



OUR  
EQUITY  
JOURNEY



SPOKANE  
WORKFORCE  
COUNCIL

# INTRODUCTION

The truly essential work of the Spokane Workforce Council system was challenging before 2020, but now as the world continues to navigate the unprecedented and compounding challenges of COVID-19, virulent racism and deepening poverty, SWC continues their commitment to equity, in the face of the triple pandemics by strategically taking action to learn and institutionalize pro-equity strategies into all aspects of the organization. The SWC equity journey began prior to 2020 and has continued to deepen over the last year.

# NORMALIZING

## WHOLE CAMPUS TRAINING

Beginning in early 2020 the Spokane Workforce Council campus contracted with Greater Spokane Progress to offer campus wide Why Race Matters Trainings, followed by two deeper dives into Implicit Bias Trainings.

## TAKING ACTION & EQUITY ASSESSMENT

Following the campus wide training series, SWC leadership participated in a follow up session focused on Taking Action to Advance Racial Equity. Through this process a racial equity assessment process was initiated to support SWC's ongoing racial equity commitment and action.

## BOARD TRAINING SERIES & STATEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Over the past several months, the SWC Board has participated in a series of Equity Learning Sessions to develop a shared vocabulary, analysis and local context related to equity topics in our community in preparation to draft and adopt a bold and actionable equity statement.

- Naming your individual "why"
- Equity Terms & Definitions
- Deep Dive into Implicit Bias
- History of Structural Racism
- Early Experiences with Race
- Exploring Local Equity Data
- Processing Equity Journey
- Crafting Equity Statement

# EQUITY ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTS

As a team, the SWC staff met every other week from December 2020 to April 2021 to review the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Organizational Continuum Assessment and discuss each of the eight areas of evaluation. The below summarizes the results.



## ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The Spokane Workforce Council identifies as working toward racial equity, with formal commitments among our board, leadership and staff. We will work to create a board equity statement with measurable goals. Leadership is committed to ongoing learning and organizational development with a racial equity lens.

## TAKING ACTION & EQUITY ASSESMENT

Our board members and organizational leadership support a culture of racial equity, and strive to find ways to learn and grow together as a leader of workforce development in our community.

## HIRING, RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

We are committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive environment for staff, both at the SWC and across the Workforce system and sites that we manage.

## COMPETENCIES

The SWC supports staff training and learning in the racial equity space. Staff are invited to participate in our book club where we read and discuss various books written by BIPOC authors and about racial equity issues in our community.

## COMMUNITY ACCESS, INVOLVEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

Between April-June 2021, staff brainstormed a list of existing community agency partnerships and also began to identify areas of strength and potential gaps. The Multicultural space at the Resource Center of Spokane County (RCSC) has been hosting various community agencies, presentations and groups. We intend the space to be used by any community groups for equity and justice-related needs.

## BUDGETING & CONTRACTING

1. We reviewed procurement templates to ensure that they included our updated language on racial equity for our subcontractors and their partners.
2. We will actively promote open RFP's to POC owned businesses.
3. We will be adding language to monitoring tools for PY21.

## COMMUNICATIONS

We reviewed and surveyed our marketing materials, and begun to create materials that more fully reflect the populations we serve. We are committed to ensure that communications materials are available on multiple platforms to ensure access to people of varying abilities.

## DATA COLLECTION & EVALUATION

Collected diversity, inclusion and equity data on staff and board members, and customer data (comprehensive effort utilizing multiple databases, including the state MIS, and partner agency information). We commit to updating data on a quarterly basis for our system/ customers and annually for board and staff.



# OUR EQUITY JOURNEY

**JAN.-FEB.  
2020**

**CAMPUS WIDE TRAINING SERIES**

**FALL  
2020**

**TAKING ACTION TO ADVANCE  
RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING &  
LAUNCH OF RACE EQUITY  
ASSESSMENT**

**WINTER  
2020**

**CAMPUS WIDE EQUITY BOOK CLUB  
LAUNCHED**

**SPRING  
2021**

**SWC BOARD EQUITY TRAINING  
SERIES**

**OCT.  
2021**

**DRAFTING OF SWC EQUITY  
STATEMENT & ASSESMENT  
RESULTS SHARED**

**DEC.  
2021**

**SWC BOARD ADOPTION OF  
EQUITY STATEMENT**

# SPOKANE WORKFORCE COUNCIL EQUITY VISION

The Spokane Workforce Council and its governing board are committed to closing wage, employment, and education equity gaps. We acknowledge and accept that we have been a part of the ecosystem that has created racial inequities, and we commit to being a larger force to evolve the system and serve as a catalyst for positive change. The SWC has embraced the need to take on the difficult conversations about diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice within the context of workforce development. By engaging with our customer base and business community, we acknowledge our past missteps and are taking action to be more inclusive to our diverse customers. The board has agreed that racism and privilege are systemic issues that must be addressed at a cultural and organization level. It has become increasingly clear that this work is not only a moral imperative, but there is individual, societal, and economic good that flows from closing equity gaps.

We acknowledge that this work is never done. In order to reach our goals, we will normalize conversations about systemic racism and all inequities, foster equitable workplace culture for our business and system partners, and support our partners with education and resources. We will continue to use assessments and other tools to embed the work in our system. Success will be measured through a variety of community-based metrics that demonstrate progress and achievement of outcomes.

Equitable practices will create a more diverse set of customers whose feedback will inform our service delivery and lead to better community outcomes. Our community will be strengthened when all members have a meaningful voice and increased access and will be elevated by creating a culture of hope and prosperity for all people.