LOCAL AND REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON
RACE & EQUITY

Racial Equity Action Plans

A How-to Manual

by Ryan Curren, Julie Nelson, Dwayne S. Marsh, Simran Noor, and Nora Liu

RACIALEQUITYALLIANCE.ORG

LOCAL AND REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON
RACE & EQUITY

This toolkit is published by the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, a national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.

AUTHORS

Ryan Curren, Julie Nelson, Dwayne S. Marsh, Simran Noor, and Nora Liu

REPORT CITATION

Curren R., Nelson, J., Marsh, D.S., Noor, S., Liu, N.
"Racial Equity Action Plans, A How-to Manual.":
Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society,
University of California, Berkeley, 2016

GARE is a joint project of

haas institute
FOR A FAIR AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

Csi CENTER FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

RACIALEQUITYALLIANCE.ORG

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TOOLKIT
**Racial Equity
Action Plans**

Government
Alliance on
Race and Equity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While local governments may consider themselves fair and just, people of color fare worse than their white counterparts in every area: housing, employment, education, justice, and health. Current day disparities are just as bad and sometimes worse than they were before the Civil Rights era. Since then, most governments have not made significant changes in outcomes for employees or residents of color, even with years of effort.

Because local governments have a unique responsibility to all residents, these racial inequities can and must be addressed. The public sector must be for the public good; current racial inequities are destructive. We must go beyond individual, intentional discrimination or acts of bigotry, and examine the systems in which we all live. We must investigate—honestly—how our longstanding systems, policies, and practices, unintentionally or not, have created and continue to maintain racial inequity, and we must change them.

> **WHAT IS RACIAL EQUITY?**
> Racial equity is realized when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes, and outcomes for all groups are improved.

Racial Equity Action Plans can put a theory of change into action to achieve a collective vision of racial equity. Plans can drive institutional and structural change. However, the goal we seek is not a plan. The goal is institutional and structural change, which requires resources to implement: time, money, skills, and effort. It requires local governments' will and expertise to change our policies, the way we do business, our habits, and cultures.

Our theory of change requires normalizing conversations about race, making sure we have a shared understanding of commonly held definitions of implicit bias and institutional and structural racism. Normalizing and prioritizing our efforts creates greater urgency and allows change to take place more expeditiously. We must also operationalize racial equity, integrating racial equity into our routine decision-making processes, often via use of a **Racial Equity Tool** and development and implementation of measurable actions. Operationalizing a vision for racial equity means implementation of new tools for decision-making, measurement, and accountability. We also organize, both inside our institutions and in partnership with others, to effect change together. Organizing involves building staff and organizational capacity through training for new skills and competencies while also building internal infrastructure to advance racial equity.

This manual provides guidance for local governments to develop their own Racial Equity Action Plans after a period of research and information gathering. This manual also provides guidance and tools to conduct this research. GARE created a Racial Equity Action Plan template after a national scan of promising practices from cities and counties that have developed plans for racial equity and the structures that supported successful planning processes. We are also appreciative of the **Results Based Accountability** framework as a disciplined way of thinking and taking action that communities and government can use to achieve meaningful improvements, eliminate racial inequities and lift up outcomes for all.

Racial Equity Plans are both a process and a product. A successful process will build staff capacity which can be valuable during implementation. A process can also serve to familiarize more staff with the jurisdiction's racial equity vision and its theory of change.

Preparing leadership support, forming a skilled planning team, designing community engagement structures upfront, and securing resources to support all participants are key preparatory steps key to set the process on the right path. Your research must not only influence the content of your plan but also how it is framed. The methodology should include

both quantitative and qualitative data collected through community engagement. A clear set of findings can provide a solid foundation to inform your plan. Areas to analyze include:

- workforce demographics, hiring, retention, and promotion;
- contracting practices;
- jurisdiction commitment, leadership, and management;
- community access and partnership; and
- data, metrics, and on-going focus on improvement.

Figure 1: The Racial Equity Action Plan Process

A strong Racial Equity Action Plan is guided by a clear vision of racial equity and structured to achieve meaningful and measurable results. A simple plan structure provided by GARE includes the following components:

- Results: Community level conditions we are aiming to impact.
- Community Indicator: Community indicators are the means by which we can measure impact in the community. Community indicators should be disaggregated by race.
- Outcome: A future state of being resulting from a change at the jurisdiction, department, or program level. Strong outcomes articulate a clear improvement or define how much improvement will take place.
- Action: They are the specific things your jurisdiction will do to achieve the outcomes.
- Performance Measure: A quantifiable measure of how well an action is working. Different types of measures include 1) Quantity—How much did we do? 2) Quality—How well did we do it? 3) Impact—Is anyone better off?

Successfully implementing a plan will require well-resourced stewardship, strong accountability structures, and clear communications with all partners during the rollout and beyond. An organizational body, with authority to remove barriers during implementation and monitor progress, is critical infrastructure over the life of the plan. Regular tracking of performance and reporting on progress provides a level of accountability to follow through on the jurisdiction's commitment to action. Using data and the opportunity to reflect develops a culture of learning and innovation to improve upon commitments in the plan over its lifetime. The quality and consistency of communication about the plan both within the government and with community will be a major indicator of whether the plan is another exercise in maintaining the status quo or whether it is truly the harbinger of your jurisdiction's commitment to advancing racial equity.

ACHIEVING LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S VISION OF RACIAL EQUITY

A jurisdiction's clear and bold vision for racial equity is important for the success of a Ra-

cial Equity Action Plan. The vision should be heavily informed by communities of color impacted by institutional and structural racism—those with the real expertise. Your jurisdiction may already have made a formal commitment to achieving racial equity and expressed this through adoption of legislation, a general plan, or executive proclamation. If so, then Racial Equity Action Plans can layout the approach to operationalizing this commitment. If not, then Racial Equity Action Plans are an excellent opportunity to make such a commitment paired with the change necessary to achieve it. Figure 2 shows the City of Portland's Citywide Racial Equity Goals and Strategies, adopted unanimously by City Council as binding policy in 2015.

By embarking on a planning process you are are undergoing a reprioritization of your work and changing long-standing systems and structures. You are creating a shared practice and forming relationships across the jurisdiction's structure. Creating a culture of learning and reflection to improve upon the work as you go is essential. You are expanding a field of practice, building off of the experiences of local governments directly addressing racial inequities, and have the opportunity to break relatively new ground. Your planning process is an opportunity to take a step back and ask engaging questions, knowing that you may not have the answers, and set an actionable course toward achieving racial equity. GARE, your peers, and our network of national partners are all here to help you, and to share resources and promising practices.

ARTICULATING A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR THE JURISDICTION

The ultimate goal of a jurisdiction's racial equity work should be to eliminate racial inequities and improve outcomes for all racial groups. Government played a primary role in the creation of racial inequities, including laws, policies, and practices that created racial inequities. Our ideas of "equality and justice" have shifted over time, and we now have collective values for a more inclusive democracy. To achieve our aspirations and to get to different outcomes, we will need to fundamentally transform government. This requires high level leadership, committed action teams, supportive community leaders, and effective structures and practices. But what guides this change?

A new theory of change to achieve racial equity should guide your jurisdiction and its plan to make transformative change. GARE's recommended theory of change does the following[1]:

1. Normalize—Establish racial equity as a key value by developing a shared understanding of key concepts across the entire jurisdiction and create a sense of urgency to make changes.

2. Organize—Build staff and organizational capacity, skills, and competencies through training while also building infrastructure to support the work, like internal organizational change teams and external partnerships with other institutions and community.

3. Operationalize—Put theory into action by implementing new tools for decision-making, measurement, and accountability like a Racial Equity Tool and developing a Racial Equity Action Plan.

WHAT IS MY JURISDICTION ISN'T READY BUT MY DEPARTMENT IS?

The framework and approach to creating Racial Equity Action Plans presented in the manual is also applicable to departments within a jurisdiction. Most often jurisdictions beginning to focus on racial equity have only a small number of departments with any emphasis on racial equity or the infrastructure to support the work. A department with some foundation to build a Racial Equity Action Plan upon is a good place to start. A strong director with capable staff and good community partnerships can develop a plan to serve as a model or proof of concept for the entire jurisdiction.

This theory of change can be measured over time to track progress and impacts, both within the organization and in the community. Activities can be quantified like the number of employees trained, number of departments with Racial Equity Action Plans, number of times a Racial Equity Tool is used to address institutional and structural barriers, or number of community members partnering with the jurisdiction to advance racial equity. Outcomes can also be quantified by measuring the improved knowledge of racial equity

Figure 2: City of Portland Citywide Racial Equity Goals and Strategies

CITYWIDE RACIAL EQUITY GOALS & STRATEGIES

OFFICE of EQUITY and HUMAN RIGHTS
CITY OF PORTLAND

EQUITY GOAL #1

We will end racial disparities within city government, so there is fairness in hiring and promotions, greater opportunities in contracting, and equitable services to all residents.

EQUITY GOAL #2

We will strengthen outreach, public engagement, and access to City services for communities of color and immigrant and refugee communities, and support or change existing services using racial equity best practices.

EQUITY GOAL #3

We will collaborate with communities and institutions to eliminate racial inequity in all areas of government, including education, criminal justice, environmental justice, health, housing, transportation, and economic success.

OVERALL STRATEGIES

1 Use a racial equity framework:
Use a racial equity framework that clearly articulates racial equity; implicit and explicit bias; and individual, institutional, and structural racism.

2 Build organizational capacity:
Commit to the breadth and depth of institutional transformation so that impacts are sustainable. While the leadership of elecmteds and officials is critical, changes take place on the ground, through building infrastructure that creates racial equity experts and teams throughout the city government.

3 Implement a racial equity lens:
Racial inequities are not random; they have been created and sustained over time. Inequities will not disappear on their own. It is essential to use a racial equity lens when changing the policies, programs, and practices that perpetuate inequities, and when developing new policies and programs.

4 Be data driven:
Measurement must take place at two levels—first, to measure the success of specific programmatic and policy changes; and second, to develop baselines, set goals, and measure progress. Using data in this manner is necessary for accountability.

5 Partner with other institutions and communities:
Government work on racial equity is necessary, but insufficient. To achieve racial equity in the community, government needs to work in partnership with communities and institutions to achieve meaningful results.

6 Operate with urgency and accountability:
When change is a priority, urgency is felt and change is embraced. Building in institutional accountability mechanisms using a clear plan of action will allow accountability. Collectively, we must create greater urgency and public commitment to achieve racial equity.

concepts among employees, increased skills to work on and communicate about racial equity, and the changes made due to racial equity considerations being integrated into decision-making structures. We must also focus on our desired results in the community, those conditions we are aiming to impact. Community indicators are the means by which we can measure impact in the community, with clear focus on closing racial disparities, and lift up success for all groups.

This higher level strategic thinking is helpful in advance of developing Racial Equity Action Plans but does not need to be exhaustive and should not impede your process. Some simple exercises can help you stay focused on racial equity and the above framework. Ask the following effective questions:

- What conditions of well-being do we want for our community?
- Why do these conditions exist differently for people of color? Ask your self "Why else?" 3–5 times to get deeper into the institutional and structural issues at play.
- What would these conditions look like if we achieved them?
- What measures can we use to quantify these conditions?
- Who are the partners with a role to play?
- What works to "turn the curve" of the baseline inequities?
- What do we propose to do?

A jurisdiction's racial equity work needs to be transformative. This means work should cut across multiple institutions and practices, and the focus should be on changing policy and organizational culture. Work will alter the ways institutions operate. It will shift cultural values and create greater political will to advance racial equity.

Transactional changes are those that help individuals negotiate existing the structures but leave those structures in place. They may result in short-term gains for communities and/or employees of color but do little to ensure those gains will be lasting.

With a clear vision for racial equity, transactional approaches can help position a jurisdiction for more transformational work. To do this effectively requires an on-going focus on organizing, operationalizing, and normalizing.

Figure 3: Transactional Approaches vs Transformative Approaches

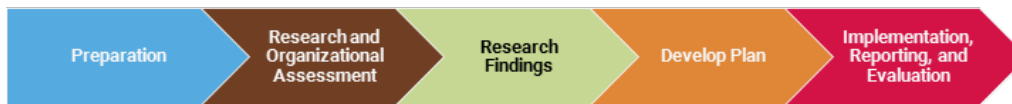| *Transactional approaches*	• Issue-based • Help individuals negotiate existing structures. • Solutions "transact" with institutions • Short-term gains for communities, but leave the existing structure in place
Transformative approaches	• Cut across multiple institutions • Focus on policy and organizational culture • Alter the ways institutions operate • Shift cultural values and political will to create racial equity

ACTION PLANNING PROCESS

Recommended steps for developing and implementing a Racial Equity Action Plan are outlined below. The details in each of the steps may vary between jurisdictions, depending on the size, structure, and resources your have available. It is much better to be pragmatic and focused so that the plan you develop sets your jurisdiction on the path to achieving racial equity.

We recommend designing your work plan to produce three products for broader communication:

- Research Findings
- Racial Equity Action Plan
- Annual Updates

Preparation → Research and Organizational Assessment → Research Findings → Develop Plan → Implementation, Reporting, and Evaluation

Racial Equity Action Teams can work with their leadership to develop agreed-upon decision making protocols and processes for vetting each of these products internally. We'll share more about these products in the next sections of this guide.

Note, some jurisdictions have the advantage of existing strategic plans with committed goals, objectives, strategies, and actions, some of which may be related to diversity, inclusion or racial equity. You can use those as a foundation from which to build upon. Additional content can then be added to you Racial Equity Action Plan to round out your jurisdiction's racial equity work if needed. Also, some jurisdictions have existing or planned processes to create broader strategic plans. You can use those processes to create your Racial Equity Action Plan rather than duplicating efforts which may otherwise lead to staff and community confusion and fatigue.

PREPARATION

Successfully developing a Racial Equity Action Plan will require preparation.

THE JURISDICTION

Your executive and leadership team should communicate the purpose and importance of this work, how it relates to the jurisdiction's work overall, and how it fits into any other work on racial equity. This context is especially important for those staff with little or no exposure to racial equity work.

"Leadership" may vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. In some cases, a city or county manager may be the most appropriate top leadership providing direction for the development of the Racial Equity Action Plan. In other cases, it might be elected officials.

In Seattle in 2009, Mayor Greg Nickels established the Race and Social Justice Initiative as one of his early priorities. With a strong-mayor form of government, Mayor Nickels set clear expectations of his department directors for developing Racial Equity Action Plans on an annual basis and he held his department directors accountable for implementation of actions. After losing his re-election bid, Seattle's City Council further institutionalized racial equity as a priority by the unanimous passage of **Resolution 31164—A Resolution Directing Race and Social Justice Work to Continue**, including development of annual Racial Equity Action Plans and support for Racial Equity Action Teams.

Fairfax County, Virginia launched a process to develop a racial equity strategy with joint **legislation** adopted by Fairfax Board of Supervisors and School Board. The resolution directed the development of a racial and social equity policy and strategic actions that include "intentional collective leadership, community engagement, equity tools, and infrastructure to support and sustain systemic change, and shared accountability."

At a minimum, we recommend that the executive send out a jurisdiction-wide email introducing the staff leading the planning process, giving them authority to oversee the process, and explaining what to expect. An accompanying **FAQ** is recommended. Another preparatory step is to present an overview of the context and process at meetings where staff from all divisions and programs are represented, such as an all-staff meeting or managers' meeting. Jurisdictional newsletters are also a good tool to communicate the context and importance of this work.

We recommend sending a clear message about the reality of this change work and the type of change that staff can expect. Do not shy away from the reality that the planning process and the plan itself will require jurisdiction resources to implement: time, money, skills, and effort.

STAFFING LEADS AND RACIAL EQUITY ACTION TEAMS

Leadership at the executive level should identify a lead or two co-leads who will oversee the plan development project. Co-leads should work with their executive and/or leadership

team to recruit staff to form a Racial Equity Action Team, a small group who will shepherd the jurisdiction through the entire process. The form and composition of your Racial Equity Action Team will depend on the size and structure of your jurisdiction. However, the function of your team should include the following:

- **Racial equity focus**—Maintaining a clear focus on racial equity throughout all stages of the process, working with any resistance that arises, and providing racial equity resources for participants who lack the skills needed to meaningfully participate.

- **Project Design**—Designing the scope, structure, and timeline of the process.

- **Project Management** – Coordinating the meetings and communications, producing materials and deliverables.

- **Research and Systems Change Analysis**—Designing information-gathering instruments and facilitating discussions to solicit qualitative information. Analyzing your jurisdiction's systems, including policies, practices and procedures, how they are working, and opportunities for change that will advance racial equity. Synthesizing information gathered to identify gaps in racial equity, promising practices, and report on findings and recommendations.

- **Strategic Planning**—Designing exercises and facilitating discussions to develop the content for the Plan (outcomes, actions, and performance measures).

- **Communications**—Communicating with leadership, staff, and community about the purpose of this process, updates on the process, results of the process, and being a point of contact for anyone with questions. Some considerations as you compose the Racial Equity Action Team include:

  - **Authority—**The Racial Equity Action Team will need to ask staff in different divisions, programs, and departments to provide information and to take various actions. They need to have sufficient authority to make these requests. This could be done by either having upper management staff as members of the team or by explicit and clear authorization from the executive or director to oversee the project.

  - **Expertise**—Team members will need to collectively possess a robust set of skills to fulfill the functions listed above. People with lived experiences bring important expertise. People with a strong racial equity analysis, some experience with strategic planning, and a good project manager are especially important.

  - **Familiarity**—All team members should be familiar with the jurisdiction's racial equity terminology. They also need familiarity with the jurisdiction's decision-making structure and processes.

  - **Time**—The Racial Equity Action Team should be given dedicated time for this project. The time commitment will vary dramatically depending on the capacity of the Team, the size of the jurisdiction, and the scale and depth of the process.

