

Supreme Court Call to Action

“The legal community must recognize that we all bear responsibility for this on-going injustice, and that we are capable of taking steps to address it, if only we have the courage and the will.”

The injustice still plaguing our country has its roots in the individual and collective actions of many, and it cannot be addressed without the individual and collective actions of us all.”

The purpose of the Racial Justice Consortium is to maximize opportunities for ...

- Education of our workforce on racism, the causes of racism, and how it shows up in the courts and legal system;
- A comprehensive review of specific areas of our Court system that contribute to racial disparities, system racial injustice and perpetuate harm; and
- Meaningful reform of policies and practices that can be measured and tracked for accountability and progress.

RACIAL JUSTICE CONSORTIUM

1
**SPRING
2021**

Grounding
Ourselves in
Belonging

2
**SUMMER
2021**
Building
Knowledge and
Awareness in
Different Contexts

3
**EARLY FALL
2021**
Applying the Racial
Equity Toolkit
Framework

4
**LATE FALL
2021**
Knowledge to
Action: Identifying
Priorities

5
**WINTER
2022**
Setting Outcomes
and Involving Key
Stakeholders

6
**SPRING
2022**
Determining
Strategies for
Change and
Structures of
Accountability

A Roadmap for Our Work Together

Reform Area - Belonging

- Make courthouses more humanizing and accessible.
- Make documentation more accessible.
- Remove barriers to accessing the court and community resources.



Commitments

- We are **accountable to one another** and to our collective work – to ensure justice for all is a reality.
- We have much to learn and we **create space to learn together**. We are committed to creating and cultivating a Consortium founded on respect, dignity, humanity, and care for one another.
- The Consortium is a **space of belonging where all voices are heard**, where all voices matter, and where those furthest from justice are centered.
- The Consortium is a **safe place, a judgment-free zone**, a place where we are held accountable without shame.
- We create **space for light-heartedness, joy, and humor**.
- We support a multi-cultural, **multi-racial Consortium**, whose leadership includes those furthest from justice.
- We are an **anti-racist** Consortium, which means we intend to **disrupt the status quo**.

- ***The Vision:***

Washington State Courts Are Places of Equity, Fairness and Justice for All.

The Mission:

Eradicating Racism to Ensure Justice in Every Instance, in Every Courthouse.

Racial Equity Toolkit

The **Racial Equity Toolkit** lays out a process and a set of questions to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, initiatives, programs, and budget issues to address the impacts on racial equity.

- **Step 1. Set Outcomes.**
Leadership communicates key community outcomes for racial equity to guide analysis.
- **Step 2. Involve Stakeholders + Analyze Data.**
Gather information from community and staff on how the issue benefits or burdens the community in terms of racial equity.
- **Step 3. Determine Benefit and/or Burden.**
Analyze issue for impacts and alignment with racial equity outcomes.
- **Step 4. Advance Opportunity or Minimize Harm.**
Develop strategies to create greater racial equity or minimize unintended consequences.
- Step 5. Evaluate. Raise Racial Awareness. Be Accountable.
Track impacts on communities of color overtime. Continue to communicate with and involve stakeholders. Document unresolved issues.
- Step 6. Report Back.
Share information learned from analysis and unresolved issue with Department Leadership and Change Team.
- Racial Equity Toolkit: https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARE-Racial_Equity_Toolkit.pdf

The Racial Justice Consortium's Work To-Date

- A deep dive into cultivating spaces of belonging and building racial equity muscle
- Child Welfare and Dependency system
- Youth justice system
- Sentencing
- Legal Financial Obligations
- Re-entry



Reform Area – Child Welfare and Dependency

- Advocate for legal reforms to prioritize family connections and allow for more flexible care arrangements.
- Prioritize family preservation, family supports, and family connection (even with removal).
- Address the capacity of court players to reduce or eliminate racial bias in implementing services and procedures.



Reform Area – Youth Justice

- Examine youth systems to ensure that they are designed around more recent brain science specific to ACES and youth development.
- Reduce the use of detention and change probation practices to divert more youth out to community partnerships.
- Examine the ways the juvenile justice system reinforces expectations of adult systems.



Reform Area - Sentencing

- Expand the use of more incentive-based and diversion models to address behavior and the underlying needs of individuals.
- Expand successful rehabilitative elements of juvenile courts to adult courts.
- Interrogate the ways that plea bargains are efficient tools in upholding systemic racism.



Reform Area – LFOs

- Eliminate LFOs, except victim restitution, which needs to be tailored to the circumstances of individual victims and defendants.
- Eliminate incarceration as a penalty for nonpayment.
- Eliminate LFOs for juveniles altogether.



Reform Area – Re-entry

- Work to expunge criminal records for youth and adult populations.
- Before release, provide a reentry "tool kit" and a corresponding navigator.
- Before release, provide incarcerated individuals an opportunity to engage in comprehensive, shared family support sessions or trainings.



Our Action Plan Includes:

- **Education** – ensuring judges and court staff receive the trainings needed to advance Belonging and Racial Equity.
- **Advocacy** – partnering with other government agencies and community organizations for collective action.
- **Implementation of new programs and policies** – we can start today.
- **Future measurement and evaluation** – we are accountable to those furthest from justice.



Next Steps

- **Engage Stakeholders** –Critique/tweak what we got so far.
- **Implementation Plan** – Decentralized, your input will be needed.
- **Cynthia Delostrinos**, Administrative Office of the Courts, Office of Court Innovation – “Let’s put this show on the road!”

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