



Partnership to End Homelessness

Racial Equity Advisory Board

OVERVIEW

The Partnership to End Homelessness (PEH) is a board that oversees funding, policies, and practices designed to address homelessness in Snohomish County. The Board is comprised of individuals representing a multitude of systems of care that serve vulnerable populations. However, the Board acknowledges its lack of community diversity within the Board. The PEH is committed to reflecting upon and making changes that will actively promote diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of its activities to end homelessness in Snohomish County.

In partnership with Snohomish County Human Services and Building Changes, the PEH Board partnered with Hooks Global for racial equity consultation between 2018 and 2020. Hooks Global provided trainings to the PEH and agency service providers on understanding racism, implicit bias, and the intersectionality of racism and homelessness. The consultation, trainings, and reflective discussions provided the framework for the PEH to gain the tools, resources and strategies needed to ensure that the policies, actions, and outcomes of the system are both equitable and sustainable.

The PEH Board recognizes this work cannot be done without input and robust collaboration with marginalized communities and local tribes. The PEH will partner with these communities to co-lead and co-create the next steps in equity strategies.

In accordance with the Equity Charter, approved by the PEH Board in February 2021, the Board established task groups for the recruitment of and outreach to the marginalized communities in Snohomish County to form the Racial Equity Advisory Board. The Equity Charter was created to provide the foundations for the PEH to move forward in sustainable equity strategies. When created, the Racial Equity Advisory Board will help guide the PEH in more expansive equity efforts.

KEY MESSAGES

The pursuit of equity is not an outcome, rather it is a process requiring constant evaluation, reevaluation, adjustment and a conscious awareness and questioning of self, processes, structures, and institutions. Inequity and racism premeditate out entire social, economic and political systems and making equity changes will require endurance and persistence. While advancing equity may feel like a daunting and overwhelming task, however, there are four critical attributes to initiating equity planning:

1. Creating a Foundation to Support and Foster Equity Efforts:

- Weave equity into the DNA of a Board/organization by making it everyone's work
- Prioritize Government-to-Government relationships by respecting Tribal rights and engage in ways that honor their sovereignty (i.e., consultation agreement)
- Marginalized communities are subject matter experts and know their assets, needs, and priorities best. It is essential to collaborate with them in the co-creation of an equity plan to ensure planning and initiatives are community-driven and culturally and linguistically appropriate
- Invest resources that support community-based initiatives that reinforce marginalized communities' strengths and resiliency
- Building capacity with the Board/organization to provide ongoing training to increase understanding and skills development to implement and sustain equity strategies

2. Establishing a Shared Leadership Approach

- Working continuously with marginalized communities at all stages of planning and implementation
- Build trust through action and regular communications with marginalized community's
- Implement strategic directions incrementally and adjust planning where needed
- Avoiding predetermined outcomes and seek community-driven timelines and solutions
- Ensure projects/initiatives are prioritized based on importance and need, not what is convenient
- Break Down Silos by tackling persistent inequities, barriers, and root causes leading to homelessness
- Promotion of equity as an operating standard for service delivery including culturally and linguistically appropriate frameworks and tools

3. Facilitating Impactful Community Engagement:

- Become familiar with marginalized communities and visit where they live (i.e., markets, community centers, clubs/associations, and virtual spaces designed)
- Develop a working relationship with community champions to facilitate and advise of proper and culturally/ linguistically appropriate community protocols, practices, and processes
- Obtain Input and Direction by seeking stories and lived experiences to reveal inequities, centering community voice in all solutions
- Seek community input into strategic directions/initiatives before implementation

- Connect with all segments of the community through a multitude of approaches, including in-person focus groups, community meetings or presentations, interviews, surveys, and hiring local resource people
- Work with grassroots organizations and support their work, they are access points to the hardest-to-reach populations whose voices have been systematically excluded in decision-making

4. Increasing Accountability and Transparency:

- Focus on Processes, Progress and Outcomes by evaluating process indicators (i.e., effectiveness, efficiency, compliance, and output quality)
- Measure progress shifts in practices, policies, and funding decisions leading to better outcomes
- Taking a balanced approach to data/analysis through both quantitative and qualitative methodologies
- Consistent data collection is essential in telling the story of access, opportunity, and outcomes
- Set standards for data collection, analysis, and reporting of quality/meaningful data
- Sharing data in a transparent manner and through data sharing agreements
- Institutionalize disaggregated and decolonizing data methods in recognition of tribal community's right to govern the collection, ownership, and application of its own data
- Develop strategic relationships with commissions, committees, and other groups centered on employee and community representation, protection of human and civil rights, and the promotion of equity

2021-2022 EQUITY ADVISORY BOARD WORKPLAN

Goal	Action	Outcome
Equity vision and guiding principles	Creation of a draft equity vision statement and guiding principles for review, approval and adoption by the PEH Board	A commitment to the advancement of equity
Equity performance targets	Research and provide recommendations of best/promising practices regarding formal consultation and partnership development, equitable governance performance targets and/or process measures for adoption by the PEH	Increased transparency and accountability
Governance charter review	A review and recommended revision to the governance charter and standing committee structure to align with equity performance targets, vision statement and guiding principles	Embedding equity within the governance structure of the PEH
Professional development	Creation of a training plan to further enhance the PEH Board knowledge and competency of equity and cultural humility for adoption by the PEH Board	Increased knowledge of equity and cultural humility
PEH member recruitment	Provision of recommendations for the broad promotion and recruitment of representatives from diverse or marginalized backgrounds to join the PEH. PEH to discuss and/approve new member applications	Diversification of PEH membership
Equity decision framework	Develop an equity toolkit for the PEH Board to aid the decision-making processes, establish equity-informed approaches to planning and funding or grant requests	Demonstration of equity as part of the decision-making processes of the PEH
Setting future directions and strategies	Provide recommendations for the continued work of the Equity Advisory Board outlining the steps/strategies required to enhance homelessness services and processes and to address systemic barriers including Fair Housing	Improving homelessness services and housing outcomes

