



Racial Equity Theory of Change Framework

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Message from the Director

As Director of the City of Minneapolis Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Department, I am honored to share the City of Minneapolis Racial Equity Theory of Change. I want to acknowledge the important thought partnership that helped bring this framework to life, including the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), the jurisdictions that participated in the Jurisdiction Evaluation Learning Exchange (JELE), and our partners at Goodworks Consulting, whose engagement with City staff and partners helped strengthen and finalize this work.

This Theory of Change is more than a planning document. It is a roadmap for moving racial equity from commitment to implementation, from values to practice, and from isolated activities to sustained systems change. Racial disparities in Minneapolis were shaped by policies, practices, budgets, and institutional decisions over time; because racial inequities were created through systems, they must be addressed through systems.

Anchored in the City's Racial Equity Ordinance, this framework is organized around three domains of government action: building internal capacity, leveraging influence, and exercising formal power through policy, budget, regulation, and governance. Across each domain, the City must normalize shared understanding, organize structures to sustain the work, and operationalize racial equity into everyday decisions.

At the foundation of this framework are community impact and harm repair. The goal is not simply to complete more trainings, tools, or reports; the goal is to improve conditions for residents, especially communities most harmed by racial inequities and discrimination, while improving outcomes for all.

The origins of this framework are directly connected to GARE's JELE, which strengthened racial equity evaluation, learning, and implementation across participating jurisdictions. Minneapolis' participation shaped the early direction of this work, and Goodworks Consulting helped refine the framework into a usable, public-facing tool for implementation.

I am grateful to GARE, the JELE partners, participating jurisdictions, Goodworks Consulting, City employees, and community partners whose insight helped inform this work. This Theory of Change is both an invitation and an expectation: it invites shared understanding of where we are going and sets the expectation that racial equity must be embedded into how the City plans, budgets, partners, governs, evaluates, and measures success. This is the map. Now the responsibility is to use it.

Prince Corbett

Prince Corbett

Director, Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging
May 2026



Racial Equity Theory of Change: Executive Summary

How the City of Minneapolis moves from ordinance commitment to enterprise-wide implementation and measurable community impact



1. The Mandate

The City of Minneapolis Ordinance on Racial Equity requires enterprise-wide integration of racial equity principles into operations, programs, services, policies, strategic planning, budgeting, and reporting.

2. The Goal

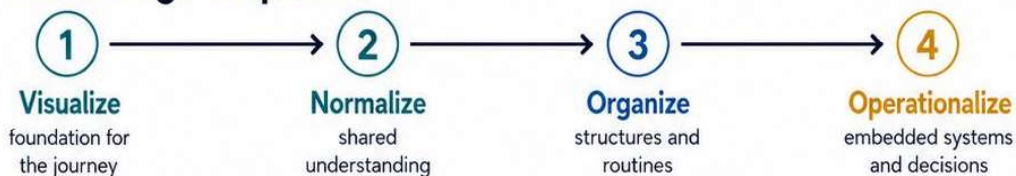


The City of Minneapolis is a just and multiracial democracy where race and ethnicity does not predict life outcomes, and outcomes for all groups are improved.

3. The Theory of Action



4. The Change Sequence



5. Accountability Foundation



What Leaders Must Do

- Align department plans to the framework
- Use disaggregated racial data to identify gaps
- Embed racial equity into budget, policy, and operations
- Report progress and adjust based on outcomes

The Case for Action

Context and Background

Why Does This Matter?

For decades, Minneapolis, like cities across the country have operated under the assumption that current policies and laws produce race-neutral outcomes. They do not. Data consistently show that race remains one of the strongest predictors of where residents live, how long they live, whether they own a home, how they experience the justice system, and whether their children thrive in school.

These racial disparities are not the result of individual choices or cultural differences. They are the predictable consequences of laws, zoning decisions, lending practices, hiring systems, and resource allocation patterns that were designed or allowed to persist, over generations. Governmental systems were not a bystander in creating these conditions, they were architects.

An approach that de-emphasizes structural barriers has been the default response for decades, and it has not closed a single gap. Sixty years of racial equity scholarship confirms what the data already show: inequities that were created by systems will not be undone without deliberately changing those systems. Waiting for disparities to resolve on their own is not neutrality, it is a choice to maintain systemic inequality.

Why This Matters

■ Structural problems require structural solutions.

Racial disparities will not be resolved through awareness alone, isolated programs, or race-neutral approaches that ignore unequal starting points.

■ Delay has consequences.

Waiting for disparities to resolve on their own is not neutrality; it allows systemic racial inequity to continue.

■ The ordinance creates a mandate for action.

The City's racial equity ordinance provides a formal commitment to stop managing racial disparities and start dismantling the systems that produce them.

This Theory of Change exists because The City of Minneapolis has decided to make a different choice. The Ordinance on Racial Equity is the City's formal commitment to stop managing racial disparities and start dismantling the systems that produce them.

Racial equity in Minneapolis requires transforming the systems, decisions, and institutional practices that shape racialized outcomes.

Purpose and Anchor

Context and Background

Ordinance Adherence

This Theory of Change is the City's primary implementation instrument for fulfilling the Ordinance on Racial Equity. It is not a standalone initiative or a "DEI program." Every goal, strategy, and measure is designed to operationalize the Ordinance's commitments, definitions, and mandates across City government.

The Theory of Change helps the City:

- Align with the ordinance
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Connect strategy to department action
- Track accountability and community impact

The framework helps elected officials, enterprise leaders, department directors, and employees understand their roles in advancing racial equity. Its North Star is clear: race and ethnicity should no longer predict life outcomes, and outcomes should improve for all groups. This requires connecting the ordinance mandate to department action, community impact, and accountability

The North Star: The Goal of Racial Equity



Understanding The City's Racial Equity Ordinance

Context and Background

High-Level Breakdown

The City of Minneapolis Ordinance on Racial Equity establishes the legal and operational foundation for embedding racial equity across City government. It makes clear that racial equity is not a temporary initiative, standalone program, or the responsibility of one department alone. It is an enterprise-wide responsibility that must shape City operations, programs, services, policies, budgeting, and decision-making.

The ordinance focuses on reversing racial disparity trends, eliminating institutional racism, and ensuring that race and ethnicity no longer predict outcomes, opportunities, or access to City services and resources. It also establishes shared definitions, a racial equity action plan, and a racial equity framework so departments have a common language for implementation, measurement, and accountability.

The Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Department serves as the City's internal infrastructure for supporting this work. REIB helps guide the racial equity framework, build departmental capacity, and support alignment across the enterprise. At the same time, all departments are responsible for applying racial equity principles within their own policies, practices, programs, and services. In plain terms: REIB helps build the system, but every department has to use it.

Key Definitions From The Ordinance	
Equity	Fair and just opportunities and outcomes for all people.
Racial Equity	The development of policies, practices and strategic investments to reverse racial disparity trends, eliminate institutional racism, and ensure that outcomes and opportunities for all people are no longer predictable by race.
Racial Equity Action Plan	A comprehensive plan to incorporate and embed racial equity principles and strategies into operations, programs, services and policies.
Racial Equity Framework	A comprehensive approach and understanding of racial equity principles and strategies that clearly articulates the differences between individual, institutional and systemic racism as well as implicit and explicit bias.

Duty of All City Departments

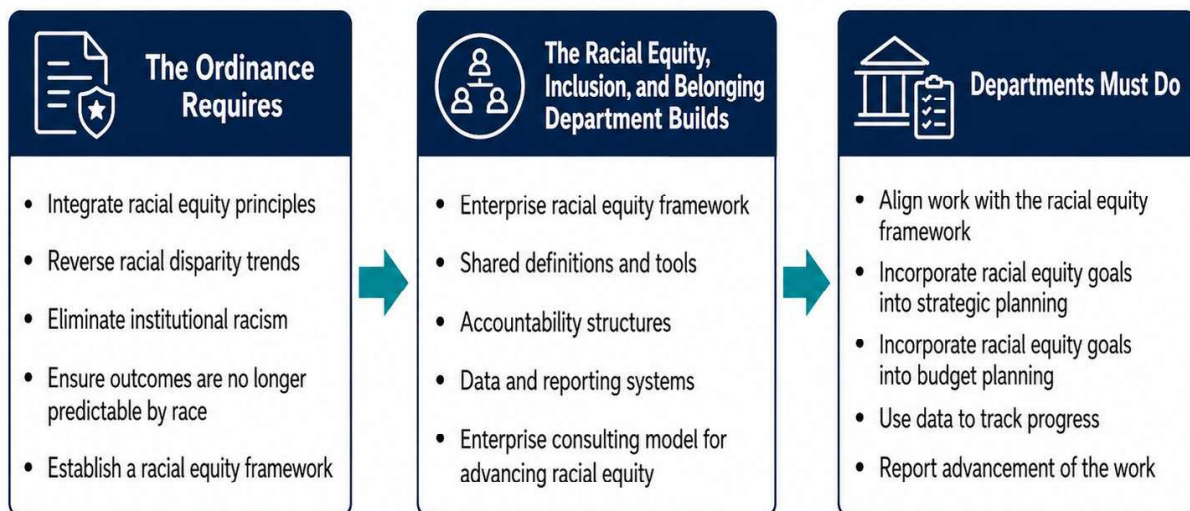
Each department shall...

- Be responsible for working with the Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (REIB) department to ensure alignment of their work with the city's racial equity framework and in advancing the work.
- Incorporate race equity goals into strategic planning and budgetary planning, including annual business plans.
- Also make data regarding progress toward these goals and advancement of the work set forth.

City of Minneapolis Ordinance on Racial Equity is codified in Title 2, Chapter 21 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances.

From Ordinance Mandate to Department Action

How the City of Minneapolis Racial Equity Ordinance translates into concrete departmental responsibilities.



Accountability Question:

Can each department show how its plans, budgets, policies, and measures advance the City's racial equity goal?

Why Now and How to Operationalize The City's Racial Equity Ordinance

Context and Background

Operationalizing The City Ordinance

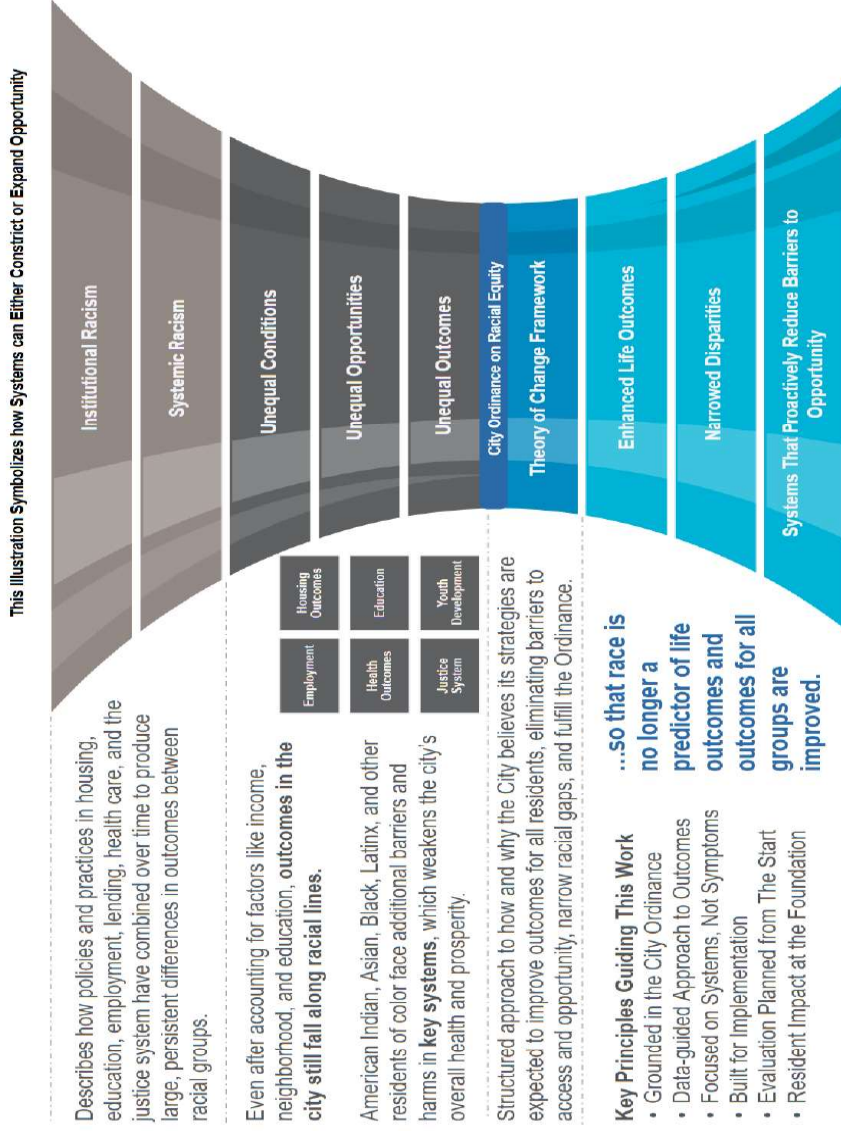
The City's ordinance on racial equity was created with the recognition of how historic institutional and systemic racism continues to produce different outcomes for different groups, these outcomes broaden when we examine outcomes by race. The City's ordinance explicitly declares its intent to purposefully integrate, on an enterprise-wide basis, a racial equity framework that will advance racial equity in all the city does in order to ultimately achieve equity for all people. Such intent is an express manifestation of the city's commitment to apply and embed racial equity principles throughout the city's broad range of operations, programs, services and policies.

This illustration symbolizes how systems can either constrict or expand opportunity.

Institutional and systemic racism shows up broadly as multiple, overlapping inequities in income and wealth, housing, education, health, policing, and the environment.

All of these forces enter the system together and, as they move through existing policies and practices, they are compressed into a narrow channel that produces predictable, racially unequal conditions, opportunities, and outcomes.

The racial equity ordinance and Theory of Change mark a turning point inside this narrowing channel. They act as an expansive force that pushes against the constriction, redirecting power, decisions, and resources. As they take hold, the funnel widens again, symbolizing systems that open up possibility, leading to enhanced life outcomes, narrowed disparities, and institutions that actively remove barriers to opportunity.



Principles Guiding This Framework

Context and Background

Foundational Commitments

This theory of change framework is designed and aligned with the City's ordinance for the purpose of providing a roadmap to systemic transformation that is in line with the City's goals and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Key Principles Underpinning This Theory of Change:

Guiding Principle	Description
Ordinance Anchored	Every element sits visibly under the City's Ordinance on Racial Equity and uses its language and definitions. The framework is a practical instrument for fulfilling the City's established Ordinance.
Data-guided approach to closing racial gaps	Strategies are guided by data disaggregated by race to identify which groups are experiencing which disparities. Interventions are tailored to the documented needs of each racial group, while remaining available to all, with the goal of moving every group toward strong and comparable outcomes.
Systems-Focused Approach	This framework focuses on changing the underlying systems and structures that shape outcomes so that everyone can participate on a more level playing field.
Implementation and Evaluation Built In	Outcomes, activities, and measures are tied together so that progress can be assessed over time at the City, department, and role levels.
Resident Impact at the Foundation	The framework distinguishes the City's direct responsibilities from those of community partners, while showing how the City influences broader conditions through policy, regulation, and partnerships to improve residents' experiences.
Harm Repair as Accountability	The City acknowledges that government policy and practice have historically produced and sustained racial harm. This framework is not neutral about that history. Repairing harm is not a separate initiative; it is a standard against which the City's equity commitments are measured. Truth-telling, structured listening, and remediation are not optional additions to this work. They are obligations that run alongside every stage of implementation and are accountable to the communities most affected.

Key Definitions

Shared definitions help the City apply the Theory of Change consistently across departments. These terms clarify the difference between individual actions, institutional practices, systemic conditions, and bias so staff and leaders can identify the right level of intervention.

Term	Description
Individual Racism	Individual racism (often called interpersonal racism) refers to racist beliefs, assumptions, or actions between people, such as slurs, harassment, exclusion, or discriminatory treatment based on race.
Institutional Racism	Institutional racism refers to the policies, practices, and decision-making patterns within a particular organization (such as a city department, school, or employer) that routinely create racially unequal outcomes, whether or not individuals intend to discriminate.
Systemic Racism	Systemic racism refers to how laws, policies, institutions, and cultural norms interact over time to produce and reinforce racial inequities across society within and between systems such as housing, education, employment, health, and justice.
Explicit Bias	Explicit bias is a conscious attitude, preference, or stereotype about a group; people are aware of these views and may express them openly in words, decisions, or policies.
Implicit Bias	Implicit bias is an automatic, unconscious attitude or stereotype about a group that can shape perceptions and decisions, even when individuals say they value fairness and equality.

Why This Matters: Racial equity implementation requires knowing whether the problem is showing up through individual behavior, institutional practice, systemic design, or decision-making bias. Different problems require different interventions.

Audiences and Engagement

Context and Background

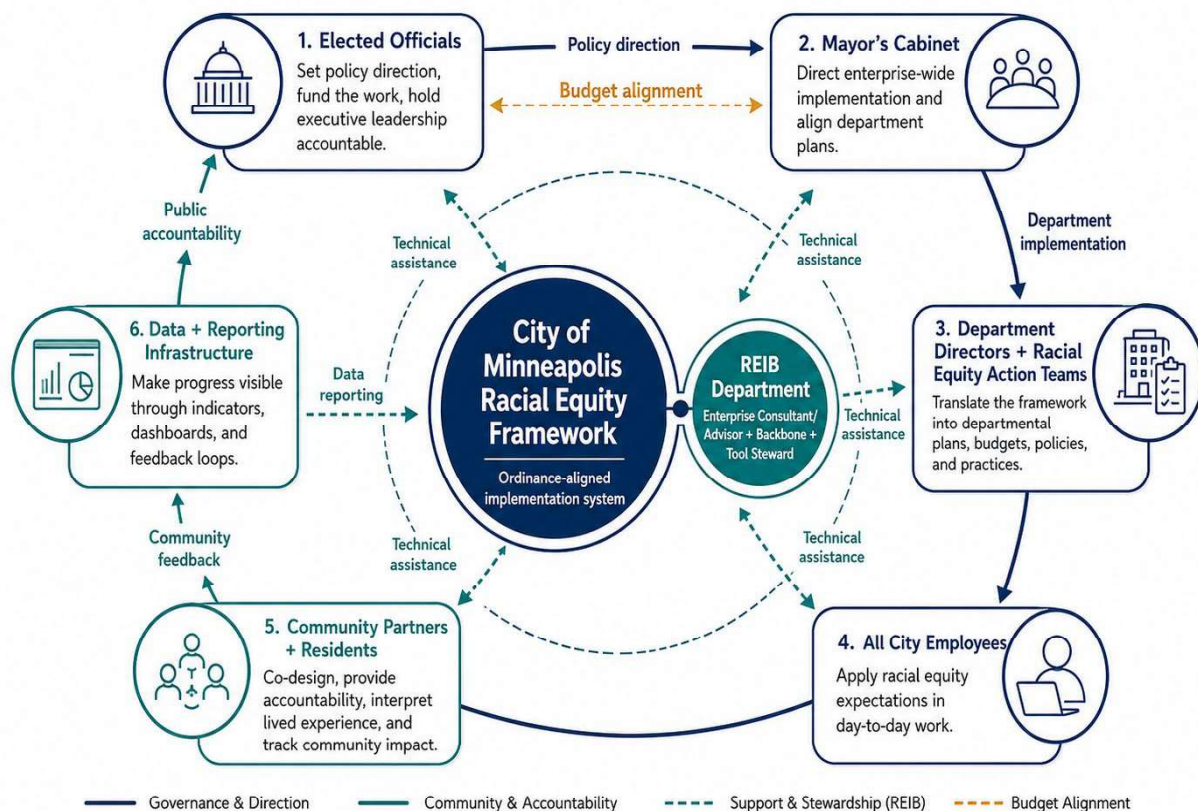
Role Delineation

The audiences identified in this section represent the key groups responsible for advancing, implementing, and holding the City accountable to the racial equity framework. Racial equity implementation requires shared responsibility: elected officials set policy direction, the Mayor's Cabinet provides enterprise leadership, department directors and racial equity action teams translate the framework into departmental plans and practices, employees apply racial equity expectations in daily work, and community partners help shape, monitor, and hold the City accountable for meaningful progress.

This framework is not a standalone initiative or a responsibility assigned to one department. It is a Citywide operating responsibility embedded in governance, operations, budgeting, policymaking, service delivery, and community partnership.

Who Holds What Role in the Racial Equity Framework

How key actors relate to the City's Racial Equity Theory of Change.



Audience	Role in this Framework	How They Engage
Elected Officials	Set policy direction; fund the work; hold the executive accountable to city Ordinance mandates	As the primary holders of public authority, elected officials bear specific responsibility for harm repair, including public truth-telling about past policy decisions that produced racial harm, and ensuring that remediation is reflected in budget and legislative priorities. Use dashboard view (Capacity, Influence, Power) to monitor Ordinance compliance and community-level indicators
Mayor's Cabinet	Direct enterprise-wide implementation; align department plans to this framework	Use strategy domains to set annual priorities; ensure regular review and updates are made to departmental racial equity plans and existing city policies, ensuring alignment with City Racial Equity goals. Establish a mid-cycle check-in between annual reports and budget cycles to identify departments falling behind and allow for course correction before the next planning period. Ensure that harm repair commitments are reflected in budget proposals and policy decisions, and are not deferred in favor of forward-looking initiatives alone.
All City Employees	Carry out day-to-day work in alignment with the ultimate goal of racial equity	Access detailed appendix materials (levers checklist, toolkits, behavioral examples, learning modules)

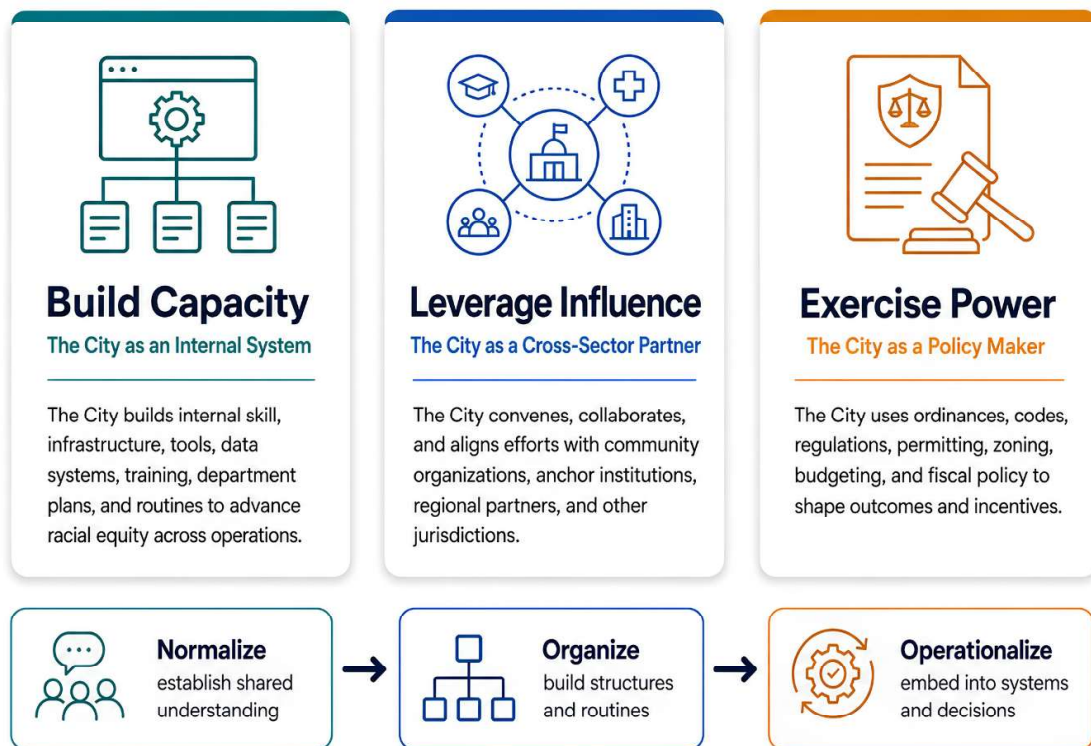
Audience	Role in this Framework	How They Engage
Department Directors and Equity Team Members	Develop and execute departmental racial equity plans that plug into this framework	Use the Departmental Mapping Tool (Appendix A) to translate departmental initiatives in line with the racial equity framework.
All City Employees	Carry out day-to-day work in alignment with the ultimate goal of racial equity	Access detailed appendix materials (levers checklist, toolkits, behavioral examples, learning modules)
Community Partners / Residents	Hold the City accountable; participate in engagement and co-design; lead community-level strategies	Use public-facing indicators and engagement opportunities to track progress and provide input

3 Domains of Government Action

The Racial Equity Theory of Change explains how the City of Minneapolis moves from commitment to implementation. It organizes the work through three domains of government action and applies a consistent change sequence to help leaders and departments align strategy, roles, tools, and accountability.

The framework is not simply a list of activities. It is an operating logic for how the City builds capacity, leverages influence, exercises power, and embeds racial equity into the decisions that shape outcomes for residents.

Three Domains of Action for the City of Minneapolis



The Theory of Change is the City's operating logic for racial equity: build capacity, leverage influence, and exercise power through a disciplined sequence of normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing the work..

The Racial Equity Theory of Change Matrix

How the City normalizes, organizes, and operationalizes racial equity across capacity, influence, and power.

The Racial Equity Theory of Change is organized as a 3x3 matrix that connects the City's three domains of government action with a consistent change sequence: normalize, organize, and operationalize. Together, the matrix shows how racial equity moves from shared understanding to coordinated infrastructure, to daily practice.

This structure helps leaders and departments locate where their work sits within the broader framework. It also makes implementation gaps visible. A department may have strong training and shared language but lack the structures, resources, or decision-making requirements needed to change outcomes. The matrix helps the City move beyond activity and toward disciplined implementation across capacity, influence, and formal power.

The Racial Equity Theory of Change Matrix

Three domains of City of Minneapolis action applied through three disciplines of institutional change

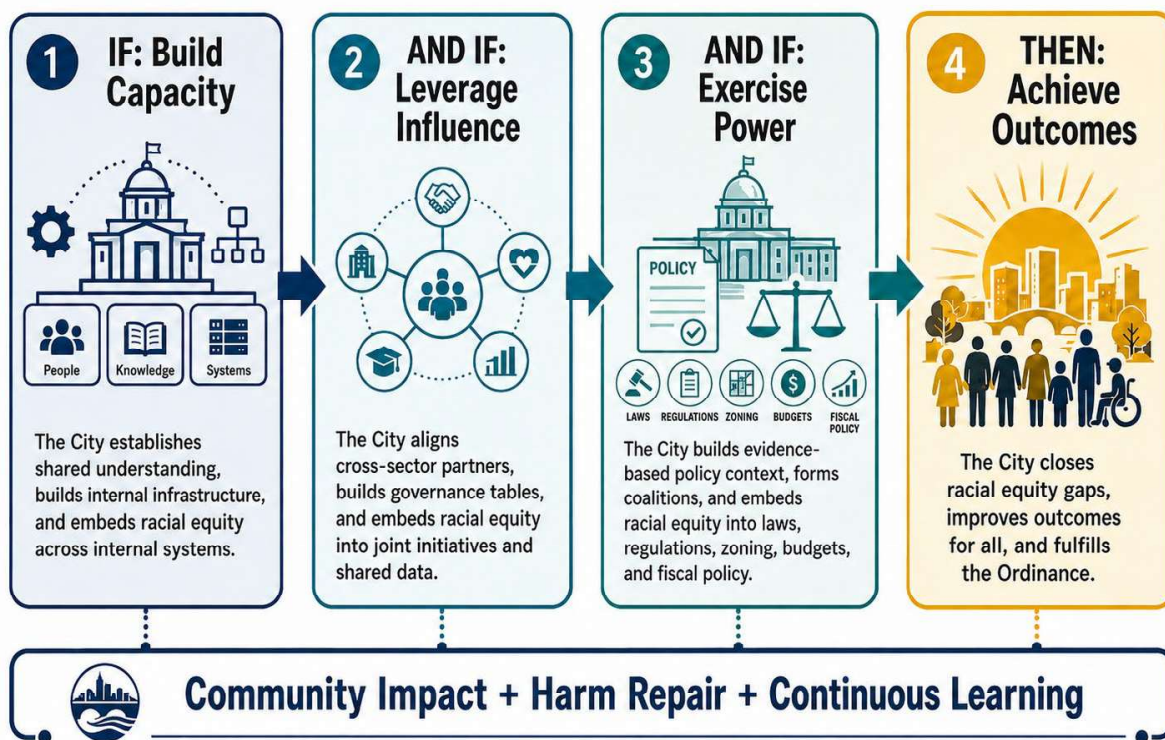
	 Build Capacity <i>The City as an Internal System</i>	 Leverage Influence <i>The City as a Cross-Sector Partner</i>	 Exercise Power <i>The City as a Policy Maker</i>
 Normalize <i>Establish shared understanding</i>	Common language, shared definitions, foundational training, and internal understanding of the Ordinance.	Cross-sector racial equity narrative and shared understanding co-created with community and partners.	Evidence-based context among policymakers and the public about how policy shapes racialized outcomes.
 Organize <i>Build structures and routines</i>	Internal racial equity infrastructure, equity teams, department plans, and governance routines.	Joint racial equity plans, partnership tables, resident co-governance, and aligned resources.	Coalitions, governance structures, review boards, and formal decision processes.
 Operationalize <i>Embed into systems and decisions</i>	Equity embedded into internal systems, budgets, policies, tools, dashboards, and daily practices.	Partnership agreements, joint initiatives, shared data, public reporting, and community feedback loops.	Equity embedded into laws, regulations, zoning, tax policy, fiscal decisions, and long-term plans.

If-Then Logic: How the Theory of Change Produces Results

The Theory of Change is built on a clear implementation logic: **if** the City builds internal racial equity capacity, **and if** it leverages influence with partners and systems, **and if** it exercises formal government power, then Minneapolis can close racial equity gaps, improve outcomes for all groups, and fulfill the Ordinance. This logic makes explicit how change is expected to happen across City government — not through isolated programs or symbolic commitments, but through coordinated action that connects people, systems, policies, partnerships, and accountability.

Each part of the sequence matters. Capacity helps the City build shared understanding, tools, data practices, and internal readiness. Influence helps the City align work with community partners, regional systems, institutions, and other governments where outcomes are shaped beyond direct City control. Power helps the City change the rules, resources, and decisions that shape racialized outcomes. Together, these domains create the engine of the Theory of Change, grounded in community impact, harm repair, and continuous learning so implementation remains accountable, adaptive, and focused on measurable results.

If-Then Logic: How the Theory of Change Produces Results

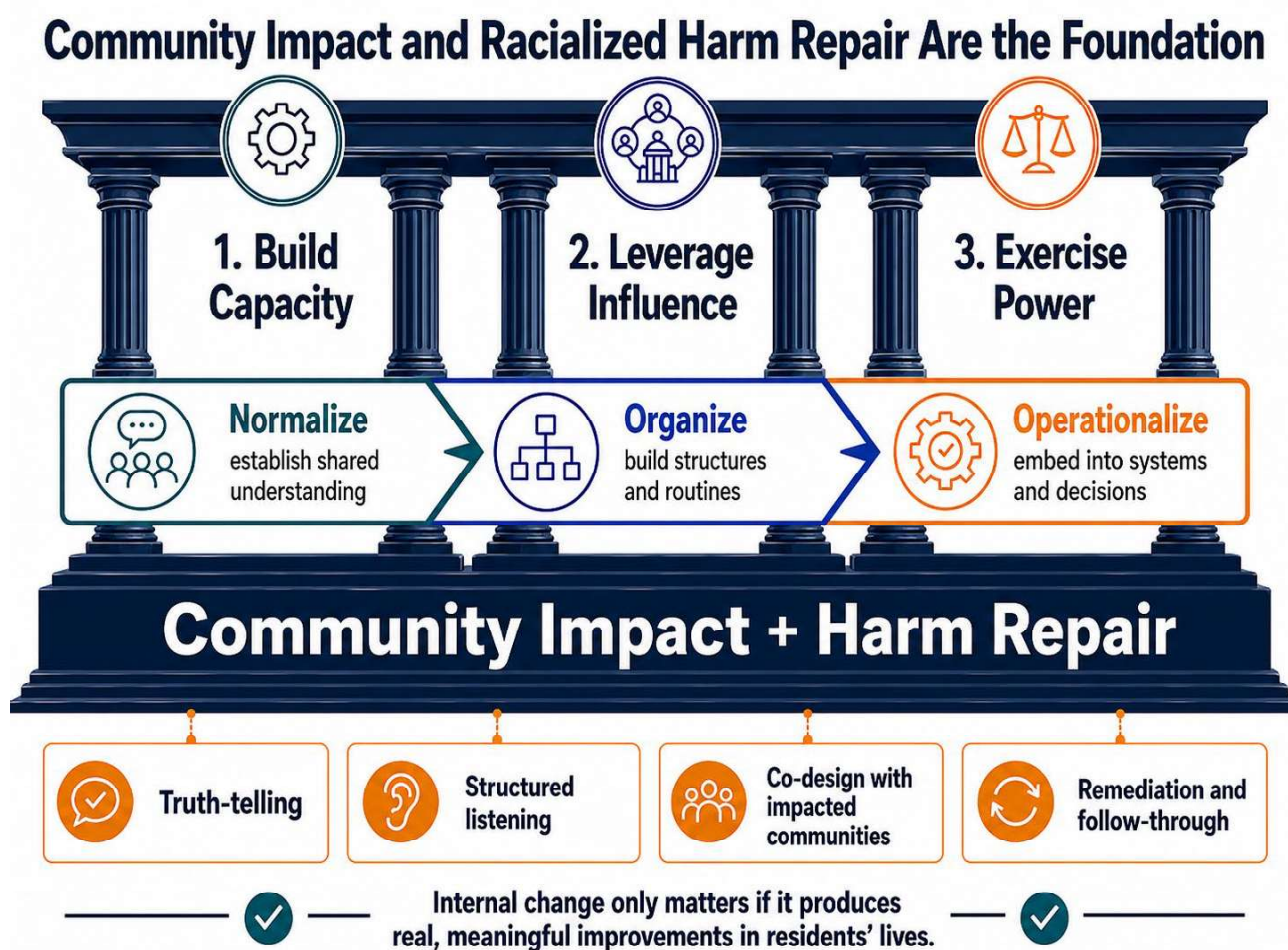


A GROUNDED PATHWAY FOR A JUST, MULTIRACIAL CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

Foundational Community Impact and Harm Repair

Serving as the foundation of the Theory of Change, community impact and harm repair define what success must be measured against. Every part of the framework is grounded in whether City action produces real, meaningful improvements in people's lives — especially for communities most impacted by racial inequity.

This work is not about internal change for its own sake. Normalize, Organize, and Operationalize are disciplines for ensuring that City strategies, systems, and decisions remain accountable to resident outcomes, community experience, and visible repair where government has contributed to harm.



The Theory of Change is grounded in a simple but demanding standard: City action must produce measurable improvements for residents and repair racialized harm where government has contributed to racial discrimination and inequity. Build Capacity, Leverage Influence, and Exercise Power are the three domains through which the City advances that standard. They are not internal change steps for their own sake; they are disciplines for ensuring that City systems, partnerships, policies, and resources are aligned toward community impact, visible harm repair, and measurable racial equity outcomes.

1  Build Capacity Deepen staff and leader ability to understand racial harm, use disaggregated data, communicate clearly, and apply the Ordinance in daily work.	2  Leverage Influence Use relationships, partnerships, narratives, and convening power to shift conditions beyond the City's direct control.	3  Exercise Power Change formal government levers - policy, budgets, governance, procurement, regulation, and resource allocation - so repair is embedded in real decisions.
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Community Impact + Harm Repair Pathway		
Awareness Staff, leaders, and community members understand how past and present decisions shape racial harm and disparities.	Involvement Communities most impacted by inequities help define problems, interpret data, shape priorities, and set terms of accountability.	Shifted Experiences City policies, services, and resource decisions change so communities experience repair, improved outcomes, and expanded opportunity.

Definition of Community: Community refers to Minneapolis residents, including City employees who live in the city and are part of the communities we serve. This framework centers residents and communities most impacted by racial inequities while recognizing that City employees may also experience, interpret, and help repair those impacts as community members.

Bottom Line: The domains only matter if they produce visible improvements in community experience, repair harm, and shift the systems, decisions, and resources that shape racialized outcomes.

The City of Minneapolis Racial Equity Theory of Change

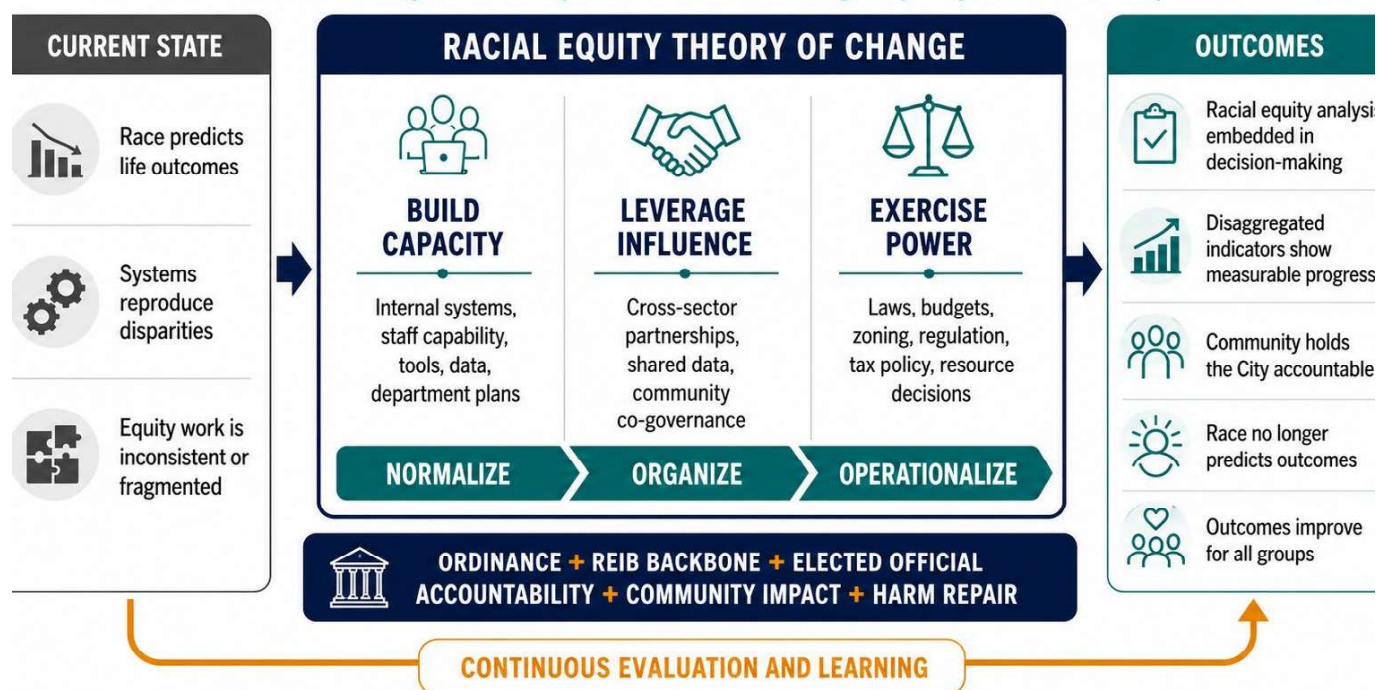
Racial inequity is systemic, which means the City’s response must also be systemic. This Theory of Change uses a three-domain model — **Build Capacity, Leverage Influence, and Exercise Power** — to show how the City advances racial equity as an internal institution, a cross-sector partner, and a policymaker.

These domains are mutually reinforcing. Capacity builds the internal foundation through staff capability, tools, data, and departmental plans. Influence expands the City’s reach through partnerships, shared strategies, and community accountability. Power embeds racial equity into policy, regulation, budgets, and formal decision-making. Together, the domains move through a consistent change sequence — **Normalize, Organize, and Operationalize** — so racial equity becomes part of how the City learns, structures work, makes decisions, and measures results.

This framework is supported by systemic enablers: the City’s racial equity ordinance, REIB as the enterprise backbone, elected official accountability and alignment, continuous evaluation and learning, and a clear foundation of community impact and harm repair.

City of Minneapolis Racial Equity Theory of Change

From current systems to improved outcomes through capacity, influence, and power.





RETOC Domain 1: Build Capacity | The City as an Internal System

Definition: The City of Minneapolis uses its capacity as a system to advance racial equity through its departments, programs, and services.

Why Building Capacity Matters

Building Capacity is the foundation of the City's racial equity work. Without it, the Ordinance remains aspirational. The City must equip employees, leaders, departments, and internal systems with the skills, tools, relationships, and routines needed for racial equity work to be real, not rhetorical.

In this domain, the City creates a shared racial equity vision, builds internal infrastructure for REIB, develops trainers and learning pathways, strengthens data practices, and helps departments understand core concepts in a consistent way. This is where racial equity becomes part of everyday conversations, expectations, problem-solving, and decision-making - not a side project or optional training topic.

By investing in capacity early, the City prepares departments to design stronger racial equity plans, interpret data, engage community, and shift behaviors over time. Build Capacity creates the internal readiness needed for the deeper work of organizing structures and operationalizing racial equity into policies, budgets, services, and long-term outcomes.

Build Capacity Means Strengthening:

- Shared understanding
- Staff and leader capability
- Internal racial equity infrastructure
- Tools, data, and learning routines
- Department readiness for implementation

Capacity is what turns awareness into readiness - and readiness into action.

1. Shared Language

Common concepts and expectations create alignment across departments.

2. Internal Infrastructure

REIB standards, support, training, and tools give the work a stable backbone.

3. Ready Departments

Departments are prepared to plan, analyze data, engage community, and implement change.

Bottom Line:

Build Capacity gives the City the internal knowledge, tools, relationships, and routines needed to make racial equity actionable across departments, programs, and services.

RETOC Domain 1 | Accountability Structures

Build Capacity = Shared Understanding + Internal Infrastructure + Tools + Accountability

The City will sustain racial equity through four interconnected accountability structures.

Together, these structures clarify who is responsible, how progress is measured, and how the City adapts over time.

01 Leadership & Governance

Provide visible commitment and clear expectations by endorsing the racial equity vision and shared definitions, assigning specific accountability roles, and using existing governance bodies to review progress and address barriers.

02 Data, Evaluation & Learning

Maintain performance measures, indicators, and success standards, using engagement surveys and disaggregated data to monitor impact and drive a culture of learning that informs adjustments to policies, practices, and resource allocation.

03 People & Capacity

Equip staff, leaders, equity teams, and departments with training, coaching, tools, and communities of practice needed to apply racial equity consistently while reinforcing expectations through everyday management and leadership development.

04 Policy, Budget & Infrastructure

Embed racial equity into decision-making by integrating equity impact assessments into policies and programs, aligning budget processes with equity goals, and using embedded dashboards and reporting tools to make results visible and actionable.

Together, these structures make racial equity a normalized standard of organizational performance, rather than a short-term initiative. **They move Build Capacity from individual commitment to institutional practice.**

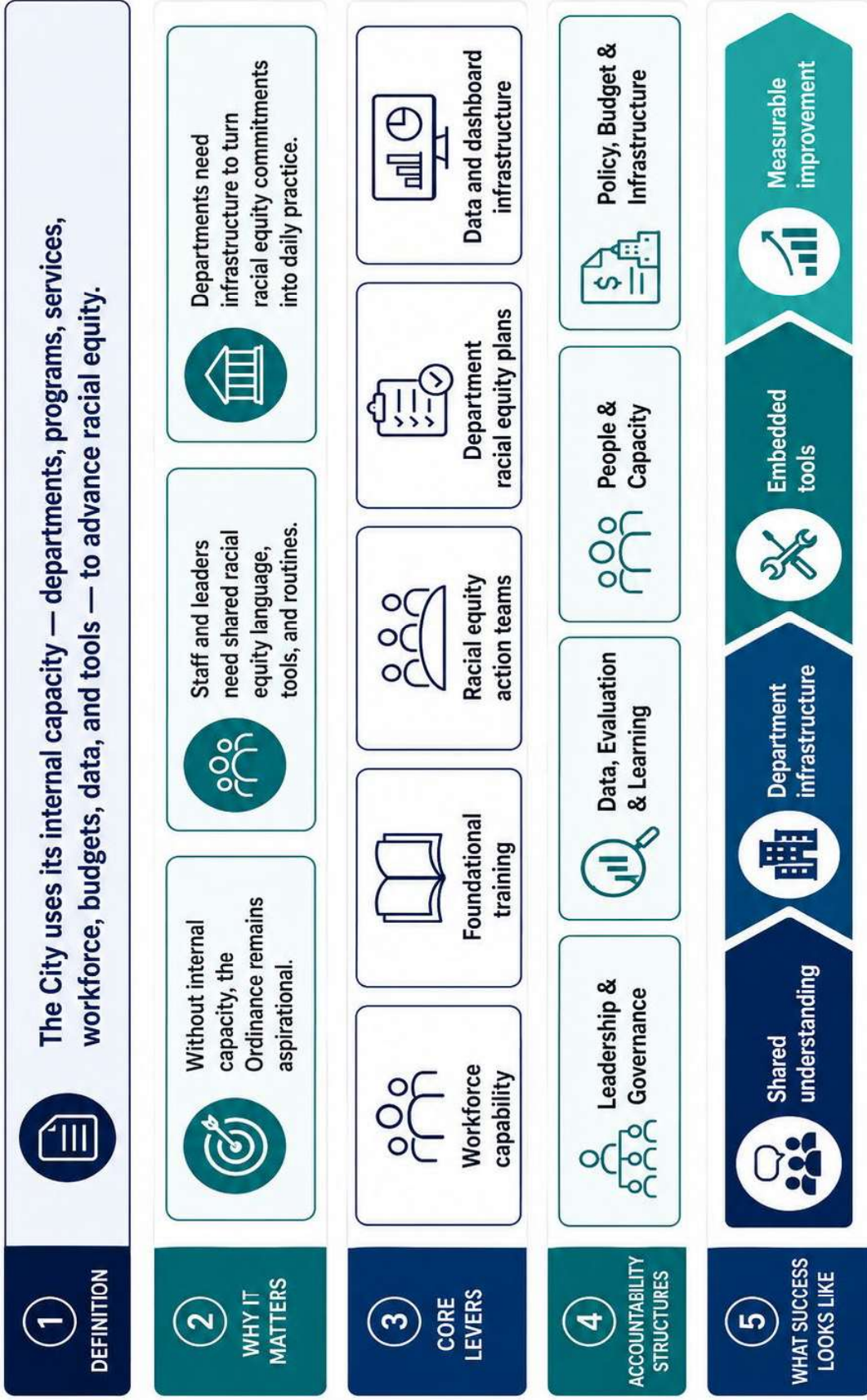
Bottom Line:

Capacity becomes durable when it is supported by leadership, data, people, policy, budgets, and infrastructure — not left to individual commitment alone.



Build Capacity | The City as an Internal System

How the City builds the internal capability, infrastructure, and routines needed to make racial equity operational.



RETOC Domain 1 | Example Activities by Change Sequence

The examples below show how the Build Capacity domain can be applied across the City's change sequence: Normalize shared understanding, Organize structures and routines, and Operationalize tools, processes, and daily decisions..

Build Capacity					
Normalize by establishing shared understanding and...	Common language, enabling consistent use of racial equity concepts and tools	Adopt ordinance definitions as operating language, co-design city narrative.	Finalize and share racial equity vision, mission, Theory of Change.		
		Communicate shared definitions and narrative.	Deliver foundational racial equity training; build internal racial equity trainers.		
	Organize by building infrastructure and ways of working	Build racial equity capacity through dedicated roles, teams, and tailored training.	Develop racial equity plans (workforce, budget, contracting, community engagement, housing stability, economic development, and community safety).		
Implement racial equity practices in policies, programs, and budget, assess plan impact.		Track performance measures and use feedback to improve how racial equity is practiced.			
Operationalize by embedding racial equity into...	Internal systems, processes and, practices	Racial equity teams evaluate racial equity plans to baseline data on a continual basis.	Racial equity teams execute quality improvement, calibrating for sustained improvement.		
Accountability Structures	Leadership & Governance	Data, Evaluation & Learning	People & Capacity	Policy, Budget & Infrastructure	
	Elected/appointed leadership alignment and support, clear accountability roles.	Engagement survey, clear indicators & success standards, learning cycles, data infrastructure.	Department equity leads, ongoing development, and communities of practice.	Racial equity impact assessments, budget processes, tools, and embedded racial equity dashboards.	

RETOC Domain 2 Leverage Influence | The City as a Cross-Sector Partner

Definition: The City of Minneapolis leverages influence by aligning with community partners, institutions, regional systems, and other governments to advance racial equity outcomes the City cannot achieve alone

Why Leveraging Influence Matters

The City cannot close racial disparities alone. Many root causes of inequity are shaped by systems beyond direct City control, including education, health, housing, transportation, employment, philanthropy, and regional economic systems. This domain helps the City use its relationships, convening power, narrative influence, and partnership infrastructure to align action beyond its own walls.

Leverage Influence Means Strengthening

- Cross-sector partnerships
- Community co-governance
- Shared data and accountability
- Regional and institutional alignment
- Public narrative and trust

Through Leverage Influence, the City clarifies shared goals, supports cross-sector accountability, and works with residents and partners to co-design strategies that address the conditions shaping racialized outcomes. The goal is not partnership for partnership's sake. The goal is coordinated action that changes how systems interact with communities, allocate resources, and measure progress.

Core Levers

01 Convening Power	02 Aligned Action	03 Shared Accountability
Bring partners, residents, institutions, and governments together around shared racial equity goals.	Translate shared priorities into joint strategies, coordinated initiatives, and clear partner commitments.	Use public reporting, feedback loops, and shared measures to track progress and address barriers.

What Changes When Influence Is Leveraged

Accountability Structures	Visible Outcomes
• Partnership tables with clear roles • Community-defined priorities • Shared timelines and follow-through	• Joint racial equity plans and initiatives • Community-informed policy priorities • Aligned partner resources and decisions

RETOC Domain 2 | Accountability Structure

Leverage Influence depends on accountability structures that make cross-sector work clear, coordinated, and durable. **Without defined roles, shared data, decision authority, and aligned funding, even strong racial equity partnerships can remain aspirational.**

This domain helps the City align partners, systems, narratives, and resources so racial equity outcomes are not limited by what City government can control alone.

Four Accountability Structures That Make Influence Actionable

01- Leadership & Governance Align leaders around the racial equity framework, make racial equity a core responsibility, and assign clear accountability roles so each partner knows what they are responsible for delivering and sustaining.	02- Data, Evaluation & Learning Use community feedback, disaggregated indicators, public reporting, and learning loops to track what is changing, adjust strategies, and strengthen shared accountability across partners.
03 - Clear Decision Authority Define how decision-making power is shared so residents and community partners participate as co-producers and co-deciders, not just advisors. Clear authority and transparent processes help align strategies, manage tradeoffs, and build shared accountability for racial equity outcomes..	04 - Policy, Budget & Infrastructure Align budgets, procurement, contracts, agreements, and shared infrastructure with racial equity goals so commitments are resourced, sustained, and embedded into how systems operate over time.

