

# Memo



**Metro**

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## Racial Equity Framework

### Purpose

We are guided by Metro's values and the [Council adopted Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) (Strategic Plan) and committed to centering racial equity in our collective responses to the economic impact of COVID19.

Goals of the Strategic Plan: The strategic plan offers prescient guideposts to helping each of us make decisions during this time:

- Use our unique position convene and support regional partners to advance racial equity including in investing shared prosperity for workers of color in our economy.
- Meaningfully engage communities of color in deep and meaningful partnerships
- Hire, train and retain a more racially diverse workforce
- Create safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations
- Resources allocation that advances racial equity

### Context

As we proceed we must consider the context within which we work:

- Metro is committed to racial equity as a value and a framework for advancing our common goals for a vibrant region, one that will rely on the resiliency of communities to bounce back from this crisis.
- Black, Indigenous, and people of color have been and will continue to be disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis, both those on our staff and in our community. These communities will be hit hardest by this crisis in terms of unemployment, access to health care, closure of businesses and small business, etc.
- We also recognize that people with chronic illness or disabilities, elders, people without access to healthcare, homeless or incarcerated members of our community have been and will continue to be disproportionately impacted by the outbreak and fallout of COVID-19 – which is highlighting how fragile the nation's social safety net really is.
- Black, Indigenous, and people of color already lacking representation at the centers of power and with precarious and underfunded non-profit infrastructure, will be the voices most diminished without a proactive strategy to help sustain them as COVID-19 ravages our state and our economy.

## Key considerations:

As leaders, it is important that we seek to set equitable outcomes that are delivered through engaging the most impacted, understanding the historic context for the inequities, and using data and input to define equitable sharing of burden with this current crisis. Below are elements to consider as you consider budget modifications.

- ✓ **Equity** and **equality** are not the same thing. Equality is treating everyone the same, while equity is ensuring everyone has what they need to be successful and reach similar outcomes. Sometimes strategies based on equality (treating everyone the same) can worsen *inequity*.
- ✓ A traditional approach to this financial crisis without an equity framework and process will result in our most diverse workers **bearing the disproportionate burden for this crisis**. We know that **Black, Indigenous, and people of color, transgender people and women** already face compounding barriers and disparities in our economy even in “good” times and this crisis will worsen this reality for many.
- ✓ Metro will continue to identify and advance strategies to **protect and invest in Black Lives**. We will prioritize maintaining the resources needed to deliver on the commitments Metro’s elected leaders have made to Black community leaders.
- ✓ Through this crisis we need to **center people**. When considering budget cuts, think about reducing materials and supply budgets instead of furloughing or laying off staff, when possible. Are there capital projects, new programs, technology upgrades, etc. that could be delayed or reduced? Consider, too, how cuts in contracted services may impact non-Metro employees. When making decisions to furlough and lay off staff, when possible mitigate impacts on the most vulnerable employee.
- ✓ Racial equity work is fairly new to Metro – keep in mind a first-in-first-out approach may jeopardize up-and-coming racial equity programs and projects. Instead, **consider using this opportunity to sunset or deprioritize programs that may advance inequities** (or do little to advance equity) while preserving programs that center DEI and racial equity.
- ✓ **Approach your budgets with an emphasis in investing in that which builds resiliency**—not just for our programs and initiatives but for the vulnerable communities we center in our work. Resilient communities are built on community trust, equitable sharing of resources and effective government partnerships with organizations representing the most vulnerable in our community. Communities of color in our CBO and contracting sectors have shared their guidance with us and though they are not monolithic-they do offer some key recommendations:

- Use a racial equity framework and data to assess how decisions we make will impact communities of color and staff of color. Make your decisions, and the impacts they will have, transparent.
- Understand that community based organizations do not have the financial resiliency of large governments and therefore need additional consideration and flexibility at this time. For example: in current contracts and future grant making—including more flexibility on funding for some operational needs like updating communications infrastructure to reach people through social media and online gatherings, simplifying grant applications and expedited payments to organizations.
- In addition, the MWESB firms Metro does business with need government to invest in them more than ever as the private sector collapses. Consider providing flexibility with deliverables, and possibly technical assistance as social distancing places additional barriers on these firms.

#### What is a racial equity lens?

Applying a racial equity lens means that we will pay close attention to race and ethnicity when making decisions – minor or significant, with a goal of changing the policies, programs and practices that perpetuate inequities. This must include using intentional tools to check our own implicit bias, listening to people affected by our decisions, factoring in the impacts on marginalized communities utilizing a set of reflective questions and ultimately shifting the way we make future decisions.

## **Racial Equity Framework Worksheet and Process**

Please answer the questions below and submit along with your budget modification package. If you need assistance with applying a racial equity framework to your budget, please immediately contact [Cassie.Salinas@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:Cassie.Salinas@oregonmetro.gov) or work directly with your racial equity leaders or DEI action teams.

Step 1: Convene an advisory team that consists of equity leaders and/or staff of color. This team should support directors in decision making and prioritizing, adjusting or postponing work to advance equity goals.

- Describe how equity leaders and/or staff of color were involved in developing your department's plan and what was their input?

Step 2: Assess with your team how your potential budget reductions impact the goals and deliverables of your racial equity plan and commitments and the Strategic Plan.

- What are the key equity goals you were planning to achieve in your original 20/21 budget pre COVID crisis?
- Does the COVID crisis impact your department's ability to achieve/advance your FY20/21 equity goals? Please describe these impacts.

- Identify which goals you are proposing to prioritize, adjust, or postpone.
- Describe how the following equity considerations are impacted by how goals will be prioritized, adjusted or postponed:
  - How will underserved communities be impacted or supported through programs, services, grants and sponsorships?
  - How is the department's capacity to meaningfully engage with CBOs serving communities of color impacted?
  - How is your department's ability to hire and retain underrepresented workers, particularly staff of color impacted?
  - How is contracting with small, minority and women owned firms impacted?
- What quantitative and qualitative data did you use to assess the impacts of your budget modifications?
- Are there existing programs that worsen inequities that can be reduced or cut?

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