



# Equity Lens Guide

What We Do and the Impact it Has  
on Historically Marginalized People

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# Table of Contents

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Introduction .....	3
What is an Equity Lens? .....	4
OYA's Commitment to the Equity Lens .....	5
Why an Equity Lens .....	6
Equity Lens: Guiding Principles .....	7
How to Use an Equity Lens .....	8
Infusing an Equity Lens: Basic Introductory Questions .....	9
Leadership Equity Lens .....	10
Policy Equity Lens .....	12
How to Use a Policy Equity Lens: Example .....	13
Policy and the Racial Equity Scorecard .....	15
Youth, Family, and Staff Engagement .....	16
Planning Services, Programs, Projects, and Events .....	17
Recruiting, Hiring, and Retention .....	18
Communications .....	19
Training Staff and Volunteers .....	20
Data Collection .....	22
Process Improvement .....	23
Sources .....	24

## About This Guide

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This Equity Lens Guide was created by the Oregon Youth Authority. We hope that this resource furthers the work for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion beyond the Oregon Youth Authority and juvenile justice. Please credit the Oregon Youth Authority when using this work in your own pursuits.

# Introduction

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A truly sobering fact is that over a century post-American slavery and over 50 years after the Civil Rights Act, racial injustice and inequities persist in nearly every public policy area and American system.

Youth of color are overrepresented in the U.S. juvenile justice system, as are people of color in adult institutions. These inequities are present at the Oregon Youth Authority. Families of color disproportionately live in poverty. To truly understand why requires the complex unweaving of how many systems were designed and have persisted throughout history. These are just a few of the historical fundamental drivers of institutional racism:

- the legacy of slavery and Native American genocide;
- the systems designed to sustain the post-slavery economic well-being of former slaveowners;
- Jim Crow laws; and
- the stereotypical narratives that have followed African-Americans and other people of color.

Many organizations and agencies have made investments in improving outcomes for underserved populations. In fact, many organizations work diligently toward building a more equitable society, allocating services and resources equitably, and extending support to historically underserved groups.

**However, when decision-makers are made up of homogeneous groups, there can be unintentional gaps in needed support for historically excluded populations that can cause harm to the very people they want to support.** Failure to be inclusive or intentional about monitoring the impact of policies and practices on the experiences and outcomes of historically excluded groups makes it easier to make false assumptions or miss harmful and disparate impacts.

## **Definition: Institutional Racism**

**“The silent opportunity killer.** It is the blind interaction between institutions, policies, and practices that inevitably perpetuates barriers to opportunities and racial disparities. Conscious and unconscious racism continue to exist in our society. But structural racism feeds on the unconscious. Public and private institutions and individuals each build a wall. They do not necessarily build the wall to hurt people of color, but one wall is joined by another until they construct a labyrinth from which few can escape.”

“Structural Racism Arts & Social Justice Workshop,”  
GIA Reader, Vol. 20, no. 1 (Spring 2009),  
[www.giarts.org/reader-20-1](http://www.giarts.org/reader-20-1)

# What is an Equity Lens?

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**An equity lens is a process to analyze the impact of the design and implementation of policies, practices, and decision-making authority on historically excluded and marginalized individuals and groups. It is a tool used to identify and eliminate systemic barriers.**

This equity lens guide is both a tool and a process to orient OYA leaders and staff to the important concepts needed to infuse equity into all the work we do. This includes all decision-making points, policies, practices, and resource allocation. It also includes the development of strategic action plans focused on eliminating systemic and individual barriers and improving the outcomes for all youth, especially those from historically underserved populations.

This document is designed to provide decision-makers with questions to:

- evaluate their own backgrounds, beliefs, and biases to be more culturally responsive and monitor lack of inclusion in decision-making processes; and
- assess the level of commitment to equity and inclusion at many different decision points.

Incorporating the questions in this document will allow decision-makers to:

- craft more culturally responsive solutions and decisions;
- gain valuable perspectives from people who have previously been silent, ignored, or misunderstood; and
- more fully understand the reach, effectiveness, and impact of investments in inclusion on equal outcomes.

This equity lens may represent a significant departure from traditional processes. Implementing it will take more time and work, but it is necessary to truly be equity-centered and to achieve OYA's goals.

## **Definition: Equity**

- A bold and fearless long-term commitment to understanding the depth of racism and all other forms of discrimination within America's systems, especially the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and taking action to eliminate barriers to equity and inclusion within our system.
- Intentional engagement with marginalized communities in decision-making and explicitly recognizing their lived experiences to shift perception, ensure equitable resource allocation, and improve youth outcomes.
- Normalize cross-racial communication, specifically about every demographic's experiences working for OYA, to ensure we are establishing an agency culture where everyone can thrive.

