

## Equity Impact Review Report

### Revisions to King County Board of Health Title 13, On-site Sewage Codes

November 2024

Equity Impact Reviews (EIR) are an important tool to ensure that the principle of being "fair and just" is intentionally incorporated into all King County does to achieve equitable opportunities for all people and communities, which is required per King County ordinance 16948<sup>1</sup>. As part of the process to propose revisions to King County Board of Health Code Title 13, On-site Sewage System (OSS) Program staff partnered with the Environmental Health Services Racial Equity Manager and the Public Health – Seattle & King County Equity Review Team (ERT) to perform an EIR of the proposed code revisions. The ERT includes representatives of different PHSKC divisions and community members whose lifelong equity work and lived experiences make them uniquely qualified to identify inequitable impacts and propose systemic changes to address them.

The EIR identified two revision topics that provided the greatest opportunities to improve equitable OSS management. These included adding a requirement to use an EIR when reviewing the OSS Local Management Plan, which is required every five years per WAC 246-272A, and addressing unethical business practices by OSS industry professionals. These topics were evaluated using a Structural Competency framework to identify what contributes to inequities at an individual/intrapersonal level of influence and an institutional/socio-cultural level of influence, as well as strategies to mitigate the concern.

Throughout this review, three key opportunities to address inequities were identified.

- **Strengthen and leverage partnerships** with community members and other impacted parties, particularly with state agencies and Tribes, to support effective EIRs that lead to meaningful change.
- **Develop OSS Industry Code of Performance and Ethics** to protect customers from unethical business practices, which are more common when a customer is a person with limited English proficiency; is Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color; is a person with a disability; or is an older adult. By incorporating protections for the most marginalized in King County communities, the proposed OSS regulations will improve services for all King County residents.
- **Increase access to in-language resources and culturally sensitive trainings** to empower OSS owners and residents to advocate for themselves and take care of their OSS.

The proposed code revisions incorporate the recommendations to require an EIR during the Local Management Plan review that occurs every five years and to create an OSS Industry Code of Performance of Ethics. The OSS Program will work to strengthen relationships with State and Tribal agencies, as well as with all interested community members, and to identify resources to increase access to OSS information and education.

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<sup>1</sup> 2010. King County Signature Report, Ordinance 16946. Available at <https://aqua.kingcounty.gov/council/clerk/OldOrdsMotions/Ordinance%2016948.pdf>.