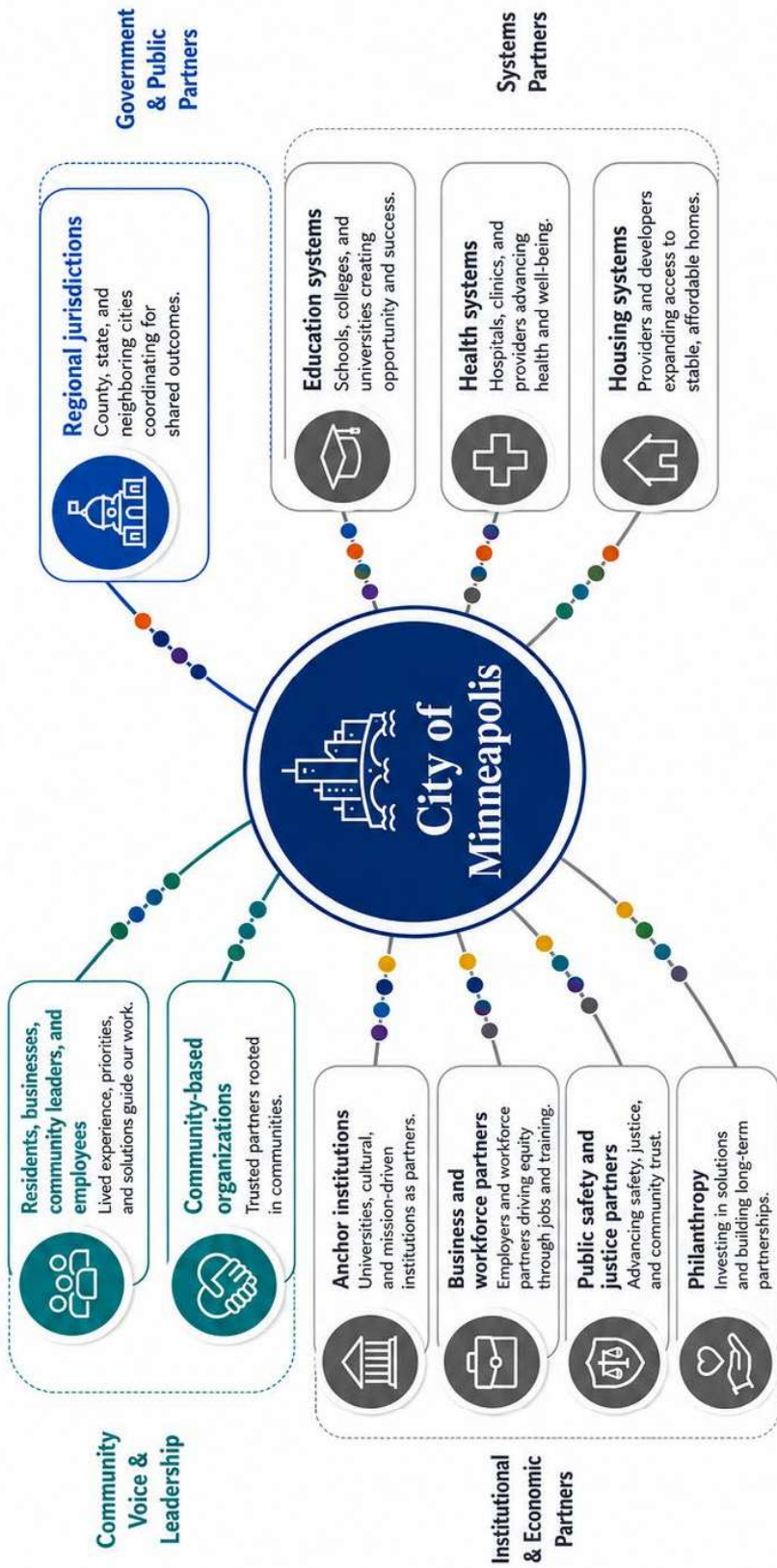
Together, these structures make cross-sector influence durable. They clarify who is responsible, how shared progress is measured, where decision-making authority sits, and how commitments are funded and sustained over time.

Bottom Line:

Leverage Influence becomes accountable when partnerships have clear roles, shared data, defined decision authority, aligned resources, and public follow-through.

Leverage Influence | The City as a Cross-Sector Partner

How the City uses relationships, convening power, shared data, and partnerships to advance racial equity beyond its direct control.



HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

- Convening**
Bringing the right people to the table.
- Shared data**
Using data responsibly to drive better decisions.
- Co-design**
Designing solutions together, informed by community.
- Co-governance**
Sharing decision-making power.
- Joint initiatives**
Launching and scaling initiatives together.
- Partnership agreements**
Formalizing our commitments.
- Public reporting**
Transparent about progress and impact.
- Resource alignment**
Aligning funding, capacity, and resources.

 Influence becomes racial equity work only when relationships change decisions, resources, and outcomes.

RETOC Domain 2 | Example Activities by Change Sequence

		Leverage Influence	
Normalize by establishing shared understanding and...	Cross-sector racial equity framework co-created with community	Convene regional collaborations across jurisdictions and systems	Establish clear vision and mission with system and cross-sector partners
		Co-design Racial Equity Theory of Change integration/training with systems, partners, and residents	Integrate community surveys with population-level indicator data
Organize by building and sustaining...	Internal racial equity infrastructure and ways of working	Engage partners and residents to develop community-level plans	Align partner contributions and resources to collective strategies
		Establish residents as authentic co-producers and co-deciders	Build and share power between system leadership and community
Operationalize by embedding racial equity into...	Partnership agreements, joint initiatives, & shared data	Modify racial equity plans based on feedback loops from community survey data	Maintain and strengthen contributions from system partners
		Build community capacity to address structural racism	Deepen co-ownership between residents and system partners

Accountability Structures	Leadership & Governance	Data, Evaluation & Learning	Clear Decision Authority	Policy, Budget & Infrastructure
	Elected/appointed leadership alignment and support, clear accountability roles.	Clear goals, disaggregated data, public reporting, transparent feedback loops.	Shared authority, community decision-making w/ resident groups, transparent processes.	Budgets that match goals, REIB infrastructure, training, fair procurement practices.

RETOC Domain 3 Exercise Power | The City as a Policy Maker

Definition: The City of Minneapolis exercises power by using formal authority — laws, regulations, zoning, budgeting, permitting, procurement, and tax policy — to advance racial equity

Why Exercising Power Matters

The City of Minneapolis’s formal powers - including zoning, budgeting, regulation, lawmaking, permitting, procurement, and tax policy - shape who benefits, who is burdened, where investment flows, and what standards govern public life.

Exercise Power focuses on using these tools intentionally to remove structural barriers, redesign core rules, and embed racial equity into the decisions that shape long-term outcomes.

Exercise Power Means Using:

- Laws and ordinances
- Budgets and resource allocation
- Zoning, permitting, and land use
- Procurement and contracting
- Regulations and accountability
- Tax policy and public investment

This domain moves racial equity from good practice to enforceable public action. It requires the City to review policies and codes, identify where existing rules preserve inequity, and redesign systems so opportunities, protections, services, and public goods are available more fairly across neighborhoods and communities.

Sustainability Callout

Using power well also makes equity work sustainable. When expectations are written into ordinances, plans, budgets, regulations, procurement standards, and reporting requirements, progress does not depend on individual champions. It becomes part of how the City of Minneapolis governs.

Core Power Levers

Policy & Law	Budgets & Resources	Regulation & Accountability
Change rules, standards, ordinances, and institutional requirements.	Align funding, investments, and fiscal decisions with racial equity goals.	Use permitting, enforcement, reporting, and measures to sustain change.

Bottom Line:

Exercise Power makes racial equity durable by embedding it into the laws, budgets, regulations, and public decisions that shape outcomes over time.

RETOC Domain 3 | Accountability Structure

Accountability structures ensure that exercising power is not just a value statement, but a binding expectation in how land use, zoning, budgeting, taxation, regulation, and public investment decisions are made. These structures clarify who is responsible, how decisions are made, and how laws, budgets, and policies remain aligned with the goal of closing racial outcome gaps.

01 Leadership & Governance Establish visible commitment from elected and appointed officials to use formal authority to advance racial equity in zoning, taxation, regulation, and related policies. Leaders set expectations, support reforms that remove structural barriers, assign accountability, and report progress.	02 Data, Evaluation & Learning Provide the evidence needed to exercise power responsibly and transparently. Racially disaggregated data, public reporting, impact reviews, and feedback loops help the City assess whether laws, regulations, and investments are narrowing or widening racial gaps.
03 Clear Decision Authority Define where formal decisions are made, who holds authority, and how inequitable policies can be challenged or corrected. Clear resident and community channels help ensure major decisions include racial equity analysis, public accountability, and structured influence.	04 Policy, Budget & Infrastructure Align long-term investments, fiscal tools, and legal frameworks with the goal of improving outcomes for all groups and closing racial gaps. This includes embedding racial equity expectations into laws, contracts, grants, tax and fee design, procurement, and financial practices.

Sustainability Standard: Using power well makes equity work sustainable. When expectations are written into ordinances, plans, budgets, regulations, procurement standards, and reporting requirements, progress does not depend on individual champions; it becomes part of how the City governs.

Core Levers of Exercising Power

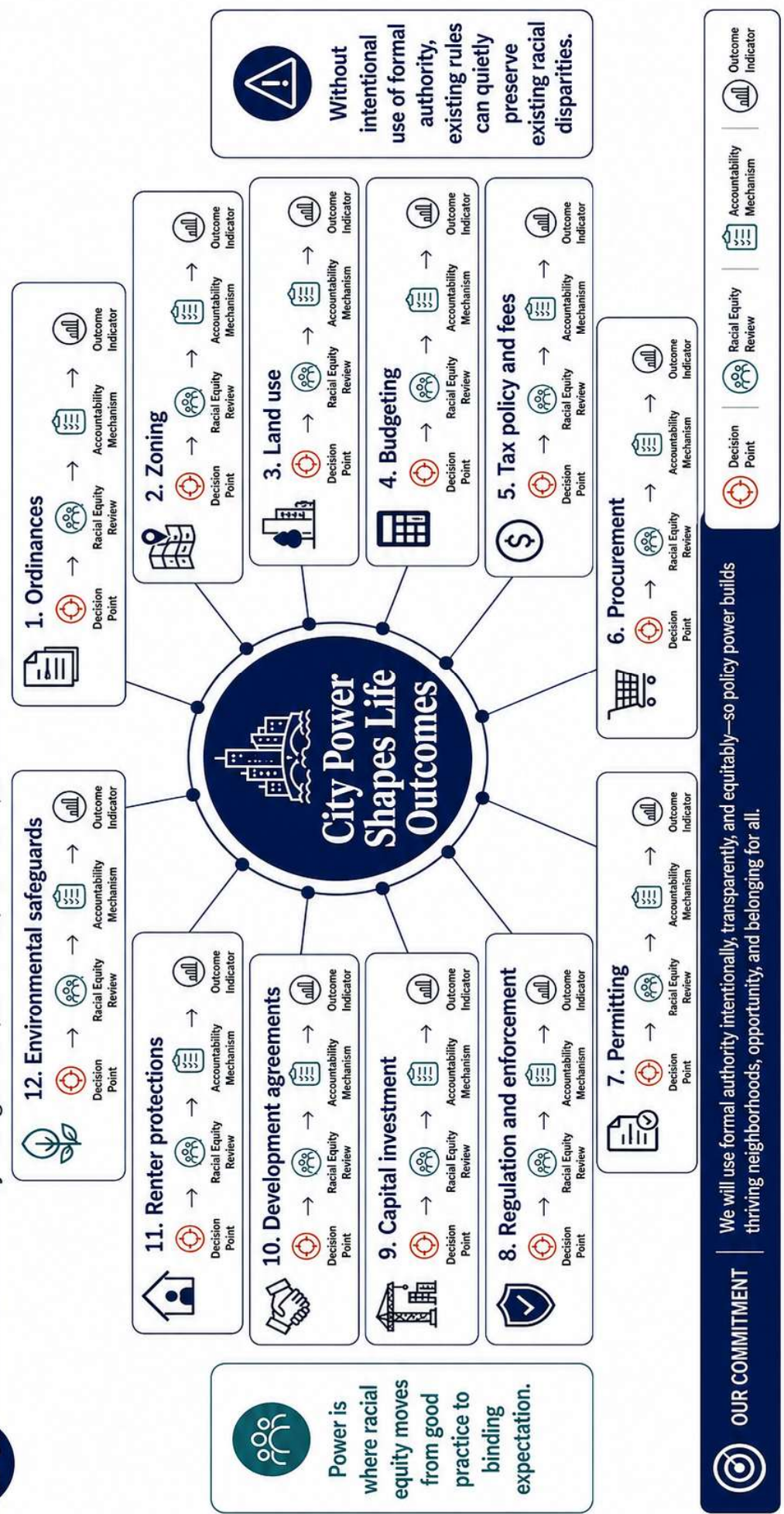
Policy & Law Change rules, standards, ordinances, and institutional requirements.	Budgets & Resources Align funding, investments, and fiscal decisions with racial equity goals.	Regulation & Accountability Use permitting, enforcement, reporting, and measures to sustain change.
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Bottom Line: Exercising Power becomes accountable when the City embeds racial equity into the formal rules, budgets, policies, and public decisions that shape outcomes over time.



Exercise Power | The City as a Policy Maker

How formal authority changes rules, resources, incentives, and outcomes.



RETOC Domain 3 | Example Activities by Change Sequence

Exercising Power			
Normalize by establishing shared understanding and...	Evidence-based context among policymakers and the public	Review zoning, tax, and related rules for inequitable outcomes and close racial gaps.	Accessible methods for residents to inform decision, including those most impacted
		Examine land use policies for exclusion, ensuring access and opportunity.	Train on how policies shape outcome gaps, using racially disaggregated data.
Organize by building and sustaining...	Coalitions, governance structures, & processes	Zoning to expand stable, affordable housing and opportunity by removing barriers.	Restructure tax incentives and property tax assessments to reduce economic burden.
		Adopt renter and development practices that narrow racial disparity gaps in housing, wealth, and health.	Set clear goals in major city plans and public reports to shrink outcome gaps.
Operationalize by embedding racial equity into...	Laws, regulations, zoning, and tax policy	Require racial equity impact reviews to show whether new rules narrow or widen outcome gaps.	Regularly revise laws and policies using disaggregated data and resident input.
		Write racial equity and targeted universalism into core city laws and long-term plans.	Ongoing funding so race doesn't predict life outcomes, all groups improve.

Accountability Structures	Leadership & Governance	Data, Evaluation & Learning	Clear Decision Authority	Policy, Budget & Infrastructure
	Elected/appointed leadership alignment and support, clear accountability roles.	Clear goals, disaggregated data, public reporting, transparent feedback loops.	Planning & zoning commissions, review boards, formal channels to address inequitable policies.	Multi-year investments, tax and fee design linked to closing outcome gaps.

APPENDICES

- A | Departmental Activity Mapping Tool
- B | Success Guidance
- C | Implementation Memo
- D | References & Citations

Appendices: Tools for Implementation

Navigate the tools and resources that support implementation of the City of Minneapolis Racial Equity Theory of Change.

A	B	C	D
			
Departmental Activity Mapping Tool	Success Guidance	Implementation Memo	References and Citations
Purpose: Helps departments map initiatives to the Theory of Change, targeted universalism, measures, sustainability, and course correction.	Purpose: Provides implementation guidance for normalizing, organizing, leveraging influence, and exercising power.	Purpose: Guides rollout through iteration, legal partnership, change management, resistance planning, and structured learning.	Purpose: Documents the research, models, and examples informing the framework.



These appendices are designed to support departments, partners, and leaders in turning the Theory of Change into **measurable, meaningful action**.

Appendix A | Departmental Activity Mapping Tool

Purpose

This tool helps you map any departmental initiative including training, policy change, community engagement, budget decision to our citywide racial equity theory of change. Complete it during working session(s). You do not need to read a training manual first — the prompts guide you through each step.

USE THIS TOOL TO...

- **Clarify what you're actually doing:** Are you building capacity, leveraging relationships, or changing policy?
- **Set a targeted universalism goal:** Define the universal outcome you're aiming for and the targeted strategies needed to reach groups furthest from that goal.
- **Apply the City of Minneapolis RETOC framework:** Ensure your work covers multiple areas of the change sequence, specifically Normalize (shift mindsets) - Organize (change behaviors) - Operationalize (transform systems).

Note: Departments will likely be at different stages depending on the function or practice area, and movement through the sequence can go in multiple directions, not just forward.

- **Strengthen your initiative:** Identify gaps and opportunities to make your work more comprehensive and sustainable.
- **Lock in sustainability:** Use results-based accountability to create your measures of success and sustainability plan.
- Plan for community impact, harm repair, and course correction

How to Use This Tool

1. Gather your team — ideally 3–6 people with direct knowledge of the initiative.
2. Work through each section in order. If a section does not apply, note why.
3. Be honest about where the work is early-stage. Early-stage is not a failure — it is a starting point.
4. When you finish, you should be able to clearly name the goal, the targeted groups, the lever, the change sequence, and how residents will experience the change.

Step 1 | Initiative Overview

STEP 1 | Initiative Snapshot

Complete the fields below before your working session. This snapshot grounds the conversation.

Department	
Initiative / Activity Name	
Initiative Owner	
Team Members	
Timeline	
Decision Point / Trigger (Why is this being done now?)	
Budget / Policy / Program Area	
Communities Most Affected	

Current Status (circle one):

Idea | Planning | Implementation | Revision | Evaluation

Step 2 | Targeted Universalism Goal

STEP 2

Targeted Universalism Goal

Targeted universalism sets a universal goal for everyone, then identifies who is furthest from that goal and what targeted strategies will help them reach it.

The goal of this approach is not about providing advantages to any one group, the approach is rooted in leveling the playing field so that all groups have the opportunity to succeed. The goal is the same for everyone, but the path must account for different barriers.

Question	Example	Your Response
A. Universal Goal <i>What outcome do we want for everyone? Be specific and measurable.</i>	Example - "All residents can access quality parks within a 10-minute walk to their home."	
B. Who Is Furthest From the Goal? <i>Which racial groups, neighborhoods, or communities currently experience the largest gaps? Use disaggregated data.</i>	Example - "Black and Latino residents in Southeast quadrant neighborhoods; only 35% have park access vs. 82% citywide."	
C. Targeted Strategies <i>What tailored strategies will help those groups reach the universal goal? (List at least 2)</i>	Example - "Prioritize capital investments in Southeast parks; partner with community land trusts to acquire green space; ensure community input on design." Note: As a general practice, targeted strategies are used to level the playing field, not advantage.	1. 2. 3.

D. Justification & Transparency

What data, history, or community experience explains why these groups or areas are targeted?

Example "Historical redlining and highway construction concentrated environmental hazards and removed green space in these neighborhoods. Targeted investment repairs past harms and moves us toward the universal goal."

E. Universal Benefit

How do these targeted strategies benefit the broader community — not just the targeted group?

Example - "New parks reduce citywide heat island effect, improve air quality for all residents, and create recreational destinations that attract visitors from across the city."

F. Burden Mitigation

What unintended burdens could this initiative create, and how will you prevent or reduce them?

Example - "New parks could raise property values and displace long-time renters."

Mitigation: Pair with anti-displacement policies (rent stabilization, community land trust acquisition, right of first refusal for tenants)."

Step 3 | Strategic Lever

STEP 3 Strategic Lever

Choose ONE primary lever. Your initiative may touch more than one, but identify the main lever driving this work.

Select	Lever	This initiative primarily...
☐	Build Capacity	Develops skills, knowledge, tools, data, or internal readiness — training, assessments, toolkits, dashboards.
☐	Leverage Influence	Uses relationships, voice, convening power, or partnerships — coalitions, co-design, public engagement.
☐	Exercise Power	Changes rules, resources, authority, policy, budget, hiring, enforcement, procurement, or governance.

Your initiative may include other strategic levers in concurrent or future phases, for example you may be changing a procurement rule to ensure fairness while counteracting racial exclusion in phase one (exercise power) and conducting training on the new process as you think about integration (build capacity), use the space below to add any additional notes or points of clarification:

Primary lever selected:

Name it and briefly explain why it best describes this initiative.

Secondary levers (if any):

Which other levers does this initiative also touch?

Notes or clarification:

Step 4 | Applying RETOC Framework

STEP 4

Applying RETOC Framework

Identify which phase(s) your initiative addresses. Strong initiatives typically touch at least 2 phases — but early-stage work starting with one is legitimate and important.

A NORMALIZE — *Shift mindsets and build shared understanding about racial equity*

☐ Yes, this initiative shifts mindsets

If yes, continue to prompts below ↓

What racial equity concept, data story, history, or ordinance expectation does this initiative help people understand?

e.g. how zoning perpetuates racial segregation, disparate arrest rates by race

Who will gain new understanding?

e.g. Department staff / leaders / community partners / policymakers / residents

How will you know understanding has shifted?

e.g. Staff use new language; Council asks racial equity questions; community trust increases

B ORGANIZE — *Change behaviors, routines, structures, and relationships*

☐ Yes, this initiative changes behaviors or structures

If yes, continue to prompts below ↓

What specific behavior, routine, or practice will change?

e.g. Managers use equity checklist in hiring; partners co-design with residents

What structure will sustain the change?

e.g. Standing equity team; quarterly partner convening; equity checkpoint in budget process

Who is accountable for maintaining it?

Name a specific role or position, not a person because a person in the role may change

C OPERATIONALIZE — *Transform systems, policies, budgets, or procedures*

☐ Yes, this initiative transforms systems or policy

If yes, continue to prompts below ↓

What rule, policy, process, budget decision, contract, or tool will change?

Be specific — cite code section, policy name, or budget line

How will this change show up in disaggregated data within 12–24 months?

e.g. Reduce racial gap in permit approval times by 25%

What makes this change durable beyond individual champions?

e.g. Codified in ordinance; built into job descriptions; automated in software

How many phases does your initiative cover?



3 phases: Excellent. Your initiative shifts mindsets, changes behaviors, AND transforms systems. This is comprehensive racial equity work.



2 phases: Strong. Your initiative addresses multiple dimensions of change.

Consider: what would it take to extend into the third phase over time?



1 phase: This may be appropriate for early-stage or foundational work (example initial training = Normalize only).

If your initiative only covers one phase, consider the following:

- **If Normalize only:** What structures or behaviors need to change next? (→ add Organize)
- **If Organize only:** What shared understanding is missing? What rules need to change? (→ add Normalize and/or Operationalize)
- **If Operationalize only:** Do people understand WHY this change matters? Are there routines to sustain it? (→ add Normalize and/or Organize)

Planning note: If your initiative currently touches only 1 phase, identify what future work would extend it into additional phases and note that in your implementation timeline.

Step 5 | Measuring Successes

STEP 5 | Measuring Successes

Results-Based Accountability asks three questions. Every initiative should have at least one measure at each level — but the impact measure is the most important.

RBA Question	Example	Your Measure
How much did we do? (Quantity)	<i>Trained 150 staff across 8 departments</i>	
How well did we do it? (Quality)	<i>85% of participants report increased confidence using the equity tool</i>	
Is anyone better off? (Impact — most important)	<i>Reduce racial gap in contract awards from 28 points to 15 points within 24 months</i>	

	Quantity	Quality
Effort	<u>How much did we do?</u> # of Customers Served # Activities How productive?	<u>How well did we do it?</u> Customer Satisfaction Retention Rates Following Protocols Are we doing things right?
	<u>Is Anyone Better Off?</u> # Skills / Knowledge # Attitude / Opinion # Behavior # Circumstance Are we doing the right things?	
Effect		

Bottom Line: Most initiatives focus heavily on quantity ("We trained 200 people!") and quality ("95% satisfaction!") but never ask "Is anyone better off?"

Force yourself to answer "Is anyone better off?" with disaggregated outcome data showing whether gaps are closing for the populations you're trying to reach.

If you can't name a measurable change in disparate outcomes within 12-24 months, you may be doing activity theater, not equity transformation.

Step 6 | Community Impact + Harm Repair

STEP 6

Community Impact + Harm Repair

Community refers to Minneapolis residents — including City employees who live in the city and are part of the communities we serve. This framework centers residents and communities most impacted by racial inequities, while recognizing that City employees may also experience, interpret, and help repair those impacts as community members.

Question:

Who is most affected by this initiative?

Name specific communities, neighborhoods, or populations

How have residents or impacted communities shaped this initiative?

Describe how community voice has been included in design or planning

What harm, barrier, or inequity is this initiative trying to repair?

Be direct — name the historical or structural cause

How will residents know something changed?

What will be different in their lived experience?

How will community feedback be gathered and used?

Describe the mechanism — not just a survey, but what happens with the results

Your response

Bottom Line: Community impact and harm repair are the foundation of the Theory of Change; internal change only matters if residents experience real improvement.

Step 7 | Sustainability

Assess whether the initiative can survive turnover, budget uncertainty, leadership transitions, and shifting priorities.

Sustainability Dimension	Not Yet	Partially	Fully Embedded	How? (Be Specific)
Embedded in governance (Council reporting, executive performance goals, public accountability)	☐	☐	☐	
Built into operations (budget process, procurement templates, hiring protocols, data dashboards)	☐	☐	☐	
Resourced (adequately dedicated staff time, budget allocation, technical assistance)	☐	☐	☐	
Regular learning loops (quarterly reviews, adjustments based on data, document lessons learned)	☐	☐	☐	
Community accountability (resident advisory board reviews progress, public reporting on outcomes)	☐	☐	☐	

Bottom Line: Community impact and harm repair are the foundation of the Theory of Change; internal change only matters if residents experience real improvement.

