

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 26-5612 THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING
TARGETED UNIVERSALISM AS METRO'S FRAMEWORK TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE
OUTCOMES

Date: July 8, 2026
Department: Diversity, Equity and
Inclusion
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Length: 45 min.

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ISSUE STATEMENT

The Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (Strategic Plan), adopted in 2016, codified Metro's commitment to advancing racial equity through a bold and ambitious vision.

After more than a decade of implementation and identified through the Strategic Plan's evaluation process, findings suggested that future iterations of the plan should better define specific outcomes and metrics. Further, Metro should seek to build a more consistent approach to advancing racial equity while embedding it across organizational strategies, plans, programs, and decision-making.

As part of the update process, Targeted Universalism (TU) emerged as a viable future framework due to its inclusion in the Strategic Plan, organizational familiarity, and alignment with regional partners and jurisdictions. An extensive engagement process with staff, decision-makers, and community leaders helped build a shared understanding of Targeted Universalism and assessed its fit with Metro's racial equity work. The process culminated in a consensus recommendation to Metro Council to consider **racial equity through the Targeted Universalism framework** as Metro's future approach.

ACTION REQUESTED

Metro Council is asked to consider and approve Resolution 26-5612, which affirms "racial equity through the Targeted Universalism framework" as the organization's guiding approach for achieving equitable outcomes. The resolution directs the implementation of the Targeted Universalism framework within Metro organizational structures, policies, and practices.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Resolution 26-5612, if approved, would establish Targeted Universalism (TU) as a framework for setting universal goals with tailored strategies and measurable results to address the distinct needs of different communities in our region.

It would equip Metro with a framework that guides organizational strategies, plans, programs and decision-making processes that are data-driven, community-centered and outcomes-oriented. Using practices, tools and resources, the framework will foster an inclusive co-creation process aimed at driving system and culture change, ultimately advancing healthy, thriving, and prosperous lives for all residents and strengthening the region as a whole. Implementation will include:

1. Opportunities to utilize, evaluate and refine practices prior to broader agency-wide application;
2. Ensuring Metro's future racial equity strategy is positioned within organizational structures to support sustained, effective implementation;
3. Identifying organizational structures, practices, tools, training, and resource considerations necessary to support consistent application; and
4. Working with the Office of Metro Attorney to confirm compliance with federal anti-discrimination and civil rights laws under the Targeted Universalism Framework.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommend Metro Council approve Resolution 26-5612 to align with recommendations from the Targeted Universalism Learning and Alignment Project stakeholder group and further support Metro's mission to ensure every community in greater Portland can thrive.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

This resolution advances Metro Council priorities by strengthening the organization's ability to embed racial equity in decision-making through a consistent, accountable, and legally sound framework. Metro has long identified advancing racial equity as a core organizational value and strategic priority through its Strategic Framework, racial equity goals, and ongoing implementation of the Strategic Plan to Advance Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Adoption of Targeted Universalism (TU) will provide a shared framework for translating those commitments into practice by helping staff and decision-makers establish universal goals and develop targeted strategies that address the different barriers and opportunities experienced across communities. In doing so, TU supports Metro's mission of serving the region effectively while advancing outcomes that promote fairness, belonging, and opportunity for all.

Targeted Universalism recognizes that people and communities are situated differently within social, economic, and institutional systems. The framework establishes universal goals, uses data and evidence to understand how communities are situated relative to the goal, identifies the systems and structures that shape the situatedness of communities and develops targeted strategies that move all people toward shared outcomes. Metro remains committed to advancing racial equity and addressing structures and systems that disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, while ensuring that all policies, programs, and resource decisions comply with applicable federal and state laws. TU supports this approach by focusing on outcomes, conditions, and data-driven strategies. As a result, the framework offers a practical way to advance racial equity through objective, outcome-oriented approaches that improve conditions for all communities.

The recommendation to approve TU is grounded in a robust engagement and alignment process. Launched in 2025, the Targeted Universalism Learning and Alignment Project strengthened organizational readiness through assessments, stakeholder engagement, facilitated retreats, and collaborative learning opportunities. Participants included the Metro Council, Committee on Racial Equity (CORE), the Senior Leadership Team, members of the Racial Equity Leaders Team, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion staff, and other organizational stakeholders. The process emphasized co-creation, shared leadership, and consensus-building, creating broad support for TU as Metro's organizational equity framework. Stakeholders reached consensus that TU offers a common language, clear methodology, and practical structure for advancing equity work across departments while creating a strong foundation for future implementation.

If approved, this resolution would initiate the next phase of implementation by establishing opportunities to evaluate and refine TU practices before broader agency-wide application. Implementation activities would include identifying organizational structures, tools, practices, training needs, and resource considerations necessary to support consistent and effective use of the framework. Approval would also help ensure that Metro's future racial equity strategy is positioned within organizational structures that support sustained implementation, accountability, and continuous improvement. This phased approach will allow Metro to learn from early applications, assess effectiveness, and make adjustments before scaling implementation more broadly across the organization.

There are no immediate financial implications associated with approval of this resolution. Initial implementation activities will be structured to assess organizational capacity, resource requirements, training needs, and operational considerations necessary for

effective and consistent application of the framework. Information gathered through early implementation efforts will inform future decisions regarding ongoing investments and resource needs. The phased implementation approach is intended to support thoughtful stewardship of organizational resources while building the foundation for long-term success.

BACKGROUND

To address existing disparities, in 2010 the Metro Council adopted equity as one of the region's six desired outcomes. In 2011 the agency started the Equity Strategy Program, with the objective of creating an organizing framework to help Metro consistently incorporate equity into policy and decision-making. To advance this work, Metro established a series of foundational reports, frameworks and policy commitments including:

- Completion of the Equity Inventory Report, which catalogued the existing equity-related activities throughout Metro's departments;
- The Equity Baseline Report: A Framework for Regional Equity, which was commissioned by Metro and prepared by six community-based organizations. The ten equity indicators highlight the interrelated nature of equity and context for Metro's work in advancing equity across the region; and
- Resolution 16-078, adopting the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The plan outlined a bold vision for systemic change, with short/long-term goals, actions and implementation approaches—including Targeted Universalism—to dismantle barriers for Black, Indigenous and people of color and improve outcomes for all people who live, work and recreate in the Portland region.

The Strategic Plan has since guided decision-making, program design and community partnerships across the organization. Grounded in collaboration, it was shaped by community members, regional partners and internal leaders, and continues to rely on these partnerships to inform priorities, assess needs and measure progress.

In 2024, an Impact Report affirmed progress while recommending stronger outcome measurement, highlighting Targeted Universalism as a promising framework for achieving more precise and equitable results.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution 16-4708 Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion