

# Race and Social Justice in the Budget

## Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the seven major Citywide equity initiatives and the [Race and Social Justice Initiative \(RSJI\)](#) in which they are grounded. In addition, this chapter provides background and context for RSJI-related budget additions throughout the 2017 Adopted and 2018 Endorsed Budget.

RSJI is a Citywide effort to end institutionalized racism and race-based gaps in City government. A key component is the examination of City policies, projects, initiatives and budget decisions to determine how each item impacts different demographic groups in Seattle. Launched in 2004, Seattle was the first U.S. city to undertake an effort that focused explicitly on institutional racism. Since then, our own King County and other cities – including Minneapolis, Madison, and Portland – have all established their own equity initiatives. RSJI’s long-term goal is to change the underlying system that creates race-based disparities and to achieve racial equity, as well as ending racial disparities within City government so there is fairness in hiring and promotions, greater opportunities in contracting, and equitable services to all residents. This goal will be achieved through strengthening outreach and public engagement, changing existing services using Race and Social Justice best practices, improving immigrant and refugee access to City services, and leading a collaborative, community-wide effort to eliminate racial inequity in education, criminal justice, environmental justice, health and economic success. RSJI works to eliminate racial and social disparities across key indicators of success in Seattle, including: arts and culture, criminal justice, education, environment, equitable development, health, housing, jobs, and service equity.

The Seattle Office for Civil Rights leads this Initiative and provides support for departments and staff. For more than a decade the initiative has worked to ensure racial equity is a core value of the City.

In 2014 Mayor Murray signed an Executive Order affirming the City’s commitment to RSJI and expanding the program’s work to include measurable outcomes, greater accountability, and community-wide efforts to achieve racial equity throughout Seattle. Under the Mayor’s direction each department is required to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit to a minimum of four projects each year, using the tool to guide decision-making.

Each City department has a “Change Team” – a group of employees that supports RSJI activities and strengthens a department’s capacity to get more employees involved. The team facilitates and participates in discussions on race and racism. The Mayor’s Office (including the City Budget Office (CBO) and the Office of Policy and Innovation (OPI)) created a combined Change Team in 2015. This offers staff an opportunity to engage all levels of the Mayor’s Office in how to more consistently and effectively use an equity lens in policy and budget decision-making. These discussions increase individual and group understanding of how racism and other marginalizing factors affect equity and service provision.

The Race and Social Justice Initiative has changed how the City engages in decision making and planning efforts both large and small. This work has led to the following equity efforts across City government:

- Equitable Community Outreach & Engagement
- Equitable Development
- Equity & Environment
- Equity in Education
- Digital Equity
- Labor Equity
- Workforce Equity

## Race and Social Justice Initiative



Lead Department:

**DON**

Collaborating  
Departments:

**Seattle IT, OCR,  
OIRA, CBO**

# Equitable Community Outreach & Engagement

Equitable community outreach & engagement is about creating authentic outreach and engagement efforts, building capacity, and developing partnerships.

The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) is leading a Citywide effort to establish and implement equitable outreach and engagement practices. This effort shows a commitment to inclusive participation and the belief that equity is essential to any community involvement processes.

DON strives to strengthen Seattle by engaging all communities. They foster community partnerships, cultivate emerging leadership, and facilitate community inclusiveness. DON serves all people in Seattle through a new public involvement framework, which broadens access points and creates more opportunities for underrepresented communities to participate. DON worked closely with Seattle IT to ensure they have the tools needed for digital engagement efforts, including contact management and targeted outreach abilities. The Public Outreach and Engagement Liaison (POEL) program continues the community clinic program, which brings multiple City departments and resources to historically underserved communities and exemplifies best practices of going where people are.

DON will continue to work towards achieving greater equity in meaningful involvement with communities throughout Seattle, with an emphasis on under-served and under-represented communities, while being mindful and intentional in addressing existing disparities.



Lead Department:

**OPCD**

Collaborating  
Departments:

**DON, OSE, CBO,  
SDOT, SPU, City  
Light, Parks, OCR**

# Equitable Development

Seattle will be a diverse city where all people are able to achieve their full potential regardless of race or means. Our neighborhoods will be diverse and include the community anchors, supports, goods, services, and amenities that people need to lead healthy lives and flourish.

