



# **EQUITY LENS FRAMEWORK**

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**Adopted  
December 4, 2020**  
*Amended on June 21, 2024*

## **EQUITY LENS FRAMEWORK SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The following persons served on the founding Equity Lens Framework Subcommittee, with the Subcommittee being primarily responsible for the development and drafting of the Equity Lens Framework that was submitted to and approved by the Board of Directors during a publicly noticed meeting on December 4, 2022.

Greg Evans, Councilor, Eugene  
Beach Pace, Councilor, Hillsboro  
CM Hall, Councilor, Newport  
Denyse McGriff, Commissioner, Oregon City  
Ed Junkins, Councilor, Corvallis  
Eddy Morales, Councilor, Gresham  
Gina DuQuenne, Citizen, Ashland  
Ken Gibson, Mayor, King City  
Markley Drake, Councilor, Happy Valley  
Russ Axelrod, Mayor, West Linn  
Sal Peralta, Councilor, McMinnville  
Steve Callaway, Mayor, Hillsboro

Equity Lens Framework Subcommittee members were led and guided by two consultants, Teresa Alonso Leon and John Lensen.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In calendar year 2024, the Equity Lens Framework was comprehensively reviewed and updated. The Equity Lens Framework Subcommittee who led the comprehensive review and update included: Councilor CM Hall of Newport and former Commissioner Amanda Fritz of Portland. The 2024 Equity Lens Framework Subcommittee was staffed by LOC Executive Director Patty Mulvihill and LOC Member Engagement Director Lisa Trevino.

## LOC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

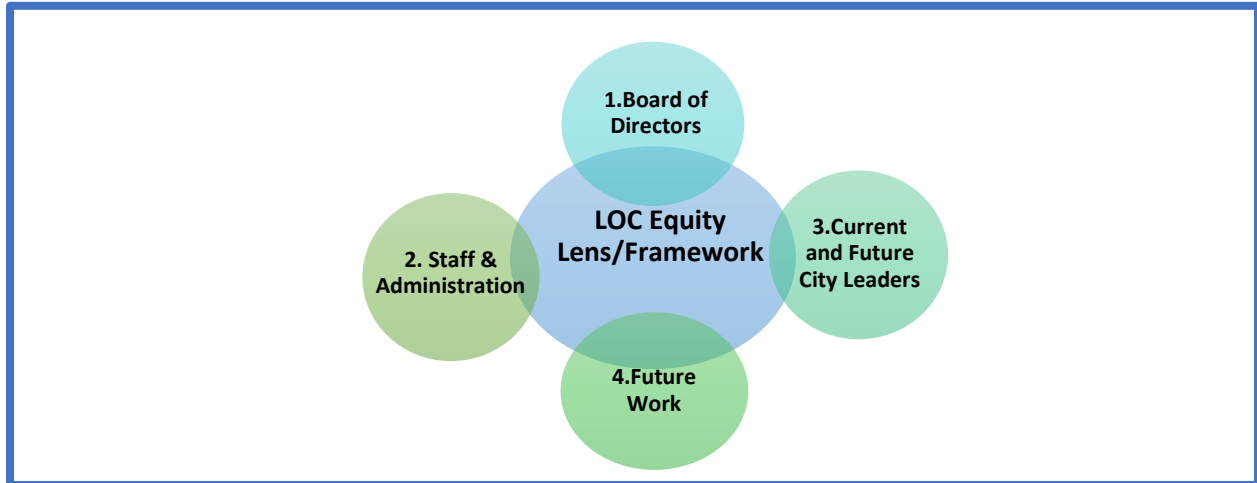
The League of Oregon Cities (LOC) Board of Directors adopted the Equity Lens Framework during a publicly noticed meeting on December 4, 2020. When the Equity Lens Framework was adopted, the following persons served on the LOC Board of Directors.<sup>2</sup>

Jake Boone, President, Councilor, Cottage Grove  
Keith Mays, Vice President, Mayor, Sherwood  
Tanea Browning, Treasurer, Councilor, Central Point  
Greg Evans, Immediate Past President, Councilor, Eugene  
Steve Callaway, Mayor, Hillsboro  
George Endicott, Mayor, Redmond  
Ken Gibson, Mayor, King City  
Scott Derickson, City Manager, Woodburn  
Drew Farmer, Councilor, North Bend  
Amanda Fritz, Commissioner, Portland  
Peter Hall, Councilor, Hines  
Dean Sawyer, Mayor, Newport  
Kevin Stine, Councilor, Medford  
Steve Uffelman, Mayor, Prineville  
Byron Smith, City Manager, Hermiston  
Spencer Nebel, City Manager, Newport  
John McCardle, Past President, Mayor, Independence  
Timm Slater, Past President, Councilor, North Bend  
Pete Truax, Past President, Mayor, Forest Grove

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<sup>2</sup> In calendar year 2024, the Equity Lens Framework was comprehensively reviewed and updated. The following persons served on the Board of Directors when it was amended: Dave Drotzmann, President, Mayor, Hermiston; Jessica Engelke, Vice President, Mayor, North Bend; Travis Stovall, Treasurer, Mayor, Gersham; Steve Callaway, Immediate Past President, Mayor, Hillsboro; Kenna West, City Manager, Independence; Carol Beatty, Mayor, Maupin; Robert Cowie, Councilor, Chiloquin; Rod Cross, Mayor, Toledo; Aaron Cubic, City Manager, Grants Pass; David Emami, Councilor, Happy Valley; Roberto Escobedo, Councilor, Nyssa; Carol MacInnes, Councilor, Fossil; McKennon McDonald, Councilor, Pendleton; Tita Montero, Councilor, Seaside; Rochelle Roaden, City Manager, Dayton; Tim Rosener, Mayor, Sherwood; Chalice Savage, Councilor, Cottage Grove; Ted Wheeler, Mayor, Portland; Tanea Browning, Councilor, Central Point; Keith Mays, Councilor, Sherwood; Greg Evans, Councilor, Eugene; and John McCardle, Mayor, Independence.

## **BACKGROUND AND BRINGING LEADERS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP EQUITY LENS FRAMEWORK**



The Equity Lens Framework Subcommittee was made up of elected officials representing multiple parts of the state and a city council candidate who worked with Parakata Consulting LLC to develop its first iteration of an Equity Lens Framework for the LOC. The framework was developed to help LOC make the necessary changes to transform the organization to become a change agent and model for the cities it represents.

For the sustainability and transformation to happen, the Equity Lens Framework Subcommittee acknowledged that it needed its Board of Directors' full support, financial investments from LOC to develop a webpage on the website portal, dedicated staff to support the work, trainings opportunities for all, including the Board of Directors, LOC staff, members associated with the LOC and eventually with external partners.

The Equity Lens Framework Subcommittee envisioned its webpage to be a central space for resources and information that staff, LOC members and partners can easily navigate to access support, tools and resources related to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) work.

The Equity Lens Framework looked to improve internal and external systems within the LOC to remove barriers that cause Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) leaders and other protected classes and underserved populations to be underrepresented in the LOC and in our municipal systems and structures. The Equity Lens Framework Subcommittee acknowledged that everyone and every city is in a different place in their journey in respect to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access work, which is why the Equity Lens Framework Subcommittee recommended year-round trainings and other support elements because it was looking for systemic change, and this work cannot be learned from one training or workshop.

The Equity Lens Framework Subcommittee submitted its proposed Equity Lens Framework to the LOC Board of Directors on December 4, 2020. After careful consideration, review, and deliberation, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the draft proposal, and officially adopted the LOC Equity Lens Framework.

In calendar years 2023 and 2024, the LOC undertook a comprehensive review of the Equity Lens Framework and determined that amendments were needed to better reflect LOC's commitment to the framework and its work on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

## LONG-TERM PLAN

The Equity Lens Framework Subcommittee also acknowledged that developing this framework is only one part of a larger body of work. It is important to note that equity work should not be an add-on, rather it should be embedded in all the work the LOC does. This means, the organization's culture will need to shift or change to meet the needs of a population or populations that the LOC had not been serving or representing. This critical work may take time but needs to proceed with a sense of urgency.