Step 8 | Course Correction

Early warning signs help leaders recognize when a racial equity initiative is beginning to drift, stall, fade, or lose operational traction before it becomes a larger organizational failure. These signs may include stalled action plans, missed checkpoints, unclear ownership, inconsistent use of racial equity tools, repeated delays in decision-making, staff confusion about roles, limited or late community engagement, weak follow-through on commitments, or equity priorities being discussed without staffing, funding, or authority behind them. These patterns should not be treated as minor administrative issues. They are signals that the initiative may be sliding back into business as usual.

Use the course-correction plan to identify when progress will be reviewed, who is responsible for reviewing early warning signs, and what may need to be adjusted to keep the work moving from commitment to implementation. Reviews should focus on whether the initiative is being implemented as intended, whether roles and responsibilities are clear, whether staff have the capacity and tools needed to carry out the work, whether departments are consistently applying the racial equity approach, and whether community feedback shows that the work is moving beyond process toward measurable impact.

Checkpoint	Timeline	Who Reviews?	What Gets Adjusted?
Example: First Review	6 months after launch	Equity team + department leads	Training content, tool usability
Example: Outcome check	12 months	Executive sponsors + community partners	Resource allocation, targeted strategies

Bottom Line: This tool is complete when the department can name the goal, targeted strategies, lever, change sequence, measures, sustainability plan, and how residents experience change.

Appendix B | Success Guidance Playbook: A field guide for moving racial equity from shared direction to coordinated action.

The Success Guidance Playbook is a practical companion to the City of Minneapolis Racial Equity Theory of Change. While the Theory of Change names the City's shared direction for advancing racial equity, the Playbook helps leaders, departments, teams, and employees understand how to move that direction into daily practice. It translates the framework from high-level strategy into concrete leadership behaviors, department actions, decision points, communication practices, and accountability routines.

Like a team sports playbook, this guide helps the City understand the strategy, know its roles, read the field, adjust to changing conditions, and execute together. Advancing racial equity across a complex municipal organization requires more than shared values, good intentions, or one-time training. It requires shared language, clear roles, coordinated infrastructure, race-explicit decision-making, community partnership, data, feedback loops, and visible accountability.

At its core, the Success Guidance Playbook is about helping the City make better decisions. Racial equity is advanced through the everyday choices of government: what gets funded, what gets measured, what gets required, who is engaged, whose expertise is compensated, which risks are addressed, and how departments respond when disparities or harms are identified. The Playbook helps leaders and staff bring racial equity into those decision points early enough to shape the outcome — not after the decision is already baked.

The Playbook Helps the City

- **Understand the strategy**
Connect racial equity goals to daily work.
- **Know the roles**
Clarify who leads, supports, decides, and is accountable.
- **Read the field**
Use data, community insight, and systems analysis to see conditions clearly.
- **Adjust to conditions**
Adapt approaches when the problem is complex, changing, or contested.
- **Execute together**
Align departments, leaders, staff, and community partners around action.

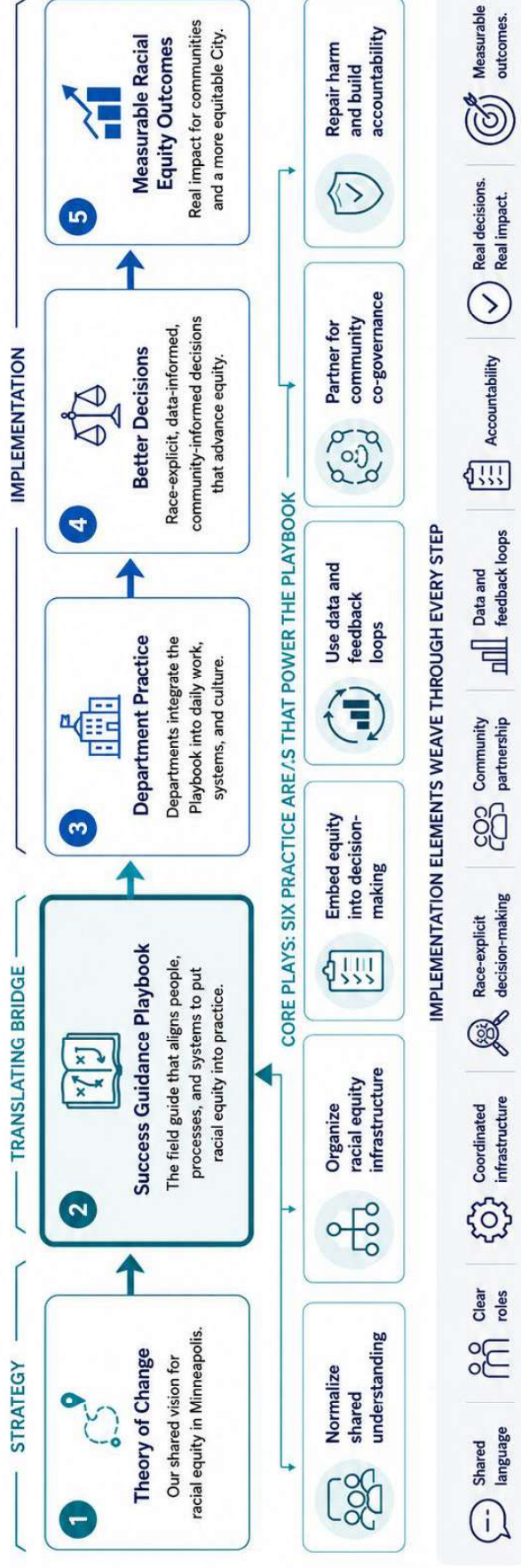
Bottom line: The Theory of Change names the destination. The Success Guidance Playbook helps the City move together with clarity, discipline, and accountability.

Success Guidance Playbook

A field guide for moving racial equity from shared direction to coordinated action.



The Playbook helps the City move from aspiration to action by turning racial equity into everyday leadership, operational, and accountability practice.



The Theory of Change names the destination. The Success Guidance Playbook helps the City move together with clarity, discipline, and accountability.



Success Guidance Playbook

Normalize for Shared Understanding

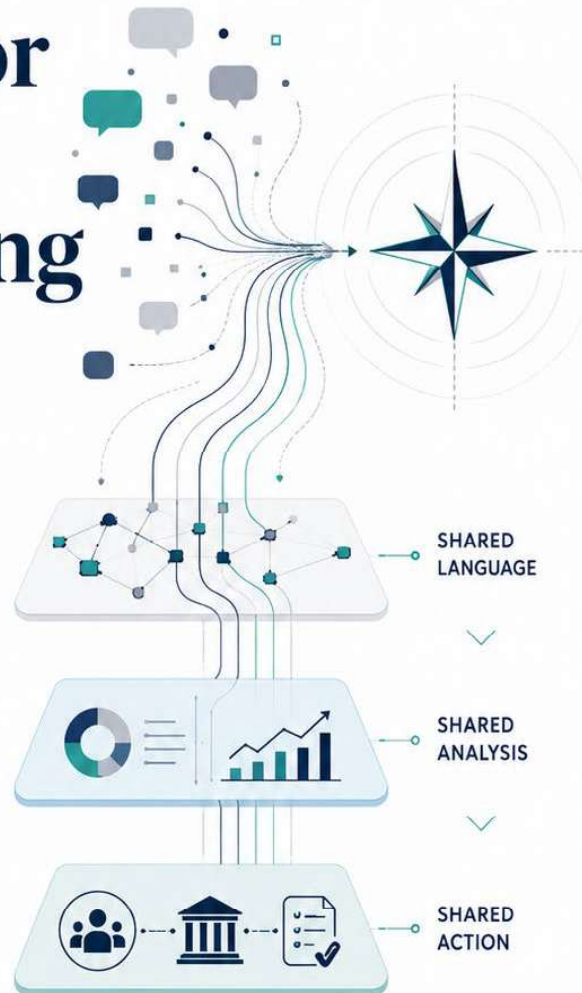
Shared Language. Clear Purpose. Better Racial Equity Decisions.

This section establishes the shared language, racial equity narrative, systems understanding, and learning foundation needed for the City of Minneapolis to make clearer, more consistent, and more accountable racial equity decisions.



Before the City can change systems, people need a shared language for naming what those systems are producing.

Normalization turns racial equity from a personal value into a shared operating discipline.



THIS SECTION INCLUDES



1 Communicating the City Ordinance and Co-Design City Narrative



2 Visualizing Our North Star



3 Map the System



4 Distinguish Problem Types



5 Finalize and Share Racial Equity Vision



6 Communicating Shared Definitions and Narrative



7 Tiered Racial Equity Training



8 Normalize Race-Explicit Conversations

AUTHORITY. ACCOUNTABILITY. RACIAL EQUITY. RESULTS.

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Success Guidance Playbook

Communicating the City Ordinance

A clear ordinance narrative helps leaders, staff, departments, and community understand why racial equity is a citywide responsibility - and how the Ordinance moves from formal mandate to daily decisions, shared expectations, and measurable outcomes.

CORE IDEA - The ordinance gives the City its mandate. The narrative helps people understand what that mandate means in everyday government decisions.

1. WHY THIS MATTERS

Racial inequity is produced and reinforced through policies, institutional practices, resource decisions, and cultural norms that shape outcomes over time.

Government decisions about zoning, policing, budgeting, hiring, service delivery, procurement, planning, and community investment have helped create and maintain disparities. The City's work must therefore focus on systems, structures, and decisions — not only individual awareness.

2. WHAT THE ORDINANCE MAKES CLEAR

The ordinance provides the formal mandate, shared language, and organizational expectation for advancing racial equity across departments. Leaders should connect racial equity learning, tools, and implementation expectations back to this mandate.

"Awareness without systems change is enlightenment with no engine."

3. WHAT LEADERS NEED TO COMMUNICATE

- The ordinance is a citywide responsibility, not a side project.
- Racial equity asks who benefits, who is burdened, whose voice is centered, and what must change.
- The framework translates high-level policy into department actions, communication routines, and accountability practices.

TAKEAWAYS

- Explain the ordinance in plain language
- Connect racial equity to daily decisions
- Align departments around shared expectations
- Reduce confusion and mixed messages
- Build trust through consistent communication

MINI-FLOW

Ordinance Mandate → Shared Narrative → Department Action → Measurable Outcomes

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Explain the ordinance in plain language and connect it to everyday decisions.
- Use the ordinance to frame racial equity as a citywide responsibility, not a side project.
- Align messaging, tools, training, and accountability expectations across departments

4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Staff can explain the ordinance in plain language and connect it to their department's goals and operations.
- Leaders use a consistent City narrative to explain why systemic racism, institutional inequity, and equity-centered decision-making matter.
- Departments use the framework to guide decisions, implementation, and accountability before choices are already locked in.

Bottom Line: Communicating the ordinance and co-designing the City narrative turns racial equity from an abstract value into a shared operating expectation. The goal is to build shared purpose, align decision-making, and connect everyday government work to measurable racial equity outcomes.



Success Guidance Playbook

1. PRACTICE NAME

Communicating the Ordinance and Co-Designing City Narrative



2. WHY THIS MATTERS

A clear ordinance narrative helps leaders and staff understand why racial equity is a citywide responsibility. Co-designed messaging improves trust, alignment, and implementation discipline across the organization and community.



3. WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Align leadership language across the organization.
- Explain the ordinance and its intent in plain language.
- Connect the narrative to department goals and day-to-day actions.
- Involve community voice in shaping messages and priorities.
- Reinforce expectations consistently in words and actions.



4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Executive talking points for meetings, media, and public events.
- Department onboarding language that explains the ordinance and expectations.
- Community-informed message testing to ensure clarity and cultural relevance.
- A shared narrative guide with key messages, FAQs, and approved language.



5. RISKS IF IGNORED

- Fragmented messaging leads to mixed signals and inconsistent implementation.
- Staff confusion about roles, expectations, and the why behind the work.
- Reduced trust, lower engagement, and weak accountability for outcomes.



6. FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



7. EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE



Cities that align leadership messaging and use plain language to communicate equity ordinances see stronger staff understanding and higher community trust.

– *Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), Communicating for Equity: A Guide for Government Leaders, 2021.*

Example: King County, WA uses co-designed message testing and a public narrative guide to connect policy to action.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Clear, consistent, and community-rooted communication turns policy into shared purpose—and purpose into results.



EQUITY. TRANSPARENCY. ACCOUNTABILITY. TOGETHER.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Visualizing the North Star

A visible destination helps leaders connect purpose, priorities, and outcomes before the work becomes process-heavy or compliance-driven.

CORE IDEA: Before departments build tools, dashboards, or routines, they need a shared picture of what success is supposed to look like.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Consistent with updated GARE models, visualizing the North Star helps create a shared reference point before racial equity work becomes technical, process-heavy, or compliance-driven. Before departments begin building infrastructure, selecting tools, launching implementation activities, or designing dashboards, they need a clear and shared picture of what success is supposed to look like.

The North Star should describe the desired future state in practical terms: what will be different for residents, how departmental practices will shift, which inequities will be reduced, and how staff and leaders will know they are moving in the right direction.

WHAT LEADERS NEED TO COMMUNICATE

This step matters because, without a defined destination, departments can easily mistake activity for progress. More meetings, more tools, more checklists, and more dashboards may create the appearance of movement, but they do not automatically produce better outcomes.

A clear North Star makes the purpose of racial equity visible and helps leaders connect daily decisions, department priorities, and implementation actions to the long-term goal.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

By naming the North Star early, departments reduce confusion, align expectations, and give staff a common language for decisions, priorities, and tradeoffs.

In practice, this may look like a North Star statement opening the strategic plan, department dashboards linked to desired outcomes, leadership presentations that tie initiatives back to the North Star, and visual one-pagers that show how tools and actions connect to resident impact.

READER TAKEAWAYS

- A clear North Star makes the purpose of racial equity visible.
- It helps leaders connect daily work to the long-term goal.
- It reduces confusion and keeps measures tied to resident outcomes.
- It prevents implementation from becoming fragmented or purely compliance-driven.

MINI-FLOW

North Star → Shared Direction → Department Action → Measurable Outcomes

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Define the desired future state in plain language.
- Connect the North Star to departmental plans and outcomes.
- Repeat the vision consistently in meetings and decisions.
- Use the North Star to align measures and priorities.
- Reinforce how short-term actions support long-term change.

“Without a defined destination, racial equity work can start doing laps in the parking lot instead of actually getting on the road.”

BOTTOM LINE: A clear North Star keeps the organization focused on resident impact, not just internal activity. It gives everyone a visible destination so the work stays connected to purpose, priorities, outcomes, and accountability.



Success Guidance Playbook

1. PRACTICE NAME

Visualizing the North Star



2. WHY THIS MATTERS

A clear North Star makes the purpose of racial equity visible.

It helps leaders connect daily work to the long-term goal.

It keeps implementation from becoming fragmented or purely compliance-driven.



3. WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Define the desired future state in plain language.
- Connect the North Star to departmental plans and outcomes.
- Repeat the vision consistently in meetings and decisions.
- Use the North Star to align measures and priorities.
- Reinforce how short-term actions support long-term change.



4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

A North Star statement opening the strategic plan.

Departmental dashboards linked to the desired outcomes.

Leadership presentations that tie initiatives back to the North Star.

A visual one-pager showing how tools and actions connect to resident impact.



5. RISKS IF IGNORED

Work becomes fragmented and activity-focused.

Staff cannot explain the end goal.

Short-term actions drift away from resident outcomes.



BUILD CAPACITY



LEVERAGE INFLUENCE



EXERCISE POWER



NORMALIZE



ORGANIZE



OPERATIONALIZE

6. FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



7. EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Public sector change is stronger when the future state is visible and consistently communicated across the organization.

— Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), *Communicating for Equity: A Guide for Government Leaders*, 2021.

Example: Cities use concise North Star statements to align implementation, metrics, and accountability.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: A visible destination helps the organization connect purpose, priorities, and outcomes.



EQUITY. TRANSPARENCY. ACCOUNTABILITY. TOGETHER.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Mapping the System

System mapping helps departments see how policies, routines, incentives, and feedback loops interact to reproduce racial disparities — and where change can interrupt the cycle.

CORE IDEA: A department cannot change what it does not understand as a system. Mapping helps connect root causes, decision points, and leverage points before action becomes fragmented.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Racial disparities are produced through interconnected structures, not isolated events. Simple system maps or causal loop diagrams help departments show how local policies, practices, decisions, and feedback loops contribute to current racialized outcomes.

WHAT MAPPING MAKES VISIBLE

The goal is not a perfect academic model. The goal is to make the invisible visible: how policies, routines, incentives, funding patterns, data practices, and institutional habits interact and reproduce inequity over time.

HOW IT SUPPORTS ACTION

System mapping helps leaders identify leverage points, clarify dependencies across teams, and avoid solving one part of the problem while another part of the system keeps reproducing harm.

MINNEAPOLIS CONNECTION

Minneapolis 2040 already uses systemic thinking to connect historically siloed policy areas to racial equity outcomes. This provides a local model for cross-system alignment and accountability.

“Without system mapping, departments risk mopping the floor while the faucet is still running — busy, visible, and completely insufficient.”

TAKEAWAYS

- Racial disparities are produced by systems, not isolated events.
- Mapping shows where policies, routines, and incentives interact.
- A strong map reveals leverage points for change.
- The work should connect structures, relationships, and resident outcomes.

MINI-FLOW

Map → Identify Drivers → Find Leverage Points → Target Action → Track Impact

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Identify the systems that shape the issue.
- Map actors, decisions, and feedback loops.
- Locate where racial disparities are reproduced.
- Prioritize high-impact intervention areas.
- Update the map as learning emerges.

EXAMPLES

- Housing map: zoning, lending, code enforcement, displacement.
- Public safety map: calls for service to outcomes.
- Cross-department workshop: where inequities are produced.

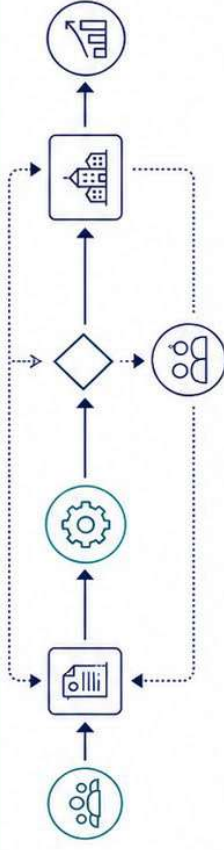
BOTTOM LINE: Mapping the system moves departments beyond symptoms and surface fixes. It reveals the structures, decisions, and feedback loops that must change to produce equitable and lasting outcomes.



Success Guidance Playbook

1. PRACTICE NAME

Mapping the System



2. WHY THIS MATTERS

Racial disparities are produced by interconnected systems, not isolated events.

System mapping helps leaders identify where policies, routines, and incentives interact.

It reveals leverage points for change.



3. WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Identify the systems that shape the issue.
- Map actors, decisions, and feedback loops.
- Locate where racial disparities are reproduced.
- Identify leverage points and high-impact intervention areas.
- Update the map as learning emerges.



4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- A housing system map linking zoning, lending, code enforcement, and displacement.
- A public safety map showing decision points from calls for service to outcomes.
- A cross-department workshop to identify where inequities are produced.
- A simple visual showing inputs, outputs, and resident impact pathways.



5. RISKS IF IGNORED

- Teams focus on symptoms instead of structures.
- Interventions address one part of the system while another part reproduces harm.
- Departments act in silos and miss key dependencies.

6. FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



7. EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

“Systems change requires an understanding of interdependence, feedback, and leverage—not just better programs.”
— Kania, Kramer, and Senge,
The Water of Systems Change, FSG, 2018.

Example: Local governments use system maps to align multi-department strategies and identify high-leverage reforms.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: You cannot change what you do not understand as a system.



EQUITY. TRANSPARENCY. ACCOUNTABILITY. TOGETHER.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Distinguish Problem Types / Cynefin

Match the response to the problem type before choosing an intervention.

CORE IDEA: Racial equity work is rarely one-size-fits-all. Clear problems need standardization; complicated problems need expertise; complex problems need learning and adaptation; chaotic problems need fast stabilization.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Use the Cynefin framework or a similar problem-classification tool to help leaders distinguish between clear, complicated, complex, and chaotic challenges before choosing a response. Applying the wrong approach can waste resources, slow progress, or cause harm.

WHAT LEADERS NEED TO UNDERSTAND

Most racial equity challenges fall in the complex domain: root causes are interconnected, outcomes are uncertain, and the best path forward often becomes clear only through action and learning. In these situations, leaders should avoid rigid “best practice” copy/paste and use pilots, community-informed experimentation, feedback loops, and iterative learning.

HOW THIS SUPPORTS ACTION

The point is not to turn every meeting into a theory seminar. The point is to choose the right operating mode. When leaders know the problem type, they can select the right response, decision rhythm, expertise, and accountability structure.

TAKEAWAYS

- Not every racial equity challenge is the same.
- Problem type should shape the response.
- Complex challenges require learning loops, pilots, and adaptation.
- Chaotic conditions require stabilization before deeper redesign.

MINI-FLOW

Classify the Problem -> Match the Response -> Test and Learn -> Adjust Strategy -> Scale What Works

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Classify the problem type before choosing a path.
- Avoid one-size-fits-all fixes.
- Match decision style to the context.
- Make space for experimentation in complex conditions.
- Escalate urgent risks quickly in chaotic conditions.

Problem Type Reference Table

Domain	Characteristics	Response	Racial Equity Example
Clear	Known cause and effect	Standardize (sense-categorize-respond)	Mandating disaggregated data collection
Complicated	Analyzable but requires expertise	Analyze (sense-analyze-respond)	Redesigning procurement scoring criteria
Complex	Emergent; cause and effect visible only in hindsight	Probe-sense-respond (pilot and learn)	Community violence prevention strategies
Chaotic	No clear cause and effect	Act-sense-respond (stabilize first)	Crisis response to displacement or civil unrest

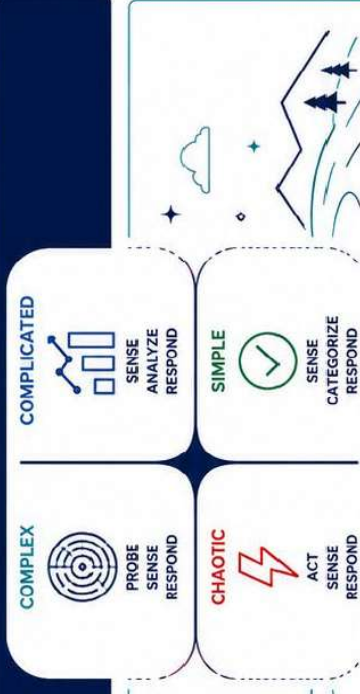
BOTTOM LINE: Leaders should match the response to the problem type. Don't bring a clipboard to a five-alarm fire, and don't bring a fire hose to a filing problem.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME



Distinguishing Problem Types / Cynefin



★ WHY THIS MATTERS

Leaders need to distinguish simple, complicated, complex, and chaotic problems so they do not apply the wrong intervention.

Racial equity implementation often spans multiple problem types and needs adaptive responses.



WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Classify the problem type before choosing a path.
- Avoid one-size-fits-all fixes.
- Match decision style to the context.
- Make space for experimentation in complex conditions.
- Escalate urgent risks quickly in chaotic conditions.



WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Standardize routine compliance and reporting (simple problems).
- Use expert analysis and proven approaches for policy design (complicated problems).
- Pilot and iterate community-informed solutions for persistent equity issues (complex problems).
- Activate cross-agency coordination and rapid response for fast-moving harm (chaotic problems).



RISKS IF IGNORED

- Overengineering simple work, wasting time and resources.
- Oversimplifying complex equity challenges, leading to ineffective solutions.
- Confusion, delay, and harm during crisis response.

FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Adaptive problem framing—matching the problem type to the right way of working—improves decision quality and outcomes in the public sector.

— Snowden & Boone, *A Leader's Framework for Decision Making (Cynefin Framework)*, 2007.

Example: State and local governments use the Cynefin framework to match problem context to action and allocate resources more effectively.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Not every racial equity challenge is the same; the response must fit the problem.



EQUITY. TRANSPARENCY. ACCOUNTABILITY. TOGETHER.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Finalizing and Sharing the Racial Equity Vision

A racial equity vision is not a communications slogan; it is a governance tool that aligns decisions, budgets, accountability, and community trust.

CORE IDEA: The vision should be co-created with communities most impacted by racial inequities and specific enough to guide plans, budgets, dashboards, and public accountability.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Finalizing and sharing a racial equity vision is not just a communications step; it is a governance and accountability step. The vision should be co-created with residents most impacted by inequities, especially communities that have experienced harm from public systems, underinvestment, exclusion, over-policing, displacement, and limited access to opportunity.

The vision cannot be written only from inside City Hall and then presented to community like it came down from Mount Policy. It has to be shaped with people who know, from lived experience, where systems have failed and what repair should look like.

WHAT THE VISION MUST NAME

A credible racial equity vision should name the specific conditions the City aims to change while telling the truth about historical harm. It should move beyond broad statements like “we value equity” and point to concrete conditions such as homeownership gaps, public safety disparities, culturally responsive services, contracting inequities, workforce representation, displacement pressures, and public investment patterns.

Naming harm does not weaken the vision; it strengthens it. It signals that racial inequity did not appear out of thin air and will not be solved through vague goodwill or another committee with snacks and no authority.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

Once finalized, the vision should show up repeatedly in strategic plans, budget instructions, department racial equity action plans, leadership talking points, staff onboarding, public dashboards, community engagement materials, and performance reporting.

A racial equity vision should not live in a PDF graveyard. It should function as the City’s North Star: clear enough to guide decisions, honest enough to build trust, and concrete enough to measure changing the conditions it says it wants to change.

NOTABLE EXAMPLE: Roseville, MN adopted a narrative dedicated to creating an inclusive community where the predictability of success is not based on race or ethnicity.

