

Metro | Agenda

Meeting: Equity Strategy Advisory Committee

Date: Monday, Jan. 6, 2014

Time: 3 to 5 p.m.

Place: Metro Regional Center, 370A/B, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland, 97232

Purpose: Discussion and approval operating principles and staff recommendations on Baseline Workgroup additions; discuss criteria for indicators; continue work on definition of equity.

Attendees: Equity Strategy Advisory Committee; Pietro Ferrari, Metro; Joan Brown-Kline, Brown-Kline Consulting

Welcome and check-in 5 min.

Carl Talton, Chair

Review of agenda and meeting expectations

Outcome: Agreement on meeting agenda and expectations

PART 1: Committee Business

Review, discuss and approval of operating principles 10 min.

Pietro Ferrari

Outcome: Committee adoption of operating principles

Staff recommendations to accommodate additional community groups to Baseline Workgroup 10 min.

Pietro Ferrari

Outcome: Approval of additional community groups and engagement plan

Review and discussion of criteria for indicators recommended by Baseline Workgroup 5 min.

Pietro Ferrari

Outcome: Committee direction on criteria to be used by Baseline Workgroup in indicator review

PART 2: Workshop session; Defining Equity 90 min.

Facilitated by Joan Brown-Kline

Outcome: First draft of an equity definition for Metro

Review results of previous exercises (5 min.)

Finish Response brainstorm exercise (15 min.)

Divide group in two breakout groups to develop a draft definition of equity using results from values, vision, opportunity, challenge and response exercises (40 min.)

Report out from each group to share draft definitions; start discussion on
combing two draft definitions into one (30 min.)

Next steps

Carl Talton, Chair

Next Advisory Committee meeting on Jan. 29, 2014

MPAC

5 min.

Metro Equity Strategy Program Advisory Committee

Defining Equity | Worksheet for drafting a Response to Challenges and Opportunities

Assignment

Provide a short paragraph of three to five sentences describing a response to the challenges and opportunities identified in the enclosed handout.

If you look at the challenges of and opportunities for advancing equity listed on the enclosed handout considered through the lens of the five desired outcomes for the region listed below, what do you think our response (finding an answer to these challenges) should be?

- Vibrant communities
- Economic prosperity
- Safe and reliable transportation
- Leadership on climate change
- Clean air and water

Deadline

Please return your draft responses to Valerie Cuevas at valerie.cuevas@oregonmetro.gov by Dec. ____, 2013.

MAKING A GREAT PLACE

Goals for the region endorsed by city and county elected officials and approved by the Metro Council

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

People live, work and play in vibrant communities where their everyday needs are easily accessible.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Current and future residents benefit from the region's sustained economic competitiveness and prosperity.

SAFE AND RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION

People have safe and reliable transportation choices that enhance their quality of life.

LEADERSHIP ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The region is a leader in minimizing contributions to global warming.

CLEAN AIR AND WATER

Current and future generations enjoy clean air, clean water and healthy ecosystems.

EQUITY

The benefits and burdens of growth and change are distributed equitably.



Metro Equity Strategy Program Advisory Committee

Defining Equity | Drafting a Response to Challenges and Opportunities

Assignment

Given the opportunities and challenges previously identified by the advisory committee to advancing equity in the region, **provide a short paragraph of three to five sentences describing a response or a solution statement** that addresses the challenges and recognizes the opportunities. Response/Solution Statement

Submitted by Ben Duncan

Metro, representing a diverse region both demographically and geographically, has the opportunity to connect business leaders, jurisdictional representatives, and communities to advance equity by influencing common policy strategies. By creating a regional definition and vision around equity, Metro can address the challenges posed by differing jurisdictional authorities, lack of alignment between government, community and business sectors, and the different interpretation and perception of equity for diverse stakeholder groups. Metro is uniquely positioned and resourced to acknowledge and address the historical and contemporary causes of inequities in the region, assist in creating regional understanding of these relationships, shared language and shared vision for what equity is, and to identify and measure indicators that allow the region to assess its progress.

Challenge

What potential challenges do we face in the region in realizing equity in the desired outcomes?