### *Steps to long-term plan*

- Step 1.* LOC hired John Lensen and Associates (consultants) to work with the LOC and establish an Equity and Inclusion Committee and work with the Equity Lens Framework Subcommittee to develop the Equity Lens Framework.
- Step 2.* Members of the Equity Committee and Subcommittee presented the Equity Lens Framework to the Board of Directors for approval on December 4, 2020.
- Step 3.* Once the Equity Lens Framework was adopted by the Board of Directors, the Equity and Inclusion Committee began overseeing the Equity Lens Framework's implementation. *Note: The Committee is now known as the Diversity, Equity, ~~and~~ Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Committee.*
- Step 4.* LOC will invest financial resources to provide training on applying the Equity Lens Framework, help the Framework implementation, and to design the webpage or website and Framework with programs.



## EQUITY LENS FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS

### *Legacy of Exclusivity*

The LOC recognizes that Oregon, and its public institutions, have a history of exclusivity rather than inclusivity. Across Oregon's history race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, veterans status, familial status, income levels, place of residency, and other social characteristics have been a basis for exclusion and Discrimination.<sup>3</sup>

*In America, being White has long been the standard, the norm, the universal image and framework through which the nation's institutions have been conceptualized. Conversely, those who are not White know and sense that the perspectives of Whites are the standard. In the same way, someone with a disability knows that the world is designed around people with a certain ability, or women know that our society offers greater opportunity for people who are labeled as male, or someone who is heterosexual knows that heterosexuality is assumed.<sup>4</sup>*

Oregon, its cities, and the LOC has seen a dramatic demographic shift, but that shift has not been fully reflected in the makeup of governmental decision-makers. As a public entity, the LOC must recognize the value of and need for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

### *LOC's commitment to equity*

The LOC is committed to creating an inclusive environment where all are welcome. As an organization we value unique leaders who represent the growing diverse populations of our state and recognize current and historical systemic disparities that exist. We are committed to transforming our organization to ensure everyone who belongs to it, and aspires to be associated with us, believe that we are a place that is welcoming, helpful and a resourceful place for all.

### *Why equity is important to the work that we do*

The State of Oregon has a long history of exclusion and discrimination against individuals and groups. Our State is becoming more diverse and aware of how our past impacts the present and the future, and the needs of our communities are expanding and continue to evolve. While many of our communities do not yet have representation of leaders that reflect the communities they serve, we are committed to providing support and training to members as well as up and coming leaders to ensure decisions that are being made come from a place of inclusion and equity. This

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<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed understanding of Oregon's history of exclusivity, LOC recommends reading the Winter 2019 edition of the Oregon Historical Quarterly, which was a special issue that featured articles exploring Oregon's history of exclusion. <https://www.ohs.org/oregon-historical-quarterly/back-issues/winter-2019.cfm>

<sup>4</sup> Carmen P. Thompson, "Note from the Editors," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 120, No. 4, Page, 356, Winter 2019, chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.ohs.org/oregon-historical-quarterly/back-issues/upload/Oregon-Historical-Quarterly\_Winter-2019-Special-Issue\_Feb-2021.pdf.

helps to make sure that all voices, languages, and cultures are being heard, no one is being left out, and resources are being distributed equitably.

Additionally, for centuries political power has been focused on Portland, Salem, and the Willamette Valley, excluding eastern, southern, central, and coastal communities. Large urban cities have dominated decision-making, often to the detriment of smaller and rural cities. The League of Oregon Cities is committed to uplifting the voices of communities that have historically not been heard and promoting true understanding and partnerships between all member cities.

### *Why we lead with equity*

The LOC acknowledges that we must do more with our membership, especially with our growing diverse members. We know that we must prepare as an organization to transform ourselves to be prepared to help our city leaders and staff across the state with the tools and resources to help their cities reimagine what it means to lead in partnership with its diverse community. Understanding that, as a majority white organization with history of our Board of Directors being led by mostly white men, we understand that change must begin with our highest-ranking leaders. This includes, diversifying our Board of Directors so they are more reflective of the growing diverse body it governs and second, participate in all trainings recommended by the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee to better understand and integrate equity and inclusion in the LOC's work and culture.

We instituted the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to ensure that all components of our Equity Lens Framework will be implemented in a timely manner and that all recommended changes are happening within the organization internally and externally.

