high schools across 10 states engaged in activities identifying root causes of racial disparities in their schools and solutions to eliminate barriers to learning for students of color.
- MMSD works with youth to grow youth leadership opportunities for African American students.

- Madison School Board approve a proposal by the Native American Student Association at West High that bans student attire depicting Native American team names, logos, or mascots.
- One City Learning Centers receive assistance from Cremer Foundation of Madison, CUNA Mutual Foundation, BMO Harris Bank, and FCI to renovate a new facility to serve preschoolers and their families. One City's mission is to prepare young children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.
- The newly formed Family, Youth & Community Engagement Department of MMSD will provide guidance and resources to schools and families to increase authentic and mutually-supportive partnership between youth, families, schools, and communities.

# UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## 2013

- UW partners with grassroots groups and activists to put on workshops, seminars, panels and conferences around issues of racial equity in our community and broadly.

## 2014

- The UW and Madison schools launch Forward Madison, a cutting edge partnership to support new educators and grow the diversity of the school district workforce.
- Led by Everett Mitchell, a racial disparity and opportunity gap committee is charged by Chancellor Blank to review how UW programs, initiatives, and faculty are working to reduce disparities.

## 2015

- The opening of the UW South Madison Partnership, an effort to bring together existing UW-Madison collaborations and programming that is already in place in South Madison. The UW South Madison Partnerships will build, promote, and host community-based service learning courses, host courses taught by Continuing Studies, and link community groups with UW-Madison personnel and services.
- The Minority Student Achievement Network, a national coalition of school districts, holds their annual institute at UW-Madison. The meeting focuses on the latest research and most promising practices for eliminating racial disparities in achievement in schools across the United States.
- The theme "Inequality in America" and the book *Just Mercy*, by Bryan Stevenson, is chosen for the 2015 *Go Big Read* program. *Go Big Read* is an initiative between UW-Madison and Madison Public Libraries to encourage the community to read a common book and attend either book discussion groups or programs at the libraries to better understand it. *Just Mercy* is a call to action and a critique of the American justice system.
- The UW-Madison School of Social Work hosts a one-day conference for social workers and students focusing on racial disparities in education and the criminal justice system and the over-representation of people of color among those living in poverty.

- Together with other student organizations, Partners in Health Engage Madison, host a forum and discussion on health disparities affecting communities of color.

# PRIVATE SECTOR

## 2013

- The local association of private-sector human resource professionals make increase hiring and retention of underemployed workers of color their top priority for 2014–2015.

## 2014

- Willy Street Co-op makes a commitment to help overcome racial disparities through providing funding to organizations working on the cause, diverse hiring, assisting with the development of a co-op in Allied Drive, and educating members on diversity.
- Madison Region Economic Partnership (MadREP) and the Urban League of Greater Madison host the first annual summit event for Madison Region business and community leaders to discuss issues related to the impact of diversity within business, improving workforce opportunities for all community members, and the need for authentic collaboration in promoting economic development.
- MadRep releases the Madison Region's Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Survey, an annual report designed to measure, recognize, improve, and promote workplace diversity and inclusion practices.
- Dane Buy Local's Diversity Committee holds a widely acclaimed seminar on racial disparities with the Latino Chamber of Commerce, the Urban League of Greater Madison Young Professionals, and the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation.
- Local businesses participate in MMSD's first year of the Workplace Learning and Entrepreneurship Initiatives, offering students opportunities such as internships, mock interviews, and career presentations.

## 2015

- Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce 63rd Annual Dinner, a premier networking event for Madison Area business leaders, focuses on issues of economic opportunity, social mobility, and inequity.
- The creation of diversity "coordinator" positions among many businesses. For example, CUNA Mutual Group created a new position to develop initiatives that promote a diverse workforce, foster a culture where all employees can contribute, and hold leaders and employees accountable for promoting diversity and inclusion.
- Downtown Madison Rotary decides to focus on racial equity as its "large impact project" for the year. As such, Rotary is funding 12 member businesses to go through the YWCA equitable organization engagement process. Those organizations will report back to the broader membership about their progress and challenges. The Rotary also creates a Racial Equity Committee in 2015.

# COMMUNITY ARTS

## 2014

- The multicultural artistic program, First Wave, presents a showcase featuring several poetry pieces written by students in reaction to the release of the Race to Equity Report.
- The Overture Center creates a new equity committee and has served as a venue for several performing arts events and art exhibits by people of color and/or focusing on racial disparities.
- Madison Children's Museum's *Play and a Play* initiative brings diverse families who do not usually access theater and museum program downtown to engage in Madison's cultural institutions. Staff from partnering organizations - Children's Theater of Madison, Goodman Center and the YWCA Madison - will continue to collaborate in order to better serve diverse audiences and create more equitable organizations.

## 2015

- Dane Arts Mural Arts (DAMA), a new public art program by Dane Arts that trains local artists and youth to collaborate on neighborhood mural projects, completes a mural at the Zion City Community Outreach Center in South Madison. DAMA also leads the creation of the PEACE Mural located on the back of the Social Justice Center on Williamson St. The mural depicts Tony Robinson and eight others with ties to the Williamson Street neighborhood who have died or been killed in the past 16 years.

# FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

## 2015

- Wisconsin Council of Churches develops a set of lectionary reflections around the theme of "Race & Privilege."
- "Action Day: People of Faith United For Justice," a day long gathering, is held to learn, discuss, and advocate for social justice issues, including MOSES commitment to cut incarceration levels in Dane County.
- Jewish Congregation for Social Justice hosts a Racial Justice Speaker Series featuring presentations by the Race to Equity team and YGB.
- The First Unitarian Society's Social Justice Program launches an ongoing series of informal conversations about equity issues. The first talk is titled, "Let's Talk: Black Lives Matter."
- Middleton Community Church and St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, together with Middleton Outreach Ministry; Middleton Police Chief, Chuck Foulke; and Director of Equity and Student Achievement at Middleton High School, Percy Brown, organize a workshop that uses

national and local history to help participants explore the roots of racism and examine racial inequities that exist in Dance County.

### 2016

- Worship leaders from Madison's InterVarsity Christian Fellowship wear #BlackLivesMatter T-shirts at the group's annual conference meeting in St. Louis, where a Black Lives Matter activist was featured as a keynote speaker.

## FOUNDATIONS

### 2014

- CUNA Mutual Foundation awards four grants of $100,000 each to the Urban League of Greater Madison, the Boys and Girls Club, the YWCA, and Centro Hispano to strengthen their capacity to address racial equity.

### 2015

- The Oscar Rennebohm Foundation provides a $300,000 grant in support of the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County and the Urban League of Greater Madison collaborative two-generational strategy to create internships, employment, and career training over the next three years and build an inclusive Dane County workforce.

### 2016

- American Family Insurance Dreams Foundation, the Milwaukee Bucks, and the Burke Foundation provides a multimillion dollar grant to support the growth of the Boys and Girls Club's AVID/TOPS, a college preparatory program designed to boost graduation rates and college enrollment for minority, low-income and first generation students.

## MEDIA

### 2013

- The featuring of the Race to Equity report in over 40 different online and print news outlets from October through December.

### 2014

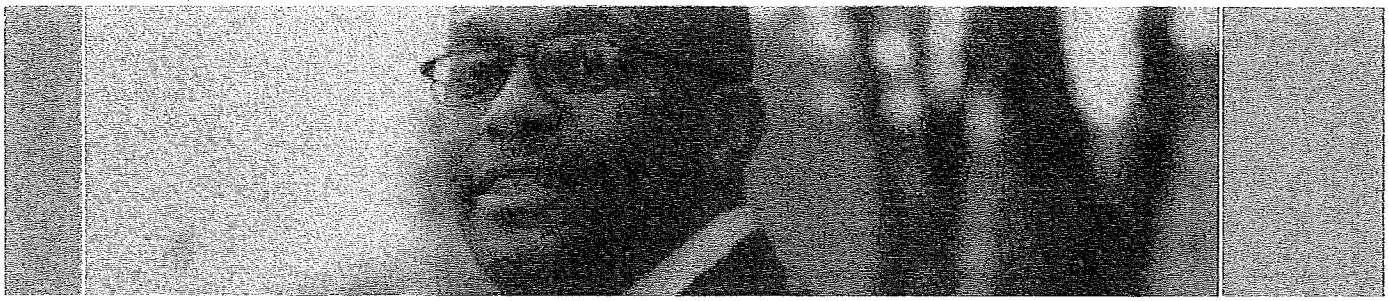
- Commitment from local media outlets to significantly increase the extent and depth of coverage of poverty and race issues. Examples include: the Cap Times creation of a website called "Together Apart" that looks at race-specific issues locally and throughout the nation, Madison Magazine's

increased focus on equity issues and Neil Heinen's ongoing editorial focus on racial disparities in Dane County.

- The Cap Times and Wisconsin Public Radio hosted "Together/Apart: Talking Across the Social Divide," a panel in which eight community leaders joined NPR's vice president of diversity for a discussion of race and ethnicity in Madison.
- Production began for the documentary called *Forward* about the racial justice movement in Madison. Through its observation of and interviews with racial justice organizations, the film highlights the racial disparities being fought, the individuals these problems affect, and what community leaders are doing to create change.

## 2015

- The creation of Madison365, an online news outlet geared toward issues faced by the Greater Madison's communities of color.
- Brava Magazine's 2015 "Women to Watch" list features diverse women who are championing change in the greater Madison area and beyond as it relates to issues of diversity, racial disparity, women, and children.
- Umoja Magazine published a directory of Black owned businesses in the community to help recognize, promote, and invest in Black entrepreneurs and business leaders.



# RACIAL EQUITY in SEATTLE

## Race and Social Justice Initiative
## Three-Year Plan 2012 - 2014

RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

ADVANCE OPPORTUNITY.
ACHIEVE EQUITY.

## The Race and Social Justice Initiative is a citywide effort to eliminate racial disparities and achieve racial equity in Seattle...

# introduction

Should race determine a person's access to housing, jobs or good health? Unfortunately, that is the reality of life in Seattle. Despite Seattle's overall high standard of living, racial disparities exist in every indicator of personal and community well-being. Our history of racism and the current impact of institutional and structural racism combine to restrict opportunities for people of color and immigrant and refugee residents.