# OYA's Commitment to the Equity Lens

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OYA has long recognized that youth of color and those who identify as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, or intersex) are over-represented in the state's juvenile justice system and in its own care and custody. We also recognize that the young women in our care, while not over-represented, require treatment and programming specific to their needs.

We are committed to dismantling systemic injustice and we respect, honor, and embrace the diversity among youth, staff, families and partners. OYA leaders and staff are committed to fearlessly challenging our implicit biases and operationalizing our values and Positive Human Development (PHD) with an equity-based lens.

Incorporating an equity lens into how we review policy and practices, and how we make decisions, will require thoughtful and intentional inclusion of youth and staff from historically marginalized communities. For OYA, this includes youth and staff from the following communities:

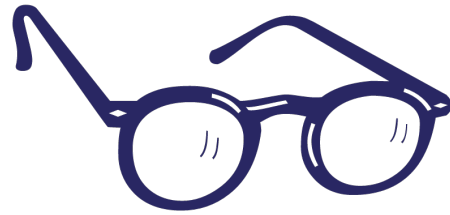
- Black, African, African American
- Native American, members of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, American Indians, Alaska Native
- Hispanic, Latino/a/x
- Asian
- Pacific Islander
- Linguistically diverse
- People with disabilities
- LGBTQ+
- Female

## **Definition: Intersectionality**

**Intersectionality** is when individuals identify with multiple communities and are impacted by compacted systems of oppression. This intersectionality must be considered when applying core elements of this equity lens in our planning and response efforts.

# Why an Equity Lens?

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**An equity lens allows us to analyze and assess what we do from many different perspectives. It encourages us to ask specific questions to check our blind spots as decisions are made.**

Diversity, equity, and inclusion strengthen our ability to fulfill our mission of protecting the public and reducing crime by holding youth accountable and providing opportunities for all youth in safe environments.

## **Who is this equity lens guide for?**

This guide is designed for EVERYONE at OYA and all those we partner with to serve youth.

This includes:

- Agency leaders, staff, and volunteers
- Contracted community partners and consultants
- Other stakeholders

## **Daily Thought Pattern**

An equity lens should be used in every business decision, every day. Using an equity lens daily will make our agency more equitable and inclusive in all that we do.

## **An equity lens is designed to:**

- Increase perception, awareness, and the aptitude to incorporate differences.
- Assist in the development of committees and teams that are specifically relevant and representative of the youth we serve and staff we employ.
- Focus on identifying and dismantling systematic racism, injustices and barriers to equity.
- Provide tools to leaders and decision-makers to be more inclusive of youth and staff from historically marginalized communities.
- Identify root causes and changes to policy or practice that must take place to ensure equitable and inclusive outcomes.
- Identify the appropriate performance measures and related data needed to effectively monitor equity and disparate impact in our practices, policy, and decision-making.
- Create action plans with specific goals related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

# Equity Lens: Guiding Principles

When you use the equity lens process in your work, keep these guiding principles in mind. Focus on who is at the table, their position of power, and the influence that each person has to achieve equity and inclusion. And remember: systemic change is not instantaneous. It takes commitment, time, and effort.

## Principle 1 - People: Who is at the Table?

- Focus on diversity when you're deciding who should be at the table for any decision or process. Prioritize race, ethnicity, gender, and job role diversity.
- It is everyone's responsibility to develop an environment where each person understands the goals and feels heard. When we truly value diverse perspectives and realize we cannot accomplish our goals without them, noticing and overcoming rationalizations and our own biases becomes a priority.



**Be aware of common rationalizations that might lead to exclusion:**

"They don't have the right knowledge, skill, or understanding to provide input."

"It's not their 'job' to make decisions or develop resources."

## Principle 2 - Awareness: Check Assumptions

- Acknowledge your biases. The equity lens process will help you understand the underlying causes and impacts of our work on different populations.
- Discuss each marginalized group that might be impacted by the decision at hand. Consider positional power dynamics, subjectivity in the process and follow-through, or bias.
- Determine the impacts on people of color and other marginalized groups and center their needs.



**Be aware of a false sense that "it doesn't happen here."**

Discrimination is everywhere. Minimizing racism, sexism, microaggressions, and other discrimination creates an unsafe environment, undermines those who share their personal experience, and blocks progress.

