



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Brion Oaks, Chief Equity Officer

**DATE:** June 12, 2018

**SUBJECT: Equity Assessment Tool Pilot Completion**

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The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the Equity Assessment Pilot Report that was prepared in partnership between the Equity Office and the Center for Place-Based Initiatives at the University of Texas Dell Medical School. The full report is attached for your review.

### **BACKGROUND**

In an effort to address racial inequity in Austin, City Council passed Resolution No. 20150507-027 in May 2015, which directed the City Manager to evaluate the impact of existing city policies and practices on racial equity and develop an Equity Assessment Tool that can be used across City departments. The City's goal is to utilize the Equity Assessment Tool and implement new policies, practices, and programs to help identify and address the inequities that impact the quality of life for low-income communities in Austin, which are disproportionately communities of color.

### **OVERVIEW**

The Equity Office is excited to distribute the report on the first cohort of City Departments to undergo the Equity Assessment Tool. In June 2017, eight pilot departments - Austin Public Health, Austin Water Utility, Economic Development, Human Resources, Austin Public Library, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Austin Transportation - completed the Tool.

The results were taken to the Center for Place-Based Initiatives (CPBI) at The University of Texas Dell Medical School for an independent third-party evaluation. CPBI performed an analysis on each department, identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT Analysis), as it relates to equity.

A SWOT Analysis is used as a means of analysis on two spectrums, positive vs. negative and internal vs. external. Strengths and Weaknesses are characteristics within departments themselves, here interpreted to be policies, procedures, and practices which either promote equity, Strengths, or impede equity, Weaknesses. Opportunities and Threats are outside the organization and are typically measured by their impact on the department, be it positively, Opportunities, or negatively, Threats.

### **MAIN TAKEAWAYS**

In the SWOT method, Strengths are most often defined as an advantage or asset an organization has, and evaluators highlighted many impactful activities taking place across departments to advance racial

equity. One area in particular that was highlighted as a strength were strategies to promote diversity and inclusion in hiring. Departments had strengths in recruiting when they utilized community organizations, boards and commissions, and multi-ethnic chambers of commerce to help identify candidates who may not otherwise apply.

Some departments also relied on social media to reach a wider audience. One department edited their job descriptions so that they were more inclusive and requirements would not inherently disqualify potential candidates. A more common practice was using a diverse hiring panel to minimize bias in selecting candidates. Once hired, some departments offered trainings that directly addressed equity and racism, and measured the effectiveness of their trainings.

Evaluators also identified significant areas of improvement for departments as it relates to advancing equity. In a SWOT analysis, a Weakness is commonly used to describe blind spots and areas where failures can occur if not addressed. One blind spot across multiple departments was in the area of data collection and management. Weaknesses in data collection pointed to the lack of a process to collect, aggregate, or analyze client data, including demographic information and client surveys, for input in, or to measure the effectiveness of, its programs and services.

Only a few departments had data regarding the race and ethnicity of their contractors and consultants. Departments infrequently did not collect data on individuals in the community for outreach and engagement efforts, such as the number reached and the demographic makeup of those groups. Most departments did not capture resident satisfaction data on their programs and services. Standards or measures to gauge the effectiveness of trainings and community engagement activities were often missing. Having disaggregated data by race and ethnicity is one of the essential first steps in advancing equity. Without segmented data to inform decision-making, it is difficult for the City to assess the impact or lack of impact it is having on communities of color and other marginalized populations.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The primary goal of the tool's first pilot was to develop a baseline for measurement within departments about their understanding of equity; how policies, procedures, and practices can support equity or create inequities; and how community engagement can inform their work towards equity. By establishing this baseline, departments can monitor progress over time. The Equity Office will now use this report to begin working with departments on an Equity Action Plan to assist departments in crafting and supporting equitable policies, practices and procedures, and eventually equitable outcomes. The Equity Assessment tool, paired with an Equity Action Plan, will establish a cycle of continuous improvement to better advance equity.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [Brion.Oaks@austintexas.gov](mailto:Brion.Oaks@austintexas.gov) or (512) 974-7979.  
Thanks!

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
Ray Baray, Chief of Staff  
Assistant City Managers

# City of Austin Equity Assessment Tool Pilot I

## Analysis of Department Responses



Created by the Center for Place-Based Initiative at The University of Texas Dell Medical School

Edited by the City of Austin Equity Office

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# Introduction

The Equity Assessment Tool is a new strategy used in City departments to identify and address inequitable policies, practices, procedures, and outcomes. It has four assessment sections: department/institutional inequity, resource allocation, community engagement, and alignment with Austin City Council priorities. The original draft of the assessment tool that departments received is included as Appendix A.

The tool was developed through a co-creative process with community members and city staff who are interested in promoting equity in the City of Austin through a collective called the Equity Action Team. This body of more than 100 individuals dedicated over 850 hours to this development process.

The City's Equity Office began piloting the tool in the summer of 2017 with eight City departments (Courageous Eight): Human Resources, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Libraries, Transportation, Austin Water Utility, Public Works, and Austin Public Health. These eight departments volunteered to pilot the tool, and most had some familiarity with the purpose of the tool and equity concepts.

Participating departments were provided with background on the initiative and a glossary of terms. Each department had the flexibility to employ its own information-gathering strategies. After all responses were collected, a completeness check was performed to address responses that were incomplete or did not answer the questions asked.

The primary goal of the tool's first pilot was to develop a baseline for measurement within departments about their understanding of equity; how policies, procedures, and practices can support equity or create inequities; and how community engagement can inform their

work towards equity. By establishing this baseline, departments can monitor progress over time and work with the Equity Office to create and support equitable policies, practices and procedures, and eventually equitable outcomes.

An overarching goal for the tool is for it to be utilized to improve and standardize decision making across all City of Austin departments to build and maintain a culture of equity.

## Purpose

The University of Texas Dell Medical School's Center for Place-Based Initiatives (CPBI) was asked to evaluate the tool as an active member of the Equity Action team. This Data Analysis is the second in a series of evaluations of the tool, in which CPBI is examining the final responses from the Equity Assessment Tool, submitted after the quality check.

Through this pilot, the Equity Office is interested in identifying each participating department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) in regards to having equitable policies, practices, and procedures. Each department's responses are compiled into a SWOT diagram and each of these is analyzed and summarized.

The Equity Office will use this information to address challenges, help fill gaps, offer support, and take advantage of opportunities within and across departments. The final evaluation report submitted will include this analysis of responses, the process evaluation, and an outcome evaluation.

# Method

A SWOT diagram (Appendix B) is a tool consisting of four sections – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats - divided by two sides: internal and external. The first side examines areas of the organization internal to the organization – these are the strengths and weaknesses. In this case, we are looking at policies, procedures, and practices that improve equity (outcomes) and are exemplary (strengths), and policies, procedures, and practices that detract from or create inequities (weaknesses).

On the other side of the SWOT diagram are areas external to the organization that can negatively impact the department’s ability to improve, create, or enhance policies and practices to make them more equitable (threats), and situations and opportunities to improve, create, or enhance equitable policies and practices (opportunities). A blank SWOT diagram summarizing each section is included as Appendix B.

Through the SWOT analysis, we will be able to identify the weaknesses that can be addressed by normalizing opportunities such as training and resources. This analysis will measure alignment between the external and internal environments. Additionally, we will identify the specific subjects and topics that could be addressed through these opportunities. We will catalog strengths – instances where City policies and procedures were exemplary and produced equity or remedied inequities. We will also identify those policies, practices, and procedures that produce inequitable results, as well as those that cannot be addressed internally at the departmental level. This will highlight areas where the Equity Office can offer guidance on improving policies and practices and advocate for city-wide changes, such as implementing new processes and initiatives during the City’s budget process.

# Results

## Strengths

In the SWOT method, strengths are most often defined as an advantage or asset an organization has. For the purposes of evaluating the results of the equity assessment, we define strengths as:

*Any policy, strategy, procedure, or practice that is currently in place within the City Department that could improve or create equity at the present time, within its scope*

Strengths are internal rather than external, and within the department’s locus of control. We focus on what is happening within departments at the present time to create or facilitate equity, rather than what might happen in the future. Based on the items measured in the tool, departments most commonly had strengths in these areas:

- Hiring and training
- Policies and procedures
- Funding
- Data collection
- Information sharing
- Community engagement.

These areas are elaborated on below. Instances when a department’s policy or process was exemplary are **bolded** in Appendix C.

## Hiring and Training

Departments had strengths in recruiting when they utilized community organizations, boards and commissions, and chambers of commerce to help identify candidates who may not otherwise apply. Some departments also relied on social media to reach a wider audience. One department edited their job descriptions so that they were more inclusive and requirements

would not inherently disqualify potential candidates.

A more common practice was using a diverse hiring panel to minimize bias in selecting candidates. Once hired, some departments offered trainings that directly addressed equity and racism *and* measured the effectiveness of their trainings.

## Policies and Procedures

There were a few policies and procedures departments had established to promote equitable practices. One approach is formalized or established partnerships with other city departments to address disparities. Some departments had established programs in place that specifically addressed equity. A few also used the data they collect or locally available data on disparities to inform programs and make changes.

These are considered strengths when they are built into the ongoing work of the department rather than being an afterthought or a one-time occurrence.

## Data Collection and Measurement

Several departments had a demographic breakdown of their clients by race, ethnicity, gender, and age. Some also had a demographic breakdown of contractors and consultants by race and ethnicity. A few departments collected data on disparities within their client base, the City, or the County in order to inform their programming. Some departments used client surveys to gauge the success of their work.

## Information Sharing

One section of the tool included questions regarding the way departments determine when to translate documents and if they are culturally appropriate. This was considered a strength when departments use tools and have adopted standards to make these decisions.

Another way departments ensure they are communicating effectively and not limiting their audience is having a Language Access Plan in place and offering translation in languages other than Spanish.

## Community Engagement

The assessment tool distinguishes community outreach for the sole purpose of information sharing from community engagement, which has mechanisms in place to receive intentional feedback from community members and feedback loops to let community know how their feedback was utilized.

Some departments had formal processes in place to gather community input on their policies, programs, or plans. Additionally, some departments had mechanisms in place to gather input from community groups in budget planning.

