



CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

Office of Equity
and Engagement

City of Grand Rapids

RACIAL EQUITY TOOLKIT DRAFT

**V.1 – Pilot
June 2024**





A Word from Brandon Davis

Interim Managing Director of the Office of Equity & Engagement

Hello City Colleagues!

When I stepped into this role as the Interim Managing Director of the Office of Equity & Engagement, I did so with respect for the City's strong commitment to equity and the amazing work that has been championed by past and present City staff members. The Office of Equity and Engagement is committed to aiding City departments in continuing to embed equity in all City operations and continuing to operationalize equity to address systemic injustices. We have heard your interest in learning how to be stewards of equity and belonging, and we have implemented learning initiatives intended to help you reach those goals and inspire others to do the same.

As we continue to embed equity into our workplace culture, I am honored and excited to lead the rollout of this Racial Equity Toolkit. I believe that this is a tool that will not only eliminate inequity in our decision-making, but will also be a shining signal to community that equity is one of our leading City values, and we will take tangible steps to incorporate it into our every action.

While creating this toolkit, we focused on national best practices and local influence with several review opportunities by staff who serve as Equity Champions. Our intention was to create something thought-provoking and fun to use as a way to help you understand that equity is not just a metric to be achieved, but a way of doing and being.

As we continually evaluate the toolkit over the next few years, please let our office know what worked for you and what didn't. We are open to feedback, especially as the toolkit becomes a tool used in our every day work.

In partnership,

CONTENTS

04

Introduction

| | |
|---------------|----|
| The What | 5 |
| The Why | 6 |
| The When | 7 |
| The How | 8 |
| How to Submit | 10 |

11

Workbook

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| 0. Contact Info | 12 |
| 1. Perspective | 13 |
| 2. Community | 17 |
| 3. Benefits & Burdens | 19 |
| 4. Accountability | 21 |
| 5. Turn It In | 23 |

25

Additional Assessment

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Budgeting | 26 |
| Budget Checklist | 27 |
| Accountability Review | 28 |
| Workforce Diversity Data | 30 |

31

Resources

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Neighborhoods of Focus | 32 |
| Lived Experiences | 33 |
| Sample Perspective Exercise | 34 |
| Benefits & Burdens Explained | 36 |
| Sample KPI Exercise | 37 |
| Glossary | 38 |
| Helpful Links | 39 |

Look for callout
bubbles like this one
for helpful tips or
links!

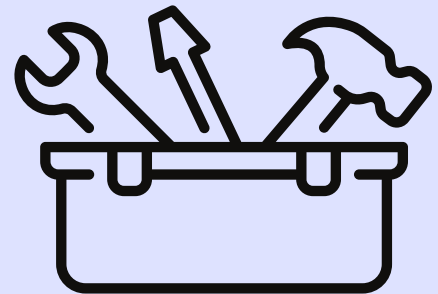
05

Introduction

What is the Racial Equity Toolkit?

Welcome to the City of Grand Rapids Racial Equity Toolkit! This toolkit is designed to walk you through the planning process of a policy, project, program, etc. **with an equity lens.** It contains a workbook to guide you through incorporating racial equity into your planning, resources to help you think critically, and elements of the previously used Equity Budget & Strategy Assessment. It includes these elements so that you can submit your workbook to the Office of Equity & Engagement at any time in lieu of annual year-end equity budget reports.

This toolkit is designed to give City departments everything they need to embed and document equity in their decision-making.



This toolkit will also help you:

- Encourage inter-departmental, cross-departmental, and community collaboration towards equity.
- See how outcomes may be affected by privilege, narrative, and lived experiences.
- Guide your department towards better equitable outcomes while leaving space for department-specific needs and practices.
- Avoid year-end crunch with your equity in budget review.

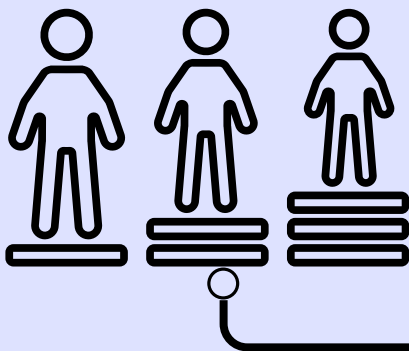
Why Should I Use the Racial Equity Toolkit?

