I. Why must government action on Climate Change advance Equity?

a. Collective Action. Government action cannot address climate change alone. We need all communities to be able to take an active role in reducing carbon emissions, but not all communities are positioned equally to do so. By addressing inequity in the systems we manage and influence, we create opportunity for more communities to participate actively in climate solutions and for everyone to benefit.

b. Resilient Design. Equity as a design process requires consideration of unintended negative outcomes on communities that are already marginalized. By addressing their needs and concerns, and shifting processes to increase their influence, solutions can enhance the overall beneficial impact of Climate initiatives. This process also improves the sophistication of systems analysis for government staff, while building long-term community capacity to address climate change.

c. Fiscal Responsibility. Government has the duty to use public dollars responsibly. Data shows us that the in major cities throughout America, people of color and low-income populations fare worse across life indicators (health, housing, economic prosperity, education, etc). As a performance metric, this is an indicator that something is not working right in government. Many public investments have been made over the years to have the opposite outcome, i.e. anti-poverty initiatives over the last 30 years in the end did not result in reversing the outcomes for communities of color and many low-income families, instead we have seen an increase in homelessness and gentrification crises. This further increases the long-term social tax burden of everyone. Addressing the systemic issues underlying both climate and social inequity is fiscally responsible management of public resources.

d. Regulatory Responsibility. Many of the social and climate challenges we face today can be traced to the regulatory decisions of government. Using the tools of regulation and policy can be a corrective mechanism to shift the impact of past decisions on communities vulnerable to climate change.

e. Justice. Those who are contributing least to climate change are most affected. Government is in a position to take action to redistribute investments to achieve better outcomes.
II. What is equity?

Kapwa Consulting defines equity as the process of correcting broken systems in order to eliminate disparate outcomes based on one’s identity.

Advancing equity means the following:

1. Because opportunities currently do not exist for everyone, equity is a corrective mechanism of redistributing benefits and burdens.
2. Because as individuals we operate within systems that create inequities, equity requires both individual and systems level change.
3. Because “business as usual” will not change by itself, equity requires transforming the culture that produces processes and products of the organization.

Equity and equality are not the same thing. Equality is treating everyone the same, while equity is ensuring everyone has what they need to be successful. While equality aims to promote fairness, it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and has the same needs and goals.

There are three different forms of equity that can be advanced through design and decision-making:

A. Procedural equity: Ensuring that processes are fair and inclusive in the development and implementation of any program or policy.
B. Distributional equity: Ensuring that resources or benefits and burdens of a policy or program are distributed fairly, prioritizing those with highest need first.
C. Structural (Intergenerational) equity: A commitment and action to correct past harms and prevent future negative consequences by institutionalizing accountability and decision-making structures that aim to sustain positive outcomes.

A fourth aspect is overarching and integrates with the previous three:

D. Cultural equity: A commitment to undoing racism and anti-blackness through an intentional deconstruction of white supremacist assumptions and behaviors and the concurrent construction of equitable multicultural norms.

Targeted Universalism is an analysis that alters the usual approach of universal strategies (policies that make no distinctions among citizens' status, such as universal health care) to achieve universal goals (improved health), and instead suggests we use targeted strategies to reach universal goals. Targeted universalism is used as a design principal within equity work in order to produce broad benefits for everyone.

III. Why does equity lead with race?

- It is consistently the indicator of greatest disparity in major Cities
- It may be ignored as a factor if not intentionally addressed

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2 See further work by the Haas Institute: [https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/targeteduniversalism](https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/targeteduniversalism)
• Our economy is built on a racist past. (slavery, Native American genocide, and racial exclusion)

The term “leading with race” does not mean “only race”. It is a practice of starting with a racial equity analysis, inclusive of analysis of other marginalized groups, in order to understand how race dynamics impact outcomes amongst other factors. If not addressed, an initiative risks exacerbating existing harm or creating new harm within vulnerable communities. Because of this, collecting and understanding disaggregated data based on race for impacted communities is a critical component of the design process for any climate initiative.

IV. What is Racism?

In order to understand racism, it is first important to understand that race is a social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, and racial classification to suit the social and economic interests of the dominant group at that time. The U.S. census provides information on how racial designations have changed over time, with the white, the socially dominant group, staying constant throughout.

Racism thus refers to a system that provides privileges to those who are in the dominant group over those in the non-dominant group based on race. These privileges result in increased power and are reinforced through racial prejudice.