Another strength is when departments offer accommodations to make it easier for community members to attend meetings or offer financial incentives for participation.

## Weaknesses

In SWOT analysis, a Weakness is commonly used to describe blind spots and areas where failures can occur if not addressed. In this evaluation we define a weakness as:

*Any policy, strategy or practice that is currently taking place within the City Department that could hinder or challenge equity at the present time, within its scope of control to change.*

Similar to Strengths, Weaknesses are internal rather than external, and within the department's locus of control. We focus on what is happening within departments at the present time that inhibits equity, rather than what could happen in the future.

Based on the items measured in the tool, departments most commonly had weaknesses in these areas:

- Hiring and training
- Data collection
- Information sharing
- Community engagement.

These areas are elaborated on below.

## Hiring and Training

Many departments lacked formal training programs or do not offer trainings that specifically address institutional racism, equity, discrimination, or similar topics. These types of trainings were rarely used to on-board or orient new employees, and many departments did not measure the effectiveness of the trainings. A few departments did not have recruitment plans to encourage minority applicants and existing efforts were very limited in scope.

## Data Collection and Measurement

Weaknesses in data collection pointed to the lack of a process to collect, aggregate, or analyze client data, including demographic information and client surveys, for input in, or to measure the effectiveness of, its programs and services.

Only a few departments had data regarding the race and ethnicity of their contractors and consultants. Departments rarely collected data on individuals in the community for outreach and engagement efforts, such as the number reached and the demographic makeup of those groups.

Most departments did not capture resident satisfaction data on their programs and services. Standards or measures to gage the effectiveness of trainings and community engagement activities were often missing.

## Information Sharing

There was no clear process for determining when public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings were translated for individuals with limited English proficiency or visual or hearing impairments.

Few departments used standards to check reading level, ensure accurate translation of documents, or had a Language Access Plan. Often public documents were available in only two languages, English and Spanish, or translation into other languages was not documented. Additionally, accommodations were not always available for individuals needing visual or audio assistance, or they had to be requested in advance by the individual.

## Community Engagement

Departments lacked defined processes for when community engagement should occur, or did not host regular public meetings to gather community input. Several used passive approaches to gather input, and made little effort to actively engage community members, instead employing comment boxes or email.

Additionally, many departments lacked a clear understanding of the difference between outreach and engagement. Many of the community activities departments led or participated in were educational and informational, rather than a means to receive input or create open dialogue with community members. Community engagement efforts sometimes were missing key stakeholders due to limited departmental reach.

## Opportunities

In a SWOT analysis, Opportunities are situations that present themselves to an organization that, if capitalized upon, would become a strength. In the context of evaluating equity, we define opportunities as:

*Potential positive forces in the environment in which the City Department operates, outside of its ability to control or change on its own.*

In contrast to Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities are not necessarily internal to the department, and depend on outside forces in order to make the change. We take a focus on what could happen in the future that might facilitate equitable policies and practices. Based on the items measured in the tool, departments mentioned potential opportunities in several areas:

- Hiring and training
- Policies and procedures
- Programming
- Data collection
- Funding
- Community engagement
- Cross-department collaboration

These areas are elaborated on below.

## Hiring and Training

Some departments have been revisiting their policies to identify ways to support hiring a diverse workforce, including both broad and targeted distribution of job postings. Another opportunity is the allocation of funds for marketing and recruiting, which could be specified during the budgeting process.

Some departments are interested in increasing diversity through internships. Departments have piloted trainings addressing equity, racism, or disparities and would like to expand those trainings or create more opportunities for training in these areas.

One department is interested in partnering with organizations that have expertise in these areas to offer additional opportunities throughout the year.

The Equity Office could partner with these departments to ensure trainings are based on reliable standards, are measurable and

effective, and then work to incorporate them into policies and procedures.

## Policies and Procedures

There are policies at the City level that advance equity and can be capitalized on, but only if departments are aware of them and how to employ them in benefit to the community. Some departments were in the process of developing policies that would improve equity and could rely on support from the Equity Office as those policies are developed. A few departments expressed interest in analyzing potential adverse impacts of policies.

## Programming

Several departments offer multiple programs across the City, which are natural touchpoints for potential engagement and input gathering. Some departments are examining the way resources are distributed and services offered to the community. The implementation of policy changes that affect existing programs could be opportunities to revisit the way programs are delivered and resources allocated.

Additionally, some policies have created new initiatives and new funding streams that the Equity Office could help inform. Departments have collected data, such as maps, that could be used to make changes to programs, but may need guidance on how to apply that information using an equity lens.

## Data Collection and Measurement

Some departments are trying to identify the best way to collect demographic information from the populations they serve, while others are collecting data that is not disaggregated, analyzed or applied. The Equity Office could assist departments in using data to inform their decision making processes, resource allocation and program improvement.

Additionally, several departments expressed interest in developing and using tools to evaluate the effectiveness of specific programs,

and may benefit from guidance to ensure diverse feedback and the successful application of data collected.

## Funding

Departments need to make decisions about how the funding they have is allocated to best serve the community. Some departments face funding realignments and may need guidance on how to best distribute funds.

Many programs with potential have been ended, or are under threat to end due to a lack of funding. The Equity Office could help departments identify outside funding, or help them advocate for funding of these programs in their upcoming budget cycle.

Some departments expressed the need for funding of specific items that would improve their ability to create equitable policies and procedures. For example, funding to develop a language access plan, to boost recruitment efforts, or to hire additional staff for community outreach and engagement.

## Cross-Department Collaboration

Several departments expressed interest in working with other departments to promote or enhance equity, while a few were already collaborating. Some policies that departments are developing could become City of Austin policies spanning multiple departments, similar to policies regarding contracts with businesses owned by women or minorities.

Some departments offer programs and conduct outreach city-or-county-wide and could collaborate with other departments that do not have the same capacity for outreach. There are also outlets for city-wide learning opportunities that could also house standardized equity trainings for all city departments.

Additionally, there are initiatives that cross department lines, such as Vision Zero, which have the potential for cross-departmental collaboration, community engagement and

concerted efforts to address equity from multiple angles.

## Threats

In a typical SWOT analysis, threats are external forces that exist in the environment or present themselves to an organization that, if not addressed, would become a weakness or cause failures. In the context of evaluating equity, we define opportunities as:

*Potential negative forces in the environment in which the City Department operates, and outside of its ability to control or change on its own.*

Like opportunities, threats are not necessarily internal to the department and often come from outside forces that the department may have little to no control over. We focus on what could happen in the future that could hinder or harm equitable policies and practices. Based on the items measured in the tool, threats were discovered in several areas:

- Policies, practices, and procedures
- Funding
- Disproportionate effects, outcomes
- Data collection, disaggregation by race and ethnicity

When weaknesses are common across departments and outside of the department's control to change, they may be considered a systemic barrier. Particularly when the threat comes from within the City of Austin itself.

## Policies and Procedures

Some department policies require information to be provided in English, but do not make accommodations for individuals whose first language is not English, which creates unequal opportunity to utilize services. Departmental policies that inadvertently create disparate impact were common.

## Funding

With City-wide line-item budgeting it is difficult to evaluate the quantity or quality of services resulting from expenditures. Very few departments employed mechanisms for tracking the cost of gathering community input and holding public meetings; recruiting diverse staff and conducting equity trainings; translating documents and making other accommodations. Some departments risked the discontinuation of successful or promising initiatives due to lack of funds. In some cases, resources were not allocated in an equitable manner.

## Disproportional effects

Some departments have well-intentioned policies that disproportionately benefit majority groups or inadvertently disadvantage marginalized groups. When attempting to shift policies from equality to equity, departments must work to ensure access to resources or services is based on need, rather than equal division, which was challenging for some. Specific examples of disproportionate effects are included in the department level SWOT analysis in Appendix C.

## Data Collection and Measurement

Several departments have a very broad definition of their client base, such as all of Austin or Travis County, and this prevents accurately identifying the population served for targeted programming, outreach, engagement and data collection. For example, some departments rely on Census data to institute equal allocation of resources and services, which can exacerbate disparities, rather than relying on subsets of data that could more accurately describe and better serve the population.

Additionally, some department programs only serve a subset of the population, but programmatic decisions are made based on City-wide data. Some departmental policies

prevent complete data collection due to privacy concerns, or lack of requirements to provide demographic information when data is being collected.

## Limitations

When considering the data analyzed using the SWOT, there may be some information that is missing, because it was not provided in the equity assessment. Some departments did not provide a response to certain questions, or did not provide a thorough response. They often had a different understanding of what the questions meant and provided answers that cannot be compared to one another.

For more comparable results, the tool can be modified in a way so that the questions and instructions are clearer and there is less room for misunderstanding.

Additionally, a standardized and detailed training and ongoing technical support for all departments and staff who participate in completion of the assessment would ensure less variability between responses.

## Recommendations

The Equity Office can use the information provided in the department level SWOT analyses to help departments improve their current policies, capitalize on opportunities and minimize weaknesses.

The Equity Office could consider developing recommendations, policy templates or tools that can be used across departments to address common weaknesses.

Strengths could be highlighted and shared across departments by the departments that are exercising these best practices (**bolded** in Appendix C). This was a desire expressed in department interviews during the process evaluation and could help provide realistic

examples for the development of new initiatives, or the modification of existing initiatives.

This would be a great opportunity for departments to talk about best practices and share changes they have made to improve equity since the assessment was completed. The Equity Office can help turn these strengths into a compendium of best practices and create implementation tools that can be used in any department.

Several opportunities were time-sensitive projects that were in process when the tool was completed by departments. This would be a great starting point for the Equity Office to begin working with departments and not miss out on the opportunity to influence department policies and procedures as they are changing.

Threats are mostly systemic issues within the City of Austin as a whole that fall outside of the ability of one department alone to change. The Equity Office can view these threats as opportunities to advocate for policy changes and develop work-arounds.