“Equity is one of the City’s six values and must be embedded into all of our decisions, policies and practices.”

The City of Grand Rapids takes equity seriously. Our **Equity Statement** reads:

“The City of Grand Rapids is dedicated to advancing equitable outcomes and opportunities by leading with racial equity to address root causes of disparities. The City defines equity as the condition achieved when people have the tools, resources and connections necessary to be fully engaged and prepared to benefit from the opportunities they seek. Racial equity is achieved when one’s race or ethnicity does not determine, in a statistical sense, how one experiences opportunity, power and life outcomes.

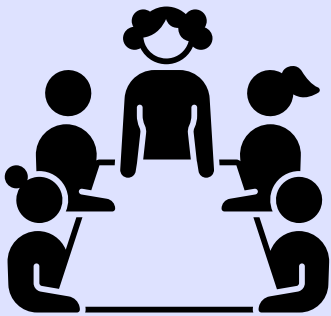
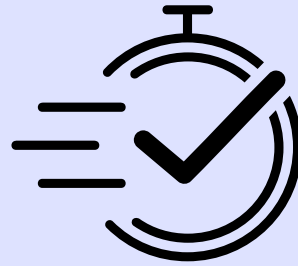
This targeted approach on racial equity will advance our universal goal of elevating quality of life in Grand Rapids. Equity is one of the City’s six values and must be embedded into all of our decisions, policies and practices. In an effort to dismantle the systemic and institutional injustice that has been prevalent throughout our history, the City has made the conscious choice to highlight equity in each priority area of our strategic plan.”



You can read the City’s full Equity Statement inside the Strategic Plan at <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Office-of-the-City-Manager/Strategic-Plan>

When Should I Use the Racial Equity Toolkit?

Early and often. Apply this toolkit early in the decision-making process for optimal alignment with the City's goals and values. Its flexible nature allows you to use it for multiple types of decisions and projects where equity should be a priority.



Before big conversations. It is strongly recommended to use this toolkit to assess your ideas before taking part in big conversations, such as before planning a department project, recommending changes to policy, presenting to City Commission, calling for a vote, or deciding on a budget, to name a few.

To comply with equity in budget reviews. At any point in the fiscal year, you may submit one workbook per project, program, or policy to the Office of Equity & Engagement to comply with the Equity Budget & Strategy Assessment for that program. This will give your department more time throughout the year to think critically about equity in your projects and budgets.



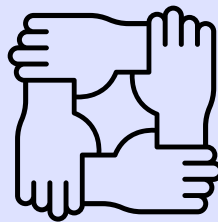
You should use this toolkit whenever you are creating or evaluating a goal to make sure equity is included in the planning process.

How Do I Use the Racial Equity Toolkit?



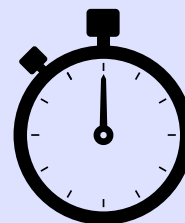
With intention.

The toolkit should be used to align your idea with the City's commitment to equity **in the beginning stages of planning.** At the very least, it should be used to evaluate this alignment before the final stages of planning.



With others.

The toolkit is **best completed in a group** to support the generation of new ideas between different lived experiences. If completion within a group is not feasible, consider asking an Equity Champion or one of our Equity Analysts to be your workbook buddy!



With enough time.

We recommend planning to spend 1-2 hours in the workbook. Be sure to allocate additional time to understand the demographics and concerns of the communities you are impacting.

Please reach out to inclusion@grcity.us if you are interested in connecting with an Equity Analyst or Equity Champion.

The Exercise

1.

Perspective



2.

Community



3.

Benefits & Burdens



4.

Accountability



5.

Turn It In

The Purpose

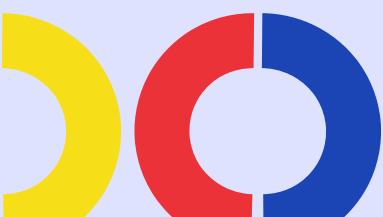
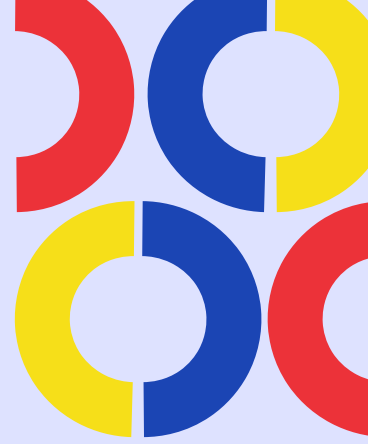
Define who and what is being privileged in your planning. Draft a plan to engage perspectives that are not privileged.