TAKEAWAYS

- A racial equity vision should be a governance tool, not symbolic language.
- The vision should be co-created with residents most impacted by inequities.
- It should name both the desired future and the conditions that must change.
- It should be visible across plans, budgets, dashboards, and reporting.

MINI-FLOW

Community Voice → Shared Vision → Department Alignment → Measurable Outcomes

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Co-create the vision with impacted residents and community partners.
- Name specific conditions the City aims to change.
- Acknowledge historical harm and how public systems shaped outcomes.
- Translate the vision into plans, budgets, dashboards, and leadership routines.
- Share the vision repeatedly across staff, leadership, community, and public reporting channels.

WHAT IT PREVENTS

- Symbolic language with no operational power.
- Fragmented department interpretations.
- Vague goals residents cannot use for accountability.
- Historical harm being erased or minimized.

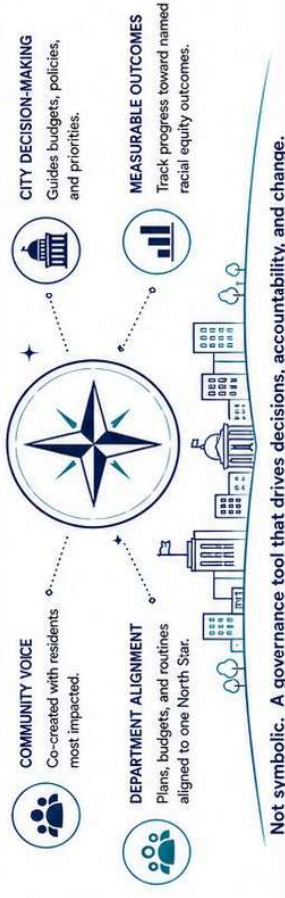
BOTTOM LINE: A racial equity vision should guide decisions, build trust, and make progress measurable. It connects community voice, department action, budgets, and public accountability. ...¹



Success Guidance Playbook

1. PRACTICE NAME

Finalizing and Sharing the Racial Equity Vision



2. WHY THIS MATTERS

A racial equity vision is not just a communications step; it is a governance and accountability step. It gives departments a clear North Star for aligning plans, budgets, policies, and performance measures.

When co-created with communities most impacted by inequities, the vision builds credibility, truth, and shared direction.



3. WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Co-create the vision with residents most impacted by racial inequities.
- Name the specific conditions the City aims to change.
- Acknowledge historical harm and how public systems helped produce racialized outcomes.
- Translate the vision into department plans, budget instructions, dashboards, and leadership routines.
- Share the vision repeatedly across staff, leadership, community, and public reporting channels.



4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

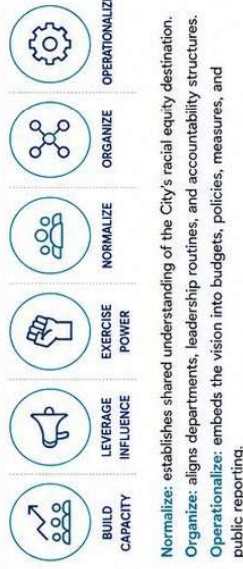
- A citywide racial equity vision shaped through resident and community partner input.
- Department racial equity action plans aligned to the same North Star.
- Budget proposals that explain how investments advance the vision.
- Public dashboards that track progress toward named racial equity outcomes.
- Staff onboarding and leadership talking points that consistently reinforce the vision.



5. RISKS IF IGNORED

- The vision becomes symbolic language with no operational power.
- Departments interpret racial equity differently and move in fragmented directions.
- Residents cannot hold the City accountable because the desired change is too vague.
- Historical harm is erased, weakening trust and credibility.

6. FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



7. EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

- "Race Forward and GARE emphasize that racial equity work requires normalizing shared language, organizing institutional capacity, and operationalizing racial equity into decision-making."
— Race Forward & Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE) Communicating for Equity: A Guide for Government Leaders, 2021.
- Example: A strong citywide racial equity vision names both the desired future and the conditions that must change, such as homeownership gaps, public safety disparities, contracting inequities, displacement pressures, workforce representation, and access to culturally responsive services.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: A racial equity vision should not live in a PDF graveyard. It should be clear enough to guide decisions, honest enough to build trust, and concrete enough to measure change.



Clear Vision. Shared Direction. Measurable Change.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Communicating Shared Definitions and Narrative

Make the racial equity ordinance understandable, visible, and usable through shared language, shared definitions, and a consistent City narrative.

CORE IDEA: The ordinance is the mandate. Shared definitions and narrative are how leaders, staff, departments, and community partners understand what the mandate requires in practice.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The City of Minneapolis has adopted a racial equity ordinance. This practice is about making the ordinance understandable, visible, and usable across the enterprise. Without shared definitions, shared language, and a shared narrative, departments can start freestyling their own versions of racial equity.

WHERE THE ORDINANCE MUST SHOW UP

Communicating the ordinance cannot be treated as a one-time memo, training slide, or legal citation. It has to show up where government decisions happen: cabinet agendas, budget instructions, department planning, staff onboarding, performance conversations, community engagement, and public reporting.

Departments should be able to explain how the ordinance shapes budgeting, program design, policy development, community partnership, data practices, and accountability.

WHY LEADERSHIP MESSAGING MATTERS

When top leadership consistently names racial equity as part of effective government, it reduces confusion about whether the work is optional, symbolic, or dependent on individual champions.

Clear and repeated communication helps staff understand the why, the what, and the how of implementation. It also builds public trust by showing that values are being translated into expectations, tools, decisions, and measurable outcomes.

JURISDICTION EXAMPLE

Seattle adopted a formal racial equity commitment through Resolution 31164 and later used mayoral executive action to expand the use of racial equity tools. Minneapolis can use the ordinance as the mandate, the framework as the operating system, and leadership communication as the drumbeat that keeps the work aligned.

READER TAKEAWAYS

- The ordinance is a citywide responsibility, not a side project.
- Shared definitions reduce mixed messages and uneven implementation.
- The framework translates the ordinance into daily practice.
- Leadership communication keeps the work aligned through transitions.

MINI-FLOW

Ordinance Mandate -> Shared Definitions -> City Narrative -> Department Action -> Measurable Outcomes

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Explain the ordinance in plain language.
- Use consistent terms across departments and public materials.
- Connect the ordinance to budgets, planning, data, and accountability.
- Repeat the narrative in leadership meetings, onboarding, and reporting.
- Invite community partners to help test language for clarity and relevance.

RISKS IF IGNORED

- Staff confusion about what racial equity requires.
- Departments creating inconsistent definitions and practices.
- Public messaging that sounds values-based but lacks operational meaning.
- The ordinance becoming symbolic instead of usable.

BOTTOM LINE: The ordinance gives Minneapolis its mandate. Shared definitions and a clear City narrative make that mandate understandable, repeatable, and operational across decisions, departments, and community accountability ¹⁴



Success Guidance Playbook

1. PRACTICE NAME

Communicating the Ordinance and Co-Designing City Narrative



2. WHY THIS MATTERS

A clear ordinance narrative helps leaders and staff understand why racial equity is a citywide responsibility. Co-designed messaging improves trust, alignment, and implementation discipline across the organization and community.



3. WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Align leadership language across the organization.
- Explain the ordinance and its intent in plain language.
- Connect the narrative to department goals and day-to-day actions.
- Involve community voice in shaping messages and priorities.
- Reinforce expectations consistently in words and actions.



4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Executive talking points for meetings, media, and public events.
- Department onboarding language that explains the ordinance and expectations.
- Community-informed message testing to ensure clarity and cultural relevance.
- A shared narrative guide with key messages, FAQs, and approved language.



5. RISKS IF IGNORED

- Fragmented messaging leads to mixed signals and inconsistent implementation.
- Staff confusion about roles, expectations, and the why behind the work.
- Reduced trust, lower engagement, and weak accountability for outcomes.

6. FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



7. EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

- Cities that align leadership messaging and use plain language to communicate equity ordinances see stronger staff understanding and higher community trust.
 - *Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), Communicating for Equity: A Guide for Government Leaders, 2021.*

Example: King County, WA uses co-designed message testing and a public narrative guide to connect policy to action.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Clear, consistent, and community-rooted communication turns policy into shared purpose—and purpose into results.



EQUITY. TRANSPARENCY. ACCOUNTABILITY. TOGETHER.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Tiered Racial Equity Training

Role-specific learning helps staff, managers, executives, and elected officials build the skills needed to move from awareness to changed practice.

CORE IDEA: Training should be ongoing, tiered, practical, and connected to real decision points so racial equity learning transfers into daily work and measurable outcomes.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Building capacity is central to the framework, but not all staff need the same depth of training. Racial equity training should be ongoing and tiered for elected officials, executives, managers, and frontline staff so expectations are clear and learning is matched to role, authority, and decision-making responsibility. Training should move beyond simple awareness. It should help staff identify and respond to structural racism, understand implicit bias and its impact on cognition and decision-making, and use systems thinking to support sustainable change.

HOW TRAINING SHOULD BE DESIGNED

Strong programs use multiple formats so all staff have consistent access regardless of department size, schedule, or budget. Self-paced learning, cohort-based models, workshops, and embedded peer support help the City reach departments that cannot release staff for full-day sessions or pay for external facilitation.

Cohort-based models, including anti-racist leadership development programs, can also build shared language, relationships, and cross-department learning over time.

WHAT MAKES IT STICK

To be effective, racial equity training must connect directly to budget development, policy design, hiring practices, service delivery, community engagement, data analysis, and performance management.

The ultimate goal is behavior change. Training should function less like information sharing and more like applied workshops where participants bring real work, practice with relevant tools, and leave with changes they can test immediately.

“Training that does not transfer into practice becomes awareness with no engine.”

TAKEAWAYS

- Tiered training aligns learning with role, authority, and decision-making power.
- Foundational training should be available to all staff.
- Managers and executives need deeper practice tied to governance, accountability, and systems change.
- Training must be paired with tools, coaching, peer support, and accountability.

MINI-FLOW

**Foundational → Intermediate → Advanced
→ Applied Practice → Behavior Change**

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Define role-based learning tiers.
- Set baseline expectations for all staff.
- Require deeper learning for managers, executives, and key decision-makers.
- Connect training to workflows, tools, and real decisions.
- Measure whether learning transfers into practice.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- Orientation for all employees on racial equity values and local context.
- Manager training on race-explicit conversations and team practices.
- Advanced workshops for analysts, policy staff, and budget leads.
- Executive sessions on governance, accountability, and system change.

BOTTOM LINE: Tiered racial equity training works when it is role-specific, practical, ongoing, and tied to real decisions. The point is not just more awareness; the point is behavior change that shifts institutional practice and improves outcomes.

Success Guidance Playbook



WHY THIS MATTERS

Not all staff need the same depth of training. Tiered learning helps align expectations, build role-specific capability, and use limited capacity strategically.

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Define role-based learning tiers.
- Set baseline expectations for all staff.
- Require deeper learning for managers and key decision-makers.
- Connect training to tools and workflows.
- Measure transfer into practice.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Orientation for all employees on racial equity values, language, and local context.
- Manager training on leading race-explicit conversations and team practices.
- Advanced tool workshops for analysts and policy staff.
- Executive sessions on accountability, governance, and system change.

EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Adult learning is stronger when training is differentiated by role and paired with practice.
— *Harvard Kennedy School, The Practice of Adaptive Leadership, 2018.*

Example: Local governments use foundational (all staff), intermediate (managers), and advanced (executives and key decision-makers) learning tracks to build capability and drive results.

RISKS IF IGNORED

- One-size-fits-all training leads to low engagement and fatigue.
- Learning is not applied, resulting in minimal change in practice.
- Capability gaps remain—especially among those with the most decision-making power.

FRAMEWORK CONNECTION

- BUILD CAPACITY
- LEVERAGE INFLUENCE
- EXERCISE POWER
- NORMALIZE
- ORGANIZE
- OPERATIONALIZE

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Training works best when it is role-specific, practical, and tied to implementation.

EQUITY. TRANSPARENCY. ACCOUNTABILITY. TOGETHER.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Normalize Race-Explicit Conversations

Make race a routine, responsible part of decision-making so the City can name disparities, shift resources, and improve outcomes.

CORE IDEA: Race-neutral language may feel safer, but it often hides the specific inequities the City is responsible for addressing. Race-explicit analysis makes better decisions possible.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Normalizing race-explicit conversations means making race a routine and responsible part of decision-making, not something treated as controversial or avoided through broad language like “underserved” or “vulnerable.” If racial disparities appear in housing, health, hiring, budgeting, transportation, enforcement, or service access, those racial dynamics must be named directly.

Race Forward emphasizes that organizations must move beyond race-neutral language and explicitly name racial dynamics in data, policy design, and resource allocation. Without this foundation, tools and data remain surface-level exercises.

HOW IT BECOMES ROUTINE

Racial equity-centered questions should be embedded into budgeting, planning meetings, cabinet agendas, policy reviews, procurement decisions, and program design before decisions are finalized.

Standard prompts should include: Who benefits? Who is burdened? Who is missing? What does the data show by race? How will resources shift to address disparities? That way, equity is built into the process instead of added later like seasoning after the food is already cooked.

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY

Leaders must model race-explicit language consistently, especially when decisions are difficult, politically sensitive, or likely to produce uneven impacts. Staff cannot be expected to name racial dynamics if executives and elected officials avoid doing so in public decision-making spaces.

This practice should not place the burden on racialized staff to educate the organization. The City should establish shared expectations, facilitation norms, data practices, and accountability structures that make race-explicit analysis a professional competency across roles.

“The point is not to talk about race for its own sake; the point is to make better decisions, reduce predictable disparities, and be honest about the conditions the City has the power to change.”

READER TAKEAWAYS

- Race-explicit conversations make disparities visible instead of hiding them under broad language.
- Questions about benefit, burden, and missing voices should become standard decision prompts.
- Leaders must model race-explicit analysis in difficult and public decision spaces.
- The work should be a professional competency, not emotional labor placed on racialized staff.

MINI-FLOW

Name Race → Review Data → Ask Racial Equity Questions → Shift Decisions → Track Outcomes

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Embed “Who benefits?” and “Who is burdened?” into routine decision forums.
- Use race-explicit language in budget, planning, cabinet, and policy discussions.
- Model respectful discussion of racial dynamics in data, policy design, and resources.
- Create facilitation norms and support staff in engaging race directly.
- Connect conversations to documented decisions, follow-up steps, and accountability.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- Budget templates include prompts about racial impact, benefit, and burden.
- Agendas include regular discussion of racial disparities and affected groups.
- Planning memos identify how proposals may affect different racial groups.
- Facilitators normalize race-explicit discussion instead of euphemisms.

BOTTOM LINE: Name race. Ask who benefits and who is burdened. Shift decisions. Track outcomes.



Success Guidance Playbook

1. PRACTICE NAME

Normalize Race-Explicit Conversations



2. WHY THIS MATTERS



Racial equity work stays shallow when organizations rely on race-neutral language. Normalizing race-explicit conversations helps staff and leaders name who benefits, who is burdened, and how racial dynamics shape data, policy design, and resource allocation. Without this foundation, tools and data often become surface-level exercises instead of drivers of change.



3. WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Embed questions like “Who benefits?” and “Who is burdened?” into routine decision forums.
- Use race-explicit language in budget hearings, planning meetings, cabinet agendas, and policy discussions.
- Model clear, respectful discussion of racial dynamics in data, policy design, and resource allocation.
- Create facilitation norms and support staff in engaging race directly rather than avoiding it.
- Connect conversation to action by documenting decisions, follow-up steps, and accountability.



4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Budget templates include prompts about racial impact, benefit, and burden.
- Cabinet and management agendas include regular discussion of racial disparities and affected groups.
- Planning memos explicitly identify how proposals may affect different racial groups.
- Meeting facilitators normalize race-neutral euphemisms.



5. RISKS IF IGNORED

- Race-neutral language obscures inequities and blunts accountability.
- Tools and data become performative or compliance-driven rather than transformational.
- Decisions quietly reproduce racial disparities because impacts are never explicitly named.



6. FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



BUILD
CAPACITY



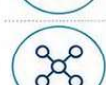
LEVERAGE
INFLUENCE



EXERCISE
POWER



NORMALIZE



ORGANIZE



OPERATIONALIZE



7. EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

“Organizations must move beyond race-neutral language to explicitly name racial dynamics in data, policy design, and resource allocation.”

— *Race Forward framework guidance*

Example: Departments use standing race-impact questions in budget, planning, and policy reviews so conversations about race become a routine part of decision-making.



Success Guidance Playbook

Organize Racial Equity Infrastructure

Building Capacity for Racial Equity

This section focuses on the structures, governance, workflows, data systems, and organizational capacity needed for the City of Minneapolis to embed racial equity into how work gets coordinated, analyzed, implemented, and improved across departments.



Infrastructure turns racial equity from isolated effort into an enterprise operating system.

Capacity is not just training — it is governance, role clarity, workflow integration, data, accountability, and feedback.



THIS SECTION INCLUDES



1

Continue Cross-Department Governance



2

Formalize REIB as Objective Enterprise Advisor



3

Formalize Approach to Internal Racial Equity Teams



4

Revisit Racial Equity Assessment Process



5

Integrate Into Existing Workflows



6

Build Racial Equity Data Infrastructure



7

Set System-Level Equity Goals



8

Create Feedback Loops

AUTHORITY. ACCOUNTABILITY. RACIAL EQUITY. RESULTS.

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Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Cross-Department Governance

What spans departments requires structure, cadence, and accountability so racial equity moves from shared values to coordinated action.

CORE IDEA: The REIB Department serves as the enterprise backbone for standards, coaching, coordination, and accountability, while departments remain responsible for implementation and results.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Through the established City of Minneapolis REIB Department, the City should continue setting clear racial equity standards, coaching departments, and tracking performance against enterprise-wide goals. This gives departments a common structure instead of leaving each one to freestyle its own version of equity. Cross-department governance is essential because racial equity work cuts across budgets, policies, services, workforce practices, procurement, legal review, and community impact. No single department can carry that alone.

WHAT GOVERNANCE MAKES POSSIBLE

A strong governance structure creates clear roles, regular decision points, shared reporting tools, and escalation pathways when barriers show up. It turns coordination from informal goodwill into repeatable management practice.

This practice also keeps racial equity from becoming symbolic or advisory only. Without real authority, leadership access, and performance monitoring, departments can treat equity as optional instead of operational.

HOW REIB SUPPORTS THE ENTERPRISE

A strong REIB governance model keeps racial equity connected to the places where actual decisions are made: budgets, policies, services, accountability systems, and measurable outcomes.

REIB should remain the backbone for standards, coaching, coordination, and accountability, while departments remain responsible for implementation. That is the difference between “we support equity” and “we built the machinery to actually do it.”

“That kind of everybody interpret it however you want approach is how implementation gets messy real fast.”

TAKEAWAYS

- Cross-department governance turns racial equity from a value statement into a management system.
- REIB provides standards, coaching, coordination, and enterprise accountability.
- Departments remain responsible for implementation, outcomes, and follow-through.
- Governance prevents uneven interpretation, drift, and siloed implementation.

MINI-FLOW

Enterprise Standards → Department Action → Shared Reporting → Escalation → Measurable Outcomes

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Establish a clear governance structure with roles and decision points.
- Assign executive sponsorship and department representation.
- Create regular review routines for plans, metrics, and barriers.
- Connect governance to budget, policy, and performance decisions.
- Use REIB as backbone support for coordination and tool stewardship.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- A cross-department steering committee with quarterly reviews.
- Standard reporting templates across departments.
- Escalation pathways when implementation barriers arise.
- Cabinet-level review of racial equity priorities and performance.

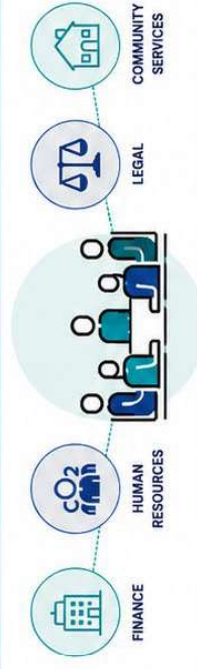
BOTTOM LINE: Cross-department governance turns racial equity from a value statement into a management system. REIB provides the backbone; departments carry implementation; leadership keeps the machinery moving toward measurable outcomes.



Success Guidance Playbook

1. PRACTICE NAME

Cross-Department Governance



2. WHY THIS MATTERS

Racial equity implementation fails when responsibilities are diffuse and coordination is informal.

Cross-department governance creates alignment, decision rights, and accountability across the enterprise.

It reduces duplication, drift, and uneven implementation.



3. WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Establish a clear governance structure with roles and decision points.
- Assign executive sponsorship and department representation.
- Create regular review routines for plans, metrics, and barriers.
- Connect governance to budget, policy, and performance decisions.
- Use REIB as backbone support for coordination and tool stewardship.



4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- A cross-department steering committee with quarterly reviews.
- Standard reporting templates across departments.
- Escalation pathways when implementation barriers arise.
- Cabinet-level review of racial equity priorities and performance.



5. RISKS IF IGNORED

- Departments interpret expectations differently.
- Equity work depends on informal champions rather than structure.
- Implementation slows because no forum resolves barriers or trade-offs.

6. FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



7. EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

“Enterprise change requires governance, not just goodwill. Structure turns intention into consistent, accountable action.”
— Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), *Advancing Racial Equity in Government*

Example: Cities with cabinet-linked equity governance structures are better able to sustain priorities across departments.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: What spans departments requires structure, cadence, and accountability.



EQUITY. TRANSPARENCY. ACCOUNTABILITY. TOGETHER.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Formalize REIB as Objective Enterprise Advisor

Position REIB as the City's coordinating backbone for standards, coaching, implementation support, performance monitoring, and enterprise racial equity practice.

CORE IDEA: REIB should not operate as a side consultant, complaint desk, or occasional training provider. Enterprise change requires authority, access, capacity, and a differentiated support model across all departments.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The City should formalize REIB as an objective enterprise advisor with the authority, access, and capacity to guide racial equity implementation across all 27 departments. REIB should serve as the City's coordinating backbone: setting citywide standards, coaching departments, assessing progress, identifying implementation risks, and helping departments align racial equity work with budget, policy, data, operations, and community outcomes.

WHAT BREAKS WITHOUT IT

Racial equity implementation often breaks down when each department is left to interpret expectations on its own. Without a central advisory structure, departments can use different tools, apply inconsistent standards, duplicate work, or move at completely different speeds. That is not strategy; that is 27 departments doing jazz solos with no bandleader.

WHAT THE MODEL REQUIRES

A differentiated support model is necessary because departments are not starting from the same place. Some have equity plans, staff capacity, data practices, and leadership buy-in. Others have limited infrastructure, competing demands, or less experience applying racial equity tools to operational decisions. REIB should be able to assess departmental readiness and provide more intensive support where the need is greater. The City should also invest in sustained REIB staffing so progress does not depend on one person, one position, or one leadership cycle.

"If REIB is expected to support all 27 departments, staffing and authority have to match the scope of the ordinance. Otherwise, the City is asking a small team to run enterprise transformation with a paperclip and good vibes."

READER TAKEAWAYS

- REIB should be positioned as enterprise advisor, backbone, and tool steward.
- Departments remain responsible for implementation; REIB supports alignment, standards, and learning.
- A central advisory model reduces duplication, inconsistency, drift, and uneven implementation.
- Credibility depends on access, authority, capacity, and sustained staffing.

MINI-FLOW

Enterprise Standards → Department Coaching → Implementation Support → Progress Monitoring → Course Correction

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Position REIB as an enterprise advisor to advance strategy and implementation.
- Engage REIB early in planning, budget, policy, and performance decisions.
- Align departments to common tools, data, definitions, and expectations.
- Protect REIB from being reduced to one-off training or reactive consultation.
- Use REIB feedback to surface implementation risks and improve plans.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- REIB consults on strategic plans and major initiatives.
- REIB supports racial equity budget analysis and tradeoff discussions.
- REIB helps structure governance routines, roles, and decision points.
- REIB translates lessons learned across departments.

BOTTOM LINE: Formalizing REIB as an objective enterprise advisor turns racial equity from scattered departmental effort into coordinated enterprise practice. REIB should have the authority, capacity, and access to guide standards, support implementation, monitor progress, and help departments move from commitment to operational change.

Success Guidance Playbook

REIB as Objective Enterprise Advisor



WHY THIS MATTERS

The REIB Department helps the City move from fragmented, ad hoc equity work to an enterprise implementation system.

Credibility depends on being a strategic advisor, backbone, and tool steward rather than a compliance police function.



WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Position REIB as an enterprise advisor to advance strategy and implementation.
- Use REIB early in planning and budget decisions.
- Align departments to common tools, data, and expectations.
- Protect REIB from being reduced to one-off training requests.
- Use REIB feedback to surface implementation risk and improve plans.



WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- REIB consults on departmental strategic plans and major initiatives.
- REIB supports racial equity budget analyses and trade-off discussions.
- REIB helps structure governance routines, roles, and decision points.
- REIB translates lessons learned and effective practices across departments.



RISKS IF IGNORED

- Inconsistent standards and tools lead to uneven results and duplicated effort.
- Overreliance on informal champions creates bottlenecks and burnout.
- Confusion about whether REIB is advisory, operational, or enforcement-oriented.



FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Enterprise transformation requires a coordinating backbone with trusted advisory capacity to turn commitment into consistent action.

– *Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), Communicating for Equity: A Guide for Government Leaders, 2021.*

Example: Cross-department backbone models in cities and counties have improved alignment, reduced duplication, and accelerated equity implementation.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: A strong enterprise advisor turns equity from scattered effort into coordinated action.