# Appendices

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# Appendix A: City of Austin Equity Assessment Tool

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# City of Austin Equity Assessment Tool (DRAFT)

## Introduction

The vision of the City of Austin is to make Austin the most livable city for ALL. The mission of the City of Austin Equity Office is to provide leadership, guidance, and insight on equity to improve the quality of life for Austinites. In order to achieve this vision, institutions need formal tools to closely examine policies, practices, budget allocations, and programs that perpetuate institutional racism and systemic inequities. The Equity Assessment Tool is a thought exercise to guide city departments in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, practices, budget allocations, and programs to begin to address their impacts on equity.

***Racial equity is the condition when race no longer predicts a person's quality of life outcomes in our community.*** The City recognizes that race is the primary determinant of social equity and therefore we begin the journey toward social equity with this definition. The City of Austin recognizes historical and structural disparities and a need for alleviation of these wrongs by critically transforming its institutions and creating a culture of equity.

The Equity Assessment Tool leads with race, as it is the primary predictor of access, outcomes, and opportunities for all quality of life indicators. By focusing on racial equity, this tool introduces a framework that can be applied to additional marginalized social identities which intersect with racial identity including age, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ability. The Equity Assessment Tool systematically integrates purposeful consideration to ensure budget and planning decisions reduce disparities, promote service level equity, and improve community engagement.

## Background

Austin has a long history of systemic racism and racial inequity that continues today. From the city's origins, African Americans and other communities of color were excluded, marginalized and discriminated against as a result of city policies and practices. This history was reinforced by segregationist policies throughout the 20th century affecting a range of Austin venues, including schools, public parks, and commercial businesses, among others. One of the most disheartening chapters of this legacy was the City of Austin's Master Plan of 1928, which divided the City along racial lines by moving community services for African American and Hispanic/Latinx residents to East Austin. African-American and Hispanic Austinites who tried to settle in areas outside of the designated district were often denied services such as utilities and access to public schools. People of color were told that if they wanted access to essential services, they had to live in the designated areas. Despite these challenges, communities of color in Austin thrived and developed strong, close knit, and vibrant communities.

While Austin was most recently recognized by US News and World Report as "The Best Place to Live in the U.S.," (citation needed), the City consistently makes national lists as a city with severe inequality. In 1950, Austin was fourth in the country for the most income inequality. In 2015, the Martin Prosperity Institute listed Austin as the most economically segregated city in the country (citation needed).

Legacies of displacement by wealthier white Austinites and lack of access to opportunity for people of color have marked the city with continued racial disparities. For more historical context, see Appendix A.

In an effort to address racial inequity in Austin, City Council passed Resolution No. 20150507-027 in May of 2015, which directed the City Manager to evaluate the impact of existing city policies and practices on racial equity and develop an Equity Assessment Tool that can be used across City departments during the budget process. The Council's goal is to utilize the Equity Assessment Tool and implement new policies, practices, and programs to help identify and address the inequities that impact the quality of life for low-income communities in Austin, which are disproportionately communities of color.

When fully implemented, the Equity Assessment Tool will aid City of Austin departments in:

- Focusing on human centered design and building institutional empathy;
- Engaging-residents in decision-making processes, prioritizing those adversely affected by current conditions;
- Bringing conscious attention to racial inequities and unintended consequences before decisions are made;
- Advancing opportunities for the improvement of outcomes for historically marginalized communities;
- Removing barriers to the improvement of outcomes for historically marginalized communities; and
- Affirming our commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity.

## Instructions

This tool should be completed annually by department leadership and financial staff as you craft your budget proposals and business plans for the following fiscal year.

Please refer to the following seven steps for building racial equity, provided by GARE, as you complete this tool:

1. **Know the History:** Consider historical events that have negatively impacted communities of color. Acknowledge them and create space for communities to share as to not repeat the same mistakes.
2. **Develop the Proposal:** What is the policy, program, practice or budget decision under consideration? What are the desired results and outcomes?
3. **Monitor Data:** What are the data? What do the data tell us? Are they disaggregated by race?
4. **Engage the Community:** How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?
5. **Analysis and strategies:** Who will benefit from or be burdened by your proposal? What are your strategies for advancing racial equity or mitigating unintended consequences?
6. **Implementation:** What is your plan for implementation?
7. **Accountability and Communication:** How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results?



## Section One: Departmental Analysis

1. What are your department's greatest equity priorities?
2. How does your department measure the effectiveness of its racial equity programs?
3. What strategies does your department employ to ensure departmental policies, practices, and programs do not adversely impact communities of color?
4. What is the racial breakdown of your department's client base?
5. What is the racial makeup of your department's staff? (Your HR representative can provide this information.)
6. What is the racial makeup of your department's contractors and consultants?
7. What are your department's strategies for ensuring diversity of your staff?
8. What dollar amount and percentage of your department's budget is allocated towards expanding diversity amongst your staff?
9. What dollar amount and percentage of your department's training budget is allocated towards training opportunities for staff that focus on critical issues related to equity and the elimination of institutional racism?
  - a. Please list those training opportunities.
  - b. In what ways are your staff on-boarded or oriented to historical and current racial inequity?
  - c. How does your department measure the effectiveness of its equity and institutional racism trainings?
10. What dollar amount and percentage of your department's budget is allocated towards capturing residents' satisfaction with programming and services?
  - a. Are these data broken down by race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, and income level? Please provide an attachment of your most recent resident satisfaction report.
11. How is your department collaborating with other City departments to achieve racial equity in Austin?

## Section Two: Budget

1. Identify ways in which your department pursues racial equity throughout budget planning.
2. Identify specific realignments in your department's base budget that could advance racial equity for communities of color.
3. Describe an unmet need within your budget that inhibits your department's achievement of its greatest equity priorities.
4. What dollar amount and percentage of your budget is grant funding that supports programs or services designed to advance equity for communities of color?
5. How have you involved internal and external stakeholders, including marginalized communities of color, in your department's budget process? What amount and percentage of your department's budget is allocated towards this process?
6. Identify ways in which your department's budget may disproportionately benefit some communities over others.
7. Identify ways in which your department's budget may disproportionately burden or marginalize some communities over others.
8. What is the proportion of your department's budget in relation to the City's general fund budget?

## Section Three: Engagement

1. Please list all opportunities your department offers residents to provide recommendations on programs, policies, and/or plans.

Funds allocated for this process and percent of base budget: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does your department translate public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings for persons with limited English proficiency or visual/hearing impairments? What dollar amount and percentage of your base budget is allocated towards this process? (Feel free to copy from your department's Language Access Plan.)

- Please describe how your department determines which public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings are translated for persons with limited English proficiency or visual/hearing impairments.
  - List all languages into which public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings are translated for limited English speaking populations.
3. Please describe how your department verifies the reading level of public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings.
4. What dollar amount and percentage of your department's budget is allocated towards ensuring that public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings are concise, understandable, and readily accessible to the public?
- Please describe your department's process for determining if public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings are concise, understandable, and readily accessible to the public.
  - Please describe by what means your department makes public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings more concise, understandable, and readily accessible to the public.
5. What dollar amount and percentage of your department's base budget is allocated towards holding public meetings for the purpose of fact-finding, receiving public comments, and conducting inquiries?
- Please describe your department's process for determining when public meetings for the purpose of fact-finding, receiving public comments, and conducting inquiries are appropriate.
  - Please describe what accommodations are made so that community members may meaningfully participate:
    - Food is provided
    - Supervised children's activities are provided
    - ASL is provided
    - Translation or interpretation provided in (please specify languages):
      - \_\_\_\_\_
      - \_\_\_\_\_
      - \_\_\_\_\_
      - \_\_\_\_\_
    - Transportation is made available for community members with mobility issues
    - Location selected to be accessible to target community(s)
    - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Please list your department's community engagement events/activities for the past fiscal year.
7. What other strategies does your department employ to ensure accountability to communities of color in its planning process? (e.g., improved leadership opportunities, advisory committees, commissions, targeted community meetings, stakeholder groups, focus groups, increased outreach, stipended participation, etc.)
8. At what stage in your decision making process do you engage the community?
9. How many community members does your department engage annually?
10. What are the demographics of the community members you engage?
11. Does your department collect feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of community engagement efforts? If so, how?
12. What are you doing to understand the lived experiences of members marginalized communities?
  - Applying for your department's services
  - Participating in simulated training experience
  - Focus groups with clients
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section Four: Alignment (with Council's Six Proposed Priority Outcomes)

Austin City Council has proposed the following six priority outcomes to guide the City:

- Economic Opportunity and Affordability: Having economic opportunities and resources that enable residents to lead sustainable lives in their communities.
  - Mobility: Getting where and when they want to go safely and cost-effectively
  - Safety: Being safe in our home, at work, and in their communities
  - Health: Being able to maintain a healthy life both physically and mentally
  - Cultural and Learning Opportunities: Being enriched by Austin's unique civic, cultural, ethnic, and learning opportunities
  - Government that Works: Believing that City government works for everyone: that is fair and equitable; serves as a good, continuously improving and innovating steward of its resources; recruits and retains a high performing, ethical workforce; effectively collaborates with the public; and delivers the results people expect and an experience they welcome.
1. Please identify all the ways that your department's proposed budget and planning have the potential to positively impact racial equity in one or more of Council's six priority areas.

## Equity Assessment Tool Appendix A: History

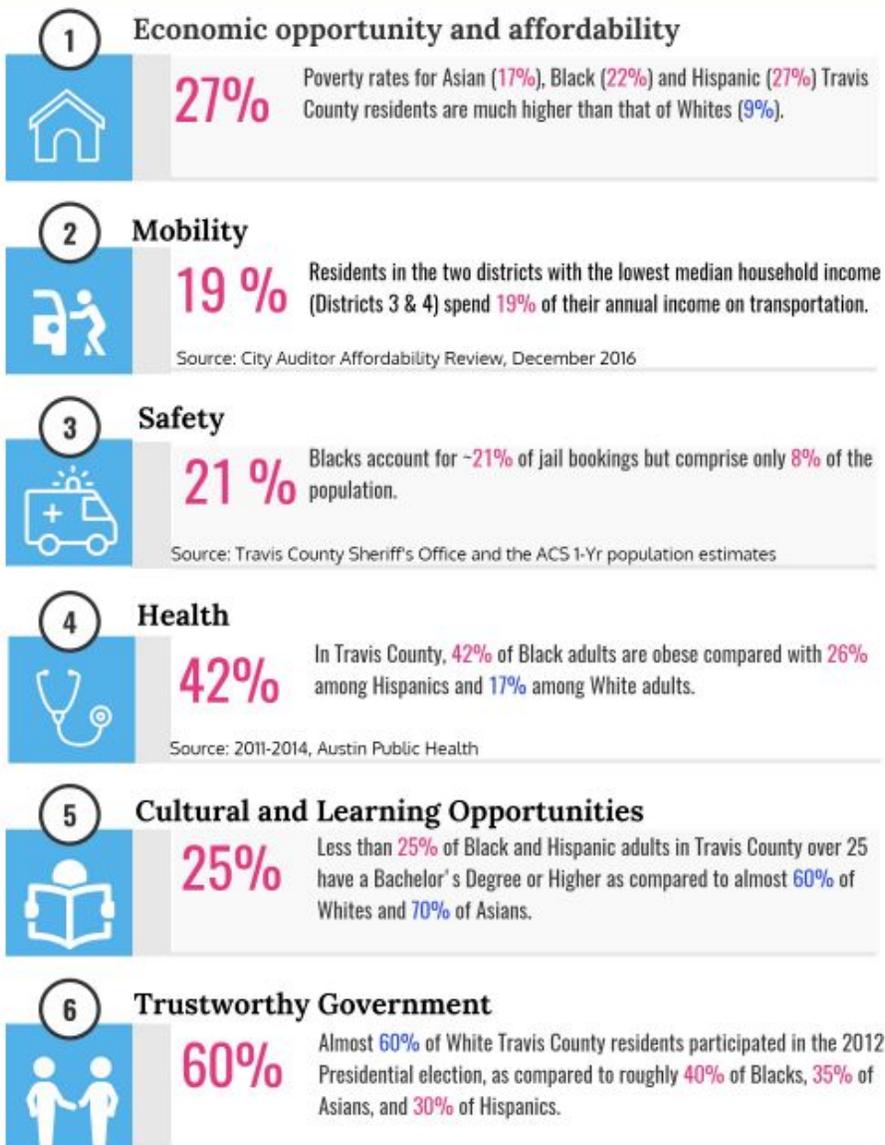
To know where we are going, we must first know where we have been. Learning about past inequities and social justice issues in our community can prevent repeating the same mistakes.

### Learn More about Austin’s Racial History:

- [Austin- A “Family-Friendly” City: Perspectives and Solutions from Mothers in the City. \(2015\)](#)
- [Link to full Master Plan of 1928](#) (the “Koch Proposal”) which formally and legally segregated the City by only providing essential city services (utilities, education, paved roads) to people of color in areas east of what is now I-35.
- [“How East Austin Became a Negro district”](#) (East End Cultural Heritage District)
- [East Austin Gentrification Overview](#) (East End Cultural Heritage District)
- [“Austin: A Liberal Oasis?”](#), a slide presentation by Undoing White Supremacy Austin, presenting a brief overview of the history of institutional racism in Austin ([document format](#))
- [Shadows of a Sunbelt City \(Dr. Eliot Tretter, 2016, University of Georgia Press\)](#) Planning for displacement. The partnership between UTA, the state and federal governments, and the real estate industry and its dominance over City planning and economic development. In particular, Chapter 6 (“The Past is Prologue”) describes how the City’s legal and administrative policies, in conjunction with private zoning deed restrictions, codified institutional racism. [Interview with Dr. Tretter](#)
- [Austin Restricted: Progressivism, Zoning, Private Racial Covenants, and the Making of a Segregated City](#) (Tretter, Sounny-Slitine, Final Report to the Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis, 2012)
- [Austin Gentrification Maps](#) (making visible one of the effects of COA policy and practice)
- [Inheriting Inequality](#) (maps of the history of the racial divide in Austin)
- [Crossing Over: Sustainability, New Urbanism, and Gentrification in Austin, Texas](#) (the downside of the “new urbanist” movement)

# Equity Assessment Tool Appendix B: Proposed City Council Priorities Infographic

## 6 Austin City Council Priority Outcomes and Existing Disparities



Data Source: American Community Survey, 1 Year Estimates unless noted otherwise

## Equity Assessment Tool Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

SOURCE: <http://racialequitytools.org/glossary>

Discrimination - The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories.

Diversity - Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender — the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used — but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

Ethnicity - A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base.

Equity- Racial equity is the condition when race no longer predicts a person's quality of life outcomes in our community.

Implicit bias - Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is often used to measure implicit biases with regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other topics.

Inclusion - Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

Institutional racism - Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.

Intersectionality - An approach largely advanced by women of color, arguing that classifications such as gender, race, class, and others cannot be examined in isolation from one another; they interact and intersect in individuals' lives, in society, in social systems, and are mutually constitutive.

Oppression - Systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm; when some people are denied something of value, while others have ready access.

Power - Power is unequally distributed globally and in U.S. society; some individuals or groups wield greater power than others, thereby allowing them greater access and control over resources. Wealth, whiteness, citizenship, patriarchy, heterosexism, and education are a few key social mechanisms through which power operates. Although power is often conceptualized as power over other individuals or groups, other variations are power with (used in the context of building collective strength) and power within (which references an individual's internal strength). Learning to "see" and understand relations of power is vital to organizing for progressive social change.

Prejudice - A pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.

Privilege - Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

Race - A political construction created to concentrate power with white people and legitimize dominance over non-white people.

Racial and ethnic identity - An individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience.

Racism - For purposes of this site, we want users to know we are using the term "racism" specifically to refer to individual, cultural, institutional and systemic ways by which differential consequences are created for groups historically or currently defined as white being advantaged, and groups historically or currently defined as non-white (African, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, etc.) as disadvantaged.

Structural racism - The normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal – that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of White domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society including its history, culture, politics, economics and entire social fabric. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism – all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism.

White privilege - Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.

## Appendix B: SWOT Analysis Diagram

	Supportive/Beneficial +	Unsupportive/Detrimental -
Internal Control, Current reality  )	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <p><i>Any policy, strategy or practice that is currently taking place within the City Department that could improve or create equity at the present time, within its scope of control to change.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are our unique resources or strategies?</li> <li>• Where do we excel in creating equity?</li> <li>• What are our best practices?</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <p><i>Any policy, strategy or practice that is currently taking place within the City Department that could hinder or challenge equity at the present time, within its scope of control to change.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where do we need the most improvement?</li> <li>• Where do we lack resources?</li> <li>• What are our liabilities?</li> </ul>
External Environment, Future potential  )	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <p><i>Potential positive forces in the environment in which the City Department operates, outside of its ability to control or change on its own.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What changes are on the horizon that the department could take advantage of?</li> <li>• What policies, strategies or practices could be improved with assistance from outside the department?</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THREATS</b></p> <p><i>Potential negative forces in the environment in which the City Department operates, outside of its ability to control or change on its own.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What policies, practices or structures within the City of Austin hinder changes the department would like to make to improve equity?</li> <li>• What obstacles could get in the way of progress?</li> </ul>

# Appendix C: Department SWOT Analysis

# Austin Public Health (APH)

## Strengths

- Have identified equity priorities
- Collects and analyzes data on clients served by demographics: race, ethnicity, and gender
- Uses demographic data to inform service delivery
- Observance of Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards and dedicated funding for implementation of standards, as well as Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Materials (CLAMS) standards
- Utilizes community health workers; staff and outreach workers have lived experience of communities served
- **The Community Health Assessment examines information on health disparities and the social determinants of health, and considers the community's experience or beliefs about the root causes of health disparities. This guides APH in developing programs and service delivery**
- Comprehensive strategies are used to recruit and hire diverse staff: outreach to local organizations and chambers of commerce such as Huston Tillotson University, Asian American Resource Center, National Forum for Black Public Administrators, Black Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Asian Chamber of Commerce; Advertise on national organization websites, LinkedIn, and other social media to expand applicant pool; Re-word job postings to attract a more diverse applicant pool; Ensure diversity in interview panel; Examine job descriptions and minimum requirements to ensure they are free from biases that may have an unintended impact on applicants
- Measures the effectiveness of staff professional development on performance, and its impact on service delivery
- **Provides 6 training opportunities that directly address inequity, disparities and racism**
- Department works with other City departments to address issues or conditions that may cause barriers to quality of life/health equity
- Incorporates community input into planning processes for budgets, strategic plan, assessment, operations, and resource allocation
  - During each year's budget cycle, Austin Public Health (APH) engages with the African American Resource Advisory Commission, Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission, and Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission to appraise the budget process and receive feedback on these groups' priorities
  - Community process for resource allocation (specific to HIV Resource Administration Unit and the HIV Planning council)
  - Regular consultation with social service contract providers

- The Health Equity program is specifically aimed at addressing disparities in health outcomes based on race
- All programs providing client-based services administer satisfaction surveys
- Almost all (95%) of the departments grant funds to address issues that disproportionately impact communities of color
- **Uses formal processes to gather community feedback, including: focus groups, client surveys, public meetings, stakeholder groups, consulting with social services contractors and quality of life commissions**
- Uses a language line when conducting door-to-door surveys to ensure participation from individuals with limited English proficiency
- Uses financial incentives when convening focus groups targeted at hard-to-reach populations
- Engages community coalitions, task forces, committees, and stakeholder groups in a participatory decision-making process with the City Clerk's Office, Mayor's Office, and Law Office in revising the Community Development Commission By-Laws to improve equity and transparency in the selection and appointment of commission members
- **All public documents are translated for limited English proficiency into multiple languages. 8 have been specified (Spanish, Mandarin, Chinese, Korean, Burmese, Arabic, Taiwanese, Vietnamese); All public documents are assessed for readability and cultural appropriateness against standards. When feasible, documents are reviewed by a focus group comprised of members of the intended audience before they are mass produced**
- Department is heavily focused on community engagement and has many events throughout the year reaching thousands of residents
- Several accommodations are offered to encourage participation of community members (food, children's activities, ASL, translation/interpretation, accessibility of location, diversity of staff)
- Neighborhood centers help identify resources to ensure that basic needs are met