The LOC has created a process in which it provides formal recognition to affinity caucuses that are formed organically by LOC members, such as the Local Government People of Color Caucus (POC) and Women's Caucus. The formal recognition of affinity caucuses is intended to promote positive and effective relationships among city officials of color and other underrepresented groups, their communities, political leaders, and the LOC. The LOC Equity Lens Framework will serve not only LOC and its members but become an effective resource to current and future affinity caucus members to help meet their goals and policies.

### *LOC's commitment to accessibility*

The LOC, to the extent possible, is committed to creating an accessible environment where everyone, regardless of ability, can fully engage with the organization. As an organization with both an internal and external focus, the LOC is committed to guiding its actions so that all aspects of its work, from its office building to the technology it uses, and to the meetings and conferences it hosts, are accessible.

### *Why accessibility is important to the work that we do*

LOC, at its core, is a member services organization, which seeks to support and uplift municipal officials as they work to provide safe, secure, and equitable communities for their residents and businesses. To serve its members effectively and thoughtfully, the LOC must guide its actions so that each member can access the programs, services, and events the LOC provides.

### *LOC's commitment to allyship*

The LOC, and its representatives, are committed to being an ally of those members of underrepresented and underserved groups. An ally is not intended to be someone who inherently understands what it feels like to be a member of an underrepresented or underserved group but is someone who is willing to support those members and to work towards meaningful change by focusing on diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility.

LOC, and its representatives, are committed to a continuing journey of DEIA work and allyship, recognizing that on this journey mistakes will be made, and that in its commitment to allyship, the LOC will provide grace as it learns to show up, speak up, and effectuate meaningful change.

### *Internal work: professional development, diversifying staff, equity, and communication*

- The LOC will provide professional development opportunities for all LOC staff in bias training, cultural competency training as well as DEIA and social justice training and any other training offered to the LOC members.
- The LOC is committed to diversifying, retaining, and offering promotional opportunities to staff of color, removing language and cultural barriers so members of our BIPOC community and community members at large have a positive customer service experience when engaging with the LOC staff.
- The LOC acknowledges that one of the largest systemic barriers to access information is language. The LOC is committed to adopting translation systems or hiring translators and interpreters as needed. We will ensure our communities and leaders who are blind, visually impaired, deaf-and hard of hearing, have access to information on the website and at our meetings.

### *External work: professional development, elevating voices, economic equity*

Keeping in mind that many the LOC members are in different places in their journey of understanding DEIA and justice work, the LOC is setting an expectation that all members will participate in trainings recommended by the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee. All LOC members are highly encouraged to provide input and participate in discussions associated with this work to gain or establish collective understanding and knowledge on why, equity and inclusion is key to self-growth but also to help transform the institution as a whole.



- The LOC is committed to provide professional development opportunities for all LOC members in bias training, cultural competency training, growth mindset training, DEIA and social justice trainings and any other trainings recommended by the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee. This training will be offered in person or online through the LOC website throughout the year including during conferences. The LOC will promote and send out information on upcoming training through the LOC Weekly Bulletin.
- The LOC is committed to helping up-and-coming leaders by providing them with professional development, tools and support they need to be prepared to step into local leadership positions.
- The LOC is committed to elevating voices of our diverse and underrepresented members, especially BIPOC members, people with disabilities, and members who speak languages other than English. The LOC will acknowledge and affirm that their presence and engagement is imperative to the success of the LOC.
- The LOC is committed to working with all businesses and creating economic opportunities for minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned and emerging small businesses.

### *Policy ideas for implementation*

To help with institutional changes within the LOC, the Equity Lens Framework Subcommittee has identified some policies to begin with.

#### Internal/LOC Administration

- Develop hiring practices to help increase racial diversity and people with disabilities among staff.
- Develop education & outreach policies to help increase engagement from members particularly among BIPOC leaders and future potential leaders.
- Create communication policies to ensure non-English speaking people access information.
- The LOC staff, Board of Directors and its committees will utilize this Equity Lens Framework and consider the impacts of its internal and external policy decisions, proposals and recommendations on diverse populations and historically underserved community members.

#### External/ City Councils

The LOC will provide resources, tools, and access to best practices to assist members in building and expanding their own DEIA values, policies, programs, and work.

### *Monitoring, evaluation, and data collection*

To learn and improve on our DEIA programs and policies, we will evaluate processes, service delivery, and outcomes. We will continue to track and share the demographics of our members which will not only guarantee that we have an updated list of BIPOC leaders, but it will also help us identify other emerging demographic leaders to ensure we are including everyone in these efforts.