EQUITY. TRANSPARENCY. ACCOUNTABILITY. TOGETHER.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Formalize the Approach to Internal Racial Equity Teams

Move departmental racial equity action teams from informal volunteer tables to coordinated business partners that translate enterprise expectations into daily practice.

CORE IDEA: Internal racial equity teams should have clear purpose, authority, protected capacity, and a strategic link to REIB so the work becomes coordinated infrastructure, not a personality-based hustle.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Some City departments already have racial equity teams that adapt tools, support peers, and surface systemic barriers from day-to-day work. The opportunity now is to formalize and unify the approach so these teams are strategically aligned across the enterprise rather than operating as separate, uneven efforts.

This approach aligns with GARE guidance that agencies establish racial equity core teams authorized to coordinate implementation of racial equity plans across the organization.

WHAT THE MODEL SHOULD BECOME

Internal racial equity teams can evolve into department-level business partners, similar to other internal functions. Their role would be to connect department operations, decisions, and outcomes with racial equity framework commitments and ordinance expectations.

This requires clarifying purpose, authority, expectations, decision rights, and protected capacity. Without that clarity, teams become informal volunteer groups: passionate, under-resourced, overextended, and disconnected from actual decision-making. That is where the work gets cute on paper but tired in practice.

HOW REIB AND DEPARTMENTS WORK TOGETHER

REIB should not manage every department's equity work directly. REIB should serve as the enterprise backbone that sets shared standards, provides tools and guidance, supports capacity building, and helps departments stay aligned with the Citywide racial equity framework.

Department leaders remain accountable for implementation, while racial equity action teams help translate racial equity commitments into budget development, policy review, strategic planning, community engagement, workforce practices, data analysis, and departmental action plans.

"This creates a feedback loop between frontline experience and enterprise strategy, so systemic barriers can be elevated, analyzed, and addressed across departments instead of handled in isolation."

TAKEAWAYS

- Equity teams should be unified strategically, not left to operate in isolation.
- A dotted-line relationship to REIB can support consistency, shared tools, and learning.
- Teams should function as operational partners, not symbolic side committees.
- Department leaders remain accountable for implementation.

MINI-FLOW

REIB Backbone → Department Action Teams → Operational Practice → Feedback Loop → Enterprise Learning

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Define team purpose, authority, and decision rights clearly.
- Protect staff time to plan, act, and follow through.
- Include cross-functional representation and diverse perspectives.
- Connect teams to leadership decision-making and priority-setting.
- Equip teams with tools, data access, coaching, and escalation pathways.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- Regular team reviews of department priorities, policies, and outcomes.
- Equity input integrated into planning, project design, and budgeting.
- Peer learning and idea exchange across departments and functions.
- Escalation of barriers and resource needs to leadership and REIB.

BOTTOM LINE: Formalized racial equity action teams move equity from advisory side tables into operational infrastructure. REIB provides enterprise standards and support; departments remain accountable for implementation; teams translate commitments into daily practice and surface barriers for systemwide learning.



Success Guidance Playbook

Internal Racial Equity Teams



WHY THIS MATTERS

Internal racial equity teams help departments translate enterprise expectations into operational practice.

They create distributed ownership, build capacity within the department, and support continuity across functions.



WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Define team purpose and decision rights clearly.
- Protect staff time to plan, act, and follow through.
- Include cross-functional representation and diverse perspectives.
- Connect teams to leadership decision-making and priority-setting.
- Equip teams with tools, data access, and coaching.



WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

Regular team reviews of department priorities, policies, and outcomes.

Equity input integrated into planning, project design, and budgeting.

Peer learning and idea exchange across departments and functions.

Escalation of implementation barriers and resource needs to leadership.



RISKS IF IGNORED

Volunteer burnout when teams lack time, resources, or recognition.

Unclear authority leads to limited influence and inconsistent follow-through.

Teams become symbolic rather than operational, eroding trust and momentum.



FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



BUILD
CAPACITY



LEVERAGE
INFLUENCE



EXERCISE
POWER



NORMALIZE



ORGANIZE



OPERATIONALIZE



EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Cross-functional implementation teams are stronger when they have leadership sponsorship, protected time, and a clear scope.

— *Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), Communicating for Equity: A Guide for Government Leaders, 2021.*

Example: City departments with equity teams embedded in decision-making act as business partners—not side committees—resulting in stronger implementation and sustained progress.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Revisit Racial Equity Assessment Process

Strengthen the assessment so racial equity analysis shapes major decisions at the concept stage — before choices are already locked in.

CORE IDEA: The assessment should be a decision tool, not a receipt. If it happens after the real decision is made, it is no longer doing equity work — it is documenting missed opportunity.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The City already uses a racial equity impact assessment process, but staff report that utilization, understanding, and adoption are inconsistent. In many cases the assessment happens too late, after key choices have already been made.

When staff do not know where to find the right data — or when the assessment is attached at the end — the tool starts to feel like a check-the-box compliance exercise instead of a strategic decision aid.

WHAT SHOULD CHANGE

The City should revisit and strengthen the process so it is embedded early and throughout major decisions, not added after the fact. The assessment should be required at the concept stage for major policies, programs, budgets, capital projects, and service changes.

Leaders should use it to define the proposal, review baseline racial disparity data, identify who benefits and who may be burdened, engage affected communities, consider alternatives, and design mitigation and accountability measures before final approval.

WHY THIS IMPROVES DECISIONS

A stronger pathway makes racial equity analysis part of the decision itself. It also gives staff the structure, data access, and guidance needed to use the tool well. Without those supports, departments may complete the form without changing the decision — which is basically equity theater with extra tabs open.

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Require the assessment early for major policies, programs, budgets, and capital projects.
- Define the proposal clearly before analysis begins.
- Use baseline data disaggregated by race and show staff where to access it.
- Identify who benefits, who is burdened, and where disparities may narrow or widen.
- Engage affected communities before finalizing the decision.
- Design mitigation steps, alternatives, and accountability measures.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Project intake forms trigger a racial equity assessment at the concept stage.
- Budget, policy, and capital proposals include race-disaggregated baseline data and impact analysis.
- Departments receive clear guidance on where to obtain data to answer tool questions properly.
- Final recommendations show community input, alternatives considered, mitigation steps, and accountability measures..

EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Seattle has required departments to apply its racial equity toolkit since 2009, with expanding expectations over time. By 2015, departments were required to complete four toolkit applications annually tied to leadership performance measures. Seattle also emphasizes applying the toolkit early so it aligns with departmental racial equity goals and outcomes.

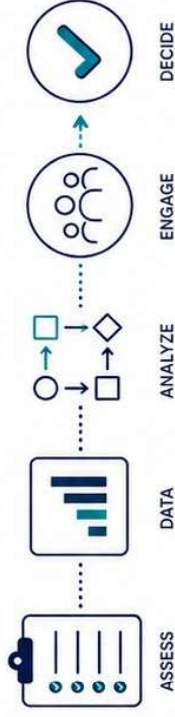
BOTTOM LINE: The racial equity assessment process should shape decisions before they are made. If the assessment happens after the real choices are locked in, it is not an equity tool; it is a receipt.



Revisit the Racial Equity Assessment Process

1. PRACTICE NAME

Revisit the Racial Equity Assessment Process



2. WHY THIS MATTERS

The City already uses a racial equity assessment process, but staff report that use, understanding, and adoption are uneven. Too often the assessment happens at the end of decision-making, staff do not know where to find the right data, and the process feels like a check-the-box exercise instead of a strategic tool.

Revisited and strengthened, the process can help embed racial equity analysis into decisions before they are finalized.



3. WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Require the assessment early for major policies, programs, budgets, and capital projects.
- Define the proposal clearly before analysis begins.
- Use baseline data disaggregated by race and ensure staff know where to access it.
- Identify who benefits, who is burdened, and where disparities may widen or narrow.
- Engage affected communities before finalizing decisions, then design mitigations, alternatives, and accountability measures.



4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

Project intake forms trigger a racial equity assessment at the concept stage.

Budget, policy, and capital proposals include race-disaggregated baseline data and impact analysis.

Departments receive clear guidance on where to obtain data to answer tool questions properly.

Final recommendations show community input, alternatives considered, mitigation steps, and accountability measures.



5. RISKS IF IGNORED

The assessment becomes a late-stage compliance task instead of a decision-making tool.

Staff complete the process without adequate data or understanding.

Communities are engaged too late to shape the decision.

Harmful impacts are missed until after decisions are made.

6. FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



7. EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

“Equity assessment tools are most effective when they are embedded in the decision itself, not appended after the fact.”

— *Race Forward* / public-sector racial equity tools practice

Example: A strong assessment pathway walks decision-makers through defining the proposal, analyzing race-disaggregated baseline data, identifying who benefits and who is burdened, engaging affected communities, and designing mitigations and accountability measures before final approval.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

Racial equity assessment only changes outcomes when it shapes the decision before the decision is made.



EQUITY. TRANSPARENCY. ACCOUNTABILITY. TOGETHER.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Integrate Into Existing Workflows

Build racial equity assessment into budget, policy, procurement, planning, and project workflows so equity analysis shapes decisions before they are finalized.

CORE IDEA: A tool changes outcomes only when it is built into the way decisions are made. Equity assessment should be a workflow requirement, not a late-stage add-on.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Racial equity assessment must be woven directly into existing decision-making processes, including budget instructions, cabinet agendas, RFP templates, staff reports, policy memos, and department planning cycles.

It should not be treated as an optional add-on or a separate exercise completed after major decisions have already been shaped. When equity assessment is built into the places where decisions already happen, it becomes part of the City's normal operating discipline.

WHERE INTEGRATION SHOULD HAPPEN

All budget proposals should include a racial equity impact assessment before the proposal is finalized and submitted for review. This moves equity analysis from a recommended practice to a structural condition of the budget process, similar to fiscal analysis, legal review, procurement rules, and other compliance requirements.

Equity assessment should also be positioned upstream in problem definition, option development, resource allocation, and implementation planning so departments can adjust proposals before decisions are locked in.

WHAT MAKES IT WORK

REIB should provide standardized templates, review criteria, technical assistance, and examples of strong racial equity analysis across different types of decisions.

A shared workflow should establish when assessments are required, who completes them, who reviews them, and how findings are incorporated into final recommendations. That is how the work moves from "we considered racial equity" to "racial equity changed what we did."

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Identify where assessment checkpoints belong in planning, policy, budget, procurement, and project workflows.
- Clarify who completes, reviews, and acts on the assessment.
- Align templates, timelines, approvals, and decision gates.
- Connect findings to decision memos, budget narratives, and recommendations.
- Monitor whether assessment results influence final decisions.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- A policy memo template requires a racial equity analysis section.
- Project intake forms include an equity review checkpoint.
- Budget proposals are linked to equity assessment questions.
- Approval workflows pause decisions when major equity concerns are unresolved.

EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Integration into workflow is essential for implementation fidelity. When assessments are embedded in decision processes, they are more likely to shape outcomes equitably.

Governments embed equity review into budget and policy workflows to improve consistency, transparency, and decision quality.

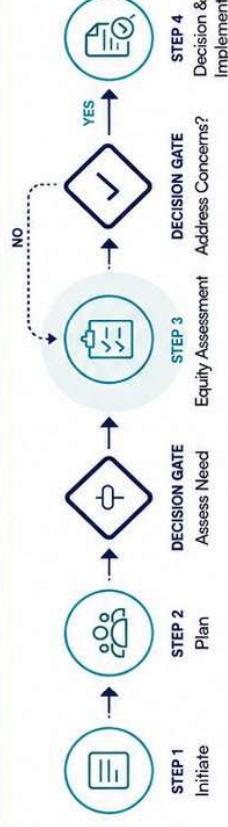
BOTTOM LINE: The real value of the assessment is not form completion; it is whether the analysis changes the decision. Build it into workflows early, or departments will keep putting an equity bow on decisions that are already baked.



Success Guidance Playbook

1. PRACTICE NAME

Equity Assessment Workflow Integration



2. WHY THIS MATTERS

Equity assessments are most effective when built into routine workflows rather than treated as stand-alone exercises.

Workflow integration ensures racial equity analysis happens before key decisions are finalized.

It turns tools into operational practice.



3. WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Identify where assessment checkpoints belong in planning, policy, budget, and project workflows.
- Clarify who completes, reviews, and acts on the assessment.
- Align templates, timelines, and approvals.
- Connect findings to decision memos and recommendations.
- Monitor whether assessment results influence final decisions.



4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- A policy memo template requiring a racial equity analysis section.
- Project intake forms with an equity review checkpoint.
- Budget proposals linked to equity assessment questions.
- Approval workflows that pause decisions when major equity concerns are unresolved.



5. RISKS IF IGNORED

Assessments happen too late to influence choices.

Tools are completed performatively and not used in decisions.

Staff see the process as extra paperwork rather than part of how work gets done.

6. FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



BUILD
CAPACITY



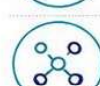
LEVERAGE
INFLUENCE



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OPERATIONALIZE



7. EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Integration into workflow is essential for implementation fidelity—when assessments are embedded in decision processes, they are more likely to shape outcomes equitably.

— *Race Forward* / GARE Tools Practice Guidance

Example: Governments embed equity review into budget and policy workflows to improve consistency, transparency, and decision quality.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: A tool changes outcomes only when it is built into the way decisions are made.



EQUITY. TRANSPARENCY. ACCOUNTABILITY. TOGETHER.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Build Racial Equity Data Infrastructure Track Progress to Improve

Use disaggregated data, shared indicators, and feedback loops to expose hidden disparities, guide decisions, and reduce racial inequities over time.

CORE IDEA: Disaggregate data by race, geography, and income to reveal barriers hidden in averages. The point is not to label communities as the problem; it is to identify where systems, policies, and practices are failing to deliver fairly.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Population-level data can create the appearance that a program, policy, or investment is working overall while masking very different outcomes for specific racial groups or neighborhoods. Without racially disaggregated data, the City may unintentionally reinforce inequities because the evidence needed to see the problem is blurred into averages.

Race-explicit data helps departments identify who is benefiting, who is being burdened, where disparities are widening or narrowing, and whether City actions are actually improving outcomes. The purpose is not to provide benefits to one group at the expense of another, but to ensure benefits are not unilaterally flowing in ways that hide harm.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Departments use dashboards that show progress by race and neighborhood rather than only citywide averages.
- Quarterly reviews connect racially disaggregated results to policy adjustments, budget decisions, and operational changes.
- Shared indicators appear in public reporting so residents and community partners can see whether gaps are narrowing or widening.

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Disaggregate key indicators such as health, housing, policing, employment, contracting, and service access by race, geography, and income.
- Establish shared indicators, consistent reporting expectations, and departmental dashboards tied to racial equity goals.
- Use findings to guide budget development, policy design, contracting, service delivery, enforcement, and performance management.
- Create clear accountability for who reviews the data, how often it is reviewed, and what decisions must change when disparities are identified.

EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

King County, Washington used disaggregated data to discover that youth of color were six times more likely to spend time in a correctional facility — a disparity that was not visible in aggregate data.

Without disaggregation, disparities remain invisible and interventions remain untargeted. If a disparity is identified but no decision changes, the data becomes decoration instead of a driver of action.

“What gets reviewed gets improved. Data should make progress visible, support course correction, and connect evidence to action”.

BOTTOM LINE: The purpose of tracking progress is not simply to measure inequity more precisely, but to improve systems so racial disparities are reduced over time.



Success Guidance Playbook

Data Infrastructure and Feedback Loops



WHY THIS MATTERS

Racial equity work needs data systems that make progress visible, support course correction, and connect staff experience to decision-making.



WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Identify priority indicators aligned to equity goals.
- Disaggregate data by race and other relevant factors.
- Build feedback loops between departments and leadership.
- Pair quantitative data with lived experience.
- Review results on a regular cadence.



WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Dashboards tied to departmental equity goals and action plans.
- Quarterly implementation reviews to assess progress and adjust strategies.
- Resident and staff feedback collected regularly and used to inform adjustments.
- Shared indicators included in public reports and budget discussions.



RISKS IF IGNORED

- Decisions are made without evidence, leading to misaligned investments and missed needs.
- No visibility into disparities, making it impossible to close gaps.
- Repeated activity without measurable improvement or learning.



FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

What gets reviewed gets improved. Strong data infrastructure and feedback loops turn information into action and drive measurable equity outcomes.

- Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), *Communicating for Equity: A Guide for Government Leaders*, 2021.

Example: City dashboards and feedback loops support transparent progress tracking in public sector equity work.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Set System-Level Racial Equity Goals

Anchor department measurement to a shared citywide racial equity direction

CORE IDEA: A strong measurement system starts with shared direction. System-level goals connect department indicators, dashboards, budgets, and reporting to the racial equity outcomes the City is collectively trying to advance.

WHY THIS MATTERS

A strong racial equity measurement system begins with a clear citywide direction. Before departments select indicators, build dashboards, or report progress, the City must first define the racial equity outcomes it is collectively trying to advance. Without that shared direction, departments may measure activity, participation, or isolated program outputs without showing whether the City is actually reducing racial disparities or changing the systems that produce them. Otherwise, the City can end up with a lot of reporting and very little accountability — the government version of looking busy while the house is still on fire.

WHAT SYSTEM-LEVEL GOALS DO

System-level racial equity goals establish a common reference point across departments, leadership teams, budget processes, strategic plans, and performance measures. These goals should be specific enough to guide action, measurable enough to track progress, and durable enough to remain stable across leadership changes, election cycles, and shifting organizational priorities.

The goal is not to force every department to measure the exact same thing, but to ensure that each department can clearly demonstrate how its work contributes to shared citywide racial equity outcomes.

HOW THIS BECOMES OPERATIONAL

When system-level goals are embedded into budget instructions, department planning, policy development, performance management, and public reporting, racial equity becomes part of how the City makes decisions — not something added after decisions have already been made. Departments can maintain flexibility based on their unique functions, but their measures should connect to a broader citywide framework so progress can be understood collectively rather than in disconnected fragments.

TAKEAWAYS

- System-level goals give departments a shared reference point.
- They make measurement meaningful and connected to outcomes.
- They help the City see collective progress rather than disconnected activity.
- They keep racial equity stable across leadership, budget, and election changes.

MINI-FLOW

Citywide Goal → Department Measures → Budget Alignment → Public Reporting → Course Correction

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Establish a clear citywide racial equity goal that is measurable, durable, and visible.
- Select a small number of multi-year equity goals tied to that broader goal.
- Require departments to align measures, indicators, and reporting to shared goals.
- Make sure departmental indicators draw a direct line to the outcomes the City is trying to improve.
- Revisit goals periodically while keeping the overall direction stable.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- The City adopts a citywide goal and multi-year targets across major issue areas.
- Departments show how their indicators connect to shared outcomes, not disconnected activity measures.
- Budget, planning, and performance systems reference the same equity goals.

BOTTOM LINE: System-level racial equity goals turn measurement from disconnected reporting into shared accountability. Departments need flexibility, but their measures should connect to a broader citywide framework so progress can be understood collectively and adjusted over time.

A vertical illustration showing a business meeting. Four people (two men and two women) are seated around a table, looking at a large screen displaying a bar chart, a line graph, and a target icon. Above them are icons representing a calendar, a building, and a group of people. The background features a stylized cityscape with a large domed building, a tree, and a skyscraper.

Anchor department measurement to a shared citywide racial equity direction

A bar chart with 'Age' on the x-axis and 'Number of people' on the y-axis. The y-axis has a scale from 0 to 100 in increments of 20. There are three bars representing different age groups: the first bar (youngest) reaches approximately 85, the second bar (middle) reaches approximately 55, and the third bar (oldest) reaches approximately 30.

- Establish a clear citywide racial equity goal that is measurable, durable, and visible.
- Select a small number of multi-year equity goals tied to that broader citywide goal.
- Require departments to align measures, indicators, and reporting to those goals.
- Make sure departmental indicators show a direct line to outcomes the City is collectively trying to improve.
- Revisit goals periodically to keep the overall direction stable through leadership, budget, and election changes.



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Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Create Feedback Loops

Build non-punitive systems for learning, adjustment, and accountability

CORE IDEA: Feedback loops turn racial equity data into action by helping the City learn from results, identify unintended consequences, center community voice, and adjust strategies over time.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Creating feedback loops is about making racial equity implementation adaptive, honest, and accountable over time. The point is not just to collect data once, publish a dashboard, and call it a day.

Feedback loops help the City examine whether policies, programs, services, tools, and investments are producing intended outcomes — and whether they are creating unintended consequences. Without regular learning cycles, racial equity work can become static, performative, or disconnected from what residents and staff are actually experiencing.

BUILD A NON-PUNITIVE LEARNING CULTURE

Data should not be used to blame departments or embarrass staff. It should be used to understand what is working, what is not working, and what needs to change. Anti-Racist Results-Based Accountability emphasizes that data should inform learning, adaptation, and course correction rather than punishment. If people fear the data, they will hide from it, soften it, or reduce it to compliance — and that is spreadsheet theater with better fonts.

MAKE THE LOOP ACTIONABLE

Feedback loops should include quantitative and qualitative data and should be built into department review sessions, leadership routines, dashboards, budget conversations, and implementation updates. Racially disaggregated indicators are essential, but community members, frontline staff, and impacted residents help interpret what the numbers miss. Departments should examine results, identify gaps, document lessons learned, and adjust strategies based on what the feedback reveals.

BOTTOM LINE: Feedback loops help the City move beyond counting activities toward understanding whether policies, programs, budgets, and services are improving outcomes. A strong feedback loop centers community voice, supports non-punitive learning, surfaces unintended consequences, and gives departments a clear process for course correction. ^[4,21,22,16]

READER TAKEAWAYS

- Feedback loops make implementation adaptive, honest, and accountable.
- Data should be used for learning and adjustment, not blame.
- Community members and frontline staff help interpret what the numbers miss.
- The loop is not complete until findings change strategy, resources, or practice.

MINI-FLOW

Collect Data → Interpret Together → Identify Gaps → Adjust Strategy → Track Change → Learn Again

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Establish regular review points to examine data and discuss results.
- Create a non-punitive learning culture.
- Combine quantitative and qualitative evidence.
- Include community members, frontline staff, and impacted residents as co-interpreters.
- Use findings to refine policies, tools, services, budgets, and resource allocation.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- Scheduled review sessions assess performance, gaps, and course corrections.
 - Dashboards include disaggregated metrics and qualitative feedback.
 - Leaders adjust training, tools, service delivery, or resources based on what feedback reveals.
- “The goal is not to prove every initiative worked perfectly the first time. The goal is disciplined learning, adjustment, and improvement.”*

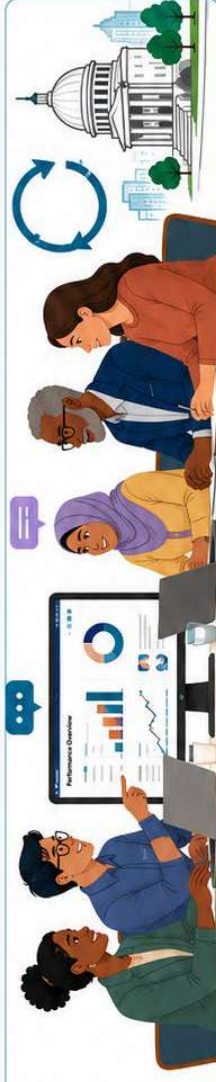


Success Guidance Playbook

1. PRACTICE NAME

Create Feedback Loops

Build non-punitive systems for learning, adjustment, and accountability



2. WHY THIS MATTERS

Helps departments learn and improve by using data to refine policies, prevent harm, and strengthen outcomes.



Creates a non-punitive culture where data is used for learning, not blame.



Centers community voice to understand what the numbers miss and improve decision-making.



3. WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Establish regular review points to examine data, discuss results, and make adjustments.
- Create a non-punitive learning culture that uses data for improvement, not blame.
- Combine quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate progress and unintended consequences.
- Include community members and staff as co-interpreters of data to balance numbers with lived experience.
- Use findings from feedback loops to refine policies, adjust strategies, and reallocate resources.



4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

Departments hold scheduled review sessions to assess performance data, identify gaps, and document course corrections.



Community members help interpret outcome trends and explain what the numbers do or do not capture.



Dashboards and reports include both disaggregated metrics and qualitative feedback from residents and staff.



Leaders adjust training, tools, service delivery, or resource allocation based on what feedback reveals.



5. RISKS IF IGNORED

Data becomes a compliance exercise rather than a tool for learning and improvement.



Unintended consequences go unnoticed and ineffective strategies continue too long.



Communities are excluded from interpreting results, leaving important lived experience out of decision-making.



6. FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



BUILD
CAPACITY



LEVERAGE
INFLUENCE



EXERCISE
POWER



NORMALIZE



ORGANIZE



OPERATIONALIZE

● Strong Connection ● Moderate Connection ● Foundational Connection



7. EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Guidance note: Anti-Racist Results-Based Accountability emphasizes a non-punitive data culture where information is used for learning, adjustment, and accountability rather than blame.

Example: Feedback loops include community members as co-interpreters of data, helping departments understand what the numbers miss, identify unintended consequences, and determine whether interventions are working as intended.

Key reminder: Qualitative data is also data.



Feedback loops turn data into action, center community voice, and drive continuous improvement toward equitable outcomes.