## Weaknesses

- There is no comprehensive or collective client satisfaction report and it is unclear if demographic data is collected, since it is not available
- There are no standard measures for evaluating the effectiveness of training activities, with the exception of the department's Health Equity training
- There are no standard measures for evaluating the effectiveness of community engagement efforts
- There is no clearly-defined process for determining when public meetings should be held to obtain feedback from the community
- No demographic data is collected on community members who are engaged by the department

## Opportunities

- Department is working with HR to identify policy changes to support hiring of diverse staff

- APH piloted a 2-day Health Equity training to be incorporated into the Equity Academy. Department wants to roll out this training to all staff and include it in the budget
- Each employee is required to do 16 hours of training annually, and is reviewed on the impact of their professional development on performance – this is an opportunity to include the equity training as part of the 16 hour requirement and develop measures for the performance review
- In FY17 APH completed an internal reorganization that resulted in the creation of the Health Equity program, which is specifically aimed at addressing disparities in health outcomes based on race
- APH has previously proposed a realignment of the City’s neighborhood centers to move them closer to communities of need, particularly around the eastern crescent of Austin, where a more-diverse population resides. As services are expanded to meet the growing needs of a rapidly diversifying city, the Department will need additional funds to help maintain infrastructure at pace with service delivery
- Desired funding for:
  - Language access plan, to cover multiple translations and written materials, language line access, and other translation service
  - Expanded community-based efforts – expanded outreach team to include social workers, registered nurse and a team of Community Health Workers
- Willing to explore unintended benefits or burdens to certain communities and develop action plans to address those issues as they are discovered
- Department is in the process of developing a Language Access Plan to meet PHAB Accreditation standards
- Department would like assistance with developing a tool to measure the effectiveness of community engagement efforts
- Include English as a Second Language courses and other services in the Workforce and Education Readiness Continuum (WERC) to ensure that clients are able to access workforce development services regardless of language barriers or education
- Department has multiple social service contracts with the African American Youth Harvest foundation which provides culturally-competent and family-centered educational, health and human services, and economic development opportunities
- Desire to work with other City Departments to establish policies that promote racial equity
- Only 8% of the department’s budget supports programs with a universal reach for all citizens (i.e., those which do not disproportionately benefit one racial group over another). The remaining 92% of the department’s budget may be interpreted as disproportionately benefiting minority racial groups as the focus is on provision of services tailored to address disparities experienced by those populations. APH has a mission to serve all of Austin and Travis County and may be inadvertently disadvantaging some groups by not ensuring access for all

## Threats

- Program structures within the department pose a threat to collecting client demographic data: Historically APH’s service population has been defined as residents of Austin and Travis County.

- APH has many programs and each may define their clients differently. Not every program reports client demographic data. For example, some programs identify populations by zip code and some by poverty level
- Resources are allocated based on census data and population changes, rather than population health data, such as disparities in rates of death and disease. Because of this, resources may not be funneled appropriately to address disparities
- Budget structures prevent tracking of investments that promote equity and inclusion:
  - Training funds are not specifically allocated for issues related to equity or institutional racism
  - The department does not track spending on client satisfaction surveys
  - Expenses related to including community member input in the budgeting process is not tracked
  - Funding is not specifically allocated for translation of documents into other languages for folks with limited English proficiency or for accommodations for individuals with language barriers
  - Expenditures related to holding public meetings for the purpose of fact-finding, receiving public comments, and conducting inquiries are not tracked

# Austin Transportation Department (ATD)

## Strengths

- Offers, funds, and supports professional development opportunities for all employees to encourage upward mobility, regardless of race or ethnicity
- Prioritize capital expenditures by need
- Maintenance is based on timing schedules to ensure that one area isn't served over another
- **Changes to streets are vetted through formalized public processes; efforts are made to offer translation and conduct outreach to worksites during working hours**
- Transportation questions have been included in the City's Community Health Assessment to gather additional input on this issue from community members
- Mobility contracts are negotiated with the expectation that communities of color are included in the service areas
- **The special events divisions works with contractors to engage community members to ensure that the events are culturally sensitive and to minimize disruptions for residents**
- The department holds regular community meetings as a practice wherever there are specific changes proposed within neighborhoods for the purpose of obtaining verbal feedback. These concerns are documented and addressed
- The department receives questions from the community through its Customer Service request and these are all responded to by phone or email to address concerns
- Local Area Traffic Management proposals are shared with the community through door to door outreach by other "lead" community members
- **The department has a 4-tier approach to engaging historically underserved communities in Austin for its Strategic Mobility Plan**
- Launched the "Mobility Talks Initiative" to engage community members around the Strategic Mobility Plan
- Department consults with various Quality of Life commissions
- Accommodations are offered to encourage participation of community members (food, children's activities, ASL, transportation, translation/interpretation, accessibility of location)
- Remote, computer-assisted transcription services are provided by request for any meeting hosted by the Active Transportation and Street Design Division and Transportation Planning
- **In FY17 the Transportation Planning division allocated 25k for focus groups with historically underserved populations**
- Department staff support two citizen advisory councils
- Department participates in the Small Minority Business Resource meetings held every 6 months to engage with leaders of African American, Hispanic, and Asian coalitions
- Project managers invite the community to stakeholder meetings regarding parking, bike lanes, street improvements, non-radioactive hazardous materials, routing destination meetings, etc.
- Department positions are advertised nationally on minority websites, including societies and associations targeting an increase in underrepresented populations in their professions. They

have successfully recruited and retained women for predominantly male jobs, and have attempted to recruit racially diverse employees. The department dedicates specific funds for recruiting highly technical positions

## Weaknesses

- Have not specifically identified equity priorities
- The transportation engineering division passively receives reports from community members rather than actively engaging the community for input on traffic decisions
- It is unclear if demographic data is collected in client satisfaction surveys since it is not available
- The department does not evaluate the effectiveness of community engagement efforts
- The department does not measure the number of community members that it reaches through community engagement efforts
- It is unclear if the department has standards to check reading level and ensure accurate translation
- Public documents and notices are only available in English and Spanish. Sign language is available for public hearings
- Project notifications are only available in English and community members must call a number to get the information in Spanish. No other language translations are provided for public notices
- The department does not track the race/ethnicity of its contractors and consultants

## Opportunities

- ATD is working on incorporating “historical need” in prioritizing capital expenditures
- Wants to move from time-based maintenance to needs-based maintenance to ensure that the assets with the greatest needs are prioritized
- Some demographic data are collected on community members who are engaged by the department and it is becoming standard
- Their guidelines include petitions of support and meetings with neighborhood representatives when quality of life issues are present. There is an opportunity to define what constitutes a quality of life initiative and/or create similar engagement guidelines for other projects (for example, who should be included, where and when events are held, etc.)
- Information on the Austin Event Center (ACE) webpage is kept updated with information about public events. This website could be leveraged and marketed so that community members are more aware of these events
- The Vision Zero Task force is convened by the department and reaches across multiple City transportation agencies and nonprofits
- The Traffic Engineering Division has started reviewing Local Area Traffic Management guidelines to determine whether the process of incorporating resident’s input can be improved

- Department holds meetings in all 10 City Council Member districts, presenting an opportunity for broad outreach
- ATD plans to realign six thousand dollars in the department's base budget to advance racial equity for communities of color and may need some guidance on how to allocate those funds
- Collaborates with nine other City departments to implement Vision Zero to reduce traffic injuries and fatalities. This initiative includes racial profiling as an issue and there may be opportunities to address other issues of discrimination or inequity across multiple departments

## Threats

- All parking enforcement citations and violations are communicated in English because of a State requirement that motor vehicle operators speak and read English. (Note this is required for commercial motor vehicle, and CDL licenses but not for regular licenses. Some offices offer drivers tests in Spanish or allow for translation of other languages during the test)
- The department does not have line items for or cannot specifically quantify certain items within its budget, such as:
  - Involving internal and external stakeholders in the department's budget process
  - Capturing resident satisfaction with programming and services
  - Training funds for issues related to equity or institutional racism
  - Ensuring that public documents are readable and accessible

# Austin Water

## Strengths

- Department has a goal to increase diversity in professional and paraprofessional occupational groups where overall diversity is low or groups are significantly underrepresented
- Standardized hiring process ensures that diverse staff participate in hiring panels and that discriminatory factors and questions are not considered during interviews
- There are several opportunities for staff to participate in trainings related to equity and diversity, and staff are required to attend some of these trainings at least once annually
- Austin Water follows guidelines established by City's Small and Minority Business Resources for selecting diverse contractors and consultants on construction and service projects
- **The department's policies, practices, and programs are vetted through the City's boards and commissions, task force groups, and advisory committees, which report their findings to the City Council. City staff will investigate any findings and return to these bodies with recommendations or strategies to help improve services**
- The City of Austin conducted a community satisfaction survey in 2016 that addressed services at multiple city departments, including Austin Water, and captured race and ethnicity of respondents
- **Austin Water's standard practices include public consultation and outreach activities into major Capital Improvement Projects when its anticipated that the proposed works or constructions would have potential impacts to the surrounding neighbors or stakeholders. Generally, engagement occurs at the 30%, 60% and 90% design phase and when the project has a contractor in place, there is a "Meet the Contractor Meeting." For non-capital improvement projects the public is engaged in the very early stages of the process. Staff address concerns they receive before they carry the project**
- Public Involvement Committees are formed to make recommendations to Austin Water and include representation from all customer classes
- **Austin Water budgets for and provides a bilingual stipend for 23 employees to be able to provide bilingual services to the community**
- The department's public information office is trained to address reading level in public documents, uses a standard reading level and reviews documents 3 times for readability
- **The department uses a variety of methods to disseminate information to the community, such as: providing electronic and hard-copy versions of materials, applications, and notices shared on the website, through the mail, electronic newsletters, door hangers, bill inserts, and social media platforms such as Next Door, Facebook and Twitter. Public announcements are made through the top 10 radio stations in Austin and press releases to local news outlets**
- Austin Water consults with Council appointed advisory/working groups and citizen task forces to look for ways to improve outreach throughout Austin's diverse community