Racism can therefore be thought of in the following formula:

Racial Power: The ability to get what you want done, including influence over others and the ability to define and alter the reality for yourself and others, based on race.

+ Racial Privilege: The unearned set of assets, advantages, and benefits that white people inherit based on their membership in society’s dominant group. Generally, those who experience such privilege do so without being aware of it.

+ Racial Prejudice: An unjustifiable attitude or behavior (whether conscious or unconscious) of an individual or group toward another group and its members, based on race.

Racism

There are different forms of racism:

1. Interpersonal racism. When we bring our private beliefs on race into our interactions with others, racism becomes interpersonal, whether intended (e.g., racial violence and hate speech) or not (e.g., microaggressions).

2. Institutional racism. The collective failure of an organization to effectively serve people because of their race, culture, or ethnic origin through its policies, programs, and services.

3. Structural Racism. The interaction of multiple institutions working together to effectively maintain the system of racism.
4. **Systemic racism.** The foundation of individual and institutional racism; refers to a value system that is embedded in a society that creates and perpetuates *discrimination*.

Understanding how racism works helps to develop a systems perspective when creating solutions. A majority of this system operates silently through actions of institutions and organizations. One does not have to be a “racist” to contribute to a racist or racialized outcomes. By understanding how the system operates, individuals can take more proactive steps to make different decisions. See the different forms of Equity above.

**What is Environmental Racism?**

Environmental racism results when decision-making and policy on environmental issues results in a disproportionate burden or prohibits the extension of benefits for communities of color. Environmental work includes anything that addresses impacts to air, land, water, and climate. It is inclusive of sustainability initiatives that integrate environmental outcomes with economic initiatives.

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**Notes**
V. Equity Lens

An equity lens is a design tool that outlines critical questions to ask in the development of any policy, program, or initiative and should be applied early and throughout project implementation. The lens corrects for what is hardest for us to see; it aims to correct for “blind” spots. The following is a simplified equity lens that can be used as a team facilitation tool in scoping, designing, and implementing a project.

1. **Historic Context**: How has historic policy and decision-making played a role in the context of this project? What challenges and successes have you had in advancing equity work, within government and with the community? Why do these challenges exist?

2. **Equity Goal Setting**: How does this project address an existing identified need within communities of color, low-income populations, or other under-served and underrepresented communities? (This can be for the process or the outcomes). How will you evaluate success on equity integration in your project?

3. **Procedural Equity**: What is your community engagement strategy? How have you integrated/prioritized the needs of under-served and underrepresented communities in your process to build their power and influence in design and decision-making?

4. **Equity Analysis**: How are you assessing existing conditions related to benefits and burdens? What data exists and what doesn’t exist? Can existing data be disaggregated based on race? What does the data tell you about the experience of people of color, low-income populations and other under-served and underrepresented groups? What information other than data can be used to understand the experience of marginalized populations?

5. **Equity Strategy**: What strategies are you developing to reduce costs/burdens and maximize benefits for under-served and underrepresented communities? How will gentrification trends, or other local socio-economic drivers affect the potential outcomes of this project for people of color and low-income communities?

6. **Distributional Equity**: How will resources, opportunities, and other benefits be distributed toward under-served and underrepresented communities because of this project? What resources can be made available through economic development and workforce development strategies?

7. **Structural/Intergenerational Equity**: What is the long-term impact of your actions to advance equity and how will equitable outcomes be sustained? How did the relationships change within government, partnerships, and impacted communities through this project?
### Equity Inquiry – Minimizing Blind Spots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity Type</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Procedural Equity (Who, How)</strong></td>
<td>Develop questions based on what information would be important for you to know to advance equity in your work with a city. (ex. What have been barriers to participation?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring that processes are fair and inclusive in the development and implementation of any program or policy.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Distributional Equity (What, Where, To Whom)</strong></td>
<td>(ex. What areas in the city will this project impact?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring that resources or benefits and burdens of a policy or program are distributed fairly, prioritizing those with highest need first.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural (Intergenerational) Equity (Why, To What End)</strong></td>
<td>(ex. How have systems we are impacting historically disadvantaged groups?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A commitment and action to correct past harms and prevent future negative consequences by institutionalizing accountability and decision-making structures that aim to sustain positive outcomes.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Equity (Who we are)</strong></td>
<td>(ex. What white dominant cultural norms have influenced the design of our process?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A commitment to undoing racism and anti-blackness through an intentional deconstruction of white supremacist assumptions and behaviors and the concurrent construction of equitable multicultural norms</td>
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