



Commitment to Racial Equity (From “A Home for Everyone”)

Portland prides itself in being a wonderful place to call home. Yet despite our city’s strengths, every resident does not experience the same access and resources to secure safe, stable housing. Nearly half (45%) of those experiencing homelessness are people of color, although they comprise only 29% percent of Multnomah County’s total population¹. The Home for Everyone Coordinating Board is committed to promoting and ensuring racially equitable access and outcomes in housing and services. This includes using an equity lens to inform and guide our planning, policies, programs and decisions.

What is a Racial Equity Lens?

A racial equity lens is a set of questions we ask ourselves when we are planning, developing or evaluating a policy, program or decision. It helps us assess if we are taking in the perspectives of the racially diverse people and communities we intend to serve, and whether our policies and programs are resulting in equitable or inequitable outcomes. An equity lens helps us see where challenges and opportunities exist, so that we can make intentional steps to ensure more equitable outcomes for all individuals and communities.

Racial Equity Lens Tool²

1. What is the policy, program or decision under review?
2. What group(s) experience disparities related to this policy, program or decision? Are they at the table? (If not, why?)
3. How might the policy, program or decision affect the group(s)? How might it be perceived by the group(s)?
4. Does the policy, program or decision improve, worsen, or make no change to existing disparities? Please elaborate. Does it result in a systemic change that addresses institutional racism³?
5. Does the policy, program or decision produce any intentional benefits or unintended consequences for the affected group(s)?
6. Based on the above responses, what are possible revisions to the policy, program or decision under review?
7. What next step is recommended and how will it be advanced?

¹ “2013 Point-in-Time Count of Homelessness in Portland/Multnomah County”, Kris Smock Consulting.

² Adapted from “Sample Equity Lens Tool”, Nonprofit Association of Oregon.

³ Institutional Racism refers “to organizational policies, practices and programs that work to the benefit of white people and the detriment of people of color.” (City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights).