



Equity Lens Framework

First Iteration

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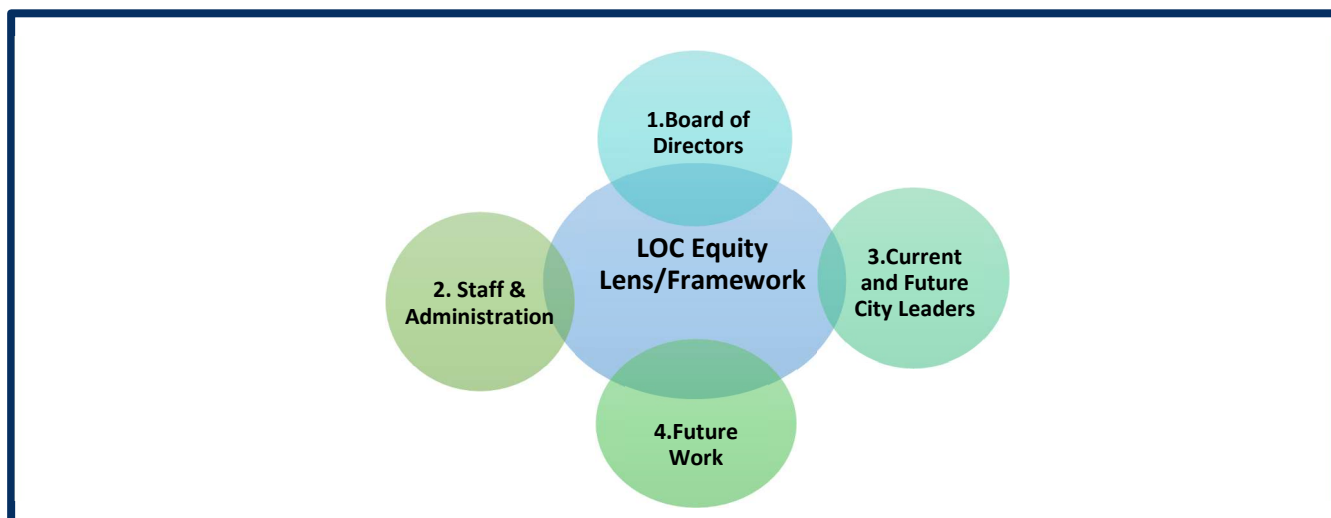
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Background/Bringing Leaders together to develop the Equity Lens

The Equity Lens Subcommittee is made up of elected officials representing multiple parts of the state and a city council candidate who worked with Parakata Consulting LLC to develop its first iteration of an Equity lens Framework for the League of Oregon Cities (LOC). The framework is developed to help LOC make the necessary changes to transform the organization to become a change agent and model for the cities it represents.

For the sustainability and transformation to happen, the Equity Lens Subcommittee acknowledged that it needs its Board of Directors' full support, financial investments from LOC to develop a webpage on the website portal, dedicated staff to support this work, trainings opportunities for all, including the Board of Directors, LOC staff, members associated with LOC and eventually with external partners.

The Equity Lens Subcommittee envisions its webpage to be a central space for resources and information that staff, LOC members and partners can easily navigate to access support, tools and resources related to DEI work.

The Equity Lens framework looks to improve internal and external systems within LOC to remove barriers that cause Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) leaders and other protected classes and underserved populations to be underrepresented in LOC and in our municipal systems and structures. The Equity Lens Subcommittee acknowledges that everyone and every city is in a different

place in their journey in respect to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice work, which is why the Equity Lens Subcommittee recommends year round trainings and other support elements because we are looking for systemic change, and this work cannot be learned from one training or workshop.

Long-term plan

The Equity Lens Subcommittee also acknowledges that developing this framework is only one part of a larger body of work. It is important to note that equity work should not be an add on, rather it should be embedded in all the work LOC does. This means, the organization's culture will need to shift or change to meet the needs of a population or populations that LOC had not been serving or representing. This critical work may take time but needs to proceed with a sense of urgency.

Steps to long-term plan

Step 1. LOC hires John Lenssen and Associates (consultants) to work with LOC and establish an Equity and Inclusion Committee and work with the Equity Lens Subcommittee to develop the Equity Lens Framework.

Step 2. Members of the Equity Committee and subcommittee will present the Equity Lens Framework to the Board of Directors for approval.