The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) was created to better integrate City priorities among all City departments and help coordinate how the City grows and invests. OPCD and CBO will manage the capital cabinet and facilitate long-range planning efforts with a lens of race, social justice, and economic equity. Working through the capital cabinet, OPCD will help align City capital resources to better meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations.

As a companion to the City's Comprehensive Plan, OPCD released an equity analysis, which looks at how future growth will affect diverse populations, including low-income people, people of color, and English-language learners. The equity analysis will help inform potential strategies to reduce growth impacts and maximize opportunity so that everyone can succeed and thrive as

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Seattle grows. In partnership with the Seattle Planning Commission and other departments, OPCD will identify citywide community indicators of equitable growth that will be monitored and reported on annually.

In 2016 OPCD created an equitable development framework and continued worked closely with community groups leading place based equitable development projects, intended to meet community objectives for housing and employment and create cultural anchors. In 2017, OPCD will continue to provide staff support to assist these community groups in their efforts and will add an additional position to help with planning related to development and real estate transactions. In addition, OPCD will assist in advancing equitable development projects through targeted funding to leverage other investments.

Finally, zoning changes citywide would implement Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) in multifamily and commercial zones and in single-family areas within urban villages. MHA, a Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) program, will increase the amount of affordable housing throughout Seattle and will address displacement through various policies and programs.



## Equity & Environment

All people should have access to a clean and healthy environment and environmental progress. Environmental equity seeks to ensure low-income people and people of color benefit and lead in our environmental movement and progress.

Lead Department:

**OSE**

Collaborating  
Departments:

**OPCD, City Light,  
FAS**

Across the United States, race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated air, water or soil. Seattle's Equity & Environment Initiative (EEI) is a partnership of the City, community, and private foundations to deepen Seattle's commitment to racial justice in environmental work. Leaders from communities of color worked in partnership with the City to engage more than 800 community members to develop Seattle's Equity & Environment Agenda, released by Mayor Murray on Earth Day, April 22, 2016. The Agenda outlines four environmental justice goal areas with recommended strategies in each: 1) healthy environments for all; 2) jobs, local economies and & youth pathways; 3) equity in City environmental programs; and 4) environmental narrative & community leadership.

In 2017, OSE will partner with community groups to integrate the goals of the EEI into existing environmental work. Two overarching elements that integrate the EEI across programs include: establishing an Environmental Justice Steering Committee to deepen the influence of communities of color in City environmental programs; and ensuring that the stories and experiences of people of color shape our environmental work. OSE will prioritize integrating the EEI goals in the following ways: create opportunities for communities of color to help shape the Drive Clean Seattle Initiative so that clean transportation investments deliver economic, health and racial justice benefits to communities most-affected by environmental hazards; co-chair the Duwamish Valley IDT to advance environmental justice in the Duwamish Valley by reducing disparities in Georgetown and South Park; and offer affordable fruit and vegetable bags to low-income children participating in the Seattle Preschool Program.

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Lead Department:

**DEEL**

Collaborating

Departments:

**OED, HSD, Parks,**

**OCR**

### Equity in Education

Educational equity is about ensuring all children in Seattle have access to a quality education system and can grow and thrive in our schools. The City invests in programs and strategies to support early childhood education, close the education opportunity gap, and ensure each Seattle student graduates from high school ready for post-secondary success.

The new Seattle Preschool Program continues to grow, focusing on neighborhoods and schools with high populations of students of color, preparing them for kindergarten and school. The Families and Education Levy will continue investing in many of Seattle's schools with the goal of supporting students who are falling behind academically. The Families and Education Levy will also continue to fund successful strategies that help students of color succeed in school and be prepared and ready for post-secondary success including health centers, family support services, summer learning programs, extended learning opportunities and social emotional and academic supports.

DEEL will support the expansion of the Parent-Child Home program to improve literacy education for young children, particularly children of color. The Parent-Child Home Program is an evidence-based, two-year home-visitation literacy program for two- and three-year old children. A recent study of the Seattle PCHP program shows that participation leads to better preparation for kindergarten and higher reading and math scores in the third grade for participating children compared to their non-participating peers.

DEEL will also expand summer programming to include cultural and gender specific programs for Seattle students, and to assist graduated seniors stay on track for college entrance. Finally, DEEL will invest in one Seattle Public Schools high school to begin implementing strategies recommended by the Mayor's Education Advisory Group to reduce discipline, improve attendance, adopt a more rigorous curriculum, create and/or adopt more culturally relevant curricula, and improve college and career planning and experiential learning for students at all grade levels.



Lead Department:

**IT**

Collaborating

Departments:

### Digital Equity

Digital equity seeks to ensure all residents and neighborhoods have the information technology capacity needed for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services. Working toward digital equity involves intentional strategies and investments to reduce and eliminate historical barriers to access and use technology.

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### OCR

The Seattle Information Technology (Seattle IT) department is continuing to work towards digital equity to reduce and eliminate historical barriers to access and use of technology. Seattle IT's Digital Equity initiative is working to ensure all residents and neighborhoods have the information technology capacity needed for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services. In 2016 the City began a project to expand Wi-Fi in parks and community centers, expanded the library Wi-Fi lending program, and supported digital literacy programs across the city. Seattle IT's work in 2017 will help increase connectivity, digital skills training, and access to laptops or other devices for residents without adequate internet access or the skills required to effectively use technology.

In 2017, the City will be funding community-driven projects through a Technology Matching Fund, providing refurbished laptops or other devices to new trainees, continuing to provide wireless internet devices for check out through the library system, and supporting public access at our community centers and in partnership with many community organizations. The City will be increasing support for coding instruction for students in after-school programs and will help foster digital literacy for parents so they can better help their kids get ahead. Seattle IT and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) are continuing to work closely with Seattle Housing Authority to get low-income families connected to low-cost internet service, skills training, and devices. Finally, in 2017, the City will also be developing recommendations on how to ensure new buildings are best designed to allow competitive broadband services thereby helping residents of apartment buildings to have more choices in how they can get connected.



Lead Department:

**OLS**

Collaborating  
Departments:

**OCR, OIRA**

## Labor Equity

The City of Seattle addresses labor equity through innovative policy decisions that create a fair and healthy economy for workers, businesses and residents. In recognition of the City's leadership in advancing workforce standards and the magnitude of work to reach these goals, the City created the Office of Labor Standards in 2015.

Seattle has led the country by developing and passing labor laws that protect workers and promote equity. We continue to implement our labor standards policies as well as develop and pass new legislation to promote a vibrant economy where all can thrive.

The City's Paid Sick and Safe Time ordinance (2012) enables employees working in Seattle to use paid leave to care for their own physical or mental health condition; to care for a family member with a physical or mental condition; for reasons related to domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking; or if their workplace is closed by order of public official or health reasons. Because many employees who previously did not have access to paid sick and safe time were disproportionately women and people of color, the impact of this ordinance is especially important for improving economic security and removing barriers to race and social justice for Seattle's most vulnerable workers.

The City's Fair Chance Employment ordinance (2013) sets limits on how employers can use conviction and arrest records for jobs performed in Seattle. The City's Wage Theft ordinance (2014) seeks to deter employers from failing to properly compensate workers and offers a civil process for addressing violations. Seattle's Ready to Work program (2014) is designed for residents who face barriers learning English and gaining employment. Ready to Work advances

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labor equity goals by connecting immigrants and refugees who need the most assistance with an education and a stable job.

The Priority Hire Program (2015) promotes access to family wage jobs in construction, ensuring workers living in economically distressed areas have access to jobs on major City construction projects. City construction projects of \$5 million or more are required to have a percentage of project hours performed by workers living in economically distressed areas. In addition, City projects also include goals for women and people of color as apprentices. The City's Minimum Wage ordinance (2015) establishes a gradual path to a minimum wage of \$15/hour for employees working in Seattle. The minimum wage requirements are phased in for employers based on the size of their workforce.

Finally, businesses that employ hourly workers rarely need the same number of workers on a consistent basis. This leads to irregular scheduling practices that burdens workers with erratic schedules, unreliable incomes, involuntary part-time status, not enough time to rest between opening and closing shifts, and coercion from employers to take shifts. The City adopted its most recent nation-leading ordinance, passed in September 2016, to advance labor equity through scheduling requirements that balance the need for predictability and flexibility for both workers and businesses.

To provide both education and enforcement for these innovative policies, in 2017, an additional 14 employees will be added to the Office of Labor Standards, which will become a stand-alone office.



Lead Departments:

**SDHR; OED**

Collaborating  
Departments:

**SPD, SFD, OCR**

## Workforce Equity

Eliminate institutional and structural barriers that impact employee attraction, selection, participation, and retention. Enable opportunity for City employees to succeed and grow in their careers.