## Principle 3 - Positional Perception: Understand Your Lens is One of Many

- Train and educate on cultural differences. Equity requires us to shift focus away from everyone being treated and served equally to acknowledging differences and everyone being treated and served to their appropriate needs.
- Be aware of your sphere of influence. If you are dismissive or indifferent, this can harmfully impact others' ability to share their expertise and engage in the process.



**Be patient! What feels difficult now will become second nature with practice.**

Using an equity lens is a step-by-step, question-by-question process that requires commitment. Not every question is needed for every situation, but being meticulous establishes the habit that sustains a culture centered on the needs of marginalized communities.

# How to Use an Equity Lens

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**OYA expects every level of our agency to fully include, center, and equitably engage people of color from all groups in decision-making, from start to finish.**

The equity lens is aimed at closing divides based on race by ensuring representation of diverse perspectives. This helps reduce assumptions about what the impacts are or are not for each community of color.

OYA uses this equity lens process to ensure equitable outcomes for youth of all races and to create respectful, diverse, equitable, and inclusive environments for youth, their families, and staff that are free from harassment, discrimination, and bias.

## **What does it mean to “center” the needs of youth and employees of color?**

- Placing the needs and barriers faced by youth or staff of color at the forefront of thinking, discussions, and decisions, rather than as an afterthought.
- Being conscious of the environments we create, to ensure people of color feel safe to speak about the barriers they see or face.
- Ensuring that this engagement informs all decisions and that solutions target overcoming the barriers.

## **1st Stage: Find the most appropriate equity lens methodology in this guide.**

- Review the different methodologies listed in the next few pages. Determine which one best suits the needs of the decision, project, etc. at hand.
- If you're not sure which one is best, use the introductory lens.
- Walk through each question. It is okay to skip a question if diverse groups sitting at the table agree it does not apply to the situation.

## **2nd Stage: Seek to understand the impact on each racial and ethnic group.**

- Put the needs of communities of color at the center of the analysis of each question. This will help you understand the potential impact of your decision, project, or situation.
- Assess if you have adequate representation from marginalized groups. Ensure you are including the people doing the work and the people who are impacted.
- Take responsibility for centering youth and staff of color in all your work by asking who is represented at the tables you sit at, too.

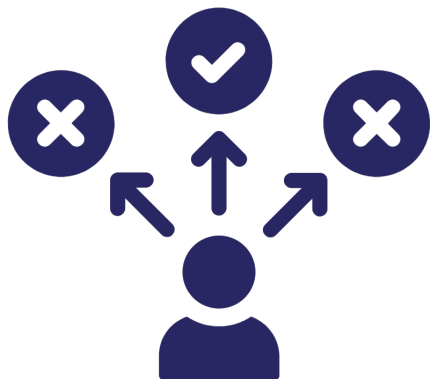
## **3rd Stage: Analyze the impacts being shared by the diverse representatives.**

- Keep defensiveness and bias in check, whether yours or others'. Acknowledge and respect the experiences and input of diverse voices.
- Ensure engagement is equitable and that people from marginalized communities hold real power in making decisions.
- Equitable engagement starts from the beginning and empowers diverse representation to help drive the conversation.



# Infusing an Equity Lens: Basic Introductory Questions

## Making Decisions



### How These Questions Help:

- **Leading:** Ensuring that leaders are transparent and demonstrate their commitment to equity and inclusion. Do staff and youth recognize this commitment? If not, why?
- **Assessing:** Ensuring that we have the capacity to infuse equity into processes and decisions, that we consider those who are impacted, and that we do not make rationalizations that prevent inclusion.
- **Reflecting:** Identifying biases and assumptions. Have I been burned when trying to be inclusive before? How am I trusting staff to have rational discourse?
- **Detecting:** Identifying patterns of lack of equity or inclusion at this decision point.
- **Strategizing:** Eliminating barriers that prevent equity and inclusion.

What is the demographical makeup of those impacted by this decision, policy, program, or practice? Can this assessment be validated?



Is there enough diversity and inclusion at the decision-making table to move forward? Who is being heard? Who is not?



Are there factors being used to rationalize lack of inclusion? Are we over-valuing similarity of job roles in ways that reinforce structural biases? How we mitigate this?



How are we considering accessibility for those who need to be included and those who are impacted? (think language, written materials, videos, meeting spaces, etc.)?



How might inequities, barriers, or negative outcomes arise from the decision, policy, or program being discussed? Who is burdened most and who benefits most? Consider class and demographics.



What have we learned from not centering inclusion and focusing on equitable impact?



Based on the responses, what solutions or interventions could eliminate inequitable impact? How can the impact be monitored and measured?