- Austin Water encourages diverse participation in major decisions and projects, including conservation code updates, cost of service updates and water resource planning efforts, by providing ample public notice of opportunities and resources
- Engages in public meetings on matters that may impact the community and partners with other City Departments to participate in community and neighborhood meetings and focus groups
- **The department provides several opportunities for the community to provide input on programs policies and plans, such as: public workshops, open houses, and presentations, meet the contractor meetings, community events and school presentations, as well as online options such surveys and comment portals**
- The following accommodations are provided so that community members can meaningfully participate: food, supervised children's activities, translation or interpretation, and location accessible to targeted community

## Weaknesses

- There is no process in place to measure the effectiveness of trainings that address equity or institutional racism
- Trainings that include the topics of equity, diversity, discrimination, or racism are not included as part of the on-boarding processes for new employees
- Although hiring diverse contractors and consultants is encouraged, they do not know the racial/ethnic makeup of those consultant and contractors they are working with
- There is no clear process for determining when public documents, policies, applications, notices and hearings are translated for individuals with limited English proficiency or visual or hearing impairments. There is no process in place to ensure that this information is readily accessible to the public. The public information office only translates information into Spanish on occasion
- Department does not offer translations or accommodations for other languages
- The public involvement program uses a passive rather than active approach to gathering community input: residents may submit comments through the website, by coming to the information library to review data, and submit written comments to Austin Water staff. It is unclear if these efforts are sufficient in ensuring that community members can provide input especially if they are not computer savvy or do not have reliable transportation
- Department does not evaluate the effectiveness of community engagement efforts
- Department does not collect data on race and ethnicity of community members that it reaches through community engagement efforts

## Opportunities

- The City of Austin conducted a community satisfaction survey in 2016 that addressed services at multiple city departments. It is unclear if there are plans to continue survey administration, or if there are opportunities to provide input into the questions asked. Additionally, no other department mentioned this survey, so it could be assumed that the information collected is not being used at the department level

- Department budgeted in FY18 to increase the amount of financial assistance provided through the Customer Assistance Program, and is looking for ways to expand its program to multi-family housing. This may be covered by the department's proposed "community benefit charge" which would charge a higher price to some customers to compensate for the lower price for others
- Department plans to begin measuring the effectiveness of its trainings after it has prioritized which inequities it should be focusing on and developed programs and plans to measure and address them
- Austin Water's Language Access Plan is currently being developed and was at 60% completion at the time of the survey. This might constitute an urgent need to have Equity Office input before it is finalized
- Department would like to better disseminate job postings through more organizations; department has identified the organizations they would like to reach out to
- Department has created new internship opportunities
- Department is currently conducting a comprehensive study to update and improve its methods for determining fair and defensible rates for services
- Department has expressed interest in developing a plan to collect feedback and determine how to gain participation from Austin's diverse community

## Threats

- The Customer Assistance Program provides discounts on water bills for low-income residents in single family housing. This program unintentionally excludes some communities by offering discounts for low-income residents in single family housing, but not for those living in multi-family housing
- Department's proposed "Community Benefit Charge" could disproportionately harm some communities by charging higher rates and causing potential hardship to low-income residents not enrolled in the Customer Assistance Program
- The department does not have line items for or cannot specifically quantify certain items within its budget, such as:
  - Recruiting to expand diversity of staff
  - Capturing resident satisfaction with programming and services
  - Training funds for issues related to equity or institutional racism
  - Involving internal and external stakeholders in the department's budget process
  - Including community members in program and planning processes
  - Ensuring that public documents are readable and accessible
  - Holding public meetings

# Human Resources Department (HRD)

## Strengths

- The Equal Employment and Fair Housing office protects individuals from difference in treatment in their employment based on their race, color, sex, disability, age, religion, national origin, gender identity, and sexual orientation
- Department tracks employee demographics such as race and gender
- The Employment Services division reviews the ethnic makeup of the City's workforce on an annual basis to determine if the City employee population mirrors the City of Austin MSA population. Techniques are utilized to ensure jobs are sourced at the appropriate places to ensure diversity and qualified applicants apply for open positions, in addition to working with several minority businesses to advertise jobs
- **HR Liaisons and other staff can view dashboards in real time that show the demographic makeup of department employees through the HR portal**
- HRD provides and advocates for funding for cultural events and support to affinity groups
- **The Department utilizes stakeholder groups to review and provide input into policies, including checking to see if it would have an adverse impact**
- **For the past 27 years, the HR Department has initiated a survey with City Employees called the "Listening to the Workforce Survey" that captures satisfaction with HRD's programs. The cost of administering this survey has been included in the department's operating budget. The survey also captures demographic data of the respondents**
- Department provides an annual report to the City Council identifying any disparities in compensation and ensures that there is funding for this study included in the budget
- HRD sponsored a training from the US Equal Employment and Opportunity Commission for HR professionals whose job duties include investigating complaints of harassment and Discrimination. Over 50 HR professionals representing 20 City departments attended
- The department has funding set aside for community outreach and education related to Fair Chance Hiring
- Key executive vacancy hiring plans involved engaging the community
- Department translates documents into languages other than English and Spanish and also includes Braille
- The Quality Assurance team reviews documents to make sure they are understandable
- Department makes the following accommodations so that community members can meaningfully participate: Food is provided, ASL is provided, and location that is selected is accessible to the target community
- HRD relies on six boards and commissions to ask questions to and discuss council priorities
- Internal stakeholders are engaged early on so that their input can be incorporated into planning
- The Equal Opportunity and Fair Housing Office in collaboration with an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer is responsible for raising awareness of employment, housing, and public accommodations rights, helping to alleviate poverty by increasing stability and career

progression. The VISTA member manages and cultivates relationships with neighborhoods, helping to create and establish lines of communication with target populations

- City-wide ASL interpretation is included in the department's budget

## Weaknesses

- There is not a formal process for onboarding or orienting staff to historical and racial inequity and a training curriculum has not been developed to include this information
- HRD does not measure the effectiveness of its trainings on equity and institutional racism
- Department has not made it a practice to involve external stakeholders in the budgeting process
- Department does not have a robust marketing and recruitment plan and relies mainly on job fairs and "minority publications" to advertise jobs
- Department was not able to provide a breakdown of the languages that are translated, besides Spanish and Braille. It is unclear whether the department collects this information
- HRD does not verify the reading level of public documents, policies, applications, notices and hearings
- HRD does not capture demographics of community members
- Many of the community engagement activities that the department participates in are education and informational rather than means to receive input or feedback or have discussions with community members
- HRD does not have a formal process for collecting feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of its community engagement efforts

## Opportunities

- Youth and Family Services Programming helps ensure citizens have access to programs and services that meet their needs. The equity office could provide input on how that takes place
- The Organization Development office champions organizational learning and employee engagement at the City of Austin through programs and services such as the Leadership Academies, to all employees, and other city-wide learning opportunities. This could be an opportunity to include standardized equity training for all City of Austin employees
- HRD has begun supplying annual reports to other departments showing both the ethnic breakdown of their own employees and the greater Austin MSA based on census data, for comparison. The goal is that the two populations should look ethnically similar. Since some departments provided services city-wide and others do not, there is an opportunity to consider modifying this initiative to take into account the different audiences served by each department
- HRD is working on creating an Unconscious Bias class for the Organizational Development unit to roll out to employees in FY18
- HRD's budget allocations are due in June of each year and funding and decisions about how funds will be spent is planned several months before that, which allows time for engagement
- HRD has asked for more funds for marketing and recruiting

- HRD has received additional funding to help recruit the “re-entry community” and to provide summer jobs for youth
- Department administers an annual employee survey to capture satisfaction with HRD’s programs. HRD could use this information to ensure that diverse staff are being retained

## Threats

- Additional funding for bolstering the summer youth program may have inadvertently disproportionately benefited one community over others
- HRD has a recruiting budget (~\$2,500) that serves all City Departments, which is smaller than several other departments even though it has a wider reach
- The department does not have line items for or cannot specifically quantify certain items within its budget, such as:
  - Including community members in program and planning processes
  - Ensuring that public documents are readable and accessible
  - Holding public meetings
  - Translating documents into other languages for folks with limited English proficiency

# Austin Library

## Strengths

- The Library has identified several equity priorities
- The libraries have “Story Time” in multiple languages including: French, Spanish and Japanese
- **Department has plans in place to ensure that decisions are made through an equity lens: The Equity Plan, the Diversity Plan, The Recruitment Plan, and the Language Access Plan**
- Department uses the demographic data published by the City’s Demographer and neighborhood statistics for planning
- Department HR Manager works with the American Library Association’s Diversity Office to gain access to diversity recruitment programs and work with professional organizations that serve ethnic minorities
- Employees receive Customer Service and Respectful Workplace training as part of onboarding; The content stresses inclusive practices and is applicable to all internal and external customers
- **Customers can provide feedback in-person, by phone, online, chat, text, or by letter any time to any staff at any location. The Library also collects feedback from community members through an online survey, paper comment carts and the use of kiosks. The online survey remains open 24/7/365. Surveys are available in Spanish. Comment Cards are readily accessible in different areas within each branch. Funding is allocated for these tools. It is the Director’s expectation that Branch Managers write a response to every customer comment. The Executive Team reviews each customer comment monthly and discusses them with Managing Librarians**
- Uses social media to reach a diverse number of organized groups in the Austin community representing various foreign language customers, to help identify specific demands for materials, programs, and services and level of demand
- Provides English language practice classes and technology classes
- Established educational development computer labs for youth in neighborhoods that have been historically underserved and extended access to adults. Computer labs support job-seekers, entrepreneurs, and learning technology skills in neighborhoods that have been historically underserved
- My Library Keeps Me Healthy uses Library online resources and on-site programs to provide information about health to historically underserved neighborhoods
- **Funding is allocated for VOIANCE, a language line service that provides translations for other languages that librarians may not speak**
- Focus groups were utilized when planning for the new Central Library
- Department provides the following accommodations to ensure community members can meaningfully participate in its services: ASL, translation or interpretation, location selected to be accessible to targeted community, google hangouts offered at 7 branches
- Department participates in the celebration of cultural and heritage events and promotes local artists, authors, and businesses

