



Creating an Equity Focused Workforce
September 2022



King County

Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Wastewater Treatment Division



King County Equity & Social Justice Plan

VISION - A King County where all people have equitable opportunities to thrive.

Four key strategies to advance Equity and Social Justice are to invest:

- Upstream and where needs are greatest
- In community partnerships
- In employees
- To accomplish this with accountable and transparent leadership



King County's 14 Determinants of Equity



WTD Equity & Social Justice Program

Goal:

- To consistently identify and implement a variety of strategies to advance the goals of King County's Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan.

Strategies:

- To direct efforts inwardly with focused training, awareness and skill building so WTD employees may advance equity and social justice through the work they perform daily.
- To apply services outwardly to advance equity and social justice outcomes within the community and residents of our service area.



Inwardly - Developing Awareness and Skills

Training Offerings:

- WTD Equity & Social Justice Fundamentals
- Hiring and Selecting a Diverse Workforce
- Strategies to Identify and Eliminate Microaggressions
- Respect, Inclusion and Equity in the Workplace
- Removing Bias From the Interview Process
- Transformational Conversations Series
- Employee Sponsored and Led Forums Exploring Race
- Monthly Employee Led Blog on Topics Exploring Race and Equity



Continuous Focus on Workforce

- WTD ESJ Supervisors' Working Group – Best Practices
- Monthly Equity & Social Justice Committee gatherings
- Supervisor oriented resources and training opportunities
- Manager & Supervisors ESJ Expectations
- Specially designed training sessions supporting new equity-oriented policy (*Affinity Groups, DNRP ESJ Policy, Gender Identity*)
- 4-hours of equity-oriented training required each year
- Management support for employee participation in ESJ activities



Outwardly - Integrating Principles into Action

- All capital project requests are screened and scored for equity opportunities
- All project teams conduct an equity opportunity review and create an equity oriented community outreach plan
- Extra points awarded on Work Order Contract proposals that demonstrate the pursuit of equity outcomes in hiring and subcontractor involvement
- All interview panels must be diverse racially and by gender
- Language Access ordinance provides outreach and information to all communities
- 15,000+ educational program participants in virtual and in-person programs. 57% of students were BIPOC and 34% coming from low income schools



Integrating Principles into Action

- Created Sharepoint site with information and resources:
- Maintaining momentum with ESJ Subcommittees
 - Skills Resources – Clarifier blogs & exercises
 - Capital – Integration of ESJ into projects and programs
 - Recruitment, Selection & Development – Identifying next steps to create inclusive workplace and opportunities for advancement
 - Workplan – Tracks formal efforts to integrate ESJ into daily business processes



Advocate for Courageous Conversations

- Center on Black, Indigenous, People of Color perspectives...
- Appreciate our Diversity and the *Value of Multiple Truths*...
- Put Relationships First...
- Seek to Learn...
- Acknowledge the Need to Pause...
- Become a Learner...
- Attend with Self-Awareness...
- Be Respectful, Be Kind, Be Brave...
- Pay Attention to Power...



Key Projects Underway

- Conducting Deep dives in:
 - ESJ related communications
 - Community Engagement – Identifying Best Practices and resource gaps with diverse communities
 - Language Access – Integrating Language Access success into all programs in DNRP
 - Capital Improvement Program (CIP) analysis – Identifying Best Practices and removing process gaps/barriers
 - ADA Compliance
 - Promoting Pro Equity Actions



Results from our efforts

- 95% of all interview panels consisted of at least one BIPOC staff member
- BIPOC applicants increased by 13% from 2016 – 2020
- BIPOC staff increasing by 18% between 2018 – 2020
- 17,000+ pages translated into 14 different languages
- \$60K paid to community partners for culturally appropriate outreach
- Reviewed and scored 100% of capital project submittals for opportunities to leverage and include equity and social justice outcomes
- Operationalized equity actions into many businesses processes



Questions & Discussion



Results from our efforts

Robert Tovar
Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Manager
Wastewater Treatment Division
206-477-5374

robert.tovar@kingcounty.gov