Step 3. Once the Equity Lens Framework is adopted by the Board of Directors, the Equity and Inclusion Committee will oversee the Equity Lens Framework's implementation.

Step 4. LOC will hire a consultant and invest financial resources to provide training on applying the Equity Lens Framework, help the Framework implementation, and to design the webpage or website and Framework with programs.



Equity Lens Components

LOC's Commitment to Equity

LOC is committed to creating an inclusive environment where all are welcome. As an organization we value unique leaders who represent the growing diverse populations of our state and recognize current and historical systemic disparities that exist. We are committed to transforming our organization to ensure everyone who belongs to it, and aspires to be associated with us, know that we are a place that is welcoming, helpful and a resourceful place for all.

Why equity is important to the work that we do

Oregon is becoming more diverse and the needs of our communities are expanding and continue to evolve. While many of our communities don't yet have representation of leaders that reflect the communities they serve, we are committed to providing support and training to existing members as well as up and coming leaders to ensure decisions that are being made come from a place of inclusion and equity. This helps to make sure that all voices, languages, and cultures are being heard, no one is being left out, and resources are being distributed equitably.

Why we lead with Equity

LOC acknowledges that we must do more with our membership, especially with our growing diverse members. We know that we must prepare as an organization to transform ourselves to be prepared to help our city leaders and staff across the state with the tools and resources to help their cities reimagine what it means to lead in partnership with its diverse community. Understanding that, as a majority white organization with history of our Board of Directors being led by mostly white men, we understand that change must begin with our highest-ranking leaders. This includes, diversifying our Board of Directors so they are more reflective of the growing diverse body it governs and second, participate in all trainings recommended by the Equity Lens Subcommittee to better understand and integrate equity and inclusion in LOC's work and culture.

We instituted the Equity and Inclusion Committee to ensure that all components of our Equity Lens Framework will be implemented in a timely manner and that



all recommended changes are happening within the organization internally and externally.

LOC has moved to create a process in which it provides formal recognition to affinity caucuses that are formed organically by LOC members, such as the Local Government People of Color Caucus (POC). The formal recognition of affinity caucuses is intended to promote positive and effective relationships among city officials of color and other underrepresented groups, their communities, political leaders, and the LOC. The LOC Equity Lens Framework will serve not only LOC and its members but become an effective resource to current and future affinity caucus members to help meet their goals and policies.

Internal Work: Professional Development, Diversifying Staff, Equity and Communication

- LOC will provide professional development opportunities for all LOC staff in Bias training, Cultural Competency training as well as DEI and Social Justice training and any other trainings offered to LOC members.
- LOC is committed to diversifying and retaining staff of color to remove language and cultural barriers so members of our Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) community and community members at large have a positive customer service experience when engaging with LOC staff.
- LOC acknowledges that one of the largest systemic barriers to access information is language. LOC is committed to adopting translation systems or hiring translators and interpreters as needed. We want to ensure our communities and leaders who are vision and print impaired, deaf, and hard of hearing or have language barriers have access to our information on the website or in respect to our meetings.

External Work: Professional Development, Elevating Voices, Economic Equity

Keeping in mind that many LOC members are in different places in their journey of understanding DEI and Justice work, LOC is setting an expectation that all existing members will participate in trainings recommended by the Equity and

Inclusion Committee. All LOC members are highly encouraged to provide input and participate in discussions associated with this work to gain or establish collective understanding and knowledge on why, equity and inclusion is key to self-growth but also to help transform the institution as a whole.

- LOC is committed to provide professional development opportunities for all LOC members in Bias training, Cultural Competency training, Growth Mindset training, DEI and Social Justice trainings and any other trainings recommended by the Equity and Inclusion Committee. These trainings will be offered in person or online through the Equity Lens Framework website or webpage throughout the year including during the state annual conference. LOC will promote and send out information on upcoming trainings through the LOC Weekly Bulletin.
- LOC is committed to helping up and coming leaders by providing them with professional development, tools and support they need to be prepared to step into local leadership positions.
- LOC is committed to elevating voices of our diverse and underrepresented members, especially Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), people with disabilities, people who are deaf and hard of hearing or are print disabled and members with language barriers. LOC will acknowledge and affirm that their presence and engagement is imperative to the success of LOC.
- LOC is committed to working with all businesses and creating economic opportunities for minority-owned, women-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned and emerging small businesses.

Policy Ideas for Implementation:

To help with institutional changes within LOC, the Equity Lens Subcommittee has identified some policies to begin with.

Internal/LOC Administration

- Develop hiring practices to help increase racial diversity among staff.



- Develop education & outreach policies to help increase engagement from its members but particularly among its BIPOC leaders and future potential leaders.
- Create communication policies to ensure non-English speaking people access information.
- LOC staff, Board of Directors and its committees will utilize this Equity Lens Framework and consider the impacts of its internal and external policy decisions, proposals and recommendations on diverse populations and historically underserved community members.

External/ City Councils

- LOC will work with cities to develop communication policies.
- LOC will work with cities to develop communication policies.
- LOC will work with cities to develop, review and revise policing policies.
- LOC will work with cities to develop administrative policies.
- LOC will work with cities to develop contracting policies.
- Best Practices for City Councils
 - Specific to smaller cities
 - Specific to medium cities
 - Specific to large cities

Monitoring Evaluation and Data Collection:

To learn and improve on our Equity Lens programs and policies, we will evaluate processes, service delivery, and outcomes. We will continue to track and share the demographics of our members which will not only guarantee that we have an updated list of BIPOC leaders but it will also help us identify other emerging demographic leaders to ensure we are including everyone in these efforts.

Tools:



As we develop our Equity and Inclusion webpage or website, we want to centralize some key tools that will be helpful for our LOC staff, and our LOC members and partners.

- Surveys
- List of Consultants
- Best practices in working with diverse communities
- Equity Decision Tools
- School district demographic breakdown (to better understand how diverse our cities and their surroundings are)
- Safe Resource Center
- Affinity Caucuses
 - People of Color Caucus (POC)
- List of Cities that have established an Equity Lens Framework
 - List of Cities recognized for establishing an Equity Lens Framework

Diverse Populations:

As we develop policies and make institutional changes within LOC and with our cities, we must recognize and acknowledge the overlapping or intersecting social identities, such as race, class, sexual orientation, and gender identity and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination. We must also acknowledge and understand that segments of our communities have been historically underserved ignored or bunched into subgroups. We want to honor people's diverse backgrounds and have created a list for the purpose of bringing awareness for change, while we acknowledge that with time this list will evolve and be adjusted. LOC recognizes that this list is not exhaustive and encourages consistent review.

- Race
- Ethnicity



- Marital status
- Religious expression
- National Origin
- People who identify as women
- Age
- People with both apparent and non-apparent disabilities
- People of various gender and sexual identities and expressions
- Socio-economic status
- Immigration status
- Veteran Status
- Black, Indigenous and People of Color
- Educational Background

Historically Underserved Community Membersⁱ

- Native Americans, members of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, American Indians, Alaska Natives;
- Black, Africans, African Americans;
- Hispanic, Latino/a/x;
- Asian, Pacific Islanders;
- Immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers;
- Undocumented, DREAMers;
- Linguistically diverse;
- People with disabilities;

- LGBTQ+;
- Aging/Older adults/Elders;
- Economically disadvantaged;
- Farmworkers, migrant workers; and
- Living in rural parts of the state

Guiding Questions in Decision Making:

- *Does the decision being made ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences?*
- *What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes (e.g., mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic, or managerial)?*
- *How has the LOC intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by the decision and/or strategic investment?*
- *What resources and support will the LOC provide to ensure training and technical assistance to successfully implement the decision and strategic investment?*
- *How will the LOC evaluate and/or modify the decision and/or strategic investment to ensure that underserved group needs are met and that outcomes are equitable?*
- *How will the LOC collect data on race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and native language (**discussion needed on this list**) relating to the decision and strategic investments?*
- *Who are the racial or ethnic (**consider expanding this list to include gender, social class, disability, etc.**) and underserved groups affected? What is the potential impact of the decision on these groups? Does the decision being made ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences?*
- *Have we effectively and in a culturally responsive way surveyed our communities to better understand their assets, needs, concerns?*

- *Have we effectively and in a culturally responsive way surveyed our communities on how to better understand the impacts of leadership decisions?*

ⁱ List comes from the State of Oregon Equity Framework on COVID-19 Responses and Recovery with exception of Latino/a/x. The list originally included Latinx, which technically only captures nonbinary Latinos. Parakata consulting felt it was more inclusive to use Latino/a/x to ensure all genders are also recognized.