Race and Social Justice Toolkit
to Assess Policies and Programs

The Race and Social Justice Toolkit lays out a process and a set of questions to guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs. The purpose of the Toolkit is not to create a scoring system or pass judgment, but rather to evaluate our systems for any potential impacts on the populations that we serve and to identify opportunities for dialogue.

Which Policies and Programs Should I Assess with the Toolkit?

If a program or policy under consideration may have an impact on residents or voucher households, you should use the Toolkit to assess and support alignment with racial and social equity principles.

You should use the Toolkit if you anticipate that the program or policy may have an impact on equity in:
•   Housing
•   Services for Residents
•   Contracting
•   Employment
•   Budget policies

There may be other relevant areas where the Toolkit may be applied.

When Do I Use This Toolkit?

Use the Toolkit as early as possible when designing a new policy or program. However, the Toolkit can also be used to assess current programs and processes and to learn from past successes and challenges.

How Do I Use This Toolkit?

With Inclusion: The Toolkit analysis should be completed by people with different racial and ethnic perspectives, representing different departments, positions, and levels of seniority. You should engage in discussion with residents, voucher participants, and community members from the groups that are likely to be affected by the program or policy under consideration.

This Toolkit is intended to raise issues that can be sensitive. Recognize the difficulty that discussion of race and social inequities can pose and create a safe

Seattle Housing Authority's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) is an effort that began in 2013 to eliminate the effects of institutional and structural racism and other inequities within SHA by examining policies and procedures and modifying those that have negative impacts in our work. The initiative's goal is that all staff will deliver services in a culturally competent way, free of racism and prejudice to achieve and support racial equity. To do this requires ending individual racism, institutional racism, and structural racism.

environment that allows people to raise challenging issues. [See "Resource Guide Creating Spaces that Promote Safe and Engaging Dialogue about Race and Social Justice" for suggestions on creating a safe space for discussion.]

Step by step: The Race and Social Justice Toolkit is comprised of 8 steps from beginning to completion. Although the 8 steps below represent the suggested process, it may not always be the best way to approach your specific project. In such cases, please touch base with your Director and the Manager, Career Development/RSJI to discuss potential adjustments to the process:

- **Step 1: Identify the issue, policy, procedure or practice that would benefit from analysis through the RSJ lens.**

- **Step 2: Identify the programs and people who are impacted by this policy, procedure or practice.**

- **Step 3: Analyze available data relevant to the population affected by the program or policy.** What does the data tell you about potential impacts?

- **Step 4: Identify and engage stakeholders to get their perspective on race and equity impacts.** Gather information from community and staff on how the issue benefits or burdens the community in terms of racial equity and other equity issues.

- **Step 5: Review racial and social justice equity impacts. Identify opportunities for change to policy, procedure or practice.** Based on the Toolkit data review and analysis and stakeholder outreach, identify benefits and burdens associated with the policy, procedure or practice. Identify strategies to increase racial and social equity or minimize unintended consequences.

- **Step 6: Secure approval for change to policy, procedure or practice.**

- **Step 7: Implement change policy, procedure or practice. Evaluate impact.** Track impacts on communities of color and social equity issues over time. Continue to communicate with and involve stakeholders. Document unresolved issues.

- **Step 8: Report back.** Summarize and share the information learned from the Toolkit analysis with your team, your department's leadership, and with the RSJI committee. Depending on the magnitude of the issue or change you're considering, you may also want to share your analysis with Cabinet and the Board.

Need Help?

Contact the RSJI Manager if you'd like help completing the Toolkit. In addition, see the resource guides at the end of this Toolkit for practical suggestions on data sources, engaging community members, creating a safe space for dialogue, and a glossary.

Race and Social Justice Toolkit Assessment

Name of policy or program:

Department(s):

Contact/lead for this Toolkit process:

Step 1: Identify the issue, policy, procedure or practice that would benefit from analysis through the RSJ lens.

Team that will complete Step 1:	Step 1 work will be reviewed by:
•	•

1a. What issue, policy, procedure or practice is being reviewed?

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1b. Specific question(s) to run through the Race and Social Justice Toolkit:

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Step 2: Identify the programs and people who are most impacted by this policy, procedure or practice.

Team that will complete Step 2:	Step 2 work will be reviewed by:
•	•

2a. What SHA programs/portfolios and geographic areas does this issue, policy, procedure or practice impact? Click all that apply.

☐ Public Housing   ☐ Special Portfolio

☐ High Rises   ☐ All Programs/Portfolios

☐ Scattered Sites   ☐ SHA Workforce

☐ HOPE VI/Choice Neighborhood Communities   ☐ North Seattle

☐ Housing Choice Vouchers   ☐ South Seattle

☐ Tenant-Based   ☐ West Seattle

☐ Project-Based   ☐ All Geographic Areas

☐ Seattle Senior Housing Program   ☐ Outside of Seattle

2b. What population(s) are impacted by this policy, procedure or practice?

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Step 3: Analyze available data relevant to the population affected by the policy, procedure or practice.

Team that will complete Step 3:
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3a. What data needs to be considered to understand the impact of this issue, policy, procedure or practice? For example: What are the racial demographics of the populations likely to be affected by this issue, policy, procedure or practice? What are the demographics on income, disability, immigrant status, language, gender, religion or family size (or other relevant issue) of those impacted this issue, policy, procedure or practice?

Data questions we want to answer Be specific about the questions that you want to answer and the specific pieces of data that you will pull	Where to get this data	Who will pull & organize this data? By when?	Who will review & summarize the findings from this data? By when?
1.			
2.			
3.			

3b. Is there any other data (that is not available at this time) that would be helpful in making this decision? If so, what?

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3c. Stop here and check in with Policy staff and the relevant SHA director(s) and senior management for feedback on the work that you have completed above. Final plan for data review, after receiving feedback Policy staff and the relevant SHA director(s) and senior management:

Data questions we want to answer Be specific about the questions that you want to answer and the specific pieces of data that you will pull	Where to get this data	Who will pull & organize this data? By when?	Who will review & summarize the findings from this data? By when?
1.			
2.			
3.			

Pull and review data.

3d. What are the key findings from the data that you reviewed in step 4c?
1.
2.
3.

3e. Initial recommendations from Toolkit team, based on findings from step 4d:
●

Stop here and share 3d. and 3e. with the relevant department director(s) and senior management.

Step 4: Identify and engage stakeholders to get their perspective on racial and social justice equity impacts.

| **Team that will complete Step 4:** |
| ● |

4a. How will you involve community members, residents, participants, staff, and/or other stakeholders in gathering information on potential impacts?

☐ Create a proposed plan for outreach - **Stop here and use Developing an Outreach Plan resource guide.**

Questions you would like to ask	**Stakeholders to talk to**	**Method(s) to obtain their feedback**

Then:

☐ Share your plans with the RSJI Manager

☐ Get approval from your department's leadership

☐ Contact the Communications Director for feedback and approval on outreach to residents, participants, and community members

Final plan for community outreach (if different from above):

Questions you plan to ask	**Stakeholders to talk to**	**Method(s) to obtain their feedback**

☐ Implement your outreach plan

4b. What were the key findings from the information that you received from stakeholders?
What did the information that you received from stakeholders tell you about inequities that should be taken into consideration based upon race, income, disability, immigrant status, language, religion, gender, family size or other equity issues?

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Step 5: Review racial and social justice equity impacts. Identify opportunities for change to policy, procedure or practice.

Team responsible for completing Step 5:
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5a. Does the information that you gained in Step 4 change your earlier recommendations? If so, what are your updated recommendations?

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5b. What are your goals for this policy, procedure or practice? How will you know if you are successful in safeguarding or promoting race and social equity in pursuing those goals?

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5c. Given what you have learned from Step 3 (data review) and from Step 4 (stakeholder involvement) above, how is this policy, procedure or practice likely to increase or decrease racial equity? How is this policy, procedure or practice likely to increase or decrease equity in the areas of income, disability, immigrant status, language, religion, gender or family size? What benefits may result from this policy, procedure or practice, when it comes to race and social justice equity? What are potential negative impacts?

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5d. Following are some of the racial inequities that impact people of color in Seattle. How might the policy, procedure or practice that you have reviewed through this Toolkit process improve or worsen them? These impacts are offered as an example, but the issue you're analyzing may impact inequities in areas other than housing and for populations other than people of color. Mark the boxes below with + for potential benefits, - for detrimental impacts.

☐ People of color in Seattle are more likely than white people to be rental housing cost-burdened.

☐ People of color in Seattle have lower rates of net wealth, including homeownership than whites and are disproportionately impacted by foreclosures.

☐ People of color do not have equitable access to affordable housing in some high-cost parts of the city that also have good access to employment, transportation, high-quality schools, and other amenities.

☐ People of color have been historically under-represented in public decision-making bodies that influence planning and housing policy.

☐ Communities of color are experiencing increased displacement due to escalating rents.

☐ New housing developments are primarily producing smaller units that do not meet the needs of the larger average family sizes of households of color.

☐ People of color are unable to stay with their cultural community and support networks.

☐ Other inequities that exist in our community:

5e. How will you address the impacts (including unintended consequences) on racial equity? How will you address impacts on other forms of equity?

-

5f. How will you address existing inequities that may compromise the intended benefit of the policy, procedure or practice?

-

5g. How will you partner with participants and stakeholders for long-term positive change?

-

5h. What support or additional resources would help you?

-

Step 6: Secure approval for change to policy, procedure or practice.

Team responsible for completing Step 6:
-

Step 7: Implement change policy, procedure or practice. Evaluate impact.

Team responsible for completing Step 7:
-

7a. How will you evaluate and report on the impacts on equity over time? What data will you track? How will you retain stakeholder participation and ensure internal and community accountability?

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7b. Are there questions that are unresolved? If so, what are they?

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Step 8: Report back.

Team responsible for completing Step 8:
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Please share the results of your Toolkit analysis with your department and the RSJI team. Depending on the policy or program, you may also want to share your results with Cabinet, the Board and/or other stakeholders.

Who you will share results with	How will this information be shared?	By who?	When?