Identify who will be impacted by your decisions. Understand their existing concerns.

Identify the intended benefits and unintended consequences of your decisions. Proactively create a plan to manage and repair harm.

Create Key Performance Indicators to hold yourself responsible for equitable outcomes.

Complete additional requirements to submit the workbook as an Equity Budget & Strategy Assessment (optional).



How Do I Submit My Workbook?

When you are ready to submit your worksheet, please email it to the Office of Equity and Engagement at inclusion@grcity.us, or by drop-off at the 4th Floor Executive Management Center in City Hall, at least **two weeks before** you solidify any details.

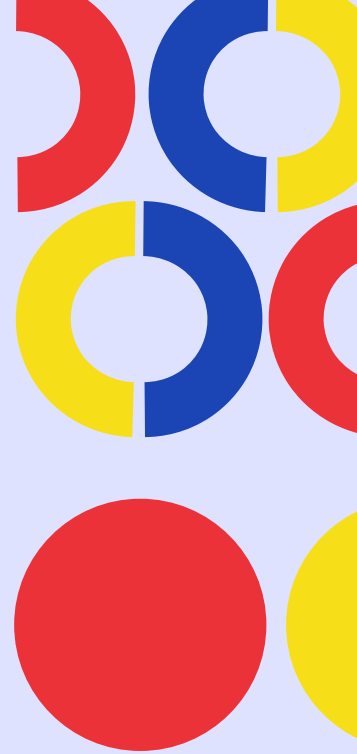
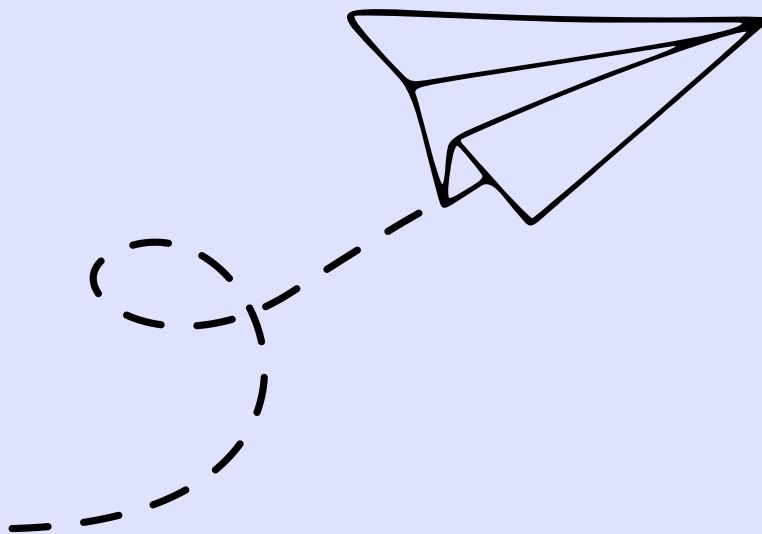
If you are submitting the worksheet in lieu of your equity in budgets, please submit your workbooks **in compliance with budget submission deadlines**.

Why?

Because our office needs at least one week to process your worksheet and another week or two to schedule a consultation with you (if necessary) and implement any recommended changes.

What if my answers aren't good enough?

Nonsense! This toolkit is a thought exercise to help the City of Grand Rapids develop a common approach to equity. It is not about being "good enough." It is about being "better" and staying committed to our journey to governmental excellence. Be honest and vulnerable in your answers so that we can accurately identify gaps in equity and service delivery together.



11

Workbook

Step 0: Contact Information



CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

Office of Equity
and Engagement

Your Name(s)



Department(s)



Contact Email(s)



What is the name of the policy, project, program, or initiative you are using this toolkit for?





13

Workbook

Step 1: Perspective



Office of Equity
and Engagement

Please provide a brief description of your policy, project, program, or initiative.