The need for change is urgent. By almost any measurement, Seattle is a city divided by race:

- The unemployment rate for African American men in Seattle today matches the unemployment rate across the country during the Great Depression.
- Immigrant and refugee communities experience severe inequities in housing, jobs, education and health.
- Although statistics for Asian-Pacific Islander communities often appear strong, combining these diverse communities into a single category often masks inequities.
- Only about half of Samoan, Native American, Latino and African American students graduate from Seattle Public Schools.
- African Americans without a conviction record have a harder time getting hired than a white person with a conviction record.
- Almost a third of Native Americans live in poverty.

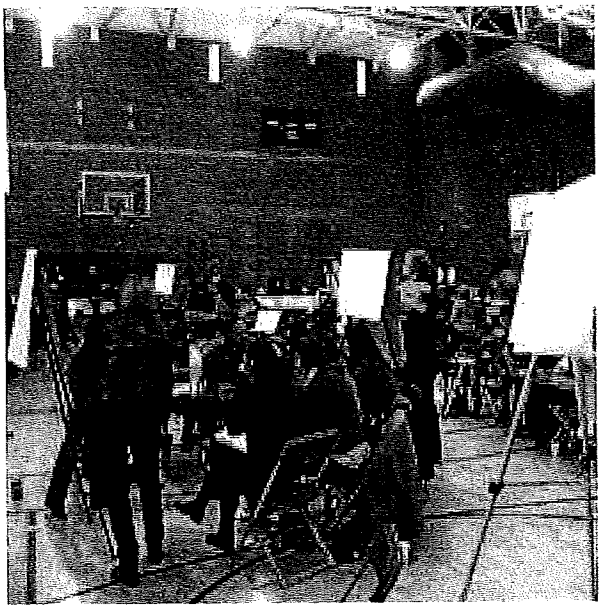
The Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) is working to change this reality. We know racial equity is possible. RSJI is the City of Seattle's commitment to:

- End institutionalized racism in City government.
- Promote inclusion and full participation of all residents in civic life.
- Partner with the community to achieve racial equity across Seattle.

The opportunity for change is now. Community organizations have pressured government to address racial equity for many years. Two decades ago the People's Institute, Western States Center and Crossroads helped the community and government understand the institutional impact of racism and develop approaches to creating change.

When the City of Seattle introduced the Race and Social Justice Initiative in 2005, no U.S. city had ever undertaken an effort that focused explicitly on institutional racism. RSJI began as the City's attempt to "get our own house in order" by focusing on internal programs and operations. In the last three years, the City of Seattle has joined with other institutions and community organizations to achieve racial equity. In 2009, RSJI convened the Race and Social Justice Community Roundtable, a group of 25 major institutions and community-based organizations, to work together on eliminating racial inequity in the community.

The Race and Social Justice Initiative completed its three-year plan for 2009-2011. This report provides an assessment of RSJI's accomplishments and challenges during the last three years, and presents a new three-year plan to focus our efforts on achieving racial equity in Seattle.



## DEFINITIONS of RACISM

(Examples – looking at employment)

**INDIVIDUAL RACISM:** Pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race.

*Example of individual racism:* Individuals acting in a discriminatory manner based on race in the workplace.

**INSTITUTIONAL RACISM:** Policies, practices and procedures that work to the benefit of white people and to the detriment of people of color, often unintentionally or inadvertently.

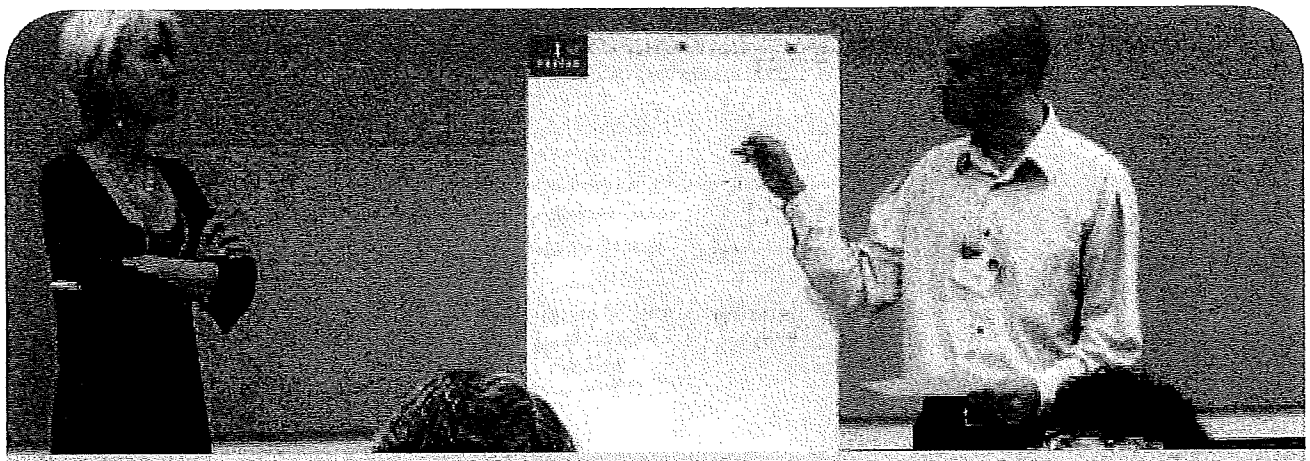
*Example of institutional racism:* Job descriptions that put undue emphasis on college degrees over work experience. This may eliminate qualified candidates of color, who face institutional barriers to higher education. This practice can create racial inequity in the job market, even when that is not the intent.

**STRUCTURAL RACISM:** A history and current reality of institutional racism across multiple institutions. This combines to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.

*Example of structural racism:* Racial inequity in employment creates inequity in family wealth. Fewer household resources mean limited housing choices, which often go hand in hand with poorer schools and inadequate health care.

"Those of us who are white often don't realize the unintended privileges we receive. We often get the "benefit of the doubt," or the trust and confidence of people who do not yet know us, or other benefits that are invisible to us as white folks. The Race and Social Justice Initiative is designed to help us equalize that trust and confidence for all people."

*– Nancy Locke,*
*City of Seattle*
*Contracting Services Manager*



## WHY FOCUS ON INSTITUTIONS AND STRUCTURES?

To achieve long-term, systemic change, RSJI focuses on institutional and structural racism. Civil rights laws and remedies have helped to address individual racism, but they have been less effective on the underlying systems that maintain racial inequity and the denial of equal opportunity.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND AREAS TO STRENGTHEN

RSJI's 2009-2011 strategic plan set forth goals to achieve racial equity in three areas:

1. Internal outcomes in City government.
2. Public engagement and City services.
3. Race-based disparities in the community.

Late last year we began an in-depth assessment of the Initiative's work. RSJI leaders held more than forty meetings with the community and within City government for candid discussions of the Initiative's strengths and challenges.

The assessment showed that the Initiative has made significant progress on all three goals. (For a detailed summary of accomplishments, please see *RSJI Accomplishments 2009-11*.)

A few examples:

In **contracting**, the City of Seattle has more than tripled the amount of purchasing dollars to women and minority-owned businesses. A 2011 Mayor's Executive Order mandates that general contractors demonstrate efforts to sub-contract with women and minority-owned businesses.

In **public engagement**, the City has dramatically expanded its outreach and engagement to historically under-represented communities. New policies mandate interpretation and translation services so non-English speaking Seattle residents can participate more fully in civic life.

In **the community**, a group of twenty-five organizations and public institutions has joined together as the Race and Social Justice Community Roundtable to work for racial equity across Seattle.

In **training and education**, the City of Seattle has strengthened support from City employees and improved their skills. In an RSJI Employee Survey in October 2010 that assessed employees' understanding of the Initiative, 83% of the 5,200 respondents said they believe it is valuable to examine the impact of race, and over 3,000 employees stated they are actively involved in promoting RSJI changes in their workplace.

The assessment also revealed areas to strengthen. Three broad challenges emerged:

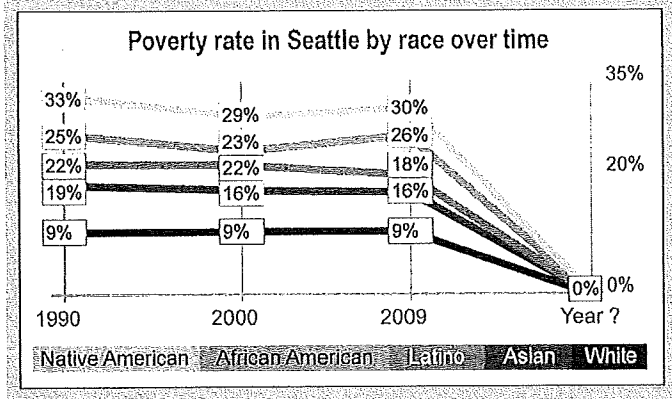
- RSJI needs to do a better job of tracking the impact of strategies to eliminate racial inequities.
- Within Seattle City government, RSJI must do a better job to improve coordination and linkages among City departments.
- In the community, RSJI must broaden and strengthen its partnerships to tackle the impact of structural racism.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The assessment process produced four recommendations to guide RSJI's work over the next three years.

1. **Focus on racial inequity in our community.** City government has made some progress in areas such as workforce equity, contracting equity, public engagement and immigrant and refugee access to services. The most meaningful measure of our success, however, will be in the lives of the people of Seattle.

2. **Use data to measure progress.** For too long, we have measured the extent of the problem without measuring progress toward a solution. We must set goals to achieve equity and use data to assess the impact of those strategies in the community. For example, year after year we report on racial inequity in poverty, but we have yet to take concrete steps to end it. This must change.




3. **Align strategies across City departments.** We must think and work strategically across departments to break down department silos. RSJI should focus on building racial equity into all City programs, projects and policies. All departments should view racial equity as part of their mission within their lines of business.

4. **Strengthen partnerships across institutions and community.** Even if Seattle City government were doing everything it could to achieve racial equity, we would not be able to achieve results on our own. All institutions and the community must work together and share a similar sense of urgency. Only by joining together in a broad partnership with common goals and strategies can we hope to achieve racial equity in key areas such as jobs, health, education and criminal justice.

## WHY LEAD WITH RACE?

The City of Seattle is committed to challenging all forms of oppression, including sexism, heterosexism, and ableism, and its actions demonstrate that commitment. In 2010, the City of Seattle created a new Commission for People with disAbilities to advise the Mayor, City Council and departments on disability issues. In 2011, the City released a comprehensive needs assessment for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, and ended transgender exclusions in all health care plans offered to City employees. The Seattle Women's Commission played a key role in working with the community to create the City of Seattle's new Paid Sick Leave Ordinance.