# Leadership Equity Lens

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When we become champions for equity and inclusion in the way we lead, we take action to model a work environment that uses everyone's diverse talents and skills. These questions are designed to accomplish this leadership approach. These are also good performance evaluation questions.

## Self-Reflection Questions

These questions will help frame discussions and reflections on the type of environments leaders create and support. It is important to monitor and think critically about innate self-defensive mechanisms when you ask these questions.

- What steps do I take to create a respectful and inclusive environment, specifically for youth and staff from marginalized communities? Have I asked youth and staff about these steps to see if they think they are effective? Have I asked them what I can do to be more respectful, equitable, and inclusive?
  - Do I clearly communicate to staff and volunteers, etc. that inappropriate behavior such as offensive jokes, racially-biased language, and negative comments are not acceptable? Do I unintentionally promote or accept this type of behavior?
  - When thinking about the decisions I make that impact youth or staff, how do I actively gather input and ideas from staff, volunteers, etc. from diverse backgrounds, especially those from marginalized communities? Is it feasible? If I think it isn't feasible, am I sure my reasoning is sound and not merely a justification?
  - How can I encourage staff to contribute positively in creating an inclusive workplace?
  - Do I set an example as a leader that diversity, equity, and inclusion are important? How am I intentionally doing this?
  - What is my threshold of comfort in advancing DEI with my team? How much am I willing to venture beyond that threshold to meet DEI expectations?
- How am I ensuring the psychological and emotional safety of staff and youth from historically marginalized communities in the space where I lead?
- Have I made intentional efforts to ensure employees suffering harassment, disrespectful treatment, or any form of discrimination can access existing agency support systems?
- Are there policies, procedures and/or practices and attitudes that unintentionally prevent some people from fully engaging in our work?

*(Continued on page 11)*

# Leadership Self-Reflection Questions (continued)

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## Listen



## Learn



## Support



## Act



- Am I aware of OYA's commitments to developing a more equitable and inclusive system? Do I continually ensure that staff are equally informed? Have I engaged OIIR and the DEI Strategic Manager to get updates on what the agency is doing to move our efforts forward?
- Who can be allies in my pursuit of equity and how can I engage them?
- What opportunities could I create to enable people from under-represented groups to bring new perspectives to our team, acquire experience, and move into higher-level positions? (Some ideas: job rotations, job shadowing, DEI-focused management mentoring)
- Are equity and inclusion incorporated into our staff check-in process? Do I ask staff for their perspective?
- Do staff have an opportunity to weigh in on their supervisor's performance evaluation? If not, why not?
- Have I sought to identify negative attitudes, beliefs, and biases within myself, or practices in my department or work area, that may unintentionally exclude youth or staff from marginalized communities?
- How proactive have I been in developing my team in a way that represents the population of the youth we serve? Does the diversity of my team mirror the demographics of the youth? Are my staff trained in cultural sensitivity?
- How have I created opportunities for underrepresented staff to acquire experience to progress their careers?
- Am I intentionally seeking to understand the experiences of staff and youth from marginalized communities?
- When I interact with colleagues, my subordinates, or youth, do I check assumptions?
  - Do I hold assumptions about people that get in the way of how I work with them?
  - Do I avoid stereotypes so I can see the individual for who they really are?
  - Am I able to respect our differences and yet recognize what we have in common?
  - Do I recognize their contributions?
- Am I genuinely paying attention to those who are not expressing their ideas? How do I encourage feedback and full participation from everyone present? Am I raising issues in a way that encourages dialogue?
- Do I consider potential barriers in each situation, and work to minimize them (e.g., language, prejudice, lack of safety in the space)?
- If I am not sure what barriers may exist, do I ask my colleagues or the people I supervise?

# Policy Equity Lens

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**When we are intentional about making policies equitable and accessible, we ensure that expectations for equity are clear across the agency.**

- What is the purpose of the policy? How do we know the impact of this policy? Can the impact be measured in any way?
- Are we recognizing how bias can influence the language and implementation of this policy? What are we doing to mitigate this bias?
- Are all racial/ethnic groups affected by the policy represented at the table in this review or policy development?
- What are the equity and inclusion concerns related to this policy? (race/ethnicity, accessibility, safety, culture, gender identity, etc.)
- What mechanisms are in place to ensure accountability for equity?
- What human and financial resources are required to address equity and inclusion needs for this policy?
- Are the groups most affected by the policy consulted for its development or reviews? Why or why not? (bias, lack of attention, “We have always done it this way”) How can we ensure their perspectives are included, especially youth and employees from underserved populations?
- What background information can aid in addressing equity and inclusion with this policy?
- Is it possible to develop innovative policy solutions that draw upon the contributions and assets of youth affected?
- If new resources are required in the policy implementation, how can we build that in from the beginning? (examples: contract with community partners, collaborate across departments, funding allocation)
- How can we communicate the policy to reach everyone who is affected?
- As currently written, how could this policy negatively impact youth and or staff from underserved populations?

