

ODHS EQUITY VISION AND NORTH STAR

The Oregon Department of Human Services' (ODHS) vision for equity is that every individual in Oregon has dignity, respect, and full measure of human rights. On October 19, 2020, ODHS adopted [The Equity North Star](#) to operationalize this vision and provide... an agency free of racism, discrimination, and bias.

PURPOSE OF THE APD EQUITY LENS

The purpose of the equity lens is to promote consistency, accountability, and shared understanding of the ODHS equity vision. It moves beyond 'understanding' what equity is and serves as a tool aimed at operationalizing ODHS equity values. The equity lens also recognizes the importance of acknowledging and addressing the institutional and systemic barriers to cultivating an equitable system.

Through the use of the equity lens, Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) aims to provide and create common criteria, language, and protocols for determining the impact of policies and rule sets on consumers representing different backgrounds. This lens can also be applied to any work that has the potential to disproportionately and adversely impact Oregon's diverse communities. An intentional examination of systemic policies and practices is needed to prevent and mitigate the marginalization of members of our communities and perpetuation of disparities. Finally, the application of this lens ensures that potential impacts on stakeholders and communities is considered early in all processes that involve decision making concerning things such as rules, policies, and budget and funding allocations.

CORE EQUITY CONCEPTS

Language matters. The following terms are designed to create shared understanding of the words we use to describe the populations we serve. They also acknowledge the role that our structures and systems play in creating and sustaining disparities and disproportionate outcomes and can be used when writing reports, briefs, and other documents.

Community Voice: The extent to which members representing the community served by the project, policy, or rule will be involved in co-constructing its design, implementation, and/or providing strategic guidance in final decision-making.

Consumers Representing Diverse Backgrounds: Refers to consumers' race, ethnicity, language, gender, gender identity, nationality/immigration status, ability, sexual orientation, age, rurality, and religion.

Culturally Responsive: Refers to the implicit recognition and incorporation of the cultural knowledge and experience of consumers served by the plan. This includes identifying and valuing: consumer and community cultural assets; diverse frames of reference that correspond

to multifaceted cultural perspectives/experiences; and consumer needs that do not necessarily comport with dominant values.

Culturally Specific: Refers to services that reflect a particular cultural community and that are delivered and led by staff who represent members of that community. Culturally specific organizations demonstrate: intimate knowledge of lived experience of the community, including but not limited to the impact of structural and individual racism or discrimination on the community; knowledge of specific disparities, barriers or challenges documented in the community and how that influences the structure of their program or service; commitment to the community's strength-based and self-driven thriving and resilience; ability to describe and adapt their services to the community's cultural practices, health and safety beliefs/practices, positive cultural identity/pride, religious beliefs, etc.

Disaggregated Data: Data that has been divided into detailed sub-categories such as geographic region, race, ethnicity, English fluency, disabilities, gender, socioeconomic status, etc. It can reveal inequalities and gaps between different sub-categories that aggregated data cannot. Disaggregated data may provide analysis of intersectional groups of two or more sub-categories, too. The accuracy and quality of this data is also dependent on data collection and analysis that may be biased towards the values of the dominant system and therefore require critical reflection on whether target focal group issues are truly emerging through the disaggregated data.

Disproportionate: Unequal or inequitable differences in access and outcomes that historical and current-day White supremacy has created. What is "proportionate," however, must also be critically analyzed and addressed in terms of its values, intent, and ideology.

Embedded Racial Inequality: Embedded racial inequalities are also easily produced and reproduced – usually without the intention of doing so and without even a reference to race. These can be policies and practices that intentionally and unintentionally enable white privilege to be reinforced.

Equity: A state in which all individuals, regardless of identity or place, can achieve well-being.

Evidence-based: Forms of validation that do not just stem from dominant research but include community-driven, indigenous, Tribal, culturally responsive/sustaining/specific, non-dominant and non-Western ways of knowing, being, and researching. Instructional practices, activities, strategies, or interventions that are "evidence-based" should not just privilege scientific evidence, but also be driven by evidence stemming from the perspectives of those affected by those practices, activities, strategies, or interventions.