Yet the Race and Social Justice Initiative leads with race. Why?

- The pervasive and deep disparities faced by people of color – disparities that cannot be explained by other factors. Addressing institutional and structural racism is essential if we are to create a just and equitable society;

- The many years of community organizing that challenged the City to address racial inequity;

- The need to focus our work. By being specific about the disparities we are targeting, we achieve more effective results. We also create the conditions for broader change. Many of the same tools and skills we use to end racial inequity apply to sexism, heterosexism, ableism and other oppressions.

Though RSJI focuses on race, we believe collaborating across issues will strengthen equity for all of us.

> "RSJI is part of the City of Seattle's broad commitment to work for social justice for all communities, and our strategies are connected. To end any form of injustice calls for a dedicated, focused effort."
>
> *– Darryl Smith, Seattle Deputy Mayor*

## ACHIEVING RACIAL EQUITY IN OUR COMMUNITY

We know what it takes for communities to achieve a good quality of life: living-wage jobs, stable and affordable housing, education, access to health care, safe neighborhoods and a healthy environment. These key indicators are the social and economic cornerstones of individual success and strong communities.

Racial inequity impacts people in multiple ways. A person's health is directly influenced by jobs, affordable transportation and safe neighborhoods. Finding a good job can determine a family's health care coverage, including critical preventative services. An educational system that fails to meet the needs of youth of color impacts the criminal justice system, creating a "school to prison pipeline." Racial inequities in one area have a compounding effect on all other areas.

### WHY DO RACIAL INEQUITIES PERSIST?

The outcome gaps we see in health, education, unemployment, poverty rates and the criminal justice system cannot be explained away as the result of decisions and actions of individuals. The lack of opportunity based on race emerges from inequity of access and the effects of institutional racism.

For too long our society has relied on trickle-down equity. We assume that job creation programs automatically result in jobs for everyone, regardless of race. The data, however, draws a different picture. The economic collapse that began in 2008 has impacted all communities, but it has devastated communities of color both nationally and locally. When we leave race out of the equation, we miss the chance to develop more effective institutions and create equity for all. When we include race in our analysis, however, we can develop smarter strategies that truly benefit everyone, and create systemic change.

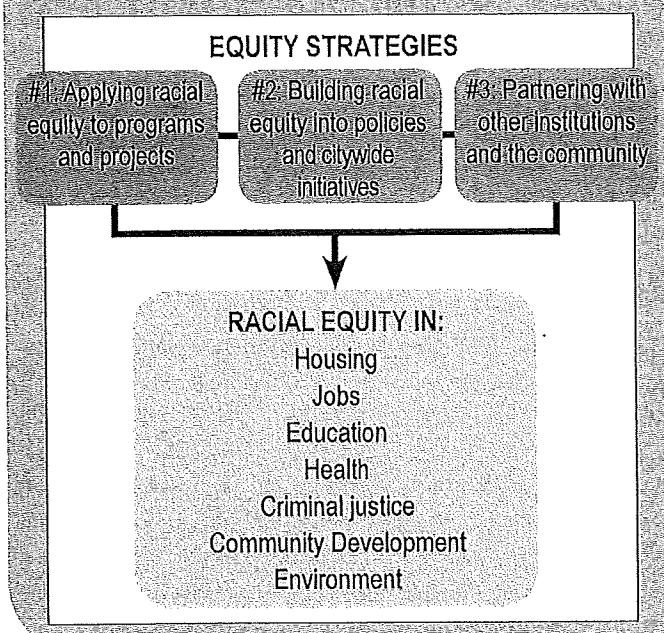
## THE VISION OF SEATTLE'S RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Government, institutions, businesses and community must work together to ensure every person in our city – regardless of race – has access to a living-wage job, quality education, affordable housing, health care and a safe neighborhood.

The vision of the Race and Social Justice Initiative is simple but profound: racial equity in the lives of the individuals and families who live and work in Seattle. Our goal is to achieve measurable progress eliminating racial inequity in seven key equity opportunity areas: housing, jobs, education, health, criminal justice and public safety, community development, and the environment.

Over the next three years the Race and Social Justice Initiative will use three equity strategies to address the root of racial disparities in our communities.

**EQUITY STRATEGY #1: Apply racial equity tools to our programs and projects.** City departments will expand their use of the Racial Equity Toolkit to ensure that racial equity is part of the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs and projects. Over the next three years, departments also will link their strategies to metrics to measure our progress. City staff will use inclusive outreach and public engagement strategies to ensure that racial equity is part of the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs and projects.




**EQUITY STRATEGY #2: Build racial equity into policies and Citywide initiatives.** To create change on a broader scale, racial equity also will be integrated into the foundation of Citywide policies and initiatives.

**EQUITY STRATEGY #3: Partner with other institutions and the community.** Government cannot achieve racial equity on its own. Over the next three years, the City of Seattle will create working partnerships with key institutions, organizations and the community to tackle racial inequity. As partners, we will adopt a shared analysis, use coordinated strategies and develop consistent ways to measure our progress. In addition, City departments will work with communities to increase opportunities for collaboration.