View the Strategic Plan at
[https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/
Government/Departments/Office
-of-the-City-Manager/Strategic-
Plan](https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Office-of-the-City-Manager/Strategic-Plan)

What are the goals of this policy, project, program, or initiative?

How do your goals align with the City's Strategic Plan?



CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

Office of Equity
and Engagement

Understanding Perspective & Privilege

This exercise will help you understand which perspectives are privileged in your planning and which may be unintentionally left out. This can help you understand where your equity blind spots may be.

Start by identifying some words in your goal that may be unclear to someone outside of your department. Which words would a community member ask about? How would you define them?

The way you define those words - and the person or policy that defines them - are the perspectives that hold privilege in your policy or program.

| What words may be unclear? | How would I define this word to someone in community? | Where did my definition come from? What is holding power here? |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Go to page 34 in the Resources section to see a completed example of this exercise.

Talking about power can be uncomfortable. Don't forget - this is a thought exercise to help us achieve equity.

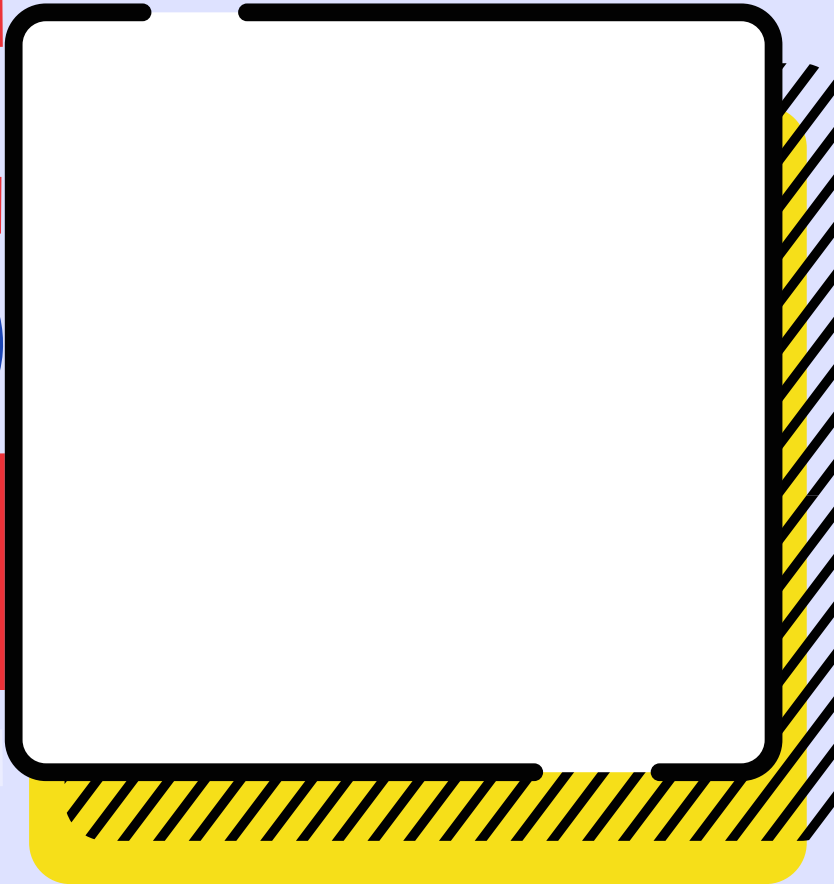
This exercise is borrowed from [We All Count | project for equity in data science](#).



Who or what is holding power over your goals?



Which perspectives may be unintentionally left out?
How will you engage them?



For ideas on how to
engage different
perspectives in your
work, go to page 33 in
the Resources section.

This exercise is borrowed from [We All Count | project for equity in data science](#).



17

Workbook

Step 2: Community



Office of Equity
and Engagement

Are you impacting a specific Ward, neighborhood, or City department?
If so, please list them here.



What are the demographics of those living or working in the impacted area?



What are the relevant concerns or disparities of those in the impacted area? How does your policy, project, program, or initiative address them?



Visit the Resources section and Helpful Links for ideas on where to find demographic data and community concerns.

19

Workbook

Step 3: Benefits & Burdens



Office of Equity
and Engagement

How will your policy, project, program, or initiative increase racial equity? Why is this beneficial?

Visit page 36 for
a refresher on
Benefits &
Burdens.