Partnership: A group of organizations, Tribes, districts, or individuals who agree to work together with a common interest and shared vision. In a partnership, there is a high level of trust and intergroup communication, and differences in power and privilege are addressed. Roles and responsibilities on all sides are well-defined and developed with shared authority in

decision making. There might be shared space and staff, with expectations and agreements in writing.

Race: A social – not biological – construct. We understand the term “race” to mean a racial or ethnic group that is generally recognized in society and often, by government. When referring to those groups, we often use the terminology “people of color” or “communities of color” (or a name of the specific racial and/or ethnic group) and “white.”

Service Equity: Programs, services, and supports are designed, improved, and provided to Oregonians through an understanding and acknowledgement of historic inequities, current disparities, and individual experiences.

Stakeholder: Groups and individuals who are vested in a shared goal, purpose, system, project, or issue. While stakeholders should be engaged collaboratively, power and privilege dynamics often enter and must be addressed. “Direct stakeholders” are those who work on the system, issue, or project directly and regularly, while “indirect stakeholders” are those who are affected and impacted by the system, issue, or project and therefore invested in its outcomes. Both are critical to engage. Stakeholder groups should be directly identified by their names instead of “stakeholders” to recognize their sovereign and unique identity.

Systemic Racism: The practices that perpetuate racial disparities, uphold white supremacy, and serve to the detriment and harm of persons of color and keep them in negative cycles.

Institutional/systemic racism also refers to policies that generate different outcomes for persons of different race. These laws, policies, and practices are not necessarily explicit and mentioning any racial group but work to create advantages for white persons and disadvantages for people of color.

Underserved: Refers to communities, groups, families, and consumers that the dominant system has historically and currently excluded, impacted, marginalized, underserved and/or refused service due to institutionalized and intersectional racism and systemic oppression. This includes consumers of color, tribal consumers, English language learners, LGBTQ2SIA+ consumers, consumers experiencing and surviving poverty and houselessness, consumers with disabilities, and consumers in rural communities.

Underrepresented: Refers to communities, groups, families, and consumers that due to systemic barriers and intersectional oppression have been excluded. This includes consumers of color, tribal consumers, English language learners, LGBTQ2SIA+ consumers, consumers experiencing and surviving poverty and houselessness, consumers with disabilities, and consumers in rural communities.

White privilege: A term used to identify the privileges, opportunities, and gratuities offered by society to those who are white.

White Supremacy: Refers to the idea that White people are superior to people of different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. It manifests as structural biases and disparities created and perpetuated by the dominant culture.

QUESTIONS FOR ENSURING STRATEGIC AND EQUITABLE PRACTICES

While the APD Equity Lens was originally conceived as a tool and process for policy and rule developers, it has a broader utility for APD work. The questions that follow are designed to be used in multiple contexts. For example, they can be used as a guide for APD leaders making decisions about strategic investments and allocations. In addition, these questions can be used by APD-commissioned boards and councils to inform decision making.

1. What does the policy/ rule/ work aim to accomplish?
2. Which specific communities are affected by the policy/ rule/ work initiative?
3. Describe how the policy/ rule/ initiative meets the needs of consumers representing diverse backgrounds.
4. What are the potential unintentional consequences or social, political, emotional, economic, and other impacts of the policy/ rule/ work on the groups identified? Does the policy/ rule ignore or worsen existing disparities? How could adverse impacts be minimized?
5. How does the policy/ rule/ initiative reflect ODHS equity goals concerning [Diversity and Inclusion and Service Equity](#)?
6. Given the potentially impacted populations you identified, will the policy, rule, or other work outputs be available in other languages? If so, which languages? If not, describe your rationale not offering the policy/ rule/ work in different languages.
7. Describe your plan for communicating the new, or modified policy/ rule/ initiative to potentially impacted communities.
8. Describe the data collection strategy for identifying and tracking impacts of the policy/ rule/ initiative on consumers representing diverse backgrounds. What does success look like?

REFERENCE

The APD Lens, including key concepts and questions have been adapted from the Oregon Education Investment Board's Oregon Equity Lens. Available: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/equityinitiatives/Documents/OregonEquityLens.pdf>