  - **Composition**—Each Racial Equity Action Team will look different and be a different size. Ideally, team members represent the demographic diversity of the jurisdiction. Racial diversity is especially important. Ideally, team members also represent the different divisions or programs across the jurisdiction. Representation from up and down the jurisdiction's hierarchy is also ideal, though if leadership is represented then it is important to be sensitive to power dynamics so all members feel empowered to meaningfully participate. Tenure and union representation are also important consider-

ations. Representativeness is something to strive for but should be balanced with the need to recruit members with the skills sets listed above.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND SCALE

The Racial Equity Action Team should develop an appropriately scaled organizing structure for this process. Not every staff person in the jurisdiction needs to or has to be involved at every stage of the process. The size and complexity of the jurisdiction is one factor shaping this project's scope. The racial equity expertise within the jurisdiction is another.

Engaging a jurisdiction's leadership team is critical regardless of their racial equity expertise. They will need to be engaged in both managing the process and providing substantive input in all phases. Engaging the top-level managers could be done as a group and/or with each manager participating in the engagement of their division or program staff. Managers of color and/or with racial equity expertise could also be considered for individual interviews to provide candid feedback.

Engaging entire divisions or large programs may prove challenging. We recommend the Racial Equity Action Team work with managers of larger divisions or programs to recruit a small team of staff to represent. These staff should have the most familiarity and experience with the concepts of racial equity in addition to being familiar with the work of the division or program.

The Racial Equity Action Team should consider creating a graphic of the agreed upon jurisdictional structure to use as a communications tool.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Communities of color have borne the burdens of inequitable policies, practices, and investments, and they hold deep expertise on those impacts. Their expertise and ownership of this plan is critical to success. Engaging residents of color—along with employees of color—as subject matter experts in the process can improve the process and the final product in myriad ways; from more accurate analysis of institutional barriers to identification of more effective strategies and greater community buy-in during implementation. Robust community engagement throughout your process will be critical to your success.

Jurisdictions willing to examine their own institutional racism are opening themselves up to criticism which may feel vulnerable. Their tendency may be to conduct an internally focused planning process. Overcoming this tendency is important. At a minimum, jurisdictions should engage people of color most impacted by racial inequities to establish the jurisdiction's broader vision for racial equity and theory of change to achieve it. This foundation can serve as the touchstone for your planning process. The other critical point of community accountability is an opportunity to review your draft plan and take an active role in implementation and regular reporting on progress.

Community engagement during the planning process can take many forms, not all of which are discussed here. Community bodies formed with decision-making authority and specific planning responsibilities are most effective. The volunteer nature of these bodies makes it difficult to recruit community members from outside the jurisdiction's institutional partners who are already paid to do this work. People of color in the community with different lived experiences of institutional racism should be compensated for their expertise, similar to how jurisdictions value technically-skilled professionals like architects and

engineers. Portland Metro's **Equity Strategy Advisory Committee** is a good example of a body that advised Metro through the creation of their racial equity strategy. Its members represented leaders from philanthropy, nonprofit, government, and business sectors.

Another strategy is contracting with community based organizations (CBOs) already working on issues of racial equity to host community events at different points in the process. Research methods conducted by CBOs such as focus groups, surveys, and interviews can solicit information government could not, and it also builds the capacity of CBOs to do future work.

Another way to access community expertise and identify priorities without fatiguing the community is to use existing community-produced reports as research material. Reports cataloguing disparities, their causes, and associated solutions are often available[2]. In some cases, these reports are even the impetus for local government to institute a racial equity initiative. However, these reports are resource intensive to produce so community groups should be sufficiently resourced. Jurisdictions should also value this work by providing decision making authority during the implementation phase to maintain trust, ensuring that community-sourced strategies are not co-opted or made ineffective.

RESOURCES

It is important to have a central point of contact for questions, training, and support during the process.

Resources provided could include a project webpage with background and training materials, sample materials, frequently asked questions, a glossary defining common terms, and contact information for specific technical assistance. You can also hold open office hours to provide tailored technical assistance through the process.

Some foundational training is a critical pre-requisite for meaningful participation in this project. The Racial Equity Action Team and leadership groups should take a basic racial equity training as a foundation for building a shared analysis and definitions for racial equity work. Additional training on strategic planning for racial equity is also recommended for co-leads and Racial Equity Action Team members. However, do not hesitate due to a fear of not being totally ready. Inaction is itself a decision to continue the status quo. Your leadership and Racial Equity Action Team simply need to be ready <u>enough</u> to begin.

2   **"An Unsettling Profile",** Coalition of Communities of Color, Portland, Oregon

TOOLKIT
**Racial Equity
Action Plans**

Government
Alliance for
Race and Equity

RESEARCH AND ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

This guide is primarily about a planning process to create the actual Racial Equity Action Plans. However, some form of research or basic information gathering is recommended to assess the jurisdiction's culture, structure, and practices.

The Racial Equity Action Team can first develop a research methodology and oversee the process to collect and analyze information. This will help assess key areas where a jurisdiction can improve racial equity and solicit ideas for making improvements. If information and/or data is lacking in some areas, you can include data development actions as a part of your Racial Equity Action Plan.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

Start by first taking an inventory of what racial equity information you already track and how useful or reliable it is. Then you can ask what information is not being tracked and what are the possible methods for collecting it.

Some jurisdictions are using a structured racial equity assessment to develop a baseline evaluation of gaps within an jurisdiction[3]. These assessments look at the jurisdiction's operations, practices, workforce, culture, policies, and programs. The City of Portland's Racial Equity Assessment[4] was used by all 26 bureaus to assess themselves before developing their five-year Racial Equity Plans.

Other research instruments and methodology can be used. Methodology used can range from reviewing source documents (ex. strategic plans, program materials, communication materials, etc.), individual interviews, administering a simple online **survey**[5] to facilitating in-person focus groups (ex. leadership team, managers, division/program teams, etc.). Research can be conducted by staff or outside consultants. The City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative alternates conducting employee surveys and community surveys (**information** on both of these surveys). The data collected through these surveys provides important feedback into their planning processes. To get the most candid feedback possible, it is important for the survey to be conducted anonymously.

