

Washington State Human Rights Commission

Equity Strategic Plan

2025–2030

Vision Statement

The Washington State Human Rights Commission (WSHRC) envisions a state where all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or socio-economic status, are treated with dignity, respect, and equity. We are committed to ensuring that every Washingtonian has access to the same opportunities, protections, and resources to thrive, free from discrimination and systemic oppression.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to protect and promote human rights by upholding the principles of justice, equality, and fairness in Washington State. The WSHRC works to eliminate discrimination, advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB), and ensure access to justice for historically marginalized communities.

This Equity Strategic Plan outlines our roadmap to embed equity, anti-racism, and inclusion in all aspects of our work, aligning with the directives of **Executive Order 22-04** and the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

Core Principles

1. **Racial Justice and Anti-Racism:** Prioritize racial equity in every aspect of our work. Actively dismantle systems of oppression that perpetuate racial disparities, ensuring that all policies, programs, and practices center the lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).
2. **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Ensure that people of all abilities, including those with physical, sensory, cognitive, and emotional disabilities, have equitable access to our services and are included in decision-making processes.
3. **Community-Centered Engagement:** Engage with marginalized and historically underrepresented communities to ensure their voices and concerns are central to our work and in policy advocacy.
4. **Accountability and Transparency:** Commit to being transparent in our progress, hold ourselves accountable to measurable outcomes, and ensure that the public is informed of our actions toward equity and justice.

Strategic Goals and Initiatives

1. Organizational Equity and Workforce Diversity

Goal: Build a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workforce within WSHRC, ensuring the agency reflects the communities it serves.

Initiatives:

- **Diversity and Inclusion Hiring:** Implement policies and practices to increase racial, gender, and disability diversity within the Commission's staff and leadership. Prioritize equitable hiring practices and ensure staff and leadership positions are representative of Washington State's population.
- **Ongoing Training:** Provide all staff with training in racial equity, anti-racism, inclusive leadership, cultural competency, and disability justice. Offer targeted support for staff members to deepen their understanding and application of these concepts.
- **Inclusive Benefits and Policies:** Review and revise internal policies to ensure they support work-life balance, health and wellness, and equitable access to opportunities for advancement for all employees, especially marginalized groups.

2. Policy Development and Advocacy for Racial Justice

Goal: Champion and influence policies that advance racial equity, eliminate discrimination, and promote justice across all sectors of society.

Initiatives:

- **Antiracist Policy Advocacy:** Advocate for policies that actively address the root causes of racial inequality and discrimination in areas such as education, housing, healthcare, and criminal justice. This includes supporting legislation that removes barriers and promotes systemic change.
- **Public Education and Awareness Campaigns:** Increase public awareness of racial justice issues by developing educational campaigns, events, and community outreach initiatives. These efforts will aim to educate the public on the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- **Policy Analysis and Reporting:** Develop a framework for conducting equity and racial justice impact assessments on all proposed legislation and government policies. This will allow for the identification of potential harms and benefits to historically marginalized communities.
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3. Community Engagement and Empowerment

Goal: Strengthen relationships with historically marginalized communities and empower individuals to access their human rights.

Initiatives:

- **Community Advisory Committees:** Establish advisory boards or councils made up of community leaders, advocates, and individuals directly affected by discrimination. These groups will help guide policy development, outreach efforts, and program design.
 - **Equity-Focused Outreach:** Increase outreach efforts to historically marginalized communities to ensure that they are aware of their rights and the services available to them. This includes targeting communities of color, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disabilities, and others disproportionately impacted by systemic inequality.
 - **Public Listening Sessions:** Hold annual statewide listening sessions to engage with communities about ongoing human rights concerns and develop solutions in collaboration with the public.
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4. Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

Goal: Utilize data to identify and address disparities and measure progress toward achieving equity.

Initiatives:

- **Equity Data Strategy:** Create a comprehensive strategy for collecting, disaggregating, and analyzing data by race, ethnicity, disability status, gender, and other key demographics. Use this data to understand inequities in access to services, discrimination complaints, and other human rights-related issues.
- **Transparent Reporting:** Publish annual equity reports outlining the Commission's progress on DEIB goals, including measurable outcomes, success stories, and

areas for improvement. Ensure that reports are accessible to the public and stakeholders.

- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Use data to inform program development and evaluation, ensuring that equity considerations are central to all decision-making processes.
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5. Building Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts

Goal: Foster partnerships with other government agencies, community organizations, and advocacy groups to advance racial justice and equity.

Initiatives:

- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Develop strategic partnerships with state agencies, non-profits, universities, and grassroots organizations to align efforts, share resources, and advocate for systemic change.
 - **Coalitions for Racial Justice:** Support and lead coalitions focused on advancing racial justice and equity across sectors. Work collaboratively with these groups to push for shared policy goals, joint initiatives, and collective action.
 - **Capacity Building for Community Organizations:** Provide training and technical assistance to community organizations that serve marginalized populations, ensuring that they have the tools, knowledge, and resources to engage in advocacy and policy change.
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6. Accessible and Inclusive Services

Goal: Ensure that WSHRC services are accessible, inclusive, and equitable for all individuals, particularly those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

Initiatives:

- **Accessible Complaint Systems:** Develop an accessible, inclusive, and culturally responsive process for individuals to file complaints with the WSHRC, including accessible language services, interpretation, and alternative formats for people with disabilities.
- **Inclusive Public Spaces:** Ensure that all public-facing events, programs, and materials are designed to be inclusive of people from all backgrounds, including

those with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, and those from underserved communities.

- **Equity in Case Handling:** Ensure that investigations, enforcement actions, and resolutions are equitable, particularly for marginalized communities. Regularly evaluate case outcomes to identify trends or patterns of systemic inequality.

Implementation and Accountability

1. **Leadership and Governance:**

Establish a dedicated Equity Task Force within WSHRC, led by senior leadership, to oversee the implementation of this strategic plan and ensure alignment with the agency's mission and goals.

2. **Action Plans and Timeline:**

Develop action plans with measurable targets for each strategic initiative. These plans will be reviewed annually and adjusted as needed to reflect evolving needs and priorities.

3. **Ongoing Evaluation and Adaptation:**

Use an adaptive management approach to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the plan's initiatives. This includes soliciting feedback from internal and external stakeholders, tracking key performance indicators, and ensuring continuous improvement.

4. **Public Accountability:**

Annually publish progress reports on the implementation of this plan and engage in public discussions regarding the outcomes and next steps.

Conclusion

The Washington State Human Rights Commission is committed to fostering an equitable, just, and inclusive state where all people are free from discrimination and able to live with dignity and respect. This Equity Strategic Plan serves as our roadmap to dismantling systemic inequities and achieving long-term transformation in our agency, our state, and our society.

Through intentional action, collaboration, and accountability, we will ensure that Washington State continues to progress toward a more equitable future for all.