# How to Use a Policy Equity Lens: Example

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## Employee Resource Group (ERG) Policy Development

**Q:** What is the purpose of the policy? By design, what purpose does it serve?

**A:** The policy will provide structure for ERGs. ERGs will provide a safe and supportive network organized around social identities shared by employees. We anticipate ERGs will support us recruiting and retaining diverse employees and help us improve how we support employees from marginalized communities. ERGs will remain consistent with OYA's mission and values. We anticipate ERGs offering professional development opportunities, networking outside of department areas, mentoring, community engagement, input on DEI, and activities that promote cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.

**Q:** What are the equity and inclusion concerns related to this policy? (race/ethnicity, accessibility, safety, culture, gender identity, etc.)

**A:** This policy and the structure of ERGs will be designed to amplify staff voice, especially for staff from marginalized communities. Accessibility for facility staff doing shift work is of great concern. We must be thoughtful in constructing this policy so every staff member has access to the ERGs.

**Q:** What mechanisms are in place to ensure accountability for equity?

**A:** Each ERG will have an Executive Team sponsor who will support the ERG chair to ensure resources and support are equitable. Additionally, DEI Steering Committee leads will routinely check in with ERG chairs.

**Q:** What human and financial resources are required to address equity and inclusion needs for this policy?

**A:** For shift-working facility staff to participate in ERGs and have it be counted as paid time, we will have to either offer overtime or have coverage available during the time of ERG meetings. This human and financial resource scenario should be explicitly outlined in this policy.

**Q:** Are the groups most affected by the policy consulted for its development or reviews? Why or why not? (bias, lack of attention, "We have always done it this way")

**A:** ERGs have been discussed at many of the listening forums with staff. They are supportive of the concept, although some facility staff worry about how much they will be able to participate. Additionally, the DEI Steering Committee weighed in on the development of the policy proposal.

# How to Use a Policy Equity Lens: Example (continued)

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**Q:** How can we ensure their perspectives are included, especially youth and employees from underserved populations?

**A:** Involving the DEI Steering Committee in developing this policy ensures we are appropriately representing and being sensitive to the many different staff and department areas within OYA.

**Q:** What background information can aid in addressing equity and inclusion with this policy?

**A:** We need to be equitable and inclusive in deciding the different social identities we extend an ERG to (race and ethnic groups, veterans, women, etc.). The number of hours per month or quarter staff can engage in paid ERG time will also be important to specify. Doing a diversity assessment of our current staff will be helpful so we can monitor how many of our staff are engaged in ERGs by demographic.

**Q:** Is it possible to develop innovative policy solutions that draw upon the contributions and assets of youth and staff most affected?

**A:** We will lean on diverse groups of staff to support the development of this policy to ensure everyone has an opportunity to participate in employee resource groups if they choose.

**Q:** If new resources are required in the policy implementation, how can we build that in from the beginning?

**A:** Collaboration across departments, combined with the reduction of program-area silos, will be important to implementing this policy effectively. We will ensure staff know about this goal.

**Q:** How can we communicate the policy to reach the full diversity of people affected?

**A:** We will collaborate with our Communications Office and use the communication equity lens established in this guide.

**Q:** How will we measure the extent to which the policy contributes to removing barriers or creating opportunities for people who have historically been underserved?

**A:** Growth in number of members year over year; number of meetings held annually; number of events driven by ERGs; staff /employee engagement surveys

**Q:** As currently written, how could this policy negatively impact youth and or staff from underserved populations?

**A:** We do not anticipate any negative impact. However, we do recognize the need for structure and a commitment from agency leaders to support these groups to sustain their growth.

# Policy and the Racial Equity Scorecard

The Racial Equity Scorecard is a way to assess how much the OYA Policy Committee has applied the equity lens to policy reviews and development. Policies can be scored on a scale of 0 (harmful as-is, capable of making disparate impacts worse) to 5 (deemed racially equitable with asset-based language).

Larger policies could be made more racially equitable by applying this scorecard to each section and recommending the OYA Research Office conduct an analysis of the impact of the policy on the lived experiences of youth and staff from marginalized communities.