The City's Workforce Equity Strategic Plan includes supporting City employment practices and policies that have the greatest impact on reducing barriers to inclusion in the workplace, while also putting forward strategies that reduce the tension between career and family responsibilities for employees. This includes expanding paid parental leave for City employees and establishing a paid family care leave benefit as a safety net for employees who care for seriously ill family members. In 2017, the City will move toward a more standardized, equitable approach to human resources, as well as will establish training for hiring managers on implicit bias and advance a more equitable approach to performance management.

The Office of Economic Development (OED) promotes access to economic opportunities for all of Seattle's diverse communities. OED seeks to foster a diverse array of industry sectors and develop local talent, focusing on women and people of color, to fill high-demand jobs. OED's small business support team helps connect individual businesses owned by people of color and immigrants with resources to grow their business. OED supports Seattle's distinctive and diverse neighborhoods to organize a collective vision for their business districts and harness resources to achieve it. OED brings together a network of partners to ensure Seattle residents get the education and training they need to be ready for -- and get -- high-quality jobs. The office also helps advance the Mayor's Youth Employment Initiative to engage more opportunity youth in short-term employment opportunities to both gain life skills and connect employers with possible future workers.

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## Race and Social Justice Impacts in the 2017 Adopted and 2018 Endorsed Budget

Consistent with established practice since the launch of RSJI, all 2017-2018 budget adjustments were screened for RSJI impacts. Departments used the City's Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) or other tools to assess direct and indirect results of their proposals, and this analysis was utilized in the decision-making process within CBO and the Mayor's Office. This section highlights specific examples of RSJI considerations in the 2017 Adopted and 2018 Endorsed Budget and budget decision-making processes.

### Enforce New Anti-Discrimination Laws

The adopted budget adds funding to support staffing within the Office for Civil Rights to help ensure that each of the newly created labor equity laws can meet their respective goals to protect the rights of LGBT youth and the right to access housing for low income people, people of color, immigrant and refugee communities, and people with disabilities.

### Workforce Equity Strategic Plan

The Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR) presented the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan in 2016 in collaboration with the City Council and the Mayor. SDHR will establish service delivery agreements with City departments to develop a consolidated human resources organizational structure. The Strategic Plan includes an unbiased employment training for managers to address institutional barriers and increase equity in the employee hiring and promotion processes. Additionally, SDHR will continue its implementation of a standardized performance evaluation tool Citywide to reduce unfair and potentially biased evaluation practices.

### Pay By Phone

The City will absorb the per-transaction payment by phone for on-street parking, which will eliminate a barrier that may previously have prevented some parkers from using this service. The City will also analyze demographic data to help it develop services that respond to the needs and preferences of the users of this application. This could include the ability to use cell-phone interfaces in languages other than English.

### Community Centers

The adopted budget implements several changes to provide more opportunities at community centers for underserved residents. Some of these changes include increased staffing and operating hours in centers where the neighborhoods have fewer resources to pay for programming and where residents have fewer recreational options; free recreational programming at five centers; eliminating drop-in fees for programs like basketball and the toddler playrooms; and simplifying the scholarship application process.

### Outreach to Low-Income Transit Riders

The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) will add two positions to help the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) improve its outreach to low-income transit riders. Already in 2016, DON staff provided much-needed outreach help to increase use of the ORCA Lift program. DON will also provide two positions to improve outreach and engagement to neighborhoods and communities affected by large-scale infrastructure improvement projects. This effort is focused on addressing issues that disproportionately affect vulnerable communities already dealing with gentrification, displacement, and other adverse impacts of development.

### Education Summit

The City will implement the recommendations of the Education Summit Advisory Group to eliminate racial disparities in our public schools, especially for African-American and ethnic minority students. The City will contribute more than \$1 million towards implementation in 2017, including funding for two positions and supporting the expansion of two projects to improve educational outcomes. One project will expand the number of summer school slots by 200 for middle and high school students. The second project will expand an existing high school innovation program. The goal of both programs is to keep students on track to graduate on time.



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## **Parent-Child Home Program**

In partnership with King County's Best Starts for Kids, the Department of Education and Early Learning will support an expansion of the Parent-Child Home program to improve literacy education for young children. The Parent-Child Home Program is an evidence-based, two-year home-visitation literacy program for two- and three-year old children. A recent study of the Seattle PCHP program shows that participation leads to better preparation for kindergarten and higher reading and math scores in the third grade compared to their non-participating peers.