---

3   City of Seattle and City of Portland racial equity assessments
4   We would like to offer special thanks to the All Hands Raised project and the Racial Equity Strategy Guide developed by the Urban League of Portland, in concert with City of Portland staff, especially its Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.
5   Portland Bureau of Transportation racial equity assessment survey

Figure 4: Sample Process for Research and Development of Recommendations
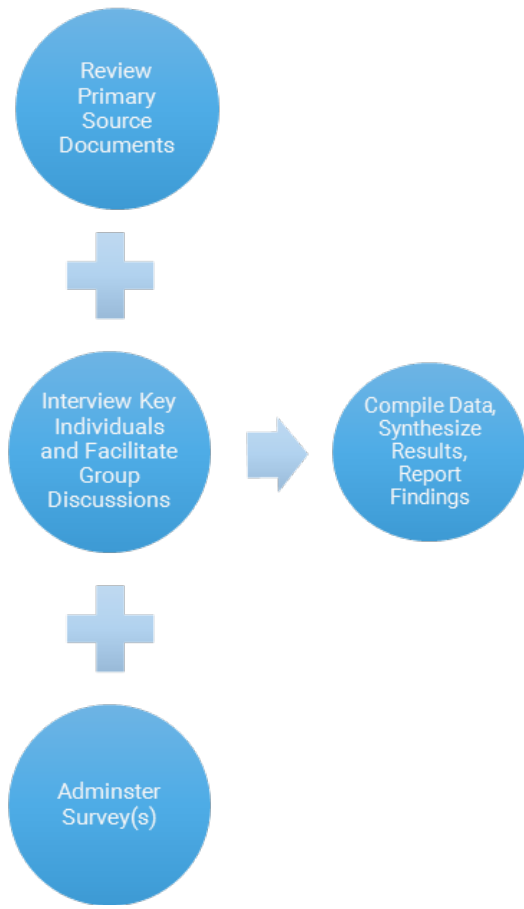
QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

Regardless of which approach you choose, it is important to create opportunities for group dialogue and analysis. Many of the most important and complex questions may not be suitable for an online survey and should be considered for facilitated discussions. The richest information gleaned from a survey will not be the quantifiable answers but the respondent's reasoning (always provide a comment box). Facilitated discussion provides participants the opportunity to clarify the questions, listen to each other's analysis, and also begin to identify solutions which can be mined later in the Plan development phase.

For group discussions, use your Racial Equity Action Team to staff the process, as experienced facilitators, to create facilitation guides, distribute questions ahead of time to participants, as note takers, and for on-going communication.

For survey analysis, conduct sub-group analysis, including comparisons between managers and non-managers, by race, between departments, and tenure. In the case of small numbers of people in some categories, to maintain confidentiality, you may want to combine racial data into whites and people of color and only highlight departmental differences for the largest departments.

RECOMMENDED AREAS OF ASSESSMENT

Jurisdiction Workforce Demographics, Hiring, Retention, and Promotion

We recommend collecting the current workforce demographic information. Try to disaggregate data by race, gender, management, line staff, represented staff, and tenure. This can help identify disparities and determine if the workforce or parts of the workforce are representative of the diversity of the jurisdiction's population.

Further research can then be done to assess how racial equity goals and practices are embedded in workforce development and hiring. The jurisdiction's human resources department can be helpful in determining whether racial equity considerations inform the hiring processes, professional development, performance evaluations, and promotions to name a few important workforce processes.

GARE's issue paper, "**Public Sector Jobs: Opportunities for Advancing Racial Equity**," has useful resources both for assessment of current conditions and practices, as well as development of actions to advance racial equity as an employer. When it comes to workforce equity, your goal should be for your workforce to reflect the diversity of the communities you serve across the breadth (functions) and depth (hierarchy) of your jurisdiction. Based on your analysis of workforce data, review of institutional policies and practices, and engagement of key stakeholders, you will be able to integrate specific workforce equity actions into your Racial Equity Action Plan.

Contracting Practices

Your jurisdiction may participate in a program to increase contracting with people of color and other underutilized contractors. It is wise to collect data on your contracting performance, and specifically identify to what extent your jurisdiction conducts business with contractors of color.

You can then inquire further about the specific contracting practices. A contract manager can help provide information on the outreach practices to contractors of color, whether minimum requirements of contractors are excluding some contractors disproportionately, or the procurement process has any unintended bias.

GARE's issue paper, "**Contracting for Racial Equity: Best Local Government Practices that Advance Racial Equity in Government Contracting and Procurement**" has useful resources both for assessment of current conditions and practices, as well as development of actions to advance racial equity in your contracting and procurement. When it comes to contracting and procurement, your goal should be for your contracting and procurement dollars to benefit the full diversity of the communities you serve. Based on your analysis of contracting and procurement data—with a special focus on those departments with the largest budgets, review of institutional policies and practices, and engagement of key stakeholders—you will be able to integrate specific contracting and procurement equity actions into your Racial Equity Action Plan.

Jurisdictional Commitment, Leadership, and Management

Your Racial Equity Action Team can assess your jurisdiction's commitment to racial equity at the policy, planning, and budget levels. Whether racial equity is embedded into key guiding documents or decision-making processes can give an indication of jurisdictional commitment. Important information can be gathered about the general workplace envi-

ronment for staff; whether there are broadly agreed upon definitions of racial equity terms or even opportunities to discuss racism and racial equity.

Exploring the way leadership and management level practices affect your jurisdiction's ability to advance racial equity can provide useful insights. Ask how leadership supports racial equity in the jurisdiction, and among the employees. Ask about networking at the leadership level—to help support management and leadership staff in the pragmatic work of racial equity.

You should be cognizant of the fact that some staff may be hesitant to provide honest feedback, especially if there are any sorts of concerns about lack of management receptivity. If you have anecdotal evidence that suggests such concerns might exist, conduct focus groups and interviews with confidentiality.

Community Access and Partnership

It is important to understand how the jurisdiction engages with people and communities of color. Some areas of focus include looking at the racial diversity of advisory bodies, availability and access of translation and interpretation services, culturally relevant communication practices, and the frequency of staff interaction or partnership with communities of color during planning and implementation processes.