What may be some **unintended** consequences? How will you manage them and repair harm if they arise?



21

Workbook

Step 4: Accountability



Office of Equity
and Engagement

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Equity

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are a great way to define how you will measure your impact and hold yourself accountable to meet your goals.

Start by listing your desired results and visualizing how these results would physically look or feel.

Visit page 37 for a definition of KPIs and a completed example of this exercise.

| Desired Results | This would look/feel like... |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |

How could you measure the things you see, hear, and feel? These are your KPIs for equity.

| I need to measure... | So my KPI should be... |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |



23

Workbook

Step 5: Turn It In



Office of Equity
and Engagement

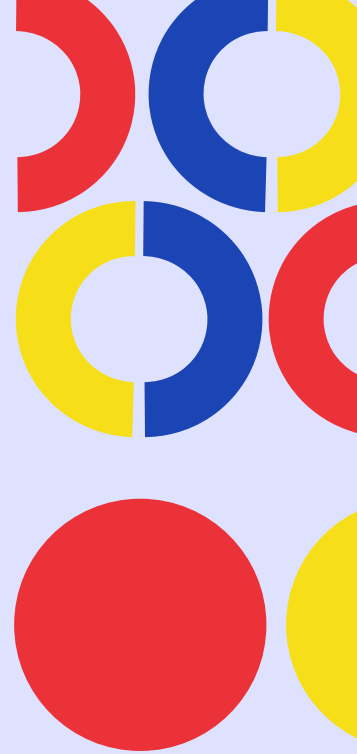
Are you done?

After you have completed the workbook, please save and send this file and any attachments as a PDF to the Office of Equity and Engagement at inclusion@grcity.us.

If you intend to submit your workbook to fulfill part of the Equity Budget & Strategy Assessment, please complete pages 26–30 before sending it in.

After we receive your work, we will get back to you within a week regarding its status. An Equity Analyst may reach out to you to offer recommendations, but this is not always the case.

Your effort to embed and operationalize equity helps us achieve governmental excellence. Thank you for your hard work!





25

Additional Assessment

**For compliance with Equity Budget &
Strategy Assessment**



CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

Office of Equity
and Engagement

Budgeting

This page will help you visualize if the resource allocations to your policy, project, program, or initiative will advance racial equity.

| | |
|---|--|
| How much money has your department dedicated to this policy, project, program, or initiative? | |
| Describe how racial and economic data were used to prioritize resource distribution. | |
| If this is NOT a <u>new</u> policy, project, program, or initiative, what impact have you seen so far? | |



Budget Checklist

Does your policy, project, program, or initiative:

- ☐ Increase racial equity?
.....
- ☐ Decrease racial disparities?
.....
- ☐ Improve access to a good or service for disadvantaged populations?
.....
- ☐ Address historical disinvestment in racially diverse areas?
.....
- ☐ Address community concern in a culturally appropriate manner?
.....
- ☐ Lead with innovation to find new ways of problem solving?
.....
- ☐ Fairly distribute responsibilities among BIPOC and white participants?
.....

Notes:

Accountability Review

If your policy, project, program, or initiative is NOT new, please revisit any Key Performance Indicators, metrics, success signals, etc. to show progress over time.

| Previously Desired Results | Updates |
|----------------------------|---------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Accountability Review cont.

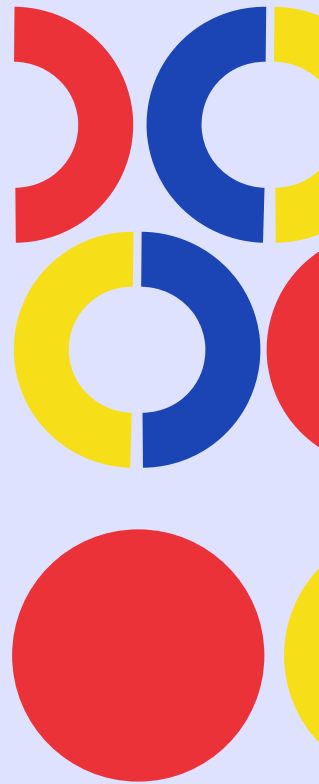
| Previously Desired Results | Updates |
|----------------------------|---------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

If you are submitting multiple workbooks for multiple projects, you only need to fill out this page once.