*Note: The word “inequity” is used in the scorecard instead of “disparate impact” as a way to focus both on inequitable outcomes and the structures that helped create them.*

<b>0</b>	<b>Harmful</b>	Overtly or covertly targets youth or employees of color.	May have coded language that exacerbates inequities.	Lacks information on the mechanisms to monitor inequities.
<b>1</b>	<b>Potentially Harmful</b>	May appear race-neutral on the surface.	May have language that negatively impacts sub-groups of communities of color at higher rates.	Lacks asset-based language and ways to monitor inequities.
<b>2</b>	<b>Equity-Based Language</b>	Has standard equity statement.	References equity without outlining concrete actions for how to do so within the context of the policy subject matter.	Lacks information on the mechanisms to monitor inequities.
<b>3</b>	<b>Inclusive and Wider-Reaching</b>	Has standard equity statement.	Explicitly outlines actions to ensure equity in its adherence with evaluation of impact mechanisms.	Lacks asset-based language.
<b>4</b>	<b>Far-Reaching and Targeted</b>	Has equity statement that acknowledges historical trauma experienced by people of color from biased policy.	Explicitly outlines actions to ensure equity in its adherence with evaluation of inequity.	Includes asset-based language.
<b>5</b>	<b>Racial Equity Prioritized</b>	Entire policy explicitly puts the needs of youth or staff of color at the center.	Asset-based language acknowledges historical trauma to ensure equity in its adherence.	Includes language that outlines evaluation of inequity.

# Youth, Family, and Staff Engagement

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When we welcome the diverse perspectives of staff, youth, and families, we take action to ensure everyone is included. To infuse equity into our work, we must consider the questions below in our decision-making processes.



- What approaches and outreach will help ensure that those impacted are able to fully participate? How can we create opportunities for people least likely to be heard to ensure they share their specific concerns?
- Have we evaluated how this process or decision could produce unintended consequences for historically underserved populations? How have we mitigated these unintended consequences?
- Are the voices in the room diverse enough to make this decision? What steps can we take to include the diversity of perspectives impacted, especially when they do not align with our own?
- Are there employees from other departments, community partners, or volunteers with experience with communities of color who can ensure we are diverse and inclusive?
- What steps must we take to remove barriers to people's full participation (examples: family support with transportation, flexible schedules, language, accessible location, advanced scheduling, multiple formats, avoid religious and cultural holidays, culturally appropriate)?
- Is the environment welcoming to participants who may be reluctant to share their views? Have we asked them how we can make the space more inviting for everyone to be comfortable to share?
- Does the pace, format, and language of the engagement accommodate everyone, including participants who are least likely to speak up and for whom the information may be new? Are the insights from groups who face systemic barriers and inequities reflected in the report and the final decision?
- Can we create an anonymous means of collecting feedback for those from marginalized communities who don't yet feel safe to communicate?
- Is the final decision expected to increase or decrease existing disparities, or areas of disparities, and if so, for which demographic subgroup(s)?



# Planning Services, Programs, Projects, and Events

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**When we consider the range of equity issues that may exist, we can then take action to eliminate barriers so that everyone, especially those from historically underserved populations, can benefit.**

All of the equity questions below might not apply to every planning item. Use the ones that make sense within the context of the service, program or project being developed.

- How will this service, program, project, or event ensure equity and inclusion?
- Do the expected outcomes of the service, program, project or event reflect equity and inclusion explicitly in its goals? How?
- What budgetary trade-offs do we need to consider that are disproportionately impacting youth from underserved populations? Does our allocation of resources negatively impact youth from underserved populations? What would be the trade-off if we reallocated resources to address this?
- How will the service, program, project, or event build upon the strengths of the people it seeks to serve equitably? Are the people developing this service, program, project or event considering racial and cultural differences? What source of information are you using to determine this?
- Are the people most impacted included in the development of this service, program, project, or event, especially those from marginalized groups?
- If this is a service or project that is using evidence-based research, are the study samples diverse? How do we anticipate youth responding to this service or project who are outside of the demographics of the sample used in the research? Is the material inherently biased against certain demographics?
- How is this service, project, or event designed to ensure that a full diversity of people can participate and benefit with dignity? (consider family schedules; staff schedules, including facility shift work; family transportation needs; language barriers, etc.)
- Have we considered and noted equity and inclusion in our business and project management plans? Do we have clear goals, timetables for implementation, and procedures for evaluation and ensuring accountability? How will we measure impact and effectiveness? (You should be able to disaggregate this information demographically. See data collection and process improvement questions, p. 22-23.)
- What human and financial resources are required to address equity and inclusion in the development and implementation of this service, program, project, or event?