Data, Metrics, and On-going Improvement

Community-level data disaggregated by race in housing, jobs, education, criminal justice, health and others will capture various areas of disproportionality. In reality, local government touches each of these areas, but ultimately, does not control the entire system. Therefore, it is important to supplement your data analysis with assessment conversations to determine the key leverage points and opportunities for your jurisdiction to influence each area of inequity.

You should also review how your jurisdiction collects information and tracks the results of its actions to improve racial equity. We recommend looking closely at how data is disaggregated by race or not, whether a racial equity toolkit is used on programs and policies, and whether data collected by communities of color is valued and used by the jurisdiction. A deeper examination is needed to look at how service-level demographic data and data documenting disparities is used to prioritize and develop criteria for decision-making. This will provide valuable insight into whether investments and resource distribution are likely serving to achieve the jurisdiction's racial equity goals.

Jurisdictional practices in this area may help later in the process when developing a Racial Equity Action Plan's methods for tracking progress.

TOOLKIT
**Racial Equity
Action Plans**

Government
Alliance for
Race and Equity

RESEARCH FINDINGS

A summary of research findings is a helpful way to synthesize a large amount of information into a useful format. This may require sorting through data to find themes, anomalies, and discrepancies, all with the ultimate goal of identifying your "headline" findings. A Racial Equity Action Team is best suited for this work but may need supplemental support from data analysts or content experts.

Communicating your findings is an opportunity to raise awareness and give leadership an opportunity to convey the importance of advancing racial equity. Your executive or director is well positioned to communicate the findings and next steps. In-person meetings of staff and leadership to share the findings are good opportunities to answer questions and garner support for your plan.

A summary can help answer the following questions:

- What research methodology was used?
- Who participated? How did leadership participate? How did community participate?
- What are the high level summary findings (headlines)? Are there themes or trends identified?
- Where are the gaps in the jurisdiction's use of promising practices of racial equity? You may want to provide brief explanation for gaps.
- Were there any discrepancies between some findings and the Racial Equity Action Team's opinion? Why do they exist and is there a recommended response?
- Where are the strengths in the jurisdiction's use of promising practices of racial equity?
- What opportunities for change does your research suggest? What are some initial recommendations for the Plan?

THE PLAN

Racial Equity Action Plans should be ambitious documents to bring about institutional change in order to eliminate racial disparities, both inside government and in the community. Plans will have clear outcomes and measurable actions to achieve them. Effective actions should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely. Be sure your plan includes sufficient funding, staffing, accountability mechanisms, and evaluation.

Racial Equity Action Plans should create opportunities for reflection and learning. No one has all the right answers. Making some mistakes is highly likely but do not let the fear of mistakes stall your process or the implementation of your Plan. The Racial Equity Action Team can provide a model of reflection and learning for the whole jurisdiction to emulate.

The terminology for Racial Equity Action Plans is informed by Results Based Accountability. This approach clearly delineates between community conditions/results and performance accountability/outcomes. These levels share a systematic approach to measurement. This approach emphasizes the importance of beginning with a focus on the desired end condition.

We encourage you to be clear about the desired end conditions in the community and to emphasize those areas where you have the most direct influence. When you align community indicators, government strategies, and performance measures, you maximize the likelihood for impact. Recognize also that to ultimately impact community conditions, you will need to partner with other institutions, across sectors, always putting community in the center of your efforts.

Figure 5: Results Based Accountability Flow
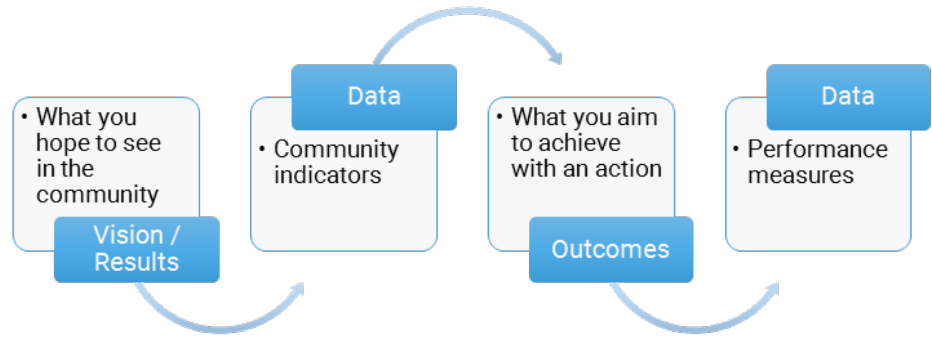
We have provided a sample template (see appendix 1) that uses the following definitions of key terms:

- **Results**: Community level conditions you are aiming to achieve.
- **Community Indicator**: The means by which you can measure community condi-

TOOLKIT
**Racial Equity
Action Plans**

Government
Alliance for
Race and Equity

tions, disaggregated by race.

- **Outcome**: A future state of being resulting from a change at the jurisdiction, department, or program level. Strong outcomes articulate a clear improvement or define how much improvement will take place. Beginning outcomes with the words "increase" or "decrease" help with the latter.

- **Action**: Specific things your jurisdiction will do to achieve the outcomes. Strong actions start with verbs.

- **Performance Measure**: A quantifiable measure of how well an action is working. Different types of measures include

  - Quantity—How much did you do?

  - Quality—How well did you do it?

  - Impact—Is anyone better off?

- **Timeline**: The month, quarter, and/or year an action will be accomplished.

- **Accountability**: The position or body that is responsible for the action and/or is accountable for its completion.

1. CREATE A RACIAL EQUITY GUIDING STATEMENT FOR YOUR JURISDICTION

A simple statement can help guide your jurisdiction throughout a plan's development and implementation. Questions to consider when developing this statement:

- How does your jurisdiction's existing mission statement relate to racial equity?

- (For departments) What is your unique role in the jurisdiction-wide effort to achieve racial equity?

- What principles or shared values are reflected in this guiding statement?

The racial equity guiding statements below are some examples:

- Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability: Develop planning and sustainability solutions that eliminate racial disparities thereby creating prosperous, resilient, healthy, and affordable communities for all Portlanders.

- Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative: Eliminate institutional racism and achieve racial equity in Seattle.