### *Tools*

The LOC website will centralize some key tools that will be helpful for our LOC staff, and our LOC members and partners.

- Surveys
- List of consultants
- Best practices in working with diverse communities
- Equity decision tools
- School district demographic breakdown (to better understand how diverse our cities and their surroundings are)
- Safe resource center
- Affinity caucuses
  - Local Government People of Color Caucus (POC)
  - Women's Caucus
- List of Cities that have established an Equity Lens Framework
  - List of cities recognized for establishing an Equity Lens Framework

### *Diverse populations*

As we develop policies and make institutional changes within the LOC and with member cities, we will recognize and acknowledge the overlapping or intersecting social identities, such as race, class, sexual orientation, and gender identity and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination. We will also acknowledge and understand that segments of our communities have been historically excluded, underserved, ignored or bunched into subgroups. We will honor people's diverse backgrounds and have created a list for the purpose of bringing awareness for inclusion. We acknowledge that this list will evolve and be adjusted. The LOC recognizes that this list is not exhaustive and encourages continual review.

- Race

- Ethnicity
- Marital status
- Religious expression
- National origin
- People who identify as women
- Age
- People with both apparent and non-apparent disabilities
- People of various gender and sexual identities and expressions
- Socio-economic status
- Immigration status
- Veteran status
- Black, Indigenous and people of color
- Educational and lived experience background
- Neurodivergent status
- Familial status

*Historically underserved community members<sup>5</sup>*

- Indigenous peoples, members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized tribes, American Indians, Alaska Natives;
- Black, Africans, African Americans;
- Hispanic, Latino/a/x;
- Asian, Pacific Islanders;
- Immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers;

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<sup>5</sup> List comes from the State of Oregon Equity Framework on COVID-19 Responses and Recovery with exception of Latino/a/x. The list originally included Latinx, which technically only captures nonbinary Latinos. Parakata consulting felt it was more inclusive to use Latino/a/x to ensure all genders are also recognized.

- Undocumented, DREAMers;
- Linguistically diverse;
- People with disabilities;
- LGBTQ+;
- Aging/older adults/elders;
- Economically disadvantaged;
- Farmworkers, migrant workers; and
- Living in rural parts of the state

## *What is the Equity Lens Framework?<sup>6</sup>*

 <b>WHAT IT IS</b>	 <b>WHAT IT ISN'T</b>
<p>A framework for thinking about what equity is and why.</p> <p>A set of tools, strategies, practices and processes to operate more equitably in our work.</p> <p>It is an evolving resource.</p>	<p>Rote process of one-size fits all.</p> <p>An approach that will solve all of our equity dilemmas.</p> <p>Something we do without considering our context and our people.</p>

### *What does it mean to apply the Equity Lens Framework?*

To apply the Equity Lens Framework means the LOC will pause in time, and most importantly take a pause in the process to help it be more inclusive in practice. Guiding questions, provided below, should be used to prompt thinking and shift processes.

### *In what context should the Equity Lens Framework be applied?*

While the Equity Lens Framework should be incorporated into all aspects of the LOC's work, its use is most important with actions and decisions that have a major impact either internally or externally. The Equity Lens Framework, and the guiding questions provided, should be used when the LOC plans, develops, or evaluates its policies, programs, or decisions. The purpose of the framework in these contexts is to identify potential impacts on underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized groups and to eliminate barriers.

### *Guiding questions in decision making*

When implementing the Equity Lens Framework, in addition to the tools provided earlier, the below questions may prove useful in ensuring the purpose and intent of the Equity Lens Framework is achieved. These questions should be used when employees, the Board of

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<sup>6</sup> The chart is from the Lane County, Oregon Equity Lens Toolkit.

Directors, and LOC committees are rendering decisions that have a major impact either internally or externally.

- Does the decision being made ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences?
- What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes (e.g., mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic, or managerial) and how and when will the LOC evaluate and modify its decisions or strategic investments to ensure that the barriers are lessened or eliminated?
- How has the LOC intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by the decision and/or strategic investment?
- What resources and support will the LOC provide to ensure training and technical assistance to successfully implement the decision and strategic investment?