Success Guidance Playbook

Partner for Community Co-Governance

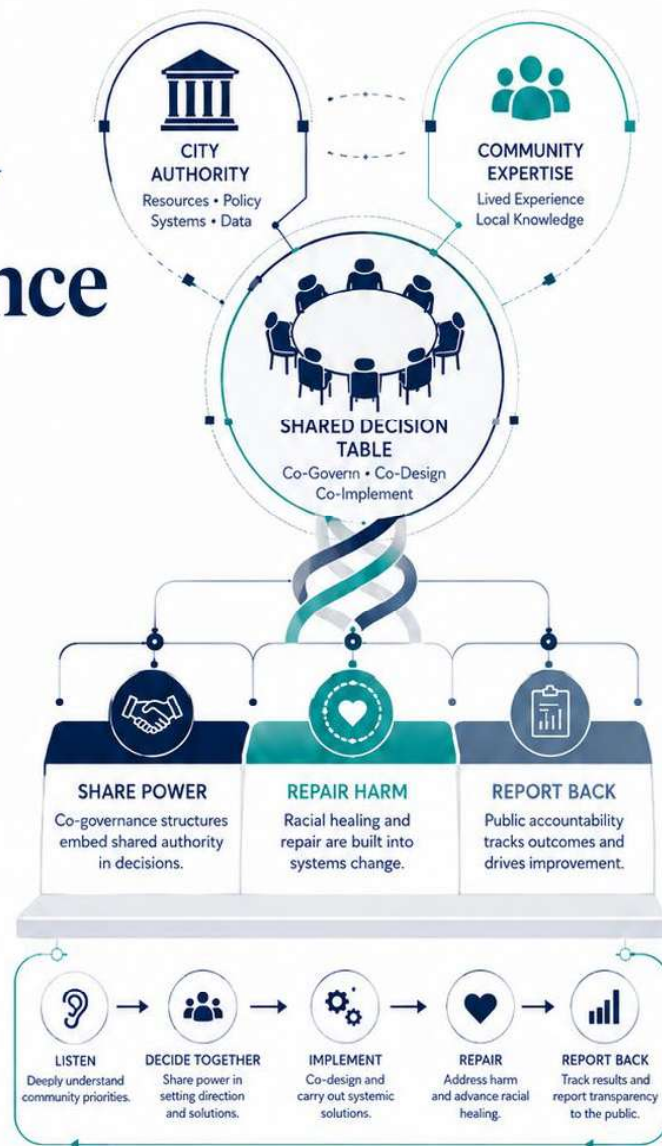
Moving from community input to shared power, visible harm repair, and public accountability.

This section focuses on how the City of Minneapolis builds formal co-governance structures, pairs systems change with racial healing, and strengthens public accountability so residents most impacted by inequities help shape decisions, repair harm, and track results.



Co-governance moves community engagement from consultation to shared power.

Shared power means community expertise shapes the agenda, the decision, the repair, and the accountability.



THIS SECTION INCLUDES

- 1**



Establish Formal Co-Governance Mechanisms

Create formal structures that embed shared authority, roles, and decision-making across systems.

2



Pair Systems Change With Racial Healing

Integrate racial healing and repair practices into policy, budgeting, and service delivery.

3



Compensate, Communicate, Report

Compensate community leadership, communicate transparently, and report results publicly.

AUTHORITY. ACCOUNTABILITY. RACIAL EQUITY. RESULTS.

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Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Establish Formal Co-Governance Mechanisms

Move from community input to shared decision-making power

CORE IDEA: Co-governance means community voice does more than react to decisions. It helps shape agendas, interpret data, influence priorities, and hold the City accountable through structured roles, decision authority, and visible follow-through.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Co-governance mechanisms move community engagement from “we asked for input” to “shared power shaped the decision.” Racial equity implementation improves when residents and community partners are not simply consulted after options have already been narrowed, but are given structured roles in agenda-setting, interpreting data, shaping priorities, and holding the City accountable.

This matters because communities most impacted by inequities often understand the real barriers, tradeoffs, and unintended consequences long before those issues show up in a formal report.

WHAT CO-GOVERNANCE LOOKS LIKE

In practice, co-governance can include resident advisory boards, youth councils, community co-design teams, participatory budgeting tables, and structured resident review processes. But the key is authority, not just attendance.

If a table has no clear scope, no decision influence, no feedback loop, and no connection to budget or policy choices, then it is just community engagement with a nicer outfit. Co-governance should clarify what decisions community members can shape, how their input will be used, and how the City will report back on what changed.

COMPENSATE COMMUNITY EXPERTISE

This practice also requires compensating community expertise. GARE guidance recommends engaging and compensating leaders accountable to communities experiencing systemic racism as trainers, technical assistance providers, and embedded consultants to help implement equity priorities.

The City should not keep asking communities to donate lived experience while institutions convert that knowledge into plans, reports, and strategies. Compensation signals respect, reduces extractive engagement, and helps build durable accountability.

“Co-governance is not attendance at the table. It is influence over the decision and accountability for what changes.”

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Define decision areas for co-governance.
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and authority.
- Compensate community expertise when appropriate.
- Create transparent feedback loops and follow-through.
- Connect co-governance to policy and resource decisions.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- Resident advisory tables with defined scope and decision influence.
- Participatory review and interpretation of data and community insights.
- Co-designed implementation priorities and strategies.
- Shared public reporting on commitments, progress, and outcomes.

RISKS IF IGNORED

- Community distrust grows when power is not shared.
- Consultation without influence leads to disengagement.
- Decisions miss lived experience and can exacerbate inequities.

EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Guidance note: Durable trust grows when communities can see how their input changes decisions and improves outcomes.

Example: City departments can use structured resident co-governance in planning councils or participatory budgeting to set priorities and monitor progress.

BOTTOM LINE: Co-governance turns community voice into shared decision-making power. It helps the City design better policies, interpret data more accurately, and build trust through visible follow-through. Without clear roles, compensation, decision authority, and public reporting, community engagement can become performative. ...^[12,13]



Success Guidance Playbook



Co-Governance Mechanisms



WHY THIS MATTERS

Racial equity implementation improves when residents and community partners are not just consulted but have structured roles in shaping decisions, interpreting data, and holding the City accountable.



WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Define decision areas for co-governance.
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and authority.
- Compensate community expertise when appropriate.
- Create transparent feedback loops and follow-through.
- Connect co-governance to policy and resource decisions.



WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Resident advisory tables with defined scope and decision influence.
- Participatory review and interpretation of data and community insights.
- Co-designed implementation priorities and strategies.
- Shared public reporting on commitments, progress, and outcomes.



RISKS IF IGNORED

- Community distrust grows when power isn't shared.
- Consultation without influence leads to disengagement.
- Decisions miss lived experience and exacerbate inequities.



FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Durable trust grows when communities see how their input changes decisions and improves outcomes.
— *Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), Communicating for Equity: A Guide for Government Leaders, 2021.*



Example: City departments use structured resident co-governance in planning councils or participatory budgeting to set priorities and monitor progress.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Pair Systems Change With Racial Healing

Reform structures while rebuilding trust, repairing harm, and demonstrating changed behavior over time

CORE IDEA: Technical reform can improve consistency, but racial healing rebuilds trust, repairs relationships, and shows communities that government behavior is changing over time.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Pairing systems change with racial healing means the City cannot treat racial equity as only a technical reform project. Forms, dashboards, policies, procedures, and tools matter, but they are not enough in communities that have experienced government as a source of harm, extraction, neglect, surveillance, displacement, or broken promises. Technical systems change can improve consistency, but racial healing is what helps rebuild trust, repair relationships, and demonstrate that government behavior is actually changing over time.

RACIAL HEALING AS IMPLEMENTATION

Racial healing should be treated as a core implementation strategy, not a ceremonial side activity. That means creating structured spaces for residents, staff, and impacted communities to name harm, interpret what repair should look like, and influence decisions about priorities and resources.

Truth-telling, participatory budgeting, transparent reporting on setbacks, and community co-design help move the City beyond performative listening toward shared accountability. Healing is not about asking communities to forgive government; it is about requiring government to become trustworthy enough that repair is possible.

VISIBLE RELATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Departments should not only report what improved; they should also name what failed, what was learned, what unintended consequences emerged, and what will be adjusted. That is how racial equity moves from compliance culture to learning culture.

If the City only changes tools without confronting harm, communities will see the update for what it is — new software running on the same old operating system. Nobody has time for that government beta version.

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Treat racial healing as a core implementation strategy.
- Create structured truth-telling, listening, and harm-repair processes.
- Build staff and leadership capacity to listen without defensiveness and respond with visible follow-through.
- Pair technical reforms with transparent communication about harms, setbacks, lessons learned, and adjustments.
- Use participatory practices, shared decision-making, and public reporting to show relationships are changing alongside systems.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- Structured spaces where communities name harms and define repair.
- Participatory budgeting or co-design processes that give impacted residents influence over priorities and resources.
- Public reporting that includes progress, failures, unintended consequences, and planned adjustments.
- Staff integrate truth-telling, structured listening, and harm repair into implementation instead of treating them as side activities.

EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Guidance note: Systems change builds the structure; racial healing rebuilds the relationship. One without the other is incomplete.

Example: Portland's Office of Equity acknowledges that good intentions have not produced equitable outcomes and calls for moving beyond intentions to accountable, data-informed practice.^[22,15]

BOTTOM LINE: Systems change builds the structure; racial healing rebuilds the relationship. If Minneapolis wants durable racial equity outcomes, it must reform policies, budgets, and practices while repairing harm, sharing power, reporting honestly, and showing changed behavior over time.



Success Guidance Playbook

1. PRACTICE NAME

Pair Systems Change With Racial Healing

Reform structures while rebuilding trust, repairing harm, and demonstrating changed behavior over time.



2. WHY THIS MATTERS

Technical systems change alone is not enough in communities with a history of government harm.



Racial healing must be part of implementation—not a symbolic side activity.



Pairing systems change with healing strengthens accountability and builds trust.



3. WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Treat racial healing as a core implementation strategy.
- Create structured truth-telling, listening, and harm-repair processes for residents, staff, and impacted communities.
- Build staff and leadership capacity to listen without defensiveness and respond with visible follow-through.
- Pair technical reforms with transparent communication about harms, setbacks, lessons learned, and adjustments.
- Use participatory practices, shared decision-making, and public accountability to show that relationships are changing alongside systems.



4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

Departments create structured spaces for communities to name harms and define what repair and accountability should look like.



Participatory budgeting or co-design processes give impacted residents real influence over priorities and resource decisions.



Public reporting includes not only progress, but also failures, unintended consequences, and how the City will adjust.



Staff are trained to integrate truth-telling, structured listening, and harm repair into implementation rather than treating them as side activities.



5. RISKS IF IGNORED

Systems change feels performative because community relationships remain damaged and trust does not improve.

Government continues to reproduce harm even while adopting more sophisticated tools, dashboards, or procedures.

Accountability stays shallow because departments report outputs without confronting harm, repair, or changed behavior.



7. EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Guidance note: Systems change builds the structure; racial healing rebuilds the relationship. One without the other is incomplete.

Example: Departments strengthen accountability when they publicly report not only what improved, but what failed, what was learned, and what will be adjusted.

Key reminder: Healing is not about asking communities to forgive government. It is about requiring government to become trustworthy enough that repair is possible.



6. FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



Systems change builds the structure; racial healing rebuilds the relationship. Together they create lasting, equitable outcomes.

Success Guidance Playbook

1. PRACTICE NAME

Compensate, Communicate, Report

Build community accountability through paid expertise, transparent tradeoffs, and public reporting

CORE IDEA: Community accountability requires three things working together: compensating expertise, communicating tradeoffs honestly, and reporting publicly on progress and setbacks.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Compensate community expertise. Communicate transparently about tradeoffs. Report regularly on progress and setbacks. Accountability to community is the throughline; without it, co-governance becomes performative.

Community knowledge, wisdom, and expertise should be treated as labor, not as free consultation that government extracts when it needs legitimacy. Residents, cultural leaders, grassroots organizers, youth, elders, and people directly impacted by racial disparities bring lived experience, historical memory, relational trust, and practical wisdom that government often does not have internally.

COMMUNICATE TRADEOFFS HONESTLY

Racial equity decisions often involve real tradeoffs: what gets funded, what gets delayed, who benefits first, who carries risk, and what unintended consequences may emerge.

Government loses trust when it communicates only polished wins while hiding hard choices, constraints, delays, or failures. Communities do not need perfect answers; they need honest ones. Clear communication moves engagement from public relations to shared problem-solving.

REPORT PROGRESS AND SETBACKS

Regular reporting closes the accountability loop. Progress reports should name commitments, timelines, responsible departments, measurable indicators, community feedback, implementation barriers, course corrections, and next steps. Strong reporting includes both progress and setbacks because trust is built through honesty, not performance. If the City cannot show the receipts, the promise is not accountability — it is vibes with a PDF attached.

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Compensate residents, cultural leaders, youth, elders, and community experts for their time and expertise.
- Communicate clearly about tradeoffs, constraints, delays, risks, and decisions.
- Report regularly on progress, setbacks, barriers, course corrections, and next steps.
- Connect community feedback to policy, budget, program, and implementation decisions.
- Make reporting public, plain-language, and tied to measurable outcomes.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- Paid community advisors help interpret data, identify harms, and pressure-test solutions.
- Departments explain what was funded, delayed, changed, or not yet possible.
- Public progress reports name commitments, timelines, responsible departments, indicators, barriers, and adjustments.
- Community feedback is documented and connected to visible decision changes.

EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Guidance note: Regular public progress reporting creates a rhythm of mutual accountability by showing commitments, barriers, course corrections, and results.

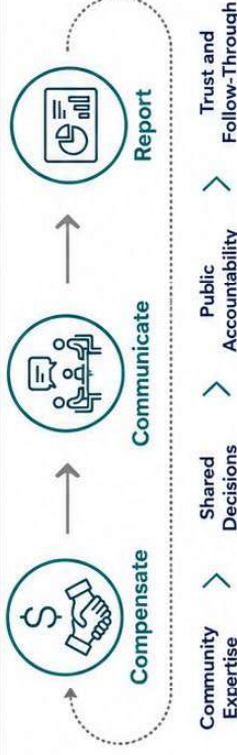
Example: D.C.'s racial equity action planning approach includes public-facing progress updates that report advancement to elected leadership and community stakeholders.

BOTTOM LINE: Community accountability requires paid expertise, honest tradeoffs, and public reporting. If the City cannot show the receipts, the promise is not accountability — it is vibes with a PDF attached.

1. PRACTICE NAME

Compensate, Communicate, Report

Build community accountability through paid expertise, transparent tradeoffs, and public reporting.



2. WHY THIS MATTERS

Community expertise should be treated as labor, not free consultation. Residents, cultural leaders, organizers, youth, elders, and people directly impacted by racial inequities bring lived experience, historical memory, and practical wisdom that government often does not have internally. Transparent communication helps communities understand tradeoffs, constraints, risks, and decisions. Regular public reporting closes the accountability loop and shows whether commitments are producing measurable change.



3. WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Compensate residents, cultural leaders, youth, elders, and community experts for their time and expertise.
- Communicate clearly about tradeoffs, constraints, delays, risks, and decisions.
- Report regularly on progress, setbacks, barriers, course corrections, and next steps.
- Connect community feedback to policy, budget, program, and implementation decisions.
- Make reporting public, plain-language, and tied to measurable outcomes.



4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Paid community advisors help interpret data, identify harms, and pressure-test solutions.
- Departments explain what was funded, delayed, changed, or not yet possible.
- Public progress reports name commitments, timelines, responsible departments, indicators, barriers, and adjustments.
- Community feedback is documented and connected to visible decision changes.
- Leadership reviews progress regularly through public-facing accountability routines.



5. RISKS IF IGNORED

- Community engagement becomes extractive and performative.
- Residents provide expertise but see no visible change or follow-through.
- Tradeoffs are hidden, weakening trust and credibility.
- Progress reporting becomes vague, internal, or disconnected from outcomes.
- Co-governance exists in name only, not in power or accountability.

6. FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



7. EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

"Regular public progress reporting creates a rhythm of mutual accountability by showing commitments, barriers, course corrections, and results."

Example:

D.C.'s racial equity action planning approach includes public-facing progress updates that report advancement to elected leadership and community stakeholders.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: If the City cannot show the receipts, the promise is not accountability — it is vibes with a PDF attached.

Paid Expertise. Honest Tradeoffs. Public Accountability.



Exercising Power for Racial Equity

Shift Policies, Practices and Resource Flows

This section focuses on how the City of Minneapolis uses its formal authority to change policies, institutional practices, standards, and resource flows so racial equity is reflected in how decisions are made, resources are allocated, and systems operate.



Exercising power means changing what institutions fund, require, permit, reward, measure, and enforce.



THIS SECTION INCLUDES

- 1** Conduct a Policy and Practice Inventory
- 2** Target Resources Using a Targeted Universalism Approach
- 3** Embed Racial Equity Standards in Core Systems



AUTHORITY. ACCOUNTABILITY. RACIAL EQUITY. RESULTS.

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Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Conduct a Policy and Practice Inventory

Audit the machinery of decision-making, prioritize concrete changes, and build momentum through sequenced early wins.

CORE IDEA: Inventory is not the work unless it leads to decisions. The goal is to identify where the system produces racialized outcomes, prioritize what must change first, and move from analysis to action.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Audit existing policies, practices, and funding streams, then prioritize a sequenced set of concrete changes. A one step, one policy approach prevents paralysis and builds momentum through visible early wins.

A policy and practice inventory helps the City move from broad racial equity commitments to the machinery of decision-making. The real action is often buried in eligibility rules, scoring criteria, staff discretion, contracting requirements, referral pathways, budget assumptions, reporting templates, and this-is-how-we-have-always-done-it routines. That is where inequity hides in plain sight, wearing khakis and carrying a clipboard.

WHAT THE INVENTORY SHOULD EXAMINE

Departments should review policies, practices, procedures, and funding streams to identify where racial inequities are produced, reinforced, or left unaddressed. The review should look beyond what policies say on paper and examine how they operate in practice: who benefits, who is burdened, who experiences delays, who is excluded, and where unintended consequences show up.

HOW TO SEQUENCE THE WORK

The work should be sequenced, not scattered. Trying to fix every policy, program, and funding stream at once creates confusion, fatigue, and a whole lot of meeting choreography with very little movement.

Prioritize based on racial disparity data, community concern, legal or operational risk, budget impact, and leadership readiness. Start with a high-visibility area like procurement, land use, or diversion programs, then build momentum from early wins.

"A beautiful spreadsheet of inequities is not progress. The inventory has to lead to decisions, owners, timelines, public reporting, and repeatable methods."

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Conduct an audit of policies, practices, procedures, and funding streams that shape departmental decisions and outcomes.
- Prioritize review areas based on racial disparity data, community concern, operational risk, budget impact, and leadership readiness.
- Use a sequenced one step, one policy approach rather than trying to reform everything at once.
- Apply a racial equity impact assessment, identify concrete changes, assign ownership, and establish timelines.
- Publicly report early wins, lessons learned, and repeatable methods.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- A procurement review identifies barriers for small, local, Black, Indigenous, immigrant, and other vendors of color.
- A land use review examines how zoning, redevelopment incentives, and infrastructure decisions shape displacement risk.
- A diversion program review looks at whether eligibility rules, referral patterns, and service access reproduce disparities.
- Departments complete targeted reviews, implement visible changes, report results, and scale the method.

EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Guidance note: A policy and practice inventory is only useful when it leads to concrete decisions, visible changes, and a repeatable method for reform.

Examples include procurement, land use, and diversion program reviews that reveal barriers, displacement risk, or eligibility patterns that reproduce racial disparities.

BOTTOM LINE: A policy and practice inventory is only useful if it leads to decisions. The goal is not to admire the problem from 14 angles; it is to identify where the system produces racialized outcomes, prioritize what must change first, and move from analysis to action.



Success Guidance Playbook

1. PRACTICE NAME

Conduct a Policy and Practice Inventory

Audit the machinery of decision-making, prioritize concrete changes, and build momentum through sequenced early wins.



2. WHY THIS MATTERS

- Audit existing policies, practices, and funding streams, then prioritize a sequenced set of concrete changes. A 'one step, one policy' approach prevents paralysis and builds momentum through visible early wins.
- A policy and practice inventory helps the City move from broad equity commitments to the actual machinery of decision-making. It reveals where inequity is embedded in rules, criteria, discretion, contracting, referral pathways, budget assumptions, and routine practices.
- Prioritize review areas based on racial disparity data, community concern, operational risk, budget impact, and leadership readiness. The goal is not to review everything at once, but to change the conditions producing inequitable outcomes.



3. WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Conduct an audit of policies, practices, procedures, and funding streams that shape departmental decisions and outcomes.
- Prioritize a manageable set of areas for review based on racial disparity data, community concern, operational risk, budget impact, and leadership readiness.
- Use a sequenced "one step, one policy" approach rather than trying to reform everything at once.
- Apply a racial equity impact assessment to priority areas, identify concrete changes, assign ownership, and establish timelines.
- Publicly report early wins, lessons learned, and repeatable methods so the work can build momentum across departments.



4. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- A procurement review identifies barriers for small, local, Black, Indigenous, immigrant, and other vendors of color, such as insurance requirements, payment delays, narrow solicitation networks, or scoring criteria that reward incumbency.
- A land use review examines how zoning, redevelopment incentives, engagement practices, and infrastructure investments shape displacement risk and neighborhood opportunity.
- A diversion program review looks at whether eligibility rules, referral patterns, and service access are reproducing racial disparities.
- Departments complete targeted reviews, implement visible changes, report results publicly, and use the same method to examine additional policy areas over time.



5. RISKS IF IGNORED

- Broad racial equity commitments remain abstract because the City never examines the operational rules and routines that drive outcomes.
- Departments become overwhelmed by trying to review everything at once, leading to fatigue, confusion, and little real change.
- Inventory becomes an administrative exercise without decisions, visible reform, or accountability.

6. FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



Inventory is not the work unless it leads to decisions. Audit. Prioritize. Change. Report. Repeat.



7. EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

- **Guidance note:** A policy and practice inventory is only useful if it leads to concrete decisions, visible changes, and a repeatable method for reform.
- **Example:** A procurement review can reveal barriers for vendors of color, including insurance requirements, payment delays, limited solicitation networks, or scoring criteria that reward incumbency. A land use review can reveal how zoning and redevelopment incentives shape displacement risk. A diversion review can identify how eligibility rules or referral pathways reproduce disparities.
- **Key reminder:** Inventory is not the work unless it leads to decisions. Otherwise, it is just government counting its socks while the house is on fire.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Target Resources Using a Targeted Universalism Approach

One universal goal, different strategies based on how communities are situated relative to that goal

CORE IDEA: Targeted universalism keeps one shared public outcome visible while designing different strategies for groups facing different barriers. Same destination, different routes — equity GPS, not one-size-fits-all MapQuest from 2004.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Targeted universalism ensures resources reach communities most harmed by past and present policy while maintaining a universal goal. It sets one shared outcome, such as all residents having access to quality housing, then designs targeted strategies for each group based on how they are differently situated relative to that outcome.

The point is not to create separate goals for separate groups. It is to recognize that people and neighborhoods face different barriers on the way to the same destination. This approach can build broader public support while still addressing racial disparities directly.

HOW THE APPROACH WORKS

If the City says “all residents should have quality housing” but does not account for barriers such as historic disinvestment, displacement, lending discrimination, exclusionary zoning, income gaps, language access, disability access, or neighborhood-level underinvestment, then the goal may sound fair while still reproducing inequity. Targeted universalism makes those differences visible and requires the City to design strategies based on how communities are actually situated relative to the outcome.

WHAT MAKES IT ACTIONABLE

A universal housing goal can be paired with targeted strategies such as anti-displacement protections, down payment assistance, culturally specific housing navigation, tenant protections, community land trusts, or capital investment in historically under-resourced neighborhoods. The discipline is to keep the universal goal visible while being honest about who needs what, why they need it, and how the City will know whether the gap is closing.

“One goal for all does not mean one strategy for all.”

TAKEAWAYS

- Targeted universalism maintains one universal goal while tailoring strategies to different barriers.
- It directs resources toward communities most harmed by past and present policy choices.
- It improves outcomes for everyone while addressing racial inequities directly.
- It avoids pretending the same intervention will work for groups with unequal starting points.

MINI-FLOW

Universal Goal → Unequal Starting Points → Targeted Strategies → Measurable Progress → Universal Benefit

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Define the universal goal clearly.
- Identify who is furthest from the goal and why.
- Use data and community insight to understand barriers.
- Design targeted strategies responsive to different starting points.
- Track whether all groups are moving closer to the goal.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- Anti-displacement protections paired with housing investment.
- Down payment assistance and culturally specific housing navigation.
- Community land trusts and capital investment in under-resourced neighborhoods.
- Tenant protections, language access, and disability access improvements.

BOTTOM LINE: Targeted universalism means one goal for all, but not one strategy for all. It helps the City maintain a shared public outcome while directing resources, tools, and protections toward communities facing the greatest barriers because of past and present policy choices. [23, 24, 20]



Success Guidance Playbook



Targeted Universalism



WHY THIS MATTERS

Targeted universalism sets one universal goal while recognizing that different groups face different barriers and need tailored strategies.

This approach improves outcomes for everyone while addressing racial inequities directly.



WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Define the universal goal clearly.
- Identify who is furthest from the goal.
- Design targeted strategies responsive to different barriers.
- Pair targeted action with measurable outcomes.
- Monitor whether all groups are moving closer to the goal.



WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Expand park access with new parks, safe routes, and programming in underinvested neighborhoods.
- Increase contracting opportunities and provide targeted support for small and minority-owned firms.
- Provide language access through translation, interpretation, and culturally competent outreach.
- Advance transit or housing initiatives using different strategies for differently situated communities.



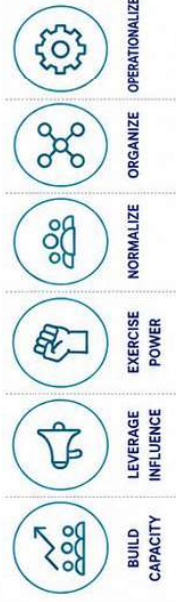
RISKS IF IGNORED

One-size-fits-all solutions that overlook unequal starting points and barriers.

Improvement for some groups, while others remain left behind.

Interventions that fail to reduce racial gaps and can unintentionally widen disparities.

FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Targeted universalism links universal aspirations to differentiated implementation. It acknowledges that addressing structural and contextual barriers requires targeted strategies.

— *Othering & Belonging Institute*

Example: Applied across health, education, economic development, housing, public safety, and civic engagement.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: One goal for all does not mean one strategy for all.



EQUITY. TRANSPARENCY. ACCOUNTABILITY. TOGETHER.

Success Guidance Playbook

PRACTICE NAME

Embed Racial Equity Standards in Core Systems

Move racial equity from special initiative to standard operating practice

CORE IDEA: Racial equity becomes durable when it is written into the systems that already shape daily government decisions: HR, budgeting, procurement, community engagement, policy development, performance management, and department planning.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Embedding racial equity standards in core systems means moving the work from special initiative to standard operating practice. If racial equity expectations only live in trainings, speeches, or the personal commitment of a few champions, the work becomes vulnerable to staff turnover, leadership transitions, budget pressure, and shifting political priorities.

This practice is about making racial equity part of the job, not extra credit. Requirements should be built into job descriptions, departmental work plans, OKRs, leadership routines, individual performance evaluations, budget templates, procurement scoring, and community engagement procedures.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE EMBEDDED

The City should define enterprise racial equity standards that apply across core functions and build required review points into decision-making. Standards should clarify what staff and leaders are responsible for doing, how progress will be measured, and how departments will be held accountable.

Core systems should include budget instructions, procurement and contracting, HR and hiring, policy memos, staff reports, strategic planning, performance management, data review, public reporting, and community engagement procedures. Otherwise, racial equity becomes the thing everyone says matters but nobody owns.

WHAT MAKES IT DURABLE

Structural embedding creates consistency across departments. When every department uses different standards, tools, timelines, or expectations, racial equity implementation becomes uneven and hard to sustain.

San Francisco offers one example: its Board of Supervisors legislatively mandated that all city departments submit Racial Equity Action Plans to the Office of Racial Equity, turning department-level planning into a citywide requirement rather than a voluntary exercise.

WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Define enterprise racial equity standards that apply across all core functions.
- Integrate standards into budget, policy, hiring, procurement, and performance processes.
- Build required review points and decision gates to ensure equity is considered.
- Monitor compliance and track equity outcomes using shared metrics and dashboards.
- Update standards and tools through learning, feedback, and data.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

- Racial equity checkpoints built into budget templates and decision memos.
- Equity impact language in policy memos and standard operating procedures.
- Hiring and procurement workflows include equity criteria and approval steps.
- Leadership dashboards review equity metrics, compliance, and progress.

EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Institutional standards create continuity, accountability, and repeatability, turning equity commitments into consistent action across systems.

Example: Public agencies that embed equity expectations into core business systems move from aspiration to routine practice.

BOTTOM LINE: Structural embedding is the difference between an initiative and an institution. If racial equity requirements are built into HR, budgets, procurement, planning, performance evaluations, and reporting, the work can survive leadership changes and staff turnover. Without that infrastructure, racial equity depends too much on personalities, informal champions, and temporary momentum. [25, 19, 13]



Success Guidance Playbook

Embedding Racial Equity Standards in Core Systems



WHY THIS MATTERS

Racial equity becomes durable when standards are embedded in the systems that shape day-to-day decisions—not treated as a side initiative.

Institutionalizing equity ensures consistency, reduces reliance on individuals, and drives accountable, repeatable outcomes.



WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO

- Define enterprise racial equity standards that apply across all core functions.
- Integrate standards into budget, policy, hiring, procurement, and performance processes.
- Build required review points and decision gates to ensure equity is considered.
- Monitor compliance and track equity outcomes using shared metrics and dashboards.
- Update standards and tools regularly through learning, feedback, and data.



WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Racial equity checkpoints built into budget templates and decision memos.
- Equity impact language in policy memos and standard operating procedures.
- Hiring and procurement workflows include equity criteria and approval steps.
- Leadership dashboards and cadence for reviewing equity metrics and progress.



RISKS IF IGNORED

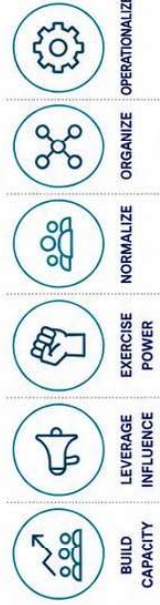
Equity work depends on individual champions and personalities.

Standards are applied inconsistently, leading to uneven outcomes across departments.

Progress backslides during leadership turnover or political and budget shifts.



FRAMEWORK CONNECTION



EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE

Institutional standards create continuity, accountability, and repeatability—turning equity commitments into consistent action across systems.

– *Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), Communicating for Equity: A Guide for Government Leaders, 2021.*

Example: Public agencies that embed equity expectations into core business systems move from aspiration to routine practice.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Durable change happens when racial equity is built into the system, not bolted on.



EQUITY. TRANSPARENCY. ACCOUNTABILITY. TOGETHER.

Appendix C | Achieving Implementation Success Quick Guide

Plan for Iteration in a Complex Environment

Turning Racial Equity Strategy into Practice

The Achieving Implementation Success Quick Guide supports departments in moving racial equity work from intention to measurable action. It recognizes that racial equity implementation happens in complex environments, where solutions cannot simply be rolled out once and assumed to work. Instead, the guide encourages departments to test, learn, adjust, and scale based on evidence.

At the center of the guide is a simple implementation discipline: pilot, measure, learn, adjust, and scale. Departments are encouraged to treat racial equity initiatives as structured experiments by starting with pilots, naming the intended racial equity outcome, collecting disaggregated data, listening to impacted communities and staff, identifying unintended consequences, and scaling only when there is evidence of more equitable results.

The guide also emphasizes the need for a structured learning rhythm. Quarterly equity reviews should help departments examine data, update causal maps, reflect with community partners, and make real decisions about policy, practice, staffing, funding, and implementation. These reviews are not meant to be performative reporting sessions; they are accountability spaces where leaders ask who is benefiting, who is still burdened, what assumptions were wrong, and what must change.

Because racial equity work often raises legal, political, and organizational questions, the guide encourages departments to work proactively with the City Attorney's Office. This helps clarify what is legally permissible, identify race-neutral design strategies when needed, and prevent departments from abandoning equity goals due to uncertainty.

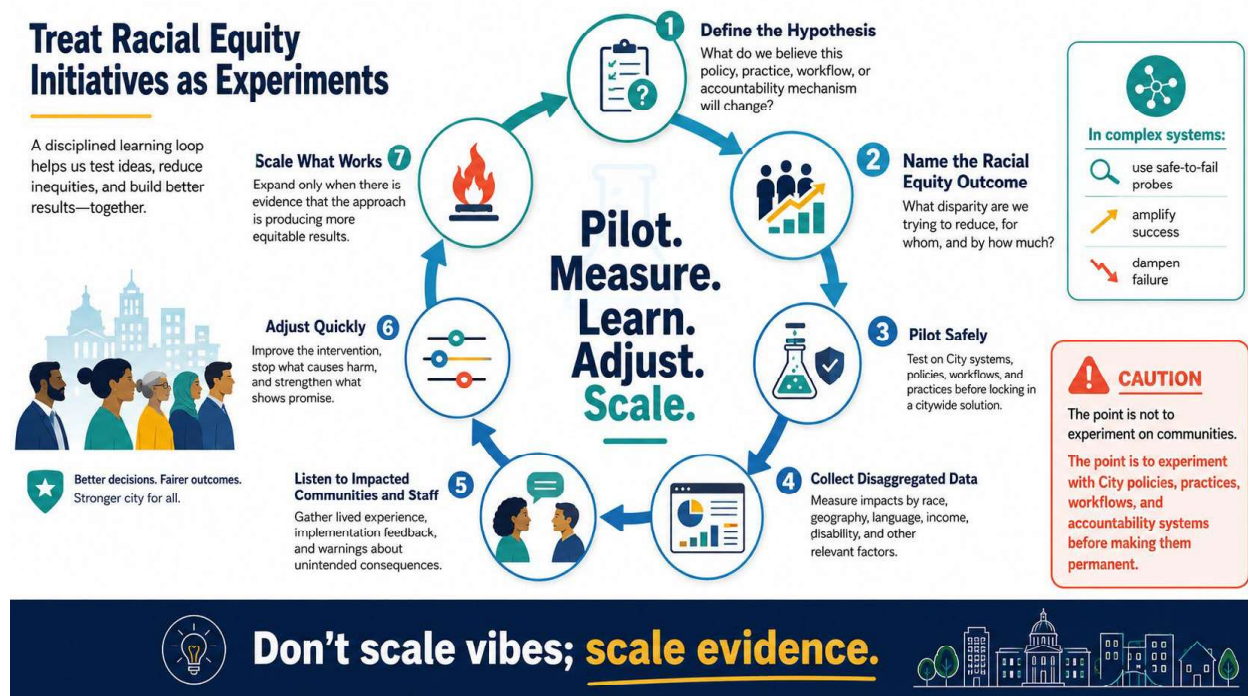
Finally, the guide treats resistance as a predictable part of organizational change. It identifies common sources of resistance, including lack of awareness, fear, role changes, distrust in leadership, and lack of inclusion. To address this, departments should invest in communication, engagement, structured change management, training, leadership development, and reinforcement.

In short, this guide helps departments build the muscle to implement racial equity work with clarity, accountability, legal awareness, and adaptability. The message is direct: do not scale vibes; scale evidence.

Treat Initiatives as Experiments

Start with pilots, measure disparate impacts, adjust quickly, then scale what works. The Cynefin framework’s guidance for the complex domain — using safe-to-fail probes where success is amplified and failure is dampened — applies directly to racial equity interventions. This stance reduces the political risk of “getting it wrong” and creates space for honest learning.

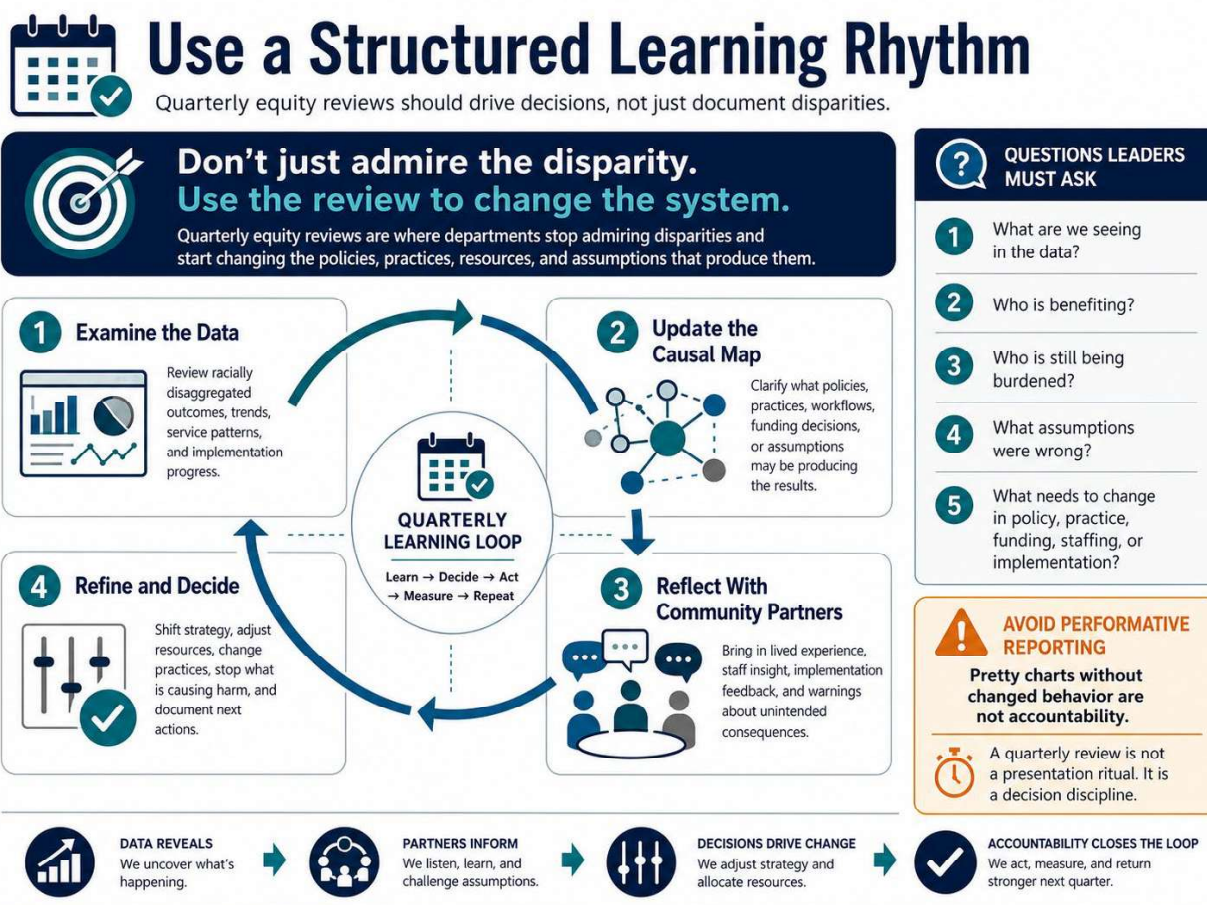
Because racial equity work often operates in complex environments, leaders should resist the urge to launch citywide solutions before they understand how an intervention functions in real conditions. A pilot allows the City to test assumptions, gather community and staff feedback, identify unintended consequences, and determine whether the approach is actually reducing disparities or just producing a better-looking process. The point is not to experiment on communities — let’s not do that old government remix — but to experiment with the City’s own policies, practices, workflows, and accountability mechanisms before locking them in. Treating initiatives as experiments also creates a disciplined learning loop: define the hypothesis, name the racial equity outcome, collect disaggregated data, listen to impacted communities, make adjustments, and only scale when there is evidence that the approach is producing more equitable results.^{10,9]}



Use a Structured Learning Rhythm

Establish quarterly equity reviews where departments examine data, update causal maps, and refine strategies with community partners. Racial Equity Centered RBA emphasizes sustained performance accountability through learning loops or praxis, continuous cycles of action, reflection, and refinement.

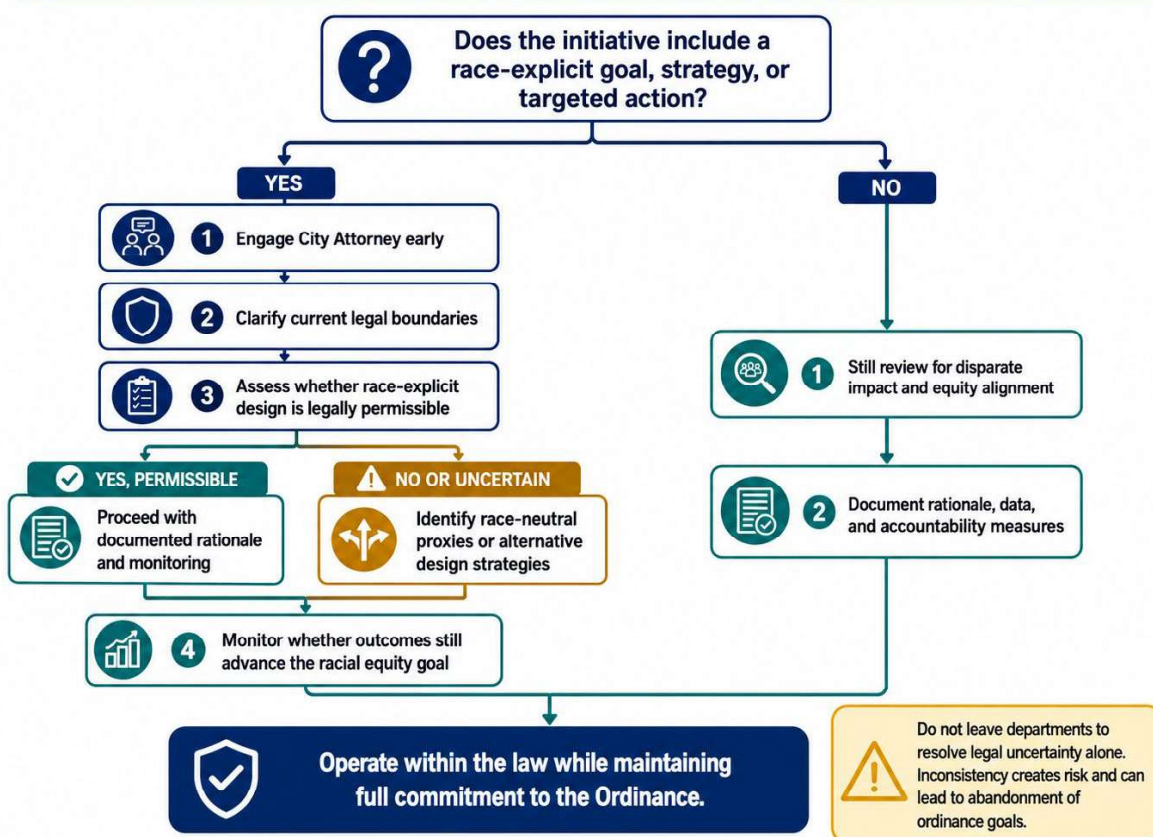
These reviews should not become performative reporting rituals where departments show up with pretty charts and no changed behavior. The purpose is to create a disciplined learning space where leaders ask: What are we seeing in the data? Who is benefiting? Who is still being burdened? What assumptions were wrong? What needs to change in policy, practice, funding, staffing, or implementation? A strong learning rhythm helps departments move from static annual plans to active racial equity management. In other words, don't just admire the disparity every quarter like it's art on the wall — use the review to make decisions, shift strategy, and close the accountability loop..^[4,16]



Working with the City Attorney's Office on Racial Equity Implementation

Departments will encounter legal constraints that appear to limit race-explicit action, particularly in areas like contracting and hiring. The political and legal environment surrounding racial equity work shifts over time, and guidance that was settled in one period may require reexamination in another. The City should approach these boundaries collaboratively, working directly with the City Attorney's Office to understand what the law currently permits and where the actual legal limits fall. This partnership should be proactive, engaging legal counsel early in the design of policies and programs so that departments are not left navigating uncertainty alone.

Working With the City Attorney's Office on Racial Equity Implementation



The goal is to operate clearly within the law while maintaining full commitment to the city ordinance. Where race-explicit approaches are constrained, the City Attorney's Office and departments should work together to identify race-neutral proxies and alternative design strategies that achieve targeted outcomes within current legal parameters, drawing on how other jurisdictions have continued to pursue equity under similar conditions. Leaving departments to resolve these tensions individually produces inconsistency and, in some cases, abandonment of goals the ordinance requires the City to pursue.

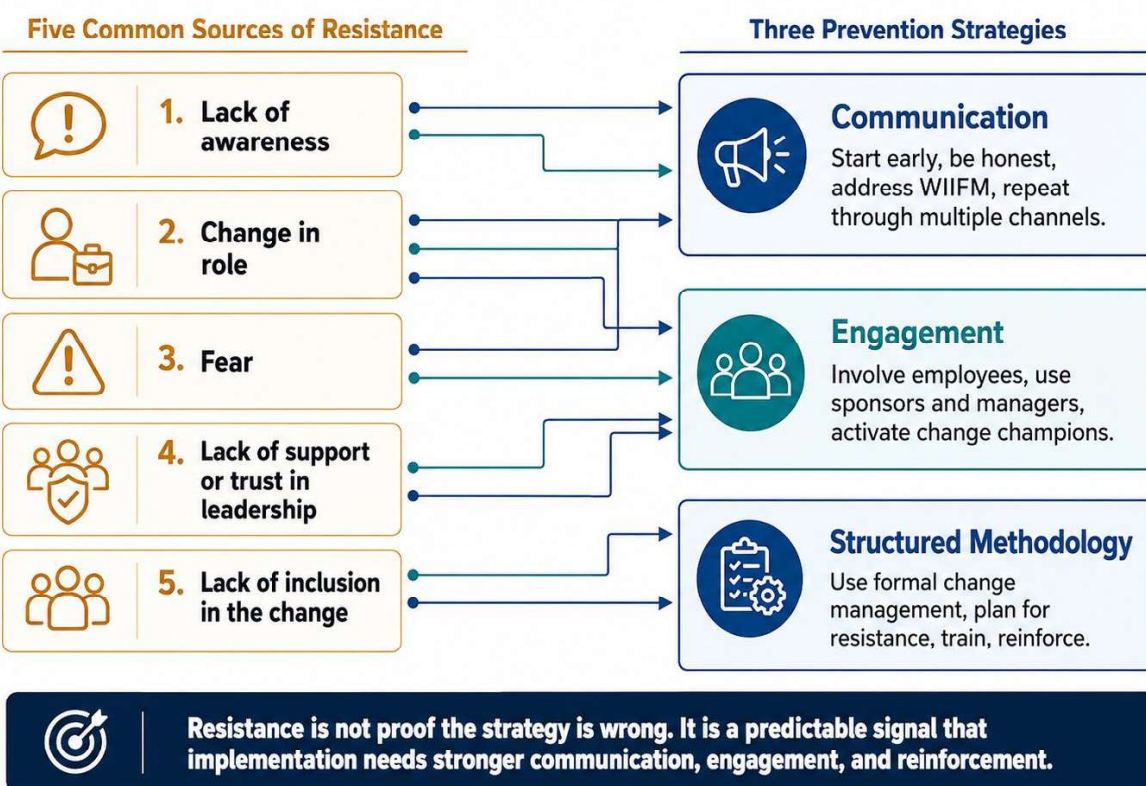
Anticipate and Manage Resistance

Racial equity work is organizational change, and resistance is predictable. Research identifies five primary reasons employees resist change:

1. **Lack of awareness:** Employees do not understand the purpose or business reason for the change, and cannot answer "What's in it for me?" (WIIFM)
2. **Change in role:** Perceived increases in workload, new behavioral requirements, decreased autonomy, or shifts in power and status.
3. **Fear:** Concerns about loss, compensation, performance ability, increased surveillance, and uncertainty about the future especially among longer-tenured employees.
4. **Lack of support from and trust in leadership:** Managers who display higher resistance and poor role modeling directly influence employee behaviors.
5. **Lack of inclusion in the change:** Front-line employees who are excluded from designing solutions feel threatened, blindsided, or targeted.

Anticipating and Managing Resistance

Common resistance patterns and the prevention strategies that address them

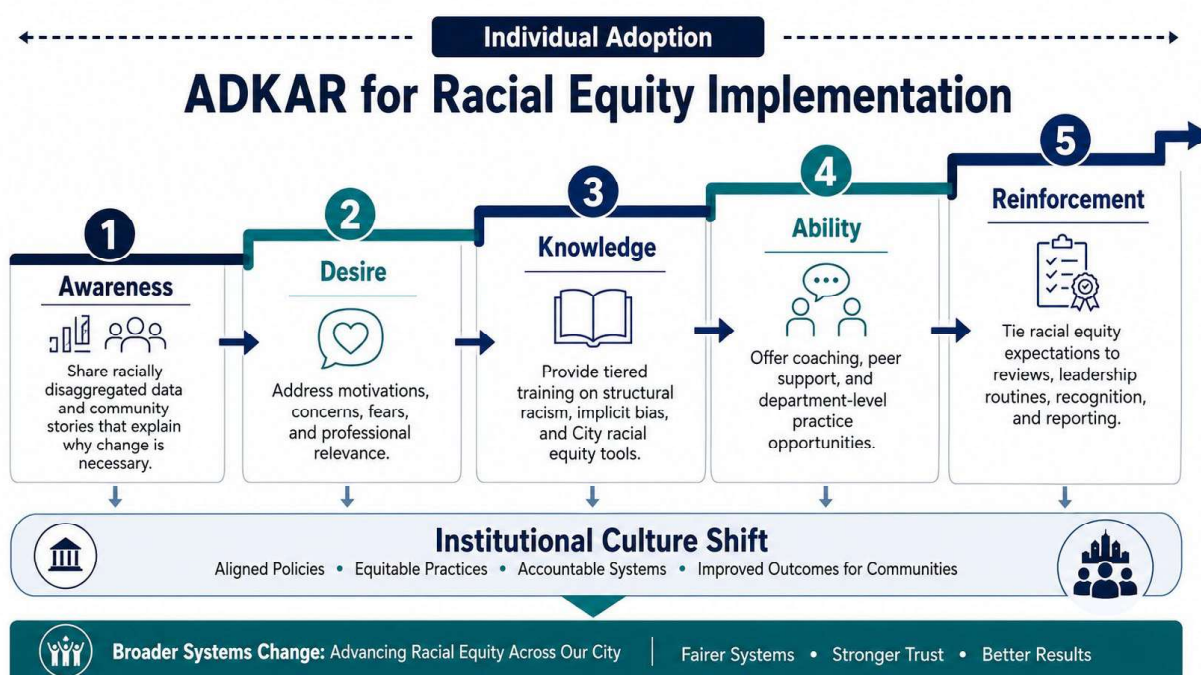


Proactive Strategies to Prevent Resistance

Research identifies three courses of action most effective at preventing resistance:

Strategy	Key Elements
Communication	Start early; multi-directional; honest, transparent, and trustworthy; address WIIFM ("What's in it for me?"); consistent messaging through multiple channels
Engagement	Involve employees in developing solutions; leverage sponsors, managers, change champions, and key influencers to coach and sponsor the work
Structured methodology	Use a formal change management approach (e.g., ADKAR®); anticipate resistance and plan accordingly; develop quality training; execute face-to-face with reinforcement ^[26,27]

The ADKAR model (Awareness → Desire → Knowledge → Ability → Reinforcement) provides a useful individual-level framework for racial equity adoption:^[26,28]



Investing in change management, narrative change, and leadership development is not peripheral to racial equity work, it is the mechanism through which institutional culture shifts.^[29,30,15]

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