We understand this information may be difficult to find on your own. Email inclusion@grcity.us if you need help.

Workforce Diversity Data

| | |
|---|--|
| How many staff does your department have? | |
| How many of your staff identify as a person of color (POC)? | |
| How many of your staff do NOT identify as male? | |
| How many of your staff are bilingual? | |
| Has there been any significant changes in any of the above data since the last fiscal year? | |





31

Resources



Office of Equity
and Engagement

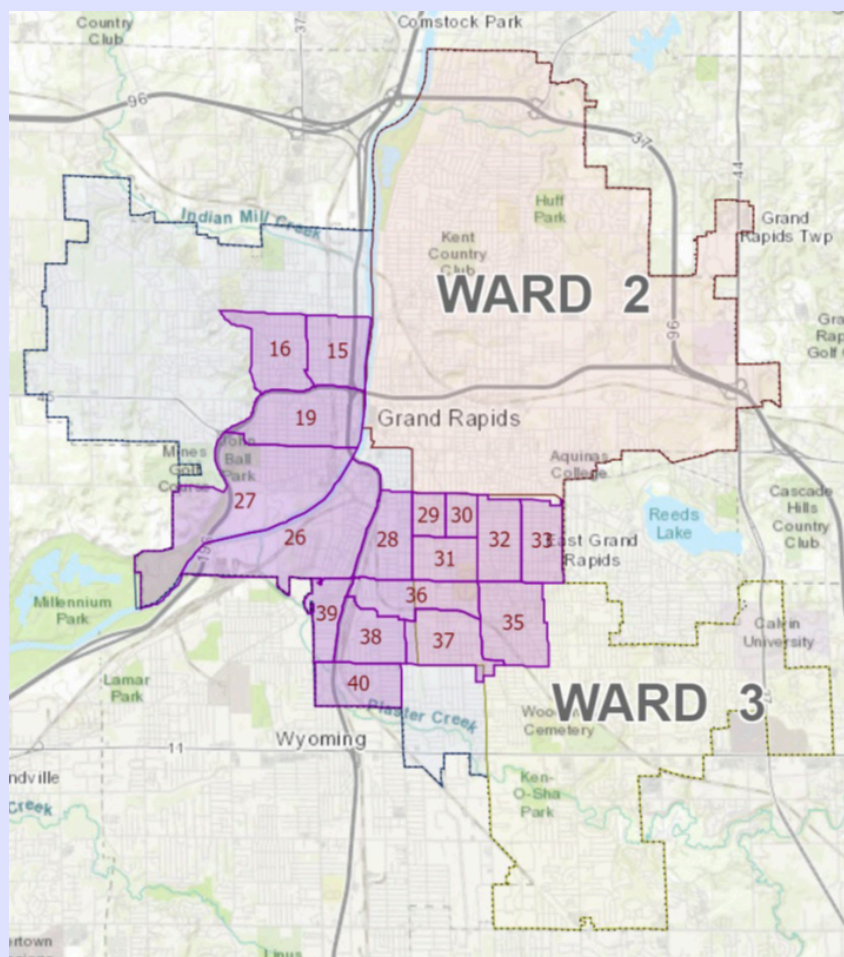
Neighborhoods of Focus

Neighborhoods of Focus (NOF) are 17 census tracts in the near west and south side of Grand Rapids in relation to downtown.

Due to systemic and historic inequities, residents in NOFs experience the most disparate outcomes in the following compared to other Grand Rapids census tracts and the city as a whole:

- Income
- Educational attainment opportunities
- Home ownership
- Wealth accumulation

For more information on NOFs (shown below in purple), including an interactive map, visit the City's [Demographics Statement](#) on our website.



Ideas to Include Lived Experiences

Internally

(engaging colleagues)

- Attend Lunch & Learns.
- Consult City Commissions.
- Engage the City's innovation teams or other workgroups.
- Reach out employee groups centered on staff voice and identity, such as Employee Resource Groups.
- Reach out to other departments who may have experience similar to your project.
- Connect with the Equity Champions Alumni Network, a network of employees who have received professional development in racial equity work.