# Recruiting, Hiring, and Retention

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**When we integrate equity and inclusion in our hiring practices and policies, we increase diverse skills and perspectives in the workplace. The result is that we better serve all youth.**



- Do staff and volunteers in our work area reflect the diversity of the youth we serve? Who is under-represented?
- What actions are we taking to improve the diversity in our work area? (Think about this now and have a plan solidified as positions becomes available.)
- What is the demographic breakdown of all applicants who met minimum qualifications and did not get selected for interviews? What is the demographic breakdown of those who did? What strategies are we using to monitor diversity levels as we fill positions?
- Do our current policies/practices hinder us from considering applicants with certain criminal histories? How could this impact applicant diversity? Is a policy revision feasible?
- Do job requirements and selection criteria unnecessarily limit who would qualify? Could we incorporate personal lived experience into ways to meet job requirements?
- How do we conduct reference checks? How do we ensure equity and fairness within this process? What resources are needed?
- Does our job announcement language unintentionally reduce the likelihood that people from underserved populations will apply? How are we vetting this?
- How could we engage our existing staff from underserved communities to improve the language of our job announcements and to diversify our applicant pools? Are we getting their feedback on how to best retain their demographic group?
- Have we considered where best to post this employment opportunity to ensure that the widest diversity of people are able to access it? Do we encourage agency and community partners to monitor our job listings so that we can broaden the applicant pool from diverse groups?
- How are we monitoring information about who voluntarily and involuntarily leaves their jobs with us? Can we break these numbers down demographically?
- Is it mandatory that interview panels be composed of individuals who bring diverse backgrounds and experiences relevant to the position? Why not?

# Communications

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**When we apply equity to all communications, we are being intentional about ensuring marginalized communities are informed. We are seeking to use languages of the youth we serve and staff we employ across all the media we use. To achieve this, consider the following questions for any form of communication.**



- Have we considered all possible target audiences? Are there any historically marginalized communities not being considered (people of color, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities, etc.)?
- Is our language trauma-informed? Are we considering the trauma that people from marginalized groups experience and avoiding language that makes these experiences worse? Have we included members of these communities in the development of this communication to better inform the language we use?
- What specific strategies do we need to reach every historically marginalized community that we serve or employ (examples: working with community leaders, bulletin boards, community newspapers, social media)? Have we sought feedback from people from marginalized communities?
- Are our communications watered-down or diluted to make them palatable to the White majority?
- Do the tone and words we use to describe youth, staff, and families align with our movement toward a more equitable and inclusive system?
- Is our communication bold and does it unapologetically align with a humane, restorative, and developmental approach? Are we using our Positive Human Development principles?
- How do our communication methods reach the target audiences we seek? How do we know this?
- Have we created a system for internal and external stakeholders to make formal complaints about our communication methods and language if deemed necessary?
- Have we considered what populations will be missed by only using certain methods (example: online or social media only)? Are our approaches effective? How do we know?
- Do images represent the full diversity of employees and youth?
  - Do they capture diversity within specific communities of people?
  - Will the people portrayed in the images relate to and feel included in the way they are represented?
  - Is everyone portrayed in positive images that promote equity and break stereotypes?
  - Consider who is active and passive, who is at the center, who is serving and being served.

# Training Staff and Volunteers

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**Training and development enhance employees' and volunteers' growth and professional development. To support all employees and volunteers, we must create and provide training that represents and includes everyone.**



## Hiring Trainers

- Have we considered diversity and inclusion when staffing for internal trainer rotations and hiring external consultants? Do trainers embody the diversity of the youth we serve?
- What is the current diversity profile of trainers? How does it compare to the diversity profile of the youth we serve? (Reflect on your staffing demographics and hire accordingly.)
- How can we recruit trainers from diverse backgrounds, so they reflect the population we serve? Can we be more intentional about seeking diversity for rotational opportunities?

## Course Material

- Are training materials created and designed with inclusive language, scenarios, and photos? Do role plays, examples, etc. express the diversity of cultures in the youth we serve?
- Does the training material outline the need to recognize and acknowledge the different experiences people have based upon their identities without pressure for these people to speak for or represent an entire community?
- How are we currently training staff related to the competency and skills they need to work sensitively and effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds, especially from historically underserved populations? What component of the training material will teach cultural sensitivity? Does the training material account for or address the need for trauma-informed care?
- How can we better train and educate our staff on the history of the U.S. juvenile justice system, Oregon's juvenile justice system, and the impact they have had on youth from marginalized communities? (This is trauma-informed because it acknowledges the experiences youth and families have with the criminal system prior to commitment to OYA, and how those experiences may impact their engagement and behavior or attitude towards OYA.)
- Do employees know how the knowledge attained from this training will be tied to their job performance and the measures we will use to determine this? If not, why not?