Challenges

- "siloed" authority in what we control as agencies – who holds authority needed to achieve desired outcomes
- lack of alignment between jurisdictional authorities
- lack of alignment between sectors to help fund and advance equity (private, philanthropic, government, community-based organizations)
- topographical disparities that impede effective communications
- issues interpreted differently by diverse communities
- creating jobs and prosperity
- perception of Metro as urban-centric
- perception that vision for the region (six desired outcomes) is representative of the entire region
- getting all voices at the table
- existing leadership isn't reflective of the demographic shift in the region
- moral and economic reasons for not recognizing lack of equity in the region

Challenges by desired outcomes

Vibrant communities

- Lack of clarity in definition of "vibrant communities"
- Portland-centric viewpoint of how "vibrant communities" is defined in the six regional

outcomes as "easily accessible" – phrasing that lends itself to the 20-minute urban neighborhood lifestyle choice

Economic prosperity

- Lack of clarity in definition of "economic prosperity"

Safe and reliable transportation

- Instances of unsafe and unreliable transportation, i.e. North light rail project

Opportunity

What opportunities do we have in the region to advance equity in the desired outcomes?

Opportunities

- recognition by leaders that demographics of the region are changing
- opportunity to bring different communities to the table
- recognition by leaders that the region has a history of inequities that are holding people back
- acknowledgement by leaders that work has been done that can be built upon
- Metro positioned to help develop one common policy strategy to help fund and advance equity for all sectors (private, philanthropic, government, community-based organizations)
- Metro can prepare communities to take advantage of one common policy strategy to help fund and advance equity
- region has a competitive advantage in implementing this work
- data resources exist for transit, jobs, etc.

Opportunities by desired outcomes

Vibrant communities

- better define what is meant by using language that describes families that thrive
- acknowledge existing strength-based/asset-based solutions with communities
- communities are rapidly diversifying
- create collective impact

Economic prosperity

- better define what is meant by "economic prosperity"
- Metro's can leverage small business and entrepreneurialism
- Metro can connect business leaders, philanthropic institutions and government sector with underserved communities
- Creative services industries can leverage the perspectives of a diverse workforce, recruit and train local talent, provide scholarships
- use home-based, local talent instead of importing talent
- prepare youth for private sector careers in the future workforce
- build capacity from community side and with private sector/businesses

Safe and reliable transportation

- data available to indicate where safe and reliable transportation didn't happen

What is the potential cost to the region in lost opportunities if we do not advance equity in the desired outcomes?

Opportunity cost

- cost of doing nothing
- improved resources
- competitive position

Equity Strategy Program Advisory Committee | Defining Equity Exercise

As identified in the Equity Strategy Program Work Plan, the Advisory Committee shall provide a recommendation on the development of an agency equity definition – as it relates to the region's desired outcomes – which will be used to guide the development of the Equity Indicators.

Group exercise for drafting a Response to Opportunity/Challenge for advancing equity

1. Reviewing the results from the Opportunity/Challenge exercise completed at the Oct. 28 meeting, provide **two to three statements** describing a Response or Solution that addresses the challenges of and opportunities for advancing equity in the region.

Break-out exercise for developing a first draft of an equity definition (2 groups)

1. Reflecting back on the results from **all** of the exercises completed:
 - **Values** The values that are important to Metro's definition of diversity
 - **Vision** What the Portland metropolitan region will look like when equity is realized
 - **Opportunity** The opportunities Metro has in the region to advance equity in the desired outcomes
 - **Challenge** Challenges Metro faces in the region in realizing equity in the desired outcome
 - **Response** Finding solutions to these challenges

What definition of equity do you propose that reflects the results of the values, vision, opportunity, challenge and response exercises and relates to the region's desired outcomes (listed on p. 2)?

2. Please consider using the following themes as you develop your draft definition of equity. The following words (themes) emerged after researching (15) equity definitions from local and national organizations:
 - Everyone
 - Access
 - Prosperity
 - Barrier
 - Intentionality
 - Ability
 - Means/ends
 - Well-being
 - Benefits/burdens

Vision

What will the Metro region be like when equity is realized?

We all want a region that provides opportunities for...