- Offering workshops and services for all ages to support educational and lifelong learning, such as financial literacy, digital literacy, job search, starting small business, and fix-it DIY clinics.
- **Hours and days of operation are adjusted to respond to customer needs.**

## Weaknesses

- Department does not have specific programs to address racial equity
- Department does not collect the racial makeup of contractors and consultants performing work at the Library
- Department does not hold regular public meetings for the purposes of fact-finding, receiving public comments, and conducting inquiries
- Department does not include historical and current racial inequity information in its New Employee Orientation
- Department does not have a performance measure evaluating the effectiveness of its trainings on equity or institutional racism
- Department uses a passive rather than active approach to community engagement; Communication is mostly one-way, with the library educating the community and telling them about their services, rather than soliciting feedback or engaging in two-way communication

## Opportunities

- Department has identified several equity priorities that could be tied to performance measures
- Department periodically reviews its policies and procedures and considers input from committees composed of internal staff as well as customer feedback. This process could be formalized and shared
- Department collects and reports on data from its own trainings and could include equity-related measures to evaluate its trainings
- Department captures customer satisfaction through online surveys and paper comment cards. Optional demographic questions could be included so that the Library has a way to capture information about the population it serves and better cater to customer needs
- Department utilizes social media to reach potential customers and identify needs. There could be an opportunity to better utilize this service for feedback (polls) and targeted outreach
- Staff are reassigned to different branches to suit the needs of the library. Ensure that demographics, experience and training are taken into consideration to meet the needs of the population served
- Buildings that are deteriorated are being repaired and could be prioritized based on greatest need or lowest resources
- Department offers workshops and other learning opportunities that could be utilized to draw in/and or cater to diverse audiences
- Department could use Google hangouts to encourage civic engagement in other ways besides attending Council meetings remotely

## Threats

- Department has a policy to not collect any personal demographic information about its customers. They only collect name and location for library card applications
- Materials and programs are moved around different libraries so that all communities can experience them. This may inadvertently disadvantage some libraries if they are being moved out of resource-poor libraries or if the individuals wanting specific resources have to travel to a library far from them to borrow them
- Funding for building repairs are distributed equally but not equitably.
- With line-item budgeting, it is difficult to evaluate the quantity or quality of services resulting from expenditures.
- Department does not have line items for or cannot specifically quantify certain items within its budget, such as:
  - Recruiting to expand diversity of staff
  - Training funds for issues related to equity or institutional racism
  - Involving internal and external stakeholders in the department's budget process
  - Ensuring that public documents are readable and accessible
  - Holding public meetings

# Economic Development Department (EDD)

## Strengths

- Department measures the effectiveness of its racial equity programs via performance measures and contract requirements
- A diversity expo is held for communities of color to network with corporations to increase job opportunities, training, and refer community businesses to the Department's Family Business Loan Program
- The City of Austin's Financial Services Department tracks minority-owned and women-owned contract expenditures
- American Sign Language translation is provided upon request
- A modifier was added to the budget to increase funding awards for African, Latin, Asian, Arab, and Native American organizations
- The small business program (SBP) outreaches to all 10 council districts to ensure all diverse communities are informed about city services for small businesses
- A Business Solutions Center was opened at Huston Tillotson University, a historically black university, offering access to software and databases at no cost to all customers who visit the office. The partnership is designed to help African-American businesses and entrepreneurs
- To ensure diversity of staff, the department managers reach out to universities, minority chambers of commerce and minority professional organizations when recruiting and diverse hiring panels are selected when interviewing
- To capture satisfaction with and evaluate the effectiveness of programs and services, surveys are conducted for participants in small business training classes and cultural arts workshops
- **Held focus groups on economic policies with 400 stakeholders in 2017**
- SBP collaborates with Department of Small and Minority Business Resources (SMBR) to disseminate information on upcoming small business trainings and informational events
- Department holds a Budget Overview presentation and invites stakeholders to participate. All lead department contacts for the minority chambers, traditional workforce development organizations, entrepreneurs, artists, musicians, and department commissions are invited to attend and to invite their organizations' members
- Each commission meeting includes citizens' communication, during which members of the public are allowed to speak to the commission
- **SBP conducts a Small Business Needs Assessment study every 5 years, getting information from small business owners on their future business development needs. EDD ensures that minority- and women-owned businesses have an opportunity to participate in the study and are represented in the survey and focus groups**
- **Translation of public documents, policies, applications, notices and hearings for limited-English speaking persons is determined primarily by the demographics of the area being served. Community engagement specialists advise EDD regarding which documents should be translated into which languages. EDD handles translations into Spanish, Vietnamese**

**and Chinese. Accommodations for people with visual and/or hearing impairments is handled on a case-by-case scenario**

- EDD shares information to the public through their website, Twitter, Facebook, and You-Tube
- The Department has a staff member dedicated to fact-finding, public inquiries and public outreach
- EDD provides the following accommodations to ensure community members can meaningfully participate in its services: Food, ASL, translation or interpretation, transportation for community members with mobility issues, location selected to be accessible to targeted community, call-in options
- EDD's Cultural Arts Division (CAD) partners with the African American Cultural and Heritage Facility, the Mexican-American Cultural Center, the Asian-American Resource Center and other facilities on a variety of programming
- The small business workshop is part of the extensive planning process for businesses, especially businesses of color
- Small Business expansions are being accelerated through FastForward, a Huston-Tillotson University and IC2 at The University of Texas. FastForward is an entrepreneur training program for minority businesses and uses extensive input and planning from businesses of color
- **Through the Cultural Ambassadors program organizations from the Asian, Black, and Latino communities partner with Cultural Funding staff to let members of those respective communities know about funding options through the Cultural Arts Funding Program. Each of the six Cultural Ambassadors (two from each community) received a stipend of \$1,000 each**
- **All EDD divisions track numbers of public events and community members engaged at each event. CAD also tracks the numbers of audience members served through division activities and cultural contracts**
- Department trains adults in poverty for middle skilled jobs and created a youth career pipeline through the Einstein Project

## Weaknesses

- The racial breakdown of all clients, consultants and contractors is unknown
- Staff is not on-boarded or oriented to historical and current racial inequity, and there are no trainings that specifically target these areas, nor are there measures to assess trainings
- The Department conducts some customer satisfaction surveys, but do not collect data on the race, ethnicity, gender, national origin or income level of respondents
- EDD's entrepreneurial classes and Family Business Loan Program have fees that may impact low-income applicants
- Although this is the Department's main avenue for community input, not all marginalized communities are represented by the participating MECA chambers of commerce
- The Department does not verify the reading level of public documents, policies, applications, notices and hearings
- There is no department-wide process or policy for deciding when to engage the community in decision making

## Opportunities

- EDD includes community involvement in some of their decision making processes and could expand this further
- The department is in the process of activating Industrial Development Authorities to offer 501(c)3 bonds and private bonds to nonprofits, research institutes and other companies at no expense to the City of Austin. Ensure that resources are distributed fairly and equitably
- New tools are being considered by the department, including: updated Family Business Loans, expanded Small Business entrepreneurial programs, Mapping Austin's Cultural Landscape to introduce art and music into deteriorated commercial areas, a Foreign Direct Investment app, an EB 5 Visa Center to generate investment dollars and jobs for the hard to employ, and a revamped Economic Development Policy on incentives
- \$700 million Smart Corridor Transportation Bond package
- Colony Park Redevelopment
- Merchants' Challenge is being used to regenerate neglected areas in the City as attractive, walkable employment and mixed-use hubs
- The Small Business Program, improving access to low-cost capital for minority firms.
- Department may need assistance interpreting and utilizing data from these two projects: a UT LBJ analysis of 300-400 individuals' experiences and outcomes of workforce training (Einstein Challenge) and The Hispanic Business Census which analyzes the nature of and potential growth of entrepreneurship of the Hispanic population
- AIPP is considering how to collect demographic information in a way that will be welcomed by the groups they work with and are engaged in a demographic study of the artists and vendors we have currently under contract. The Equity Office could help the AIPP division collect and use this information to improve its programs
- Department's strategic plan directs resources and focus to equity and marginalized communities
- EDD's Redevelopment Division is working with the Black and Hispanic Chambers of Commerce to determine where to dedicate redevelopment resources
- FastForward is an entrepreneur training program for minority and women-owned businesses and lacks resources to continue
- Department trainings cater to diverse populations but it is not clear if they address equity or racism. They department could work with the Equity Office to incorporate these trainings
- A template is being developed for managers that can ensure diversity among staff
- In the FY18 budget, a marketing supplement was included for awardees. Input could be provided on how these funds are used.

## Threats

- Reporting race/ethnicity is optional for clients, contractors and consultants.
- Funding for Fast Forward is not available to continue the project in 2018 and beyond.
- The department does not have line items for or cannot specifically quantify certain items within its budget, such as:

- Recruiting to expand diversity of staff
- Involving internal and external stakeholders in the department's budget process
- Holding public meetings

# Parks and Recreation Department (PARD)

## Strengths

- Department has identified equity priorities
- Employs various, diverse outreach strategies throughout the city, such as maintaining comprehensive stakeholder lists, utilizing promotional resources that target communities of color, and regularly engaging with various community groups.
- Utilizes research to determine disparities and targets in the development of new programs or the expansion of existing programs, such as neighborhoods/communities that have indicators that suggest a need or identifying potential benefits and/or burdens of program changes
- Department tracks the ethnicity/race of Recreation Program Instructors, a specific program delivery contractor
- To hire a diverse and qualified applicant pool, PARD advertises in local, web-based and national publications that target communities of color and posts advertisements on various social media accounts/pages that serve communities of color. They also incorporate diversity within the hiring process and interview panel
- **The Parks and Recreation Department developed 4 training programs to specifically prepare youth of color for employment opportunities within PARD: Swim ATX, Outdoor Leaders, Teen Leadership Training Program, and the Ranger Cadet Program**
- The department offers several trainings and workshops that address equity and diversity
- **In planning community engagement, project managers are asked how they plan to ensure outreach/engagement with historically disadvantaged populations. Staff works closely with PARD's cultural centers' staff to ensure proper outreach is being conducted to communities of color based upon historical and current racial inequity**
- **The Parks and Recreation Programming Division works with Austin Public Health to utilize data and indicator information to offer programs in traditionally underserved target markets, establish outreach services to underserved target markets and develop financial aid/scholarship programs for those who qualify**
- **The annual Budget Forecast is presented to the following groups to gather feedback, before it is provided to the Budget Office: Asian American Quality of Life Commission, African American Quality of Life Commission, and The Mexican American Cultural Center. The department also utilizes surveys and other community engagement in developing the unmet needs for the Department and/or making budget allocations decisions**
- **PARD offers many opportunities to receive input from the community on its programs, policies and plans: Public Meetings, Focus Groups, Online Surveys, Charrettes, Neighborhood Canvassing, Pop-up engagement and intercept surveys, SpeakUp Austin, Conversation Corps, Neighborhood Briefings, Community Mapping, Phone Interviews, Text Surveys, Open Houses, Comment Forms, Community Advisory Groups, Working Groups, Field Trips and Tours, and Representative Participation**