Externally

(engaging community)

- Attend external events such as Neighborhood Summit, where you can talk with and learn from community leaders.
- Conduct a community survey or host a forum.
- Consult initiatives with data on community voices, such as Participatory Budgeting Grand Rapids (PBGR).
- Invite a focus group of community members to your work.
- Utilize existing reports and surveys that showcase resident concerns.
- Volunteer at Commission Night Out to engage with residents.
- Engage City Boards and Commissions, such as the Community Relations Commission.

Sample Perspective Exercise

My goal is to create & maintain sustainable regional collaborations that increase public awareness of and importance of water treatment & infrastructure. I will address anticipated socio-economic barriers keeping qualified individuals from pursuing a career in water to build a strong and diverse talent pipeline.

| What words may be unclear? | How would I define this word to someone in community? | Where did my definition come from? What is holding power here? |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| sustainable regional partnerships | groups and organizations within the West Michigan area working towards a common goal | my workgroup |
| water treatment + infrastructure | the process by which your drinking water is cleaned; includes any item used for collection, storage, treatment, or transport of water | federal and state laws |
| socio-economic barriers | many factors, such as, income, education, employment status, etc. | CDC, American Psychological Association |
| strong and diverse talent | people with a wide variety of perspectives, ideas, and skill from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds, etc. | HR, recruitment companies |

This exercise is borrowed from [We All Count | project for equity in data science](#).

Sample Perspective Exercise cont.

Who or what is holding power over your goals?

The grant manager and the City of Grand Rapids hold power in my goals because they monitor and allocate financial resources. However, my goal is also affected by the perspectives of my workgroup, federal and state law, and other outside influences.

Which perspectives may be unintentionally left out? How will you engage them?

I may be overlooking the perspectives of people our program is intended to reach. Some people who learned English as a second language have expressed interest, and the community organizers who help our department connect with potential candidates have valuable input as well. I will advocate for translated materials and more time to engage the community from my grant manager.

Benefits & Burdens

The following excerpt on benefits and burdens is taken directly from the Racial Equity Toolkit designed by the Michigan Department of Civil Rights:



Government has upheld racial hierarchy through policies that have sustained – through seemingly race-neutral approaches – unintentional forms of prejudices which normalize one dominant racial experience and result in policies and practices that negatively impact individuals who are not members of the dominant group. In this way, government has actively decided who benefits and who is burdened by these policies and practices. Examples include developing infrastructure in neighborhoods where people of color would be most impacted without evaluating the projected harms and benefits to this community, promoting healthcare practices that are culturally insensitive resulting in decreased participation and distrust, and imposing identification requirements to receive social services that disadvantage families with mixed citizenship status.



As you consider the benefits and burdens of your concept, keep in mind the potential consequences of not researching and engaging the community you seek to serve.

You can view the State of Michigan's Racial Equity Toolkit at <https://www.michigan.gov/mdcr/divisions/dei/racial-equity>



Office of Equity
and Engagement

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Sample Exercise

To establish KPIs for something as socially complex as equity, try starting with defining the desired results of your policy or program. Then, visualize what the end result would physically look like to you and others. By working backward, you can better understand what you are trying to achieve and how it could be measured based on tangible results.

My goal is to celebrate existing equity work in City departments, foster collaboration, and inspire other employees that change is possible.

| Desired Results | This would look/feel like... |
|--|---|
| Show what's working in City departments that prioritize equity. | Taking a step back as I invite speakers from other departments to share. |
| Get the audience to tell stories and form relationships with each other. | A big room with small group tables. I will have icebreakers and worksheets. |
| Encourage staff to take action to advance equity. | Getting at least three people to join my leadership planning team. |

| I need to measure... | So my KPI should be... |
|--|---|
| Successful storytelling from another department. | Audience feedback about the quality of the presentation and their takeaways. |
| Audience cohesion and collaboration. | Audience feedback about group activities and how comfortable they felt with others. |
| Sign-ups for my leadership team. | The number of sign-ups I get on my leadership interest sheet. |

Glossary

Bias: Prejudice toward one group and its members relative to another group (Government Alliance on Race & Equity).

Diversity: Speaks only to the statistical presence of individuals of varying physical characteristics, cultures, or identities in a group (Baltimore Racial Justice Action).

ELC: Equity Learning Community. The ELC is an employee group that learns about and applies equity tools to increase equity and belonging at the City through passion projects and collaborative design practices (City of Grand Rapids Office of Equity and Engagement).

