

Model Legislation for Racial Equity Initiative

**Template for legislation to start a Racial Equity Initiative in your city, county or state
(modeled on the City of Seattle)**

WHEREAS, [provide background as to the organizational structure of your city, county or state];
and

WHEREAS, [provide background related to similar pieces of legislation]; and

WHEREAS, [provide background as to the urgency of the moment and the reason why it is
important for your jurisdiction from a values perspective]; and

WHEREAS, [provide information about your jurisdiction's historical relationship to the creation
and maintenance of racial inequities]; and

WHEREAS, [provide information about the racial demographics of your jurisdiction]; and

WHEREAS, [provide information about the racial inequities in your jurisdiction]; and

WHEREAS, [provide information about any recent ways in which racial inequities have been in
the public discourse]; and

WHEREAS, [provide any recent research about implicit bias or institutional and structural
racism]; and

WHEREAS, because of the government's role in serving the public, government is uniquely
positioned to address the pervasiveness of implicit bias, first by recognizing and acknowledging
bias, and secondly by working to reduce bias, both individually and within government; and

WHEREAS, efforts to address implicit bias and proactively advance racial equity can repair and
strengthen the relationship between government and communities; and

WHEREAS, we recognize the need to eliminate racial inequities; and

WHEREAS, [reference any recent related legislation that has been passed]; and

WHEREAS, we recognize the need to eliminate racial inequities; and

WHEREAS, [reference data that indicates that racial and ethnic disparities are deep and
pervasive across all indicators for success]; and

WHEREAS, we recognize the need to implement clear strategies, actions and measures that lead with race; and

WHEREAS, race and equity are key priorities internally and with community based organizations, private businesses, non-government organizations, philanthropy, and academia; and

WHEREAS, achieving equity requires the intentional examination of policies and practices that, even if they have the appearance of fairness, may marginalize individuals or groups and perpetuate inequities, and

WHEREAS, working towards racial equity requires an understanding of our historical context and active investment in structures over time so that all communities can experience success; and

WHEREAS, achieving equity requires commitment, collaboration, and clear, transparent communication among Departments that serve as the primary structures for managing how resources are divided and how public services are provided; and

WHEREAS, advancing equity for everyone who lives, works and plays in our communities will require coordination with others, not only in government, but also in private business, nongovernment organizations, academia, community groups, and the media; and

WHEREAS, economic development, job creation, and the stable employment of people in our city are essential to achieving equity; and

WHEREAS, advancement of equity may require resources to be shifted and reallocated; and

WHEREAS, we commit to remove the structural barriers that prevent our society from being just and inclusive and towards one that cares about and provides justice for the lives of all people.

WHEREAS, over the past decade, numerous jurisdictions across the country have in [XXXX year] launched Racial Equity Initiatives, with the vision of eliminating race-based inequities and the mission of eliminating institutional and structural racism; and

WHEREAS, [identify any equity assessments conducted that identified baseline data]; and

WHEREAS, [identify any related supportive organizations]; and

WHEREAS, the [jurisdictional body considering this legislation] affirms its commitment to

principles of equity and justice for all people; and

WHEREAS, the City Council declares racism unjust, advocates equal rights for all, and affirms the City's commitment to racial equity; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE [jurisdiction]:

Section 1. Findings. The Council finds the following:

1. Racial discrimination and institutional and structural racism continue to create barriers to success for people of color.
2. The principles of inclusiveness, multiculturalism and respect are values that can create a healthier and more productive workplace, improve customer service and drive policies and outcomes that benefit the entire jurisdiction.
3. The Race and Equity Initiative will develop and implement new policies and practices to help eliminate institutional racism within the jurisdiction, including a new budget and policy tool to be used to assess the potential disparate impacts of new financial and regulatory initiatives.
4. The Race and Equity Initiative has developed and implemented an infrastructure to further promote racial and social equity across the jurisdiction and within each department, including Action Teams within each department and a jurisdiction-wide Core Team, so that the Initiative is fully integrated into departmental work and into policies, programs and practices.

Section 2. Vision, mission and goals. The Race and Equity Initiative envisions a city where racial and social inequities have been eliminated and equity and inclusiveness achieved. The mission of the Race and Equity Initiative is to end institutionalized racism and social inequities in government and to promote multiculturalism and full participation by all its residents.

Section 3. Departments should use available tools to work to eliminate racial inequities across key indicators of success, including health, education, criminal justice, the environment, employment and the economy; and to promote racial equity in the delivery of services. Efforts by departments should include:

- a. Development and implementation of annual work plans aligned with the jurisdiction-wide plan.
- b. Implementation of racial equity tools in budget, program and policy decisions, including review of existing programs and policies.
- c. Continued support for the internal resources, such as departmental Action Teams, needed to



ensure that racial equity will be sustained into the future.

Section 4. [Designated department] shall report to [elected officials] on at least an annual basis to demonstrate the progress towards achieving racial equity within City government and within the broader community.