- On average 10-15% of a project's budget is reserved for engagement and outreach
- **PARD has developed a Standard Operating Procedure and Manual for Community Engagement. The manual outlines when and how to plan community engagement. PARD MCU provides training to all PARD staff on community engagement procedures. Additionally, PARD staff are provided resources for planning community engagement efforts. The department has a dedicated staff person for planning and facilitating all community engagement activities**
- PARD ensures that messages are clear, understandable and concise through the development and implementation of communication standards. PARD staff are trained on these standards, and all materials are reviewed by the Marketing and Communications Unit prior to going out to the public. Many commonly used documents are placed on the Department's website. Other items are available by request through the City of Austin's Public Information Request system
- Although not clearly delineated, PARD provides translation for languages other than Spanish
- PARD provides the following accommodations to ensure community members can meaningfully participate in its services: Food, Supervised children's activity, ASL, transportation for individuals with mobility issues, translation or interpretation, location selected to be accessible to targeted community
- PARD established a District Representative Group for the development of the Aquatic Master Plan to ensure representation of all communities and council districts of Austin
- PARD has a standard for determining the level of public participation on any process, and it starts at the project's inception
- Although they cannot provide an exact figure, PARD engages tens of thousands of Austin residents through various public engagement processes

## Weaknesses

- PARD does not have a consistent mechanism in place for tracking how its programs, services and parks measure effectiveness with regards to racial equity
- Department does not consistently collect data related to the racial or ethnic composition of the clients served
- Does not have a process in place to ensure that staff are on-boarded or oriented to historical and racial inequity
- Does not have a process in place to measure the effectiveness of its trainings addressing equity and institutional racism
- Does not capture resident satisfaction with programs and services nor demographic data.
- Does not have a Language Access Plan nor a process in place to determine which public documents, policies, applications and notices are translated for persons with limited English proficiency or visual impairments. Translations are only provided in Spanish.
- PARD does not track the demographics of the community members engaged.

## Opportunities

- Department has initiated several pilot programs to collect more granular demographic information
- Through the public engagement process PARD could collect demographic information (such as zip code, income, race/ethnicity) when feasible
- Department collects census data regarding race, income, age, etc. to determine the placement of pilot programs for Connecting Communities to Nature and Stronger Austin initiative
- PARD plans to conduct Youth Program Quality Assessments using a nationally-recognized, evidence-based, validated-assessment tool to evaluate overall program quality
- PARD is in the pilot and implementation stages of collecting data of individuals using department facilities. This program is being met with some concern and the full implementation has been stalled as the Department works to determine options for effective data collection
- They are working in partnership with local nonprofits and The University of Texas to develop an evaluation tool to determine program effectiveness of health based programs in targeted areas of the City of Austin
- Department may need assistance in adhering to Parkland Acquisition Priorities established by Council resolution that citizens within the urban core will live within ¼ mile of a publicly accessible and child-friendly park and that citizens outside the urban core will live within ½ mile of a publicly accessible and child-friendly park when making land acquisition decisions
- Department has a resident historian on staff who could potentially be used to provide information on the history of segregation in Austin
- Recently, PARD began mapping some programs, amenities and services to determine “gaps” and compare those gaps to census data, and other social determinants as a method for decision making. This process is new and has not been used consistently in the past
- Department is recognized as a quality youth out of school time program provider and has physical capacity to serve more youth
- The development of the Language Access Plan will aid the department in determining which public documents, etc. would be translated for people with limited English proficiency.
- An AmeriCorps VISTA developed a process for community engagement for historically difficult to engage community members, including an engagement toolkit and resources- this pilot project is being replicated by a new member of the AmeriCorps VISTA specific to communities of color
- In addition, PARD has identified the following opportunities for improvement:
  - Creating mechanisms for identifying potential adverse impacts of development
  - Creating an evaluation matrix for Project
  - Managers to review development impacts
  - Utilizing existing literature on the potential adverse impacts of green infrastructure and park projects (for example the Highline in NYC) to evaluate opportunities
  - Increase employee training opportunities regarding diversity and Austin’s history of institutional racism practices, race equity training, etc.
  - Work with professional organization (Texas ASLA, Texas APA, CNU) to provide one training opportunity per year focused on social equity and institutional racism.

- Require staff members who attend conferences to attend a workshop focused on social equity or issues that intersect with institutional racism, social inequity, social justice or the like.
- Contract with a consultant to provide Department-wide training annually and ensure training is mandatory

## Threats

- All City of Austin employees are required to undergo training that reviews the established federal, state, and local Equal Employment Opportunity laws and regulations. However, there is no specifically established orientation or historical perspective with regards to racial inequity
- The current budget allocations does not allow for expansion of the Youth Out of School Time program, even though there is an internal capacity to serve more youth
- PARD does not utilize a centralized budget for community engagement activities. Primarily, funds are allocated through staff time, and contingent on staff availability
- The department does not have line items for or cannot specifically quantify certain items within its budget, such as:
  - Recruiting to expand diversity of staff
  - Training funds for issues related to equity or institutional racism
  - Involving internal and external stakeholders in the department's budget process
  - Translating documents into other languages for folks with limited English proficiency
  - Ensuring that public documents are readable and accessible
  - Holding public meetings
  - Program based surveys
  - General community engagement activities

# Public Works Department (PWD)

## Strengths

- Projects are prioritized based on service plans that are created based on needs of the community
- Community engagement is a priority during design and construction of Capital Improvement Program projects
- Have diverse panels for the hiring of staff
- Sponsor events that promote diversity and equity, such as the International Hispanic Network (IHN) and the Forum for Black Public Administrators
- In 2016 the PWD Executives participated in a training provided by GARE and HRD on Unconscious Bias; other equity trainings have also been available since then
- PWD diversifies the selection panels for hiring new staff and professional consultants
- **Funds are specifically included in the PWD budget to fund the Neighborhood Partnering Program to assist all communities that apply and get selected for project funding**
- Has a process in place to determine reading level, which is lower than most other departments
- Public materials undergo a rigorous review process, going through at least three communication professionals who check for grammar, clarity and accessibility
- **Public engagement is conducted on a large number of capital improvement projects- Urban Trails, Safe Routes to School programming, and preventive street maintenance work**
- **There are four full-time public outreach specialists to conduct public meetings and collect input on the work of the department**
- **Project managers are required to complete a detailed “Public Outreach Intake Form” before starting construction on a project. This document collects detailed information on the Council district, location of the neighborhood, the neighborhood association(s), schools, community issues and anticipated impacts as a result of the construction work. A customized outreach and engagement plan is developed for each project or program based on the needs of the community. The department does not utilize a one-size-fits-all approach**
- PWD provides the following accommodations to ensure community members can meaningfully participate in its services: Food, ASL, translation or interpretation, location selected to be accessible to targeted community, served by mass transit, have free parking and/or are conducive to walking/biking
- Department conducted 50 public events the past fiscal year

## Weaknesses

- Does not have a way to measure effectiveness of racial equity programs
- Does not have formalized strategies to ensure that departmental policies, practices and programs do not adversely impact communities of color
- Does not measure the racial breakdown of clients, contractors or consultants

- Does not have a process in place to ensure that staff are on-boarded or oriented to historical and racial inequity
- Does not have a process in place to measure the effectiveness of its trainings addressing equity and institutional racism
- Does not capture resident satisfaction with programs and services nor demographic data
- Does not directly engage stakeholders in the budget process
- Language may be a barrier preventing residents from airing complaints and requesting services.
- Printed documents and materials are provided in English and Spanish, but are not translated into any other languages. Translation and interpretation is only provided in Spanish
- Public documents, policies, applications and notices are made available on the PWD website but are not actively pushed into the community through other means, minimizing potential reach, especially for the computer illiterate or those whose first language is not English
- Does not have formalized strategies to ensure accountability to communities of color in its planning processes
- Does not track community engagement efforts, nor the number of community members participating
- PWD uses a limited number of methods to collect community feedback, some of which are passive, including comment cards, surveys and door hangers, and could be reexamined

## Opportunities

- PWD is piloting a higher education program (Peloton U) which is tailored to provide professional development and growth for all department employees. This program is available to both office and field staff
- PWD serves the community through various programs: Urban Trails, Neighborhood Partnering Projects and Safe Routes to Schools. These are potential touch points for outreach and engagement
- The City of Austin has ordinances in place that require Minority and Women owned Business participation on city-procured projects
- PWD is considering specifying a budget line item that is devoted to the advancement of racial equity for communities of color in order to be more intentional and transparent of how funds are expended for this initiative
- Data is collected on demographics of community members but is not easily aggregated

## Threats

- PWD considers complaints to 311 when deciding budget priorities, which could be disproportionately benefiting those areas of Austin where residents who are more likely to complain live
- Racial Equity is not a part of the budget planning process directly

- The department does not have line items for or cannot specifically quantify certain items within its budget, such as:
  - Recruiting to expand diversity of staff
  - Training funds for issues related to equity or institutional racism
  - Capturing resident satisfaction with programs and services
  - Involving internal and external stakeholders in the department's budget process
  - Translating documents into other languages for folks with limited English proficiency
  - Ensuring that public documents are readable and accessible
  - Holding public meetings