(Workplan prioritization may be adjusted based on Equity Advisory Board input)

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Composition:

The Equity Advisory Board be comprised of a minimum of seven members to a maximum of eleven. The Board will be comprised of:

- Five to nine member positions dedicated to individuals from diverse and marginalized communities
- Two member positions dedicated to PEH members

Non-voting members:

The Equity Advisory Board reserves the right to invite additional persons possessing subject matter expertise they feel is required to support or advance the workplan and/or board objectives. The length of involvement of the subject matter experts will depend on the type of assistance the Equity Advisory Board is requesting. Given these individuals will be offering technical knowledge to the Equity Advisory Board they will be regarded as resource support and will not have a voting right. If there will be a cost to acquire subject matter expertise a discussion with county staff will need to take place prior to their participation.

Membership:

The advisory board will be comprised of members from diverse and marginalized communities within the county, inclusive of:

- Tribal
- Black
- Latinx
- Immigrant, Migrant, and Refugee
- Asian and Pacific Islander

Expression of Interest:

Individuals interested in participating on the Equity Advisory Board will be asked to submit an expression of interest. It is important to emphasize the expression of interest is intended to ensure the voices of marginalized communities are a central feature of the Equity Advisory Board. Submissions can be received in a variety of formats; submissions can include but not limited to:

- written
- video
- audio
- oratory
- art and music
- Discussion with Outreach Team or recruiting source (PEH Member)

The length of the expression of interest will be at the discretion of the individual, however, some considerations to include:

- Address and contact information;
- Preferred available to participate in the advisory board;
- Reason or motivation for wanting to participate on this board;
- Experience and/or interest with the housing and homelessness sector;
- Experience or involvement with supportive services dedicated to assisting marginalized communities; and
- Experience or involvement with supportive services dedicated to equity.

The Racial Equity Outreach Team will be responsible for responding to inquiries or requests for information from interested individuals, contacting the individuals to notify of receipt of the expression of interest, and advise of meeting schedule. Where available, volunteers of the PEH will be invited to help review the expressions of interest.

Recruitment Considerations:

- Individuals from the marginalized communities (listed above)
- Individuals from marginalized communities with lived experiences of homelessness
- Individuals from marginalized communities with experience developing equity:
 - Planning and implementation strategies
 - Organizational or public policies
 - Staffing policies and procedures
 - Research and data guidelines
- Individuals from marginalized communities with experience working or volunteering in agencies or initiatives dedicated to:
 - Housing and homelessness
 - Services for families
 - Youth and early adulthood support
 - Education and early development
 - Health and wellness
 - Emotional and mental care support
 - Employment and training
 - Historical, cultural or linguistic services
 - Political or governance
 - Justice and policing

Additional considerations:

- Individuals with experience developing equity strategies for organizations or agencies:
 - Planning and implementation methodologies
 - Organizational or public policies
 - Staffing policies and procedures
 - Research and data guidelines

- Individuals with experience working with marginalized communities dedicated to:
 - Housing and homelessness
 - Family and resource support
 - Youth and early adulthood support
 - Education and early development
 - Health and wellness
 - Emotional and mental care support
 - Employment and training
 - Historical, cultural or linguistic services
 - Political or governance
 - Justice and policing

The Racial Equity Advisory Board will preliminarily support the PEH in implementing the equity workplan and setting its future equity plan. However, beyond these efforts, the Racial Equity Advisory Board will need to determine its role and function in continuing to support the PEH which possibly includes expanded recruitment of the advisory board. As such, it would not be appropriate for the PEH or the County to take a broad recruitment approach initially. As a starting point, the initial recruitment for the Racial Equity Group be focused on seeking community champions from diverse and marginalized communities that work with the housing and homelessness sector.



Partnership to End Homelessness

Recruiting for a Racial Equity Advisory Board

The Partnership to End Homelessness (PEH) board oversees funding, policies, and practices to address homelessness in Snohomish County. The PEH is committed to diversity within its membership and looking for individuals to join the newly created Racial Equity Advisory Board.

Lead the Change to Build Equity in Our Homelessness and Housing Services

The Racial Equity Advisory Board will help the PEH establish the foundations needed to support and sustain future equity strategies for the improvement of housing and homelessness services.

Recruiting

The Racial Equity Advisory Board will be comprised of seven to eleven members and will include two PEH Board members and individuals from Tribal, Black, Latinx, Immigrant and Asian and Pacific Islander communities with:

- Lived experiences of homelessness
- Experience developing equity or working and volunteering in agencies or initiatives dedicated to:
 - o Housing and homelessness
 - o Services for families, Youth and early adulthood support
 - o Education and early development
 - o Health and wellness, and Emotional/mental care support
 - o Employment and training
 - o Historical, cultural or linguistic services
 - o Political or governance
 - o Justice and policing

If you would like to know more about this Board, please visit:
<https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/2191/PEH-CoC-Board/5808>

Partnership to End Homelessness Outreach Team:

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