Equity: The condition achieved when people have the tools, resources, and connections necessary to be fully engaged and prepared to benefit from the opportunities they seek (City of Grand Rapids Strategic Plan).

ERG: Employee Resource Group. ERGs are established to support employees and offer resources and recommendations that foster awareness, respect, and inclusion within the workplace. ERGs give employees the opportunity to identify how shared lived experience inform their experience of work culture (City of Grand Rapids Administrative Policy 20-02).

Explicit Bias: Biases that people are aware of and that operate consciously. They are expressed directly (Government Alliance on Race & Equity).

Implicit Bias: Treating people differently or making decisions about them, at the subconscious level, based on their group membership (City of Durham).

Inclusion: A commitment to pursuing deliberate efforts to ensure that differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard, and every individual feels a sense of belonging (adapted from the University of Michigan).

Individual racism: Pre-judgment, bias, stereotypes about an individual or group based on race. The impacts of racism on individuals including white people internalizing privilege and people of color internalizing oppression (Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative).

Institutional racism: Organizational programs, policies or procedures that work to the benefit of white people and to the detriment of people of color, usually



CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

Office of Equity
and Engagement

Glossary cont.

unintentionally or inadvertently (Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative).

Lived Experience: Personal knowledge about the world gained through direct, first-hand involvement in everyday events rather than through representations constructed by other people (Oxford Reference).

MLBEs: Micro-Local Business Enterprises. Small local businesses, typically minority- or women-owned, that are certified to receive bidding opportunities with the City of Grand Rapids.

OEE: City of Grand Rapids Office of Equity and Engagement

OPA: City of Grand Rapids Office of Public Accountability.

Privilege: The benefits automatically received from being a member of the dominant group. Privilege includes not having to think about the implications of one's identity because of automatically fitting in the category that is the "norm" or the "standard" for the society (Baltimore Racial Justice Action).

PBGR: Participatory Budgeting Grand Rapids. Participatory Budgeting is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. The process was first developed in Brazil in 1989. There are now over 1,500 participatory budgeting processes around the world, most of them at the municipal level (City of Grand Rapids).

Racial Disparity: A measurable difference in outcomes for populations (City of Durham).

Racial Equity: Racial equity is achieved when one's race or ethnicity does not determine, in a statistical sense, how one experiences opportunity, power and life outcomes (City of Grand Rapids Strategic Plan).

Helpful Links

Census QuickFacts: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/>



CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

Office of Equity
and Engagement

Helpful Links cont.

Baltimore Racial Justice Action Definitions:

<https://bmoreantiracist.org/resources/our-definitions>

City of Grand Rapids Employee Resource Groups (ERGs):

<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Office-of-Equity-and-Engagement>

City of Grand Rapids National Community Survey:

<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Programs-and-Initiatives/National-Community-Survey>

City of Grand Rapids Office of Equity and Engagement (OEE):

<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Office-of-Equity-and-Engagement>

City of Grand Rapids: <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Home>

Data USA: <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/grand-rapids-mi#demographics>

Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE):

<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/>

Grand Rapids Demographic Statement:

<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Office-of-Equity-and-Engagement/Demographics-Statement>

Grand Rapids Strategic Plan:

<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Office-of-the-City-Manager/Strategic-Plan>

Michigan Department of Civil Rights Racial Equity Toolkit:

<https://www.michigan.gov/mdcr/divisions/dei/racial-equity>

National Equity Atlas:

https://nationalequityatlas.org/research/racial_equity_index/index#/?geoSectionName=State



Office of Equity
and Engagement

Helpful Links cont.

National Equity Project: <https://www.nationalequityproject.org>

Participatory Budgeting Grand Rapids (PBGR):

<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Programs-and-Initiatives/Participatory-Budgeting>

Stanford d.school: <https://dschool.stanford.edu/>

We All Count | project for equity in data science: <https://weallcount.com/>



WE NEED YOUR Feedback

Did this toolkit meet your expectations? What would you change, delete, or add? Let us know by contacting Sierra Hatfield, Equity Analyst in the Office of Equity and Engagement.



616-465-5279



shatfield@grcity.us



300 Monroe Ave NW Suite 840
Grand Rapids, MI 49503



Office of Equity
and Engagement