- access to safe neighborhoods
- employment
- high quality education
- wellness
- healthy people, healthy communities
- equal access to Metro benefits
- the region's quality of life
- competing for individual prosperity
- honoring and respecting individual and cultural differences
- respecting the uniqueness of individual communities
- community and self-determination
- health, prosperity and well-being and the systems that support them
- "homegrown" economic competitiveness with the rest of the world
- accessible, representative decision-making
- transparency and structure in decision-making
- life outcomes that are not predicted by race
- success and enjoyment of life
- the elimination of racial and ethnic disparities
- equitable distribution of the benefits and burdens of growth and change
- collaboration on common goals
- services and resources delivered and administered proportionately to demographics of community members
- appreciation of communities

COMMON THEMES

Appeared in two or more groups

- access
- safety
- appreciation/respect/embracing all cultures
- equity; equitable distribution of burdens and benefits
- understanding of cultures and histories
- future generations
- health
- education
- economic competitiveness/ employment, opportunity
- self determination; individuality
- natural environment stewardship
- elimination of racial and ethnic disparities; race ceases to predict life outcomes
- participation/collaboration
- opportunity

OTHER THEMES

Appeared in one group only

- institution changes: ensure systems support outcomes
- transparency in structure and decision-making
- community fabric
- "homegrown" economic competitiveness with the rest of the world
- community definition of prosperous and healthy

COMPLETE VISION: Future generations realize a region where families thrive and have access to safe neighborhoods and opportunities, and share in the stewardship of natural resources.

Values

What values are important to Metro's definition of equity?

Our region is stronger when everyone has access to the benefits of...

- acceptance and embracement of all cultures
- authentic relationships
- prosperity
- success
- ability to thrive
- realizing human potential
- a greater appreciation of differences
- making the world better for future generations
- (ensuring) personal and community safety
- connecting to others
- a common culture for decision-making and resolution of shared issues
- equal access
- equity
- respect of others
- collaboration
- empathy
- transformation
- empowerment
- pride in our cultural heritages
- a shared understanding of history and appreciation for where we came from and where we are now
- a well-informed community
- racial and ethnic justice
- perspectives from the underserved and underrepresented as part of policymaking
- honoring cultural and historic context
- proportional allocation thinking
- relational and inclusive worldview
- self-determination
- a sense of a greater common good
- valuing the feelings of communities, thinking holistically
- accountability
- transparency

COMMON THEMES

Appeared in two or more groups

- safety
- self reliance, self determination
- realizing human potential
- empowerment
- future generations
- honor/understand cultural histories
- relationships/connectivity
- collaboration: common culture for decision-making and resolution
- respect/embrace all cultures; appreciate differences
- opportunity
- equity

OTHER THEMES

Appeared in one group only

- empathy
- institutional issues; accountability
- acknowledgement of how Metro perpetuates inequalities
- keeper/facilitator of vision



Equity Strategy Program Advisory Committee Charter, Purpose and Operating Principles

Section I. Charter and authority

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Equity Strategy Program Advisory Committee is to provide support to Metro's Equity Strategy Program in developing a common language and framework for advancing equity through the delivery of the agency's mission, programs, policies and services to create a region where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

B. Formation

The Metro Chief Operating Officer shall approve the formation of the Equity Strategy Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee).

C. Character and authority

The purpose and authority of the Advisory Committee is to convene periodically to support the Metro's Equity Strategy Program, provide constructive comments and review of deliverables, and develop recommendations on the program deliverables (Program Recommendations).

The Advisory Committee shall deliver the Program Recommendations to Metro's Chief Operating Officer through Metro's Equity Strategy Program Manager, who will convey the Program Recommendations to Metro Council, along with the Chair and other Advisory Committee members as needed.

The Advisory Committee will foster positive communication outside of the team regarding the program's progress and outcomes, suggest other resources that may be useful or available, and act as a resource to the program team as needed.

D. Period of time necessary for the Advisory Committee to carry out its purpose

The Advisory Committee shall be dissolved upon the completion of Phase 2 of Metro's Equity Strategy Program and this issuance of the Equity Strategy Action Plan (an estimated three-year timeline).

E. Frequency of meetings

The Advisory Committee shall meet monthly, though emergency meetings may be called as needed with no less than three days written notice. After the first year, the Advisory Committee may choose to adjust the frequency of meetings in conjunction with program needs; however the Committee shall meet no fewer than four times per year (quarterly).

F. Membership

This volunteer committee shall be comprised of up to 15 members, to be appointed by the Metro Chief Operating Officer. Members will be selected to balance the expertise and viewpoints necessary to effectively address the issues to be considered by the Committee. Members will be recognized experts in their fields, including but not limited to social and environmental justice, cultural organizations, transportation, housing, land use, finance, philanthropy, education, health care, social work, general business, and local government.

Terms

Members shall be appointed to serve a one-year term, and may be reappointed to serve up to two additional terms.

G. Chair and Vice Chair

The Metro Chief Operating Officer shall designate one member to serve as Chair of the Advisory Committee. The Chair shall preside over meetings of the Advisory Committee. When the Advisory Committee is not in session, the Chair's duties include acting as its representative and spokesperson.

Vice Chair

The Chair shall appoint a member of the Advisory Committee to serve as Vice Chair. The Vice Chair shall assist the Chair and support the Chair's responsibilities in the absence of the Chair.

H. Joint sub-committee

To ensure coordination and open communication between the Advisory Committee (external) and Metro's Steering Committee (internal) a joint sub-committee shall be formed with 3 representative members from each committee supported by staff. This joint sub-committee will meet on a regular schedule to review status updates, provide an opportunity to share the committees' perspectives and/or concerns and provide guiding support to ensure program deliverables are met. The Advisory Committee and Steering Committee chairs will appoint each of the remaining committee members to this sub-committee.

I. Reporting requirements

The Advisory Committee will provide formal recommendations to Metro's Chief Operating Officer and Metro's Equity Strategy Program Manager on major deliverables (identified below). These recommendations, developed in collaboration with the Steering Committee, will be delivered to Metro Council by the Chief Operating Officer.

J. Expected Work Results

The Advisory Committee shall provide written and oral reports on the following milestones:

Phase 1: Definition, Indicators & Baseline

- Recommendation on the development of an agency equity definition, used to guide development of Equity Indicators
- Recommendations on a series of community-supported equity indicators to be used in Equity Baseline
- Presentation of final Equity Baseline report, including documentation on structural nature of equity indicators

Phase 2: Recommended roles & responsibilities for Metro

- Recommendations on Metro's roles and responsibilities relative to the Equity Baseline, including (1) areas where Metro has a clear role; (2) areas clearly outside of Metro's authority; (3) and recommendations on Metro's potential role for areas where Metro is not currently active.

Phase 3: Policy recommendations to implement Metro's Equity Strategy

- Policy recommendation on Metro's Equity Strategy

- Recommendations on Equity Strategy Action Plan including implementation and evaluation processes

K. Metro responsibilities for providing necessary support

Metro will provide managerial and support staff as well as the facilities, supplies, external consultants (as needed) to support the successful completion of activities of the Advisory Committee. Advisory Committee members will not be compensated for their services. Metro will pay costs associated with the provision of reasonable accommodations for people when such costs are directly associated with the conduct of the Advisory Committee meetings and reporting activities. In addition, Metro will provide funds annually to support the development and publishing of Advisory Committee reports.

L. Date of Charter

The purpose and authority of the Advisory Committee was formalized in the adoption of a committee charter on Oct. 28, 2013.

Section II. Operating principles

In order to effectively conduct its work, the Advisory Committee agreed on the following operating principles to guide its meetings and decision making processes as follows:

A. Productive communication

- We value communications that allow for differences in perspectives.
- We assume committee members come with the best of intentions.
- We promote an openness that supports us in communicating our feelings.
- We respect each other by focusing on issues and ideas, not individuals.
- We have the option of providing input after a meeting through email to Metro staff who can provide constructive feedback to committee members if we don't feel comfortable taking that role.
- Any issue discussed during committee meetings stays with committee members.

B. Collaboration

We all benefit from a collaborative working relationship between advisory committee members, joint sub-committee, program manager, and Metro staff.

C. Content relevance

- Committee members and Metro staff can propose issues beyond the charge of the Equity Strategy Program Advisory Committee.
- The Committee decides whether or not the proposed issue has relevance, given its charge.
- Committee members can request input from the Committee on issues they are considering in their course of work outside of the Committee.

D. Role of the Program Manager and Supportive Staff

- The Equity Strategy Program Manager shares input and facilitates check-ins as needed with Metro Council liaisons and the Chief Operating Officer, especially in regard to the development of the Committee's recommendations.
- Metro staff keeps momentum going and helps facilitate discussion by developing materials and content for committee consideration.

- Metro staff provides outside resources that can inform the professional work of committee members.
- Metro staff synthesizes discussions, tracks progress, and determines next steps and points of action needed.