> "Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative is an important model for the country because it involves community in fostering change in government."
>
> *Gary Delgado, Founder, Applied Research Center & Center for Third World Organizing*

Across all three strategies, City departments will utilize four common approaches:

- We will measure the outcomes of RSJI work and report this information to the community. We will set goals to end racial inequity and measure the success of our strategies in terms of their actual impact in the community.
- We will use inclusive outreach and public engagement to involve the community, including specific efforts for immigrant and refugee communities.
- We will work with partners to create greater public will to achieve racial equity.
- We will align strategies across City departments and continue internal efforts to achieve workforce equity and contracting equity in Seattle City government.

future direction

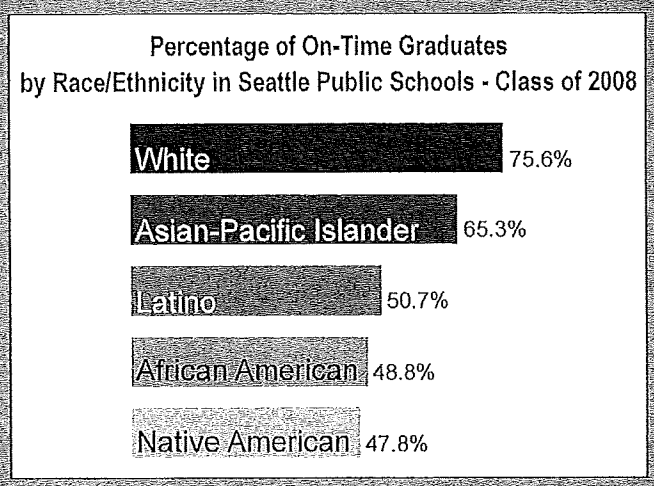
## HOW RSJI STRATEGIES WILL WORK TO ACHIEVE GREATER RACIAL EQUITY

RSJI's new strategies and approaches represent a dramatic shift in the Initiative's direction. Until now, RSJI has focused almost exclusively on those responsibilities that Seattle City government controls. As a City, we pledged to put our house in order. We are proud of the progress we have made, but there is much more work to do both within and beyond City government.

Much of that work involves breaking down the silos that often structure our efforts to end racial inequity. We cannot do this work alone or apart. Even within a single area such as education, achieving racial equity will require coordinated efforts. The following section highlights an example of this direction.

## EDUCATION: THE FUTURE IN OUR HANDS

Young people are not only our future, they are our present. And at present it is clear Seattle fails to make the grade for its youth, especially youth of color. Seattle has one of the highest percentages of college-educated residents in the United States. At the same time, about half of Samoan American, Latino, African American and Native American seniors graduate on time in Seattle Public Schools. Third grade reading levels are a critical determinant of how well students will do as they progress through high school. In the 2010-2011 school year 43% of African American and half of Native American third graders did not meet the standard for reading.



The Race and Social Justice Initiative's equity strategies already include a number of programs to end racial inequity in education, for example:

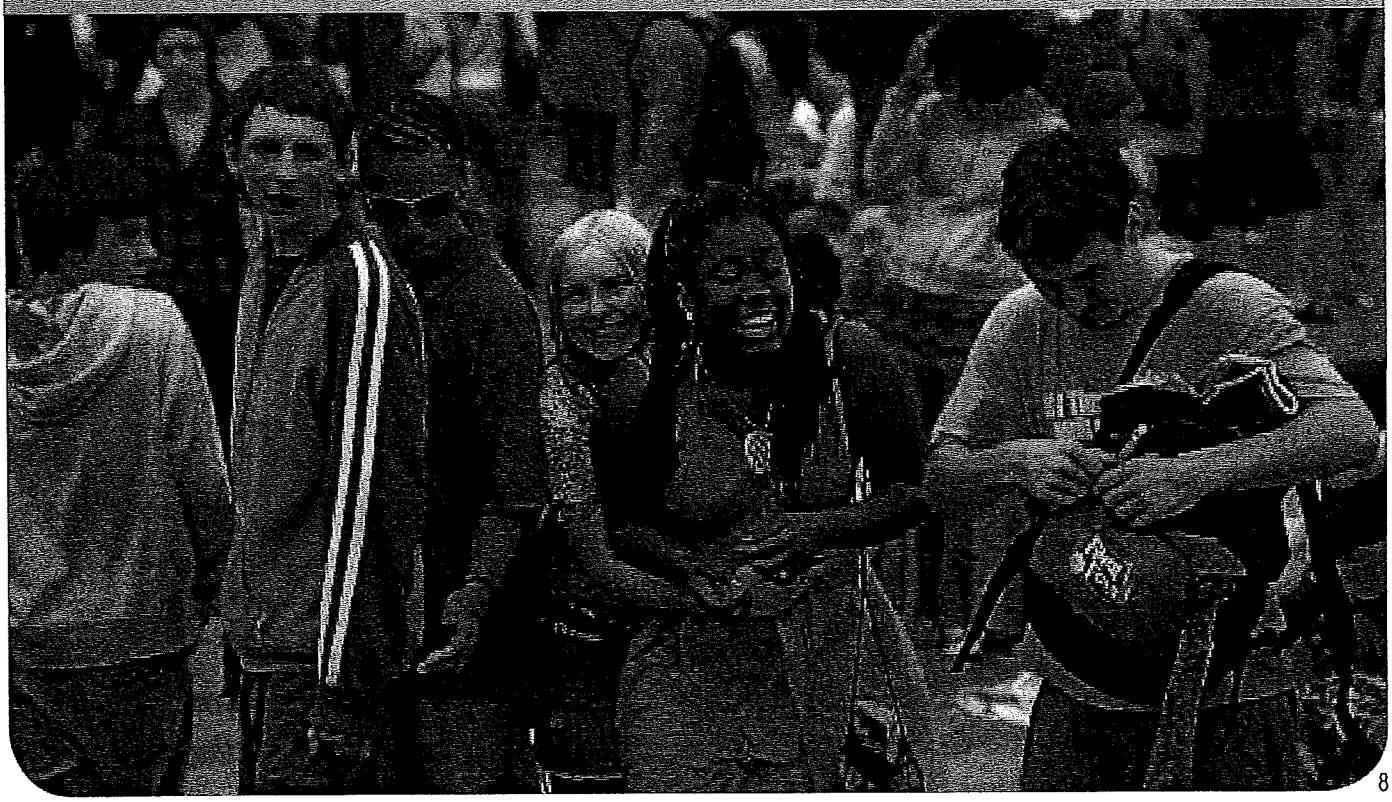
**EQUITY STRATEGY 1: Applying racial equity tools to our programs and projects.**
Through the Youth and Families Initiative (YFI), the City has realigned spending to meet families' priorities, and has designed the new Families and Education Levy around YFI's recommendations. The new Levy, which Seattle voters passed in November of 2011, targets schools with the greatest needs, often meaning significant populations of students of color, for programs aimed at closing the achievement gap.

