

Colorado
Housing &
Finance
Authority
(CHFA)
Racial Equity Lens

- Are all racial/ethnic groups who are affected by the decision we are making currently at the table? Have we heard the voices of those who are affected?
- How will the proposed decision **affect** each group?
- How will the proposed decision be **perceived by** each group?
- Does the decision advance racial equity or mitigate unintended consequences?
- **CHECK POINT**: Based on the above responses, what revisions are needed in the decision under discussion? Have we also considered other marginalized/underserved groups who might be affected?

RACIAL EQUITY LENS



Objective - By utilizing a racial equity lens, The Salvation Army aims to (a) provide a common vocabulary and protocol for evaluating policies, programs, practices and decisions for racial equity and (b) produce policies, programs, practices and decisions which result in more equitable outcomes.

Procedure - For any policy, program, practice, or decision, consider the following five questions:



Who are the racial/ethnic groups affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? And what are the potential impacts on these groups?



Does this policy, program, practice, or decision ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences?



Have you intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? Can you validate your assessments in (1) and (2)?



What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic, or managerial)



How will you (a) mitigate the negative impacts and (b) address the barriers identified above?

WHO IS REPRESENTED IN DECISION-MAKING? ARE THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE ROOM?

When making decision, there can be tension between acting quickly and acting equitably. The misconception is that equity-based decisions take time to implement. However, decisions can be made quickly and prioritize issues affecting people of color, specially Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), if they are in the decision-making table.



HOW ARE WE LEVERAGING RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING TO BUILD TOWARDS A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE?

Racial equity training is critical to develop a racial equity lens. Educating on topics such as racial history, unconscious bias, language access, white privilege, inclusive engagement and teaching, and racial equity tools are all vital. This improves outcomes for all, including people of color, specially BIPOC.

HOW DO WE INCREASE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY?

Knowledge is power. Transparency and genuine community engagement allow for people to be in control of their life. An organization should share how process work and how outcomes are identified to advance racial equity. This should be done in partnership with people of color, particularly BIPOC and anti-racists. People who are affect by a decision should have access and a meaningful part of the decision making process.



HOW ARE WE INVESTING IN RACIAL EQUITY?

To advance racial equity, resources must be invested. This could be time or funding, or both. Time needs to be allocated to develop new ways of teaching, working, and learning. Funding must be invested in scholarships, accessible ways of teaching, materials, etc. In addition, time and funding must be allocated to develop new policies, creating a new culture that dismantles white supremacy to advances racial equity and benefits all, including people of color, particularly BIPOC.

Key Questions:

- Am I uplifting the experiences, knowledge, and contributions of people of color in this decision? How so?
- Am I involving people affected by this decision in the decision making process? How so?
- If I don't know how I can embed racial equity into this decision, am I reaching to someone who can help me? Who?
- Am I learning about racial equity and how embedding it could change this decision? How so?
- Am I investing time and/or resources into this decision? If not, how would doing so change my decision change?



If the answer to any of these questions is **NO**, go back to the drawing board until you are able to say **YES**.

Does our PROCESS ensure that people of color are **at the table**, that the process is **accessible**, and that we're not leaving out other historically underrepresented communities in Denver?

- Are members of historically under-represented communities 'at the table' and involved in the decision-making process? Who is not represented?
- Are Task Force members and the City connecting with historically underrepresented groups – to communicate what's being considered and get input, and so these communities know how they're being taken into consideration and are able to take advantage of the effort? Who are we missing?
- Is the Task Force getting input and data from and about the needs of those communities without creating the burden of 'educating' or providing otherwise available information?
- What communities of color does the Task Force least understand? Who are we currently least connected with? What do we already know about these people?
- Are there ways in which we can engage more people of color along? Build more excitement from people of color?
- Are we communicating with end users about the benefits and reasons for the policy, in ways that empower folks, are connected to neighborhoods and culture, and advance racial equity?
- Are we anticipating how communities of color will experience and perceive a policy? How do we incorporate this without making assumptions?
- Are we ensuring that people of color can take advantage of the resources and opportunities from this process?
- What communities of color could be left behind? How will we know?
- Are we examining our assumptions about key terms and what we mean by them (e.g., costs; affordability; does 'housing' affordability include utility costs)?
- Are we examining our conscious and unconscious biases as a Task Force?
- Does our decision-making process help change systems by advancing racial equity?
- How will we be accountable for outcomes? Who will be involved in evaluating success? Who will be involved in adapting the policy or decisions to address unintended consequences or shortcomings in the initial approach?
- What are the unintended consequences? How are we mitigating them and building in a process to check for other unintended consequences through policy implementation? Have we built in flexibility to evaluate outcomes and improve the policy based on what is working and not working?
- How will we (and later the City) evaluate what and who has been missed? Is there enough flexibility to adjust the policy based on this?

Are we ensuring the **OUTCOMES** **prioritize and provide benefits,** while **not causing harm,** to people of color and other historically disadvantaged communities in Denver?

- Who will the policy help, and who will it harm – in the short-, medium- and long-terms? Consider in particular Native American, Black and Latinx communities. How might this vary across different sizes and types of buildings?
- What is the risk of inaction for people of color?
- What health benefits are we providing to people of color?
- Will downstream benefits go to people of color (jobs and business opportunities)?
- Which companies benefit, which jobs are created? Who are they employing?
- Does that policy create benefits and avoid harm in terms of affordable and market rate housing costs and availability for people of color?
- Are buildings that are owned or occupied by racially diverse groups seen as good or better than the whole cohort of buildings?
- Are we allocating resources for people who are experiencing racial inequities now?
- Are we providing extra support for people of color to ensure they are partners in this work, can take advantage of incentives, and that they have a smooth experience through this transition?
- Have we ensured that buildings managers serving more people of color are prepared to comply, especially if the building may be less well managed and less upgraded today?
- Does this decision help or harm the community/underrepresented communities?
- Do the policies advance the City's racial equity goals (e.g., housing, health, good jobs, safety, service delivery, income/wealth)? Are we considering impacts on housing costs and segregation of housing?
- What are the costs associated with the requirement? Who pays for these costs? Who pays the cost of inaction?
- Who is required to do the work?
- Where is the building located? Is it in an environmental justice community? Is it downtown etc.?
- Does the support we're providing building owners advance racial equity?
- Are we considering new ways to recruit, train, retrain, and educate laborers to promote racial equity?
- Is our training and outreach targeted at people of color?
- How will changes affect the way people of color do business?

Initial thoughts about your lens...

- Does our PROCESS ensure that the voice of people of color is present, that the process is **accessible**, and that we're not leaving out other historically underrepresented communities in Denver?
- Are we ensuring the OUTCOMES **prioritize, provide benefits and improve lives of** people of color and other historically disadvantaged communities in Denver?
- How will the proposed decision be **perceived by** each group?
- Does this policy, program, practice, or decision 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).
- **CHECK POINT:** Based on the above responses, what revisions are needed in the decision under discussion? Are there other things to take into consideration?