E. Decision-making process

- We support an open, transparent and inclusive decision-making process.
- The Equity Strategy Program Advisory Committee reaches decisions through consensus.
- Consensus means that all parties can live with a recommendation, though they may not agree with it in its entirety. Silence will be considered consent.
- When decisions are made by the committee, Metro staff captures the discussion, synthesizes the comments, and sends all notes and materials back to the committee.
- We will evaluate whether there are enough committee members present to have a discussion and reach consensus on any given issue on a case-by-case basis.

F. Meeting logistics

Attendance

The Committee will not mandate a specific amount of absences that are allowable regarding attendance. We assume that since committee members agreed to serve on the Equity Program Advisory Committee, they understand the importance of regular attendance in order to be heard and have their opinion factored into the decision.

Multiple options for committee participation

While it is preferred that Committee members attend in person, members will have the following options for participation (determined in advance of meetings, allowing Metro staff time to accommodate meeting needs):

- Conference calls for those who cannot attend in person
- Video conferencing
- Meeting at other locations beyond Metro to accommodate committee members in other parts of the region.

Sub-Committees

The Chair or Vice-Chair shall have the authority to designate sub-committees as necessary to break out the work of the Advisory Committee into smaller working groups.

Definitions of Equity

Applied Research Center

- **Equal opportunity and fair treatment:** All people are afforded full and fair access to all opportunities and benefits, free of bias and barriers, with all programs designed to be inclusive and representative of the demographics of the communities in which they're based.
- **Excellence and efficacy:** Jobs are high-quality, and job programs are highly effective and specifically tailored to build strong skills and career paths for marginalized communities, so as to maximize the shared benefits and transformative potential of the green economy.
- **Health and wellness:** The health, safety and well-being of all individuals and communities are maximized, with active attention to eliminating existing disparities.
- **Human rights and worker's rights:** All employees and community residents are guaranteed basic rights and respect, including the right to organize and engage in collective advocacy.
- **Sustainability and security:** Households and communities are provided the support and protections needed for long-term economic security and environmental sustenance. This includes affordable housing, access to public transportation and proximity to a high-quality education for children.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Openness and fairness are maintained in all phases of planning, decision-making, program development, implementation, documentation and evaluation, with public participation of community stakeholders, particularly those most disadvantaged.

Coalition for a Livable Future

We all have a shared fate and a shared responsibility —as individuals within a community and communities within society. Our region's future depends on the success of all of its populations, but disparities in the distribution of resources and opportunities create imbalances that disadvantage some communities and advantage others. To create a prosperous region, we must ensure that everyone in our region benefits from the opportunities the region provides so that we are all able to thrive.

Building an equitable region will benefit us all by creating a stronger, healthier, and more sustainable community. Equity is not just a moral imperative – it is an economic one. As our region becomes more racially, ethnically, and age-diverse, our shared prosperity depends on our ability to create conditions that will allow everyone to flourish. Consequently, just as the sustainability of our economy depends on a regional strategy, our efforts to increase equity must also be regional in scope.

In an equitable region:

- All people have access to the resources necessary for meeting their basic needs and advancing their health and well-being.
- All people have the power to shape the future of their communities through public decision-making processes that are transparent, inclusive, and engage the community as full partners.
- All communities experience the benefits and share the costs of growth and change.
- All people are able and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and realize their vision for success.

Inequities are not random; they are the results of past and current decisions, and they can be changed. Creating an equitable region requires the intentional examination of policies and practices (both past and present) that, even if they have the appearance of fairness, may, in effect, serve as barriers that perpetuate disparities. Working toward equity requires the prioritization of policies, infrastructure, and investments to ensure that all people and communities can thrive

-- regardless of race, ethnicity, income, age, gender, language, sexual orientation, ability, health status and other markers of identity.

Greater Portland Pulse

All individuals, regardless of “markers of difference” including but not limited to race, ethnicity, income, disability, and age, have equal privilege and opportunity to access the basic needs, services, skills and assets required to succeed in life. This includes affordable access to healthy food, adequate and appropriate housing, quality jobs, safe neighborhoods, transportation and mobility options, education, civic engagement, health services, natural areas, and opportunities to participate in arts and cultural activities.