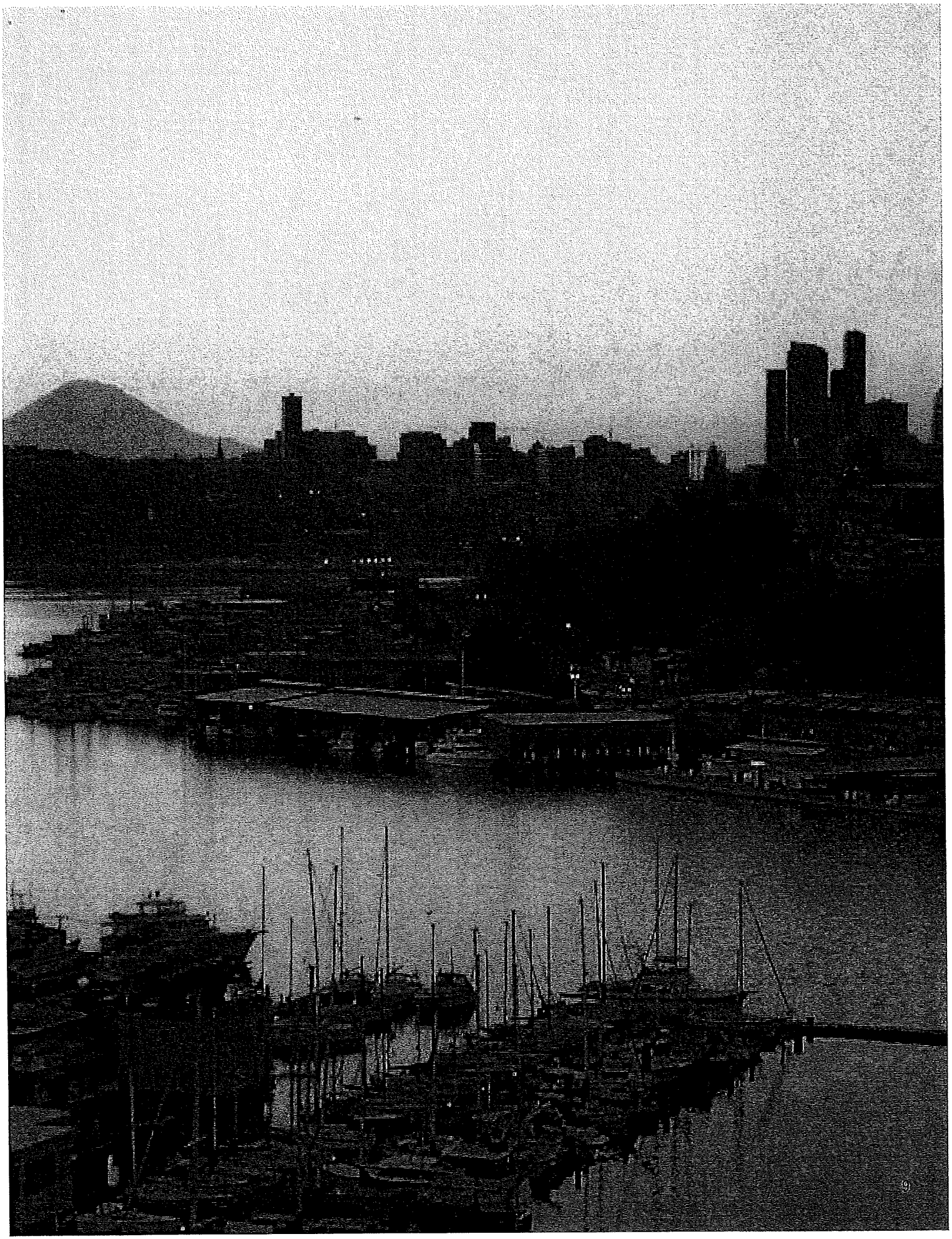
**EQUITY STRATEGY 2: Building racial equity into citywide policies and initiatives.**
School discipline policies such as out-of-school suspensions result in students' missing classroom experiences for extended periods of time. This directly impacts their ability to progress and graduate on time. The Race and Social Justice Community Roundtable has named education as its lead issue and is working with the Seattle School District to revise its policies on school discipline rates.

