

Equity Policy

Description:

This policy, along with the [Respectful Workplace policy](#), requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to foster an inclusive workplace environment with equitable treatment, and equity-related considerations for the people it serves. DHS is committed to equity, and operating as an antiracist, multicultural and intercultural organization.

Reason for Policy:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that each employee analyzes **actions (policies, practices, procedures, rules, budgets and decision-making)** through an equity lens with the goal of reducing disparities and inequitable outcomes, and improving access to human services for communities DHS serves.

All employees need to use a required equity analysis per the [DHS Equity Analysis Toolkit](#); complete equity curriculum; remove barriers to opportunities, and success; and reduce actions that cause harm for the communities DHS serves, as well as DHS employees.

Applicability:

This policy and its procedures apply to all DHS employees. Vendors, contractors, grantees and volunteers may have these responsibilities through their agreements with DHS.

Roles and Responsibilities

The work of this policy and toolkit are the responsibility of all staff to comply with; however, it is essential for the agency to provide staff with the resources needed to apply this tool to their work. The DHS equity directors, in partnership with the administration/area's Equity Committee, will be responsible for successful implementation of the policy and tool.

Therefore, DHS is committed to:

- Educating all employees on the use of this policy and the [DHS Equity Analysis Toolkit](#) on an annual basis.
- Ensuring each employee has the DHS Equity Analysis Toolkit and administration or area tools to conduct an equity analysis or equity scan within their work and business area.

- Empowering all employees to build an equitable workplace environment and ensure equitable outcomes for all Minnesotans.
- Employing human-centered design approaches, including acknowledgement of the social determinants of health, within external and internal decision-making.
- Adhering to all administrative policies that mandate respectful, equitable and antiracist engagement with community partners, contractors and other employees within DHS.
- Adhering to the additional five objectives stated in the original Equity Policy.

Policy

Equity impacts

All DHS employees are expected to incorporate an equity lens in **actions (policies, proposals, practices, procedures, rules, budgets and decision-making)** and in their daily work. DHS will provide employees with learning opportunities to support equity policy expectations. DHS employees will communicate how equity impacts are reviewed and the impact of the results of policies, practices, procedures, rules, budgets and decisions.

I. Equity toolkit

[DHS Equity Analysis Toolkit](#) is available on the DHS Equity, Diversity and Inclusion InfoLink webpage. The Equity Analysis Toolkit will be used in:

- Policy development and revisions
- Legislative proposals
- Agencywide and administration or area budgets
- Strategic planning
- Administrations or area's leadership decision-making
- Divisional leadership decision-making
- Special projects
- Learning and development trainings and workshops
- Administrative or division policies and procedures
- Administration and area's Equity Committee decisions, processes and actions
- IT funding and modernization
- Recruitment, hiring, onboarding and retention practices
- Community and partner engagement efforts
- Request for proposal processes, contracting and procurement
- Business impact analyses and recovery efforts
- Service delivery.
- Additional opportunities to embed equity, as identified.

II. Regulatory procedures

All DHS administrations, divisions and employees are expected to adhere to the additional five objectives of the original Equity Policy and other regulatory procedures, which include:

- The creation and management of an Equity Committee embedded within each administration or area.
 - Each administration or area's Equity Committee should be led or directly supported by the Equity Director.
- Workforce development opportunities (e.g., mentorship, sponsorship, reclassification, internal career ladders and work-out-of-class assignments).
- A comprehensive review contracts and procurement through an equity lens to enhance equitable access to money and resources provided by DHS.
- Authentic, meaningful and ongoing community engagement and inclusion during the formation of new or recurring policies, practices, procedures, committees, groups, etc.
- The incorporation of National CLAS Standards as part of everyday work responsibilities.
- The key with each objective is that each administration or area should work with their Equity Director and Equity Committee to create goals, with measurable outcomes, designed to advance equity in all these key areas.

Procedures:

A formal equity analysis is required for all actions that have prolonged and/or long-term impact scheduled for approval by a supervisor/manager/director, assistant/deputy commissioner, and/or commissioner. Actions must be accompanied by the DHS Equity Analysis or Equity Scan within the [DHS Equity Analysis Toolkit](#), or a customized tool developed in consultation with an equity director for relevance to the business area's function. Further guidance of how to apply an analysis or scan can be found in the [DHS Equity Analysis Toolkit – User Guide](#).

I. Employee responsibilities

Employees must:

- Attend annual learning opportunities to support meeting equity policy expectations.
- Use equity analysis toolkit in performing the work of the agency.
- Use equity analysis toolkit in actions requiring leadership approval.
- Use equity analysis toolkit in planning meetings and group discussion-related actions and regulatory procedures to ensure equity considerations are met.
- Act in good faith by examining personal beliefs and biases that may be counteractive to the goal of advancing and achieving equitable outcomes (the DHS learning center currently offers trainings on implicit bias, culturally responsive practices and the Orientation to Antiracism).

II. Annual acknowledgement

Employees must:

- Annually acknowledge and complete an online staff commitment for advancing equity agreement
- Annually acknowledge, electronically sign and agree to the use [DHS Equity Analysis Toolkit](#)

III. Equity director responsibilities

- If requested, the business area's equity director will advise the DHS employee(s) completing an equity analysis.
- Each equity director will provide an approved equity analysis per administration and work area, as needed.

IV. Management responsibilities

- Supervisors, managers, directors, assistant commissioners and/or commissioner across DHS are expected to promote equity in strategic planning processes and encourage staff to apply an equity lens throughout their daily work.

V. Human resources responsibilities

- Human resource management strategies will support workforce development and workforce equity to meet DHS recruitment and retention goals
- Foster belonging with all staff.

Related policies and references:

- [HR/LR Policy #1379, Affirmative Action Officers - M.S. 43A.191, Subd.1](#) (pdf)
- [HR/LR Policy #1358, Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) - Title II](#) (pdf)
- [ADA Title II Accommodation Request Form](#) (pdf)
- [ADA Title II Notice and Grievance Procedure Template](#) (pdf version) (word version) - updated 4/29/2019
- [General Memo 2015-8, Reassignments under the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (pdf)
- [HR/LR Policy #1433, ADA Reasonable Accommodation](#) (pdf)
- Employee/Applicant Request for Accommodation Form
- Authorization for Release of Medical Information Form
- Letter Requesting Documentation for Determining ADA Eligibility from a Medical Provider
- [HR/LR Policy #1445, Code of Ethical Conduct](#) (pdf)
- [General Memo 2015-5, Code of Ethics Q&A](#) (pdf)
- [HR/LR Policy #1329, Sexual Harassment Prohibited](#) (pdf)
- [HR/LR Policy #1436, Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited](#) (pdf)
- [HR/LR Policy #1432, Respectful Workplace](#) (pdf)
- [HR/LR Policy #1444, Workplace Violence Prohibited](#) (pdf)
- [HR/LR Memo #2021-2, Workplace Violence Prevention and Response](#) (pdf)

Training:

- All DHS staff will be assigned a DHS Equity Analysis Toolkit training and such training will be documented annually on staff training record.
- This training is administered through an agencywide learning and development platform with an additional annual compliance refresher.
- Administration and area-wide training, support and guidance are conducted by each administration's and area's equity director upon request.

Failure to Comply:

Failure to comply with this policy and its procedures may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and/or ending a contractor or volunteer relationship with DHS.

Legal Authority:

- [CECLC Legislation](#): The legislature charged the Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council with advising the commissioner of human services on reducing disparities that affect racial and ethnic groups. Laws of Minnesota 2015, Chapter 78, Article 4, Section 50 [256.041]
- [Executive Order 19-24](#): Affirming the Government-to-Government Relationship between the State of Minnesota and the Minnesota Tribal Nations: Providing for Consultation, Coordination and Cooperation
- [Executive Order 15-2](#): Signed in January 2015, this order affirms Minnesota's commitment to diversity and inclusion and establishes the Diversity and Inclusion Council
- [Executive Order 19-01](#): One Minnesota Council on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- [Executive Order 21-13](#): Establishing the Governor's Community Council on Inclusion and Equity and Amending Executive Order 19-01.
- [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#): Statutory Citation: 42 USC 2000e et seq; Regulatory Citation: 29 CFR 1601
- [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Title I](#): Statutory Citation: 42 USC 12111; Regulatory Citation: 29 CFR Part 1630
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Title II: Statutory Citation: 42 USC 12131; Regulatory Citation: 28 CFR Part 35
- [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#): Statutory Citation: 42 USC 2000d et seq.; Regulatory Citation: 45 CFR Part 80
- [Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons](#): Federal Register Citation: 68 Fed. Reg. 47311 (2003)
- [Administration for Children and Families](#): Equity in Action: Prioritizing and Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities.

- [Health and Human Services Equity Action Plan: Executive Order 13985](#) calls on agencies to advance equity through identifying and addressing barriers to equal opportunity that underserved communities may face due to government policies and programs.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Statutory Citation: 29 USC 794; Regulatory Citation: 45 CFR Part 84
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Statutory Citation: 29 USC 794
- [Minnesota Human Rights Act](#): Statutory Citation: Minn. Stat. Chapter 363A
- [Chapter 43A, State Personnel Management](#): Statewide Affirmative Action Program, Rules; Statutory Citation: Minn. Stat. Chapter 43A.04, Subd. 3
- [Affirmative Action](#): Statutory Citation: Minn. Stat. Chapter 43A.19
- [Affirmative Action Programs](#): Statutory Citation: Minn. Stat. Chapter 43A. 191

Policy Definitions:

Access: The timely ability to use resources and services to achieve the best outcomes.

Communities experiencing inequities: For this policy, communities experiencing inequities refers to communities of color, multi-racial individuals, American Indians, veterans, LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, and individuals with disabilities.