2. IDENTIFY RESULTS AND COMMUNITY INDICATORS THEN CREATE OUTCOMES

Identify a result and its associated community indicator(s) and then commit to an outcome stating the change your jurisdiction will make in order to improve the indicator. Indicators should measure a specific racial disparity. Outcomes articulate the change that strengthens the jurisdiction's position to reduce that disparity.

Again, this is an opportunity to engage leadership and secure buy-in to the necessary change. The Racial Equity Action Team can draft results/indicators and outcome language for leadership to process and finalize through a facilitated work session. Use this precious time wisely by coming with prepared materials and a facilitator's guide.

Questions to consider as you select community indicators and outcomes are:

- What needs or opportunities were identified during the research and assessment phase of this process?

- What needs to be different in our jurisdiction's culture, workforce, policies, practices, and procedures? What change do we ideally want (not just for what we would

settle)?

- What does our jurisdiction define as the most important racially equitable outcomes?

- What are some known racial inequities in your jurisdiction? What are the root causes or factors creating these racial inequities?

- How does your jurisdiction's relationship with communities of color need to change? How can those most adversely affected by an issue be actively involved in solving it?

- How will proposed outcomes address root causes of racial disparities and advance institutional and/or systemic change?

Examples of community indicators in Racial Equity Action Plans (disaggregated by race):

- Dane County, WI: Unemployment rates

- City of Seattle: Severe housing cost burden for renters

Examples of outcomes include:

- Dane County, WI: Dane County is a model employer advancing racial equity.

- Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability: Shared project management approach that integrates equity at all phases (scoping, design, implementation, evaluation).

- Seattle Public Utilities: Position service equity as one of the primary filters for decision making by Q1 2018.

3. CREATE ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE EACH OUTCOME

Develop a clear action or set of actions to achieve each outcome. Facilitated action planning sessions with departments or divisions are a good way to source potential actions. Bring the relevant indicators and outcomes to these sessions and facilitate a conversation about what steps are necessary to achieve them.

Questions to consider when developing actions include the following:

- Were any actionable solutions identified during the information gathering phase of this process? Are there actions prioritized by communities of color?

- What is a specific change in policy, practice, or procedure that could help produce more equitable outcomes?

- How will an action decrease racial disparities?

- Are there any unintended consequences? Can they be mitigated?

- What capacity is needed to successfully implement the action?

- How will an action be implemented and by whom?

- Is the action achievable within the lifetime of the plan?

- Is the action measurable and how will it be measured?

Similar to the sorting and summarizing of your research findings, there will need to be a process to refine all the proposed actions solicited through your work sessions. Again, the Racial Equity Action Team is best suited for this role.

TIPS FOR WRITING AN EASILY UNDERSTOOD PLAN

To ensure the public can understand the Plan, use the follow writing tips:

- Use plain language to describe your indicators, outcomes, actions, and measures.
- Spell out acronyms.
- Double-check for spelling errors.
- Have a communications expert review the Plan for clarity and cultural competency.

Examples of actions include the following:

- Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS): Develop a customized BPS project management approach that integrates transformational values framework, equity tools, and community engagement.
- Seattle Public Utilities: Implement an ongoing, sequential community engagement training and coaching process for all project managers.
- Seattle, WA: Develop and implement a Racial Equity Fund—provide funding to support institutional/community collaborations aimed at eliminating structural racism.

4. CREATE PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR EACH ACTION AND COMMIT TO A COMPLETION DATE

Each action should have a completion date (month/quarter/year) and performance measure(s). You may consider these questions as you develop a date and measures:

- What is your timeline?
- How will you evaluate and report progress over time?
- How will you know the action is complete?
- Can you retain stakeholder participation and ensure internal and public accountability?

Examples of tangible results to measure include the following:

- Seattle Department of Human Services:
  - 900 youth/young adults of color participating in the Youth & Young Adults Program made academic progress by achieving at least one of the following: GED completion, grade progression, credit retrieval, passing HSPE scores, on-time graduation.
  - By Q4 100 percent of our Human Resources policies will have been evaluated and corrected as filtered through the racial equity toolkit.
- Dane County Racial Equity Framework: 75 percent of Dane County employees believe their department seeks input and assistance on decision making from communities of color.

5. IDENTIFY THE LEAD POSITION OR BODY THAT HOLDS THE POSITION ACCOUNTABLE FOR COMPLETION OF EACH ACTION

The responsibility for completing actions should be delegated to a position or body. Any community oversight body should also be identified.

Recommend a Stewardship Plan

The ultimate goal of this work is not a Racial Equity Action Plan. The goal is institutional and structural change. Thus, GARE recommends the Racial Equity Action Team also provide recommendations on Plan stewardship and accountability. This includes responsible parties, resources committed, and accountability structures.

Recommendations could include a proposal for an ongoing coordinating body to track and support implementation of the Plan. Your accountability and stewardship structure is another opportunity to partner with the community.

Stewardship provides the opportunity to obtain broad buy-in—including from leadership—for any shifting of existing resources and/or any new staffing and resources required to implement actions. Also, some actions may be flagged for prioritization due to required immediate or near-term action.

Questions concerning limited resources for this work will undoubtedly arise. Remember, we are paying the cost already for past inaction to reduce disparities. There is a continued and growing cost to inaction. Your leadership should be reminded of this cost when they are considering how much to invest in the plan.

23

TOOLKIT
**Racial Equity
Action Plans**

Government
Alliance for
Race and Equity

REVIEW AND FINALIZING THE PLAN

Each jurisdiction's process for reviewing a draft plan will be different. The Racial Equity Action Team may want to circulate a draft to all or some participants, similar to the process for sharing the research findings. A public review process and/or comment period is recommended.

After receiving feedback, the Racial Equity Action Team can collectively and individually review the plan using questions like these below. Again, this is an excellent opportunity to engage the community in this process.

- Does the Plan reflect the research findings?
- Are the community indicators of racial disparities explicitly named?
- Are the outcomes and actions likely to make institutional or structural changes?
- Are the actions measurable and realistic?
- Do the actions reflect relevant promising practices in racial equity work?
- Are there positions responsible for the actions?
- Is the Plan implementable and well resourced?
- Are there any multi-department trends?
- Are there opportunities for different departments to work together?
- Are there opportunities for the community to work with departments on an action or the Plan as a whole?