King County Equity and Social Justice (2008)

Fair and Just. These principles, stated in our county's strategic plan, are incorporated into all of our work at King County. We recognize that our economy and quality of life depends on the ability of everyone to contribute. We will work to remove barriers that limit the ability of some to fulfill their potential. It is troubling that race, income, neighborhood are each major predictors of whether we graduate from high school, become incarcerated, how healthy we are, and even how long we will live. We are committed to implementing our equity and social justice agenda, to work toward fairness and opportunity for all.

Multnomah County, Office of Diversity and Equity

Equity is an ideal and a goal, not a process, it ensures that everyone has the resources to succeed.

Northwest Health Foundation

We have a shared fate—as individuals within a community and communities within society. All communities need the ability to shape their own present and future. Equity is both the means to healthy communities and an end that benefits us all. Equity requires the intentional examination of systemic policies and practices that, even if they have the appearance of fairness, may, in effect, serve to marginalize some and perpetuate disparities. Working toward equity requires an understanding of historical contexts and the active investment in social structures over time to ensure that all communities can experience their vision for health.

Oregon Health Authority

Health equity is the attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Health equity entails focused and societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities by equalizing conditions for the health of all groups, especially for those who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantages or historical injustices.

Policy link

Just and fair inclusion. An equitable society is one in which all can participate and prosper. The goals of equity must be to create the conditions that allow all to reach their full potential.

Portland Plan, Urban League of Portland and City of Portland’s Office of Equity and Human Rights

Equity is when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential. We have a shared fate as individual as within a community and communities within society. All communities need the ability to shape their own present and future. Equity is both the means to healthy communities and an end that benefits us all.

Metro Equity Advisory Committee

Defining Equity Exercise

January 6, 2014

Break-out group discussion

1. In reflecting back on the results from the exercises we completed related to the five components of:
 - **Values.** Values that are important to Metro's definition of diversity.
 - **Vision.** What Metro region look like when equity is realized.
 - **Challenge.** Challenges Metro faces in the region in realizing equity in the desired outcome.
 - **Opportunity.** Opportunities Metro has in the region to advance equity in the desired outcome.
 - **Response.** Finding solutions to these challenges.

What definition of equity can you create that will address the outcomes that is clear and comprehensive of Metro's five goals?

2. Please consider using the following themes as you develop your definition of equity. The following words (themes) emerged after researching (15) equity definitions for local and national organizations:
 - Everyone
 - Access
 - Prosperity
 - Barrier
 - Intentionality
 - Ability
 - Means/ends
 - Well-being
 - Benefits/burdens

Definitions of Equity

Coalition for a Livable Future

We all have a shared fate and a shared responsibility —as individuals within a community and communities within society. Our region’s future depends on the success of all of its populations, but disparities in the distribution of resources and opportunities create imbalances that disadvantage some communities and advantage others. To create a prosperous region, we must ensure that everyone in our region benefits from the opportunities the region provides so that we are all able to thrive.

Building an equitable region will benefit us all by creating a stronger, healthier, and more sustainable community. Equity is not just a moral imperative – it is an economic one. As our region becomes more racially, ethnically, and age-diverse, our shared prosperity depends on our ability to create conditions that will allow everyone to flourish. Consequently, just as the sustainability of our economy depends on a regional strategy, our efforts to increase equity must also be regional in scope.

In an equitable region:

- All people have access to the resources necessary for meeting their basic needs and advancing their health and well-being.
- All people have the power to shape the future of their communities through public decision-making processes that are transparent, inclusive, and engage the community as full partners.
- All communities experience the benefits and share the costs of growth and change.
- All people are able and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and realize their vision for success.

Inequities are not random; they are the results of past and current decisions, and they can be changed. Creating an equitable region requires the intentional examination of policies and practices (both past and present) that, even if they have the appearance of fairness, may, in effect, serve as barriers that perpetuate disparities. Working toward equity requires the prioritization of policies, infrastructure, and investments to ensure that all people and communities can thrive -- regardless of race, ethnicity, income, age, gender, language, sexual orientation, ability, health status and other markers of identity.

Northwest Health Foundation

We have a shared fate—as individuals within a community and communities within society. All communities need the ability to shape their own present and future. Equity is both the means to healthy communities and an end that benefits us all. Equity requires the intentional examination of systemic policies and practices that, even if they have the appearance of fairness, may, in effect, serve to marginalize some and perpetuate disparities. Working toward equity requires an understanding of historical contexts and the active investment in social structures over time to ensure that all communities can experience their vision for health.