*(Continued on page 21)*

# Training Staff and Volunteers (continued)

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- How will the learning objectives be designed to influence staff awareness and consideration of individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds? (The learning objectives should explicitly state this goal.)
- How do training materials account for different language fluency, learning styles and abilities, physical/sensory, and cognitive abilities? (Consider auditory, verbal, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles; include closed-captions and audio descriptions when possible; use clear and legible font large enough to be read from all parts of a room, etc.)
- Do visual materials (photos, videos, and graphics) reflect diversity?
- How are we monitoring the attitudes and conversations of the dominant culture during the trainings to recognize oppressive and harmful dialogue?
- How do we take into consideration the lived experience of staff from marginalized communities when developing training content? Are we getting feedback from staff from these communities?
- Are staff mandated to fully participate in the training? Are barriers addressed (safety, language, accessible location, time, avoiding religious and cultural holidays, culturally appropriate, accommodation needs)? How will we ensure make-up sessions for staff who miss training?
- Have we welcomed the diverse perspectives of people who have specific equity concerns or needs, even if they may not be obvious? (LGBTQ+ identities; dietary, auditory, language needs or preferences, etc.)
- In the evaluation of the training, do we ask whether there were any barriers to participation or whether the facilitator was inclusive of the diversity of participants?

# Data Collection

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**Considering equity when conducting our environmental scans, needs assessments, and data collection allows us to find disparate impacts and eliminate inequities that may exist.**

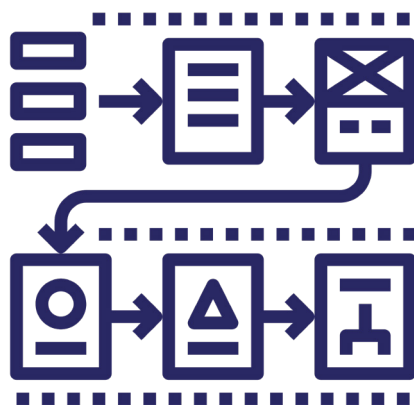


- What current statistics or demographic data would help us understand the people or communities who face systemic barriers and inequities in relation to the issue in question? Will data gathered capture the diversity of the population? Is it broken down to make differences visible (also known as “disaggregated”)?
- How are we collecting, reviewing, and analyzing demographic data (race, ethnicity, gender, language, disability, etc.) to inform our decision? How is this data woven into decision-making?
- What do we want to accomplish by reviewing and analyzing this data? How will the metrics we analyze accomplish this for everyone, including people from historically marginalized communities?
- How can this data work toward improving achievement, opportunities, and other components within our system for youth or staff? How could it be used to increase the sense of worthiness and outcomes for underserved populations of staff or youth?
- Are we making assumptions that we need to verify? (Example: when we measure how safe youth feel in our custody, the data includes youth from historically marginalized communities explicitly disaggregated. Any data not broken down demographically fundamentally assumes the results includes those from underserved populations, which may not be the case.)
- How might we consult with the people most affected by any disparate impact we uncover to ensure the reliability of our data, approach, and findings? (Ask staff, leaders, and youth from marginalized communities about the culturally appropriateness of the data or approach, or present the information to OYA’s DEI Steering Committee for recommendations.)
- Does the final report include any findings on the specific equity and inclusion concerns identified?

# Process Improvement

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When we consider equity and inclusion in how we measure results, we take action to ensure that all benefit from the process and outcomes.



- Are there components of youth and staff's lived experience that cannot be captured in the form of data collection we use?
- What measures are we currently tracking and monitoring?
  - How can we determine the level of equity based on the findings of each measure?
  - Can the measure be broken down demographically to assess any disparate impact?
  - What value does the measure hold if potential disparities cannot be assessed?
- What other approaches can we take? (focus groups, semi-structured interviews, etc.)
- What measures do we need to effectively monitor equity in decision points for our department?
- Have we spoken to youth or staff from marginalized communities to get their feedback on the measures and forms of data collection we have decided on?
- When analyzing our data, did we maintain a diversity of perspectives in the findings?
- What specific disparities were uncovered in the data analysis?
- How have we sought feedback from the population of staff or youth where disparities were found in data? (Validating our findings this way minimizes any bias influences.)
- Have we conducted a root cause analysis of disparities we find in the data? Have we created an action plan with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-sensitive) goals to reduce the disparities we found in the data?
- How will we know this action plan is supporting our strategy to eliminate disparities impacting underserved populations? What are the measurable goals within our action plan?

# Sources

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