ROLL OUT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the plan is perhaps the most critical step to create positive, meaningful change over time. The rollout of the plan should launch its implementation. The plan is a public document so the rollout should occur externally as well as internally. Each rollout will look different for each jurisdiction depending on their structure and their communications capabilities.

Once the plan is finalized, you will want to work with your leadership to distribute the plan at multiple staff levels and in multiple venues. Your communications staff could be good resources. The initial internal process may use similar communication strategies that were used when announcing the planning process; director sends all-staff email, presentation at all-staff meetings, summary materials distributed, etc.

The release of the plan will be a highly visible statement of the jurisdiction's intent and commitment to racial equity. GARE recommends using this opportune moment to raise awareness about racial inequities, government's role in eliminating inequities, and leaders' commitment to eliminating inequities. Achieving these objectives during the rollout of the plan will likely support many of the plan's actions.

At a minimum the executive should publicly release the plan with a press release, social media, and unique webpage. If possible or needed, a legislative body can provide additional legitimacy by adopting the Racial Equity Action Plan through a legislative action. This action could also include budgetary authority for implementation.

TOOLKIT
**Racial Equity
Action Plans**

Government
Alliance for
Race and Equity

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTING

Your stewardship body can help track and report on the progress of the Racial Equity Action Plan. They can compile the reports received from responsible parties and synthesize the results. At a minimum these should document challenges faced and plans for addressing challenges or how the outcome or action might be refined in the future. Also, be sure to document and celebrate successes that have been achieved.

By tracking challenges, the stewardship body will be able to see what obstacles are affecting progress towards racial equity and attempt to resolve those issues. They can also share jurisdiction successes with others who are looking for promising practices.

Some things to consider when reviewing progress on the plans:

- Are there outcomes and actions that are receiving less attention than others?
- Is there a need to change the plan?
- Have plan actions been implemented or in progress? What do the results indicate as to how to improve?
- If there are unmet or blocked actions, is there an explanation and/or proposal for resolving the issue?
- Are there racially diverse staff working on the plan over the year(s)?
- Are residents of color engaged in the implementation of the plan over the year(s)?
- Are measures being recorded and updated as actions change or are completed?
- Is the jurisdiction reporting on challenges and successes?

CONCLUSION

By developing a Racial Equity Action Plan, you are moving from theory into action, recognizing the potential for government transformation—a public sector for "the public good." You are creating a shared practice and forming new relationships across the jurisdiction's structure and in partnership with community. You are also creating a culture of learning and reflection to improve upon the work as you go. GARE, your peers, and our network of national partners are all here to help you.

In closing, we encourage you to be driven by:

- Justice—Be clear-eyed about the past and rigorously committed to a new way of governing, one that intentionally creates racial equity rather than reinforces historic injustice. Government itself created and continues to maintain inequity. City governments are uniquely suited and responsible for creating and sustaining equitable outcomes.

- Community—Adhere to the principle "nothing about us without us" as a core tenet of your approach. People of color and communities most affected by inequity are supported to lead efforts toward equity in cities, counties, and states across the country. Build capacity with leaders at all levels—from formal positions of authority and community leaders in cities to peer leaders elsewhere in our movement.

- Momentum—Aim for nothing less than complete transformation, but be both pragmatic and urgent in your approach, seeking not perfection but progress. Starting from what exists, build solutions, constantly evolve and adapt to accelerate the pace of progress.

You are joining a growing movement of people within government, normalizing conversations about race, operationalizing new behaviors and policies, and organizing to achieve racial equity. GARE is seeing more and more jurisdictions that are making a commitment to achieving racial equity, focusing on the power and influence of their own institutions, and working in partnership across sectors and with the community to maximize impact. There is an increasingly strong field of practice. We are organizing in government with the belief that the transformation of government is essential for us to advance racial equity and is critical to our success as a nation.

TOOLKIT
**Racial Equity
Action Plans**

Government
Alliance on
Race and Equity

APPENDIX I

Racial Equity Plan Template

(Template that can be customized depending on your jurisdiction's self-assessment and priorities; add your actions, timeline, accountability and performance measures, along with any additional results, indicators and outcomes)

1. Jurisdiction's residents understand and are committed to achieving racial equity.					
Community Indicator	**Outcomes and Actions**	**Timeline**	**Accountability**	**Performance Measure**	**Progress Report**
•Percent of population who believe advancing racial equity should be a priority of government •Percent of population who understand the jurisdiction's commitment to racial equity	A. Jurisdiction's employees understand, are committed to, and have the infrastructure needed to advance racial equity.				

2. Jurisdiction's residents view the jurisdiction as an effective and inclusive government that engages community.					
Community Indicator	**Outcomes and Actions**	**Timeline**	**Accountability**	**Performance Measure**	**Progress Report**
• Percent of population who believe the jurisdiction values community participation and engagement •Jurisdiction services are well received by community members • voter turnout	A. Jurisdiction's employees have outreach and engagement skills and competencies to advance racially inclusive outreach and engagement.				

3. Jurisdiction's communities of color share in the economic prosperity.					
Community Indicator	**Outcomes and Actions**	**Timeline**	**Accountability**	**Performance Measure**	**Progress Report**
•Unemployment rates •Household income •Number of businesses developed	A. Jurisdiction is a model employer advancing racial equity. B. Investments in contracting and procurement benefit the diversity of jurisdiction's communities.				

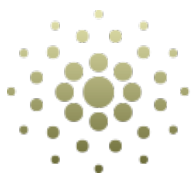| 4. Others					
Community Indicator	**Outcomes and Actions**	**Timeline**	**Accountability**	**Performance Measure**	**Progress Report**
•Criminal justice •Education •Housing •Health					

Across the country, governmental jurisdictions are:

Making a commitment to achieving racial equity

Focusing on the power and influence of their own institutions

Working in partnership with others

When this occurs, significant leverage and expansion opportunities emerge, setting the stage for the achievement of racial equity in our communities.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON
RACE & EQUITY

RACIALEQUITYALLIANCE.ORG