Healthy King County Coalition
Mobilizing communities to achieve health equity

Health Equity Assessment Tool (HEAT)

A planning tool to help you deepen your racial equity and social justice analysis during each phase of the development and decision-making of initiatives, programs and policies

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of policy, initiative or program:
Issue to assess is a: ☐ policy ☐ initiative ☐ program ☐ budget ☐ Other:
Brief description of the issue:
Purpose or goal:
Organization Name:
Department (if applicable):
Contact name: Pronouns:
Contact information:

INTENTIONAL ACTIONS. Which antiracist actions are you taking to advance health equity?

- Are you designing your program *with* the community? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe? How?
- Which strategies are you using to connect and learn from community?

- How are you centering the voices and feedback of BIPOC individuals in those conversations?   And in your decision-making processes?
- How do you plan to retain community participation and maintain those relationships in a meaningful way moving forward?
- How will you ensure that your organization is internally and publicly accountable to communities most impacted by racism?
- How does your organization benefit from conducting this HEAT evaluation?

HEAT TIP!

Engage early. Engage often. Include key individuals from communities experiencing health inequities. Reach out to different sectors and non-traditional partners. Make sure to add new voices and perspectives regularly.

ASSESSMENT

HEAT TIP!

Show up. Hold listening sessions or attend existing community meetings. Use the Language access for limited English-speaking populations tools and resources. Compensate partners.
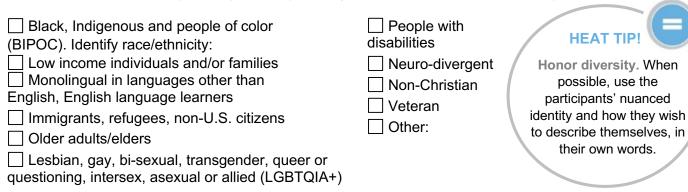
Step 1. Identify racial equity results.

- What does your organization define as the three most important racially equitable community outcome?
- What does your organization define as the most important racially equitable community outcome of this project/program/policy?
- Think about the systems your project/program/policy may impact. Can the project potentially impact systems outside the sector where you work? (for example, healthcare, education, employment, contracting, community development, housing, criminal justice, immigration, transportation)

Step **2.** Identify key priority population.

Race matters. Who does your project policy or program impact? Check all that apply:

☐ Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC). Identify race/ethnicity:
☐ Low income individuals and/or families
☐ Monolingual in languages other than English, English language learners
☐ Immigrants, refugees, non-U.S. citizens
☐ Older adults/elders
☐ Lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual or allied (LGBTQIA+)

☐ People with disabilities
☐ Neuro-divergent
☐ Non-Christian
☐ Veteran
☐ Other:

HEAT TIP!

Honor diversity. When possible, use the participants' nuanced identity and how they wish to describe themselves, in their own words.

Include those who are marginalized. Who is your project, policy or program *not* reaching or impacting *that should be*?

HEAT TIP!

Where people live influence their health. Qualities of a place—jobs, affordable housing, quality schools, clean air and water, access to nutritious foods, social connections, parks— all affect health.

Place matters. What geographic areas may be impacted by your work?
  City or neighborhood
  What is the racial composition of people and community groups in this city/neighborhood?
  What does data and your conversations with community members tell you about existing racial inequities that you should take into consideration?

Determine benefits and burdens. Consider intersectionality across people who may be impacted (for example, BIPOC queer veteran).

What are potential impacts to racial equity in the community where you are working?

Benefits	Burdens

Will Insert one population impacted, i.e. Black Insert another population impacted, i.e. older adults in this community be positively or negatively impacted?

Benefits	Burdens

Will Insert one population impacted, i.e. Native Insert another population impacted, i.e. children in this community be positively or negatively impacted?

What are potential *unintended* consequences of your project/policy/program?

Benefits	Burdens

How do these impacts align with the community outcomes as defined in **Step 1**?

Healthy King County Coalition
Mobilizing communities to achieve health equity

Step 3. **Avoid, Mitigate, Accept.** Address each change you've made in response to identifying racial equity impacts. Think of *how* you will adjust your plans to AVOID the negative impacts, MITIGATE (minimize) them, or ACCEPT them. If you have no choice and must ACCEPT a negative impact, identify *why* you had to accept that impact and *what* you would have needed to AVOID or MITIGATE the negative impact.

Racial equity issue (potential impact, root cause, etc.)	Avoid, Mitigate, Accept	What strategies will you use to avoid/mitigate/accept this issue?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Healthy King County Coalition
Mobilizing communities to achieve health equity

ABOUT THE HEALTH EQUITY ASSESSMENT TOOL (HEAT)

About HEAT

The Health Equity Assessment Tool (HEAT) is a planning tool to help you deepen your racial equity and social justice analysis during each phase of the development and decision-making of initiatives, programs and policies.

The HEAT can also be used as a reflection tool to help you and your team think about questions that contribute to advancing racial equity in any decision or situation.

This tool does not have all the questions one can or should ask themselves as part of a racial equity analysis but it is a good exercise to begin your thinking. It offers a foundation to build upon as your racial equity analysis strengthens.

Use the HEAT when first developing projects, programs or policies. Then revisit it when you reconvene to plan next steps.

About the Healthy King County Coalition (HKCC)

Through our membership and honoring the wisdom and power of those who have been subject to discrimination due to their race, class, or sexual orientation, the Healthy King County Coalition (HKCC) develops leaders and provides expertise and resources that contribute to achieving health equity.

HKCC works to ensure communities have equitable access to healthy food options, physical activity, safe environments, smoke free living, and affordable transportation choices needed for communities to thrive.

HEAT was developed by the HKCC Equity Committee. The HKCC Equity Committee:
o Works to eliminate health inequities by applying race and social justice principles in all policy, systems, and environmental change efforts.
o Promotes strategies that benefit communities.

Definitions

Equity. Equity means all people have full and equal access to opportunities that allow them to reach their full potential.

Determinants of equity. The social, economic, political and environmental factors in which people are born, grow, live, and age determine equity. Determinants of equity include affordable and safe housing, equitable justice system, quality education, access to health and human services, and access to wealth and family wage jobs. All people regardless of race, class, gender, language spoken or sexual orientation need these conditions to thrive. Inequities are created when barriers prevent people from accessing these conditions and reaching their full potential.

Intersectionality. It is a way of thinking about how multiple identities together shape how a person experiences oppression or privilege. While we tend to separate racism from sexism from other forms of discrimination, they often come together and make situations worse for people who face them. Considering intersections helps us think how the multiple identities of a Black refugee Muslim woman, for example, work together and intensify conditions of power, privilege or oppression in that person's life.