## **East African Community Action**

The Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) will hire a consultant to work with City departments to develop and improve action plans geared towards improving outreach and engagement with the East African community. This consultant will also help City departments carry out recommendations listed in the City's 2016 report on Voices of Seattle's East African Communities.

## **Arts in Equitable Development**

In 2017, the Office of Arts (Arts) will create a new Cultural Preservation Fund in support of the Equitable Development Initiative. Arts will administer grants to the Wing Luke Museum and the Historic Central Area Arts and Cultural District to support cultural preservation in each of their respective communities. In return, each organization will help Arts develop strategies that can advance the goals of the Equitable Development Initiative, including strategies focused on cultural preservation and how to best invest additional funding in 2018.

## **Ready to Work Capacity**

OIRA will expand to serve more participants and will provide local community-based organizations participating in the City's Ready to Work program with more bilingual classroom assistants. Additional classroom assistants will help immigrant and refugee students of various backgrounds improve their English and prepare for employment.

## **Assistance to Minority Owned Businesses and Vulnerable Workers**

The Office of Labor Standards (OLS) Business Outreach and Education Fund provides technical assistance to small businesses in order to increase compliance with Seattle's labor standards. OLS will expand education, outreach, and technical assistance to businesses owned and operated by low-income and historically disenfranchised communities. The adopted budget also adds funding to the OLS Community Outreach and Education Fund to develop awareness and understanding of worker rights provided by Seattle's labor laws.

## **Equity Lab Initiative**

The RSJI Equity Lab is a new initiative within the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) that will support the City's network of RSJI practitioners in departmental and citywide policy initiatives, resulting in more effective implementation of racial equity principles across city government.

## **Retention of Arts Spaces in Our Neighborhoods**

The Office of Arts & Culture (Arts) has developed programs to combat the displacement of arts and ethnic cultural spaces, to create cultural affordability, and to support the retention of art spaces in our neighborhoods. The adopted budget provides additional funding to support these efforts, including increasing granting initiatives and retaining crucial cultural anchors. In 2018, the endorsed budget will increase funding to Arts' core grant funding programs. This will allow Arts to potentially increase funding to historically underfunded programs.

## **Creative Advantage**

The adopted budget increases funding for Arts' support of Creative Advantage, an arts education initiative led by a public-private partnership that includes Arts, Seattle Public Schools, and The Seattle Foundation. The Creative Advantage initiative addresses inequity in arts education, transforms how Seattle youth learn, and enhances career readiness opportunities for Seattle students. The additional funding in 2017 will support a new Skill Center focused on Media Arts located on the Seattle Center campus.



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## Digital Equity

The adopted budget includes funding to increase digital skills training for low-income families, increase STEM and coding instruction for students in out-of-school programs, increase access to technology skills training for women and minority business owners, and evaluate building codes to ensure adequate access and infrastructure for high-speed internet service.

## Homelessness Services

The adopted budget increases funding for homelessness shelters and services, including funding for a navigation center, which is a 24 hour, low-barrier shelter model. The adopted budget also adds funding for case management, rapid rehousing, and diversion for homeless individuals and families. People of color are disproportionately represented in the homeless population.

## Youth Opportunity

The adopted budget increases funding for the Career Bridge program and repurposes existing resources to support a youth mentoring program. The Career Bridge program helps men and women of color who face multiple barriers to employment by providing them with mentors, training and support to attain employment. The youth mentoring program is focused on black males in middle schools.

## Restrooms at the Library

The Seattle Public Library will install single-stall restrooms on the 3rd floor, 5th avenue entrance of the Central Library. The Central Library is one of the most heavily-used public facilities, but currently has no single-stall restroom options for patrons. The project will improve security and safe access for transgender individuals and people who do not consider themselves exclusively male or female.

## OED Youth Employment Investment

The adopted budget expands the investment in the Mayor's Youth Employment Initiative to provide support to disadvantaged, primarily ethnic minority youth aged 14-24 to gain internships that prepare them for successful careers. The City will replace one-time grant funding from JPMorgan Chase to maintain the current level of internships. The City will also fund a new position to support the work needed to build a coordinated system that connects employers with youth in need.