Determinants of health: Structural determinants and conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. They include factors like socioeconomic status, education, the physical environment, employment and social support networks, as well as access to health care.

Disparity: A group is systematically faring worse than another for reasons that are not due to the group's needs, eligibility or preferences.

Diversity: The presence of differences that make each person unique, and that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another.

Engagement: Process of collaboration and inclusion in which entities build ongoing relationships for the purpose of applying a collective vision to solve complex problems.

Enhanced National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards (CLAS): A series of standards that are intended to advance health equity, improve quality and help eliminate health care disparities. Beyond healthcare delivery, CLAS standards should be understood as applicable to public institutions addressing individual, family or community health, health care or well-being.

Ethnicity: A population group whose members identify with each other based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values and traditions, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, ancestral geographical base and common nationality.

Equity: The proactive and ongoing reinforcement of actions (policies, practices and attitudes) that re-distribute power by enhancing access, opportunities and outcomes.

Equity lens: A filter by which to guide one's thoughts and actions with the intent to establish deliberate and continuous analyses of pervasive systemic and structural inequities.

A process for analyzing power in systems, the impact of the design and implementation of policies on underserved and marginalized individuals and groups and to identify and eliminate barriers. A tool for identifying and analyzing differential and adverse impacts of ideas, policies or structures on individuals and groups based on a hierarchy of power.

Equity analysis: A systemic process of examining the impact of decisions and actions to develop strategies that reduce and/or eliminate disparities and improve successes for communities experiencing inequities.

- What groups are impacted by the proposed policy or budget item? (racial and ethnic groups, LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, people with disabilities and veterans) What is the nature of the impact? Have representatives from these groups been consulted and collaborated with to determine how to address these impacts?
- Is the proposed item submitted to reduce or eliminate any disparities for racial and ethnic groups, LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, and people with disabilities and veterans? Please explain how implementation of the proposed item(s) will reduce or eliminate these disparities.
- Are there potential positive or negative impacts on the identified groups? Explain those impacts. If negative, please adjust the proposal to achieve a more equitable outcome.
- Can the policy or budget idea be sustainably successful? Discuss the on-going funding, implementation strategies/opportunities and performance measures/accountability mechanisms.

Health: Health encompasses many aspects, including physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. Health is “not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” How individuals experience health and define their well-being is greatly informed by their cultural identity.

Human-centered design approaches: Human-centered equity framework focuses on the humans and their personhood when developing, creating and implementing strategies with people, groups and communities. Drivers of the human-centered equity framework confer early, and if at all possible, gather information from service population, internal workplace, external partners and community on the proposed action. A human-centered equity framework includes:

- Research identification
- Development co-creation
- Implementation with joint feedback loop

Related definitions:

Antiracism: A personal and collective identity that embraces the intentional dismantling of our racialized society and proactively builds racial peace [McKinney and Essenburg].

- The process of actively and consistently confronting racism [Kivel, p. 230].

- A powerful collection of antiracist policies that leads to racial equity and is substantiated by antiracist ideas [Kendi].
- An antiracist idea is any idea suggesting that the racial groups are equal in all their apparent differences [Kendi].
- An antiracist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial equity among racial groups [Kendi].
- An antiracist person is one who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea [Kendi].

Community engagement: The process of co-creating solutions in partnership with people, who through their own experiences, know the barriers to opportunity best. It is grounded in building relationships based on mutual respect and that acknowledge each person's added value to the developing solutions.

Health equity: Absence of unfair, avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically, or by other dimensions of inequality, as well as a principle commitment to reduce and—ultimately—eliminate such disparities in health and its social drivers.

Health in All Policies: Health in All Policies is a collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas. Ultimately the Health in All Policies approach seeks to institutionalize considerations of health, equity and sustainability as a standard part of decision-making processes across a broad array of sectors.

Inclusion: Actively promoting belonging by leveraging the value of diversity. Inclusion is achieved when each person feels a sense of belonging and their contributions are valued.

Inequities: Differences in outcomes that are systematic, avoidable and unjust.

Intercultural: An environment, community or society that is actively aware and engages across cultures. An intercultural environment requires a deep understanding, appreciation and skills to adapt to cultural differences and commonalities.

Intercultural competence: The capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior across cultural differences and commonalities.

Multicultural: An environment, community or society with many different cultures and ethnicities that occupy a common space together.

Outcomes: Organizational, departmental or program-level indicators of success. Outcomes are what you aim to achieve with specific actions and proposal.

Race: Identified and labeled by a person's physical characteristics, such as bone structure and skin, hair or eye color.

Racial equity: A process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone. It is the intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems and structures by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of people of color.

Restorative practices: A set of practices, rooted in Indigenous teachings that emphasize our interconnection by repairing relationships when harm occurs and proactively building and maintaining relationships that prevent future harm.

Restorative practices can help shape inclusive workplaces that respect all individuals, focus on community building and repair harms through meaningful accountability.

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This policy and its procedures remain in effect until rescinded or updated.