**EQUITY STRATEGY 3: Partnering with community.**
The Race and Social Justice Community Roundtable is partnering with Washington Community Action Network and other Roundtable members to promote a statewide legislative agenda on racial equity in education, and to develop strategies to eliminate disproportionality in school discipline rates.

"RSJI is a great example of City government seeking concrete, measurable reductions of racial disparities for the greater good of all. It is rare to see government take on – and stick with – an initiative that emerged from strong community leadership and engagement."

*Lori Villarosa, Executive Director, Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity*





## MOVING FORWARD

What is RSJI's plan to end racism and achieve racial equity? Specific, measurable goals to address all key community indicators: education, jobs, housing, health, criminal justice, community development and the environment. Through our public planning process, community members identified education, health and community development as top priorities for action.

We will begin by:

- Selecting measures within each indicator.
- Developing equity strategies.
- Setting specific goals to assess progress.

We have no illusions regarding the enormity of the challenge. Over the next three years, however, we will show results:

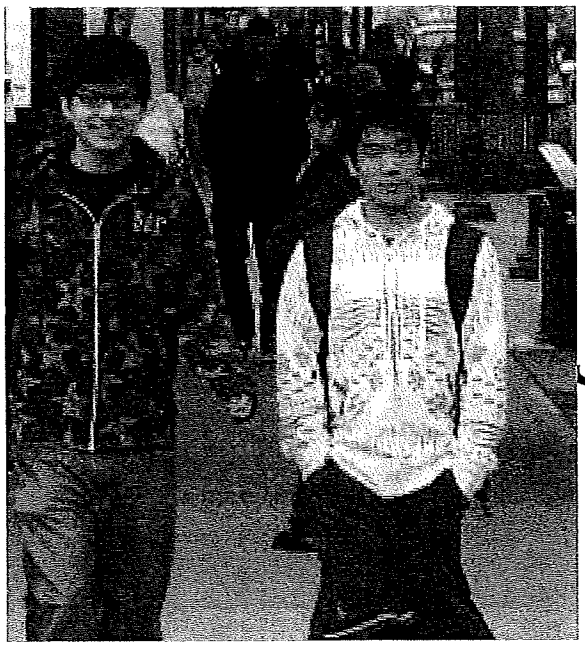
- We will develop meaningful measures for our racial equity work and set specific, measurable targets for eliminating racial inequity. We will measure our progress with the same dedication as we measure our problems.

- We will develop and implement programs and policy strategies to achieve racial equity.

- We will use inclusive outreach and public engagement strategies to involve the community. We will apply our racial equity toolkit across our work.

- And we will develop partnerships with other institutions and the community. We will increase the public will to achieve racial equity.

Since the beginning of Seattle's history, racism has existed even as many worked to put an end to it. As a community we have made it to this point thanks to the efforts of those who came before us. We believe that Seattle residents have had enough of the status quo, and that we are ready to end the effects of racism in our city. The current state of affairs is not carved in stone; it is something we can change. The time has arrived to speak openly and to work urgently for racial equity.



summary

## GET INVOLVED!

Many organizations and individuals have committed themselves to this work. Join us!

- Develop conversation or training on racism at your workplace, in your community or at your place of worship.

- Develop strategies to eliminate institutionalized racism within your own organization.

- Work with the Race and Social Justice Initiative to develop a collaborative plan for community action.

**Resources and funding for your community:**
The Department of Neighborhoods funds racial justice projects. Visit **seattle.gov/neighborhood/nmf.**

**Learn more about RSJI**: Visit **seattle.gov/rsji** or call the Seattle Office for Civil Rights at 206-684-4507.

Together we can achieve racial equity in Seattle.

RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

**ADVANCE OPPORTUNITY. ACHIEVE EQUITY.**

Thank you to the members of the Three-year Plan Steering Committee:

**Elected Officials:**
Deputy Mayor Darryl Smith
Councilmember Bruce Harrell
Darby DuComb, City Attorney's Office

**RSJI Coordinating Team:**
Julie Nelson, Office for Civil Rights
Glenn Harris, Office for Civil Rights
Darlene Flynn, Office for Civil Rights
Elliott Bronstein, Office for Civil Rights

**RSJI Subcabinet:**
Ron Harris-White, Parks
Ron Wilson, Police

**RSJI Change Team Leads:**
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Ahmed Darrat, Transportation
Sahar Fathi, Legislative
Steve Sneed, Seattle Center

**Workforce Equity Planning and Advisory Committee:**
Darwyn Anderson, Personnel

**Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Committee:**
Michael Davis, Public Utilities
Bernie Matsuno, Neighborhoods

**Contracting Equity Committee:**
Fred Podesta,
Finance & Administrative Services

**Core Team:**
Sherri Anderson, City Light
Monica Beach, Office for Civil Rights

The development of our new Three Year Plan was made possible through the broad participation of departmental Change Teams, the Race and Social Justice Sub-Cabinet, the Race and Social Justice Initiative Core Team, the Race and Social Justice Community Roundtable and participants in the community engagement process. Thank you!

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