

**DRAFT**

# **SOCIAL EQUITY FRAMEWORK: Events & Programs Guidebook**

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**July 2025**

# **SOCIAL EQUITY FRAMEWORK**

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# Purpose

This guidebook was developed to help make Wilsonville's programs and events more welcoming, inclusive, and easy to access for everyone in our community. Whether you're creating something new or improving something that already exists, this resource gives you the tools to do it with equity in mind.

It supports four key actions from the City's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Plan, adopted by the City Council on July 18, 2022 (Resolution No. 2979):

- Make existing programs, meetings, and events more inclusive for all community members
- Improve accessibility for everyone attending city events and meetings
- Share and apply best practices across all city departments
- Provide guidance for creating bilingual materials

Each section of this guide offers practical tips and thoughtful questions to help city staff design programs that reflect the needs of our diverse community. From language access to physical spaces, this guide encourages us to think about how we can remove barriers and create opportunities so that every resident feels seen, heard, and included.

Together, we can build a city where everyone belongs.

# Acknowledgements

## *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee*

- Karla Brashear (Chair)
- Erika Pham (Vice Chair)
- Diane Imel
- Carolina Wilde
- Elisabeth Garcia Davidson
- Anthony Reyes
- Justin Brown
- Mina Lemke
- Rick Wallace
- Fiona Huston
- Wilnise Jasmin

## *City Staff*

- Zoe Mombert, Assistant to the City Manager, DEI Committee Liaison
- Bryan Cosgrove, City Manager
- Jeanna Troha, Assistant City Manager
- Delora Kerber, Public Works Director
- Sasta Sasser, Library Director
- Dwight Brashear, Transit Director
- Kelsey Lewis, Grants Program Manager
- Scott Simonton, Fleet Manager
- Chris Neamtzu, Community Development Director (Retired)
- Andrea Villagrana, Human Resources Manager
- Kris Ammerman, Parks & Recreation Director

# Background

Public administration is the heart of local government; it's how cities and towns deliver the programs and services that shape daily life in our communities. From parks and libraries to public safety and transportation, public administration ensures that local services are responsive, efficient, and equitable.

Across the United States, local government structures vary by state, each with its own laws and responsibilities. In Oregon, the most common model is the Council–Manager form of government, used by the (XXX) of the state's 241 cities. This form of government was designed to promote transparency, reduce corruption, and ensure that professional expertise guides the delivery of public services<sup>1</sup>. Social equity is one of the four pillars of the structure of the Council – Manager form of government. The City Manager is held to a high standard of ethics and is guided by four foundational pillars of public administration:

- 1) Economy – Using resources wisely and spending responsibly
- 2) Effectiveness – Achieving meaningful results for the community
- 3) Efficiency – Delivering services in the best way with the least waste
- 4) Social Equity – Ensuring fairness and access for all residents

These pillars are more than just principles—they are a call to action. They remind us that good governance is not just about managing systems but about serving people. When we lead with equity, we build trust, strengthen communities, and create a city where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

At the core of this guidebook is a commitment to social equity, the idea that everyone in our community deserves fair access to opportunities, services, and support. To help city staff plan and evaluate programs through an equity lens, we focus on four key elements that make up the Social Equity Framework, including outcomes, process, access, and quality as described below.

## Outcomes

Outcomes are the measurable results; what changes, improves, or is achieved because of your efforts. Equity-focused outcomes ensure that all community members benefit, especially those who have historically been underserved.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://icma.org/articles/article/brief-description-local-government-systems-united-states>

**Process**

Process refers to the steps and decisions made along the way. An equitable process is transparent, inclusive, and collaborative; inviting diverse voices to shape the path forward.

**Access**

Access means removing barriers so that all people regardless of language, ability, income, or background can engage fully. This includes physical access, language access, and access to information and resources.

**Quality**

Quality speaks to the standard of the program or service. Equity means ensuring that all participants, regardless of who they are, receive a high-quality experience that meets their needs and expectations.

# Expanded Social Equity Framework

## Outcomes

To develop programs and events that are inclusive and accessible to everyone, consider the following;

- Who
  - Consider the demographics you are trying to serve or reach with the event (seniors, youth, unhoused, housed, etc.)
- What
  - Is there a specific purpose such as gathering public input, adding a family friendly event, providing education, etc.?
- Where
  - Are there required resources needed to execute the event such as indoor or outdoor, field space or audio visual (AV) equipment, etc.?
- When
  - Does this event need to occur within a specific timeframe, are there dates of cultural significance or other city meetings planned at the same time that could cause a conflict for community members?
- How
  - Are there specific monetary or staff capacity resources needed to make the event possible? Are there other meetings, events, programs that would not occur if this event moved forward?
  - Will there be program outreach or advertising? Which hard copy and online tools will be used to reach a target audience (broad audience, for a city-wide event)?

## Process

As the event is being planned, consider intended outcomes, access availability and quality of the event being planned by creating a step-by-step plan (*example to be provided*) to advance the project. This is an opportunity to collaborate with other departments and share resources.

## Access

There are four main access areas to be considered including parking, transit, information and language. These components vary depending on the intended outcomes of the project.

### Access: Parking

Event parking is essential in the community since many are dependent on vehicles. There should be adequate parking with clear information for event goers to find general parking as well as ADA parking. ADA parking is often limited and may not have a direct route to the event location. If ADA

parking is limited, consider a designated drop off location, in a safe location with access to a curb ramp and level pathway.

Clear information about bicycle parking should be identified if it is not centrally located.

#### Access: Transit Options

Free transit service is provided by SMART and is underutilized for city sponsored activities. SMART's service has expanded, providing more consistent service and connecting to most city facilities. This is an essential option to make events accessible to all. In the planning phase, consider the SMART bus route(s) and service time(s).

SMART's free planning tools help community members plan their trips and are available for staff to identify the transit route opportunities and route times.

Information about parking and transit opportunities (location and route number) can be included on the project website or written materials.

#### Access: Information

There continue to be an increasing number of platforms and ways to share information and depending on the community member, the information can be consumed or shared differently.

- Consider having an online and hard copy version available. Some members of the community do not have regular access to the internet while others are not comfortable with the internet making hard paper copies important and vice versa, some individuals prefer online resources over paper copies.
- Provide "what to expect" details in the event publications. This is important information for community members. This is a general description of the event and day of event details regarding your senses, what will you see (flashing lights), hear (amplified sound), feel (temperature), surfaces (flat, elevated, uneven), crowd size and suitability (children, families, adults, etc).
- Provide a description of images and logos by adding alt text.<sup>2</sup>

#### Access: Language

Providing information is only useful if it can be consumed by community members. Our community is diverse, which makes it more important to provide information in different ways.

- Auditory
  - Clear audio is essential to get information for the intended audience. Background noise and soft voices can make it challenging for anyone to hear a presenter.

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<https://abilitynet.org.uk/factsheets/creating-accessible-documents-0#:~:text=easier%20to%20read,-.Point%20size,text%20in%20Times%20New%20Roman>



Microphones allow many people to hear more clearly. Many of the conference rooms in city facilities are equipped with microphones which can be easily turned on to increase the volume of all speakers to make the message clearer to many.

- Hearing support devices are available in the City Council Chambers at City Hall and Oak Room at the Public Library, which can be used by audience members as long as the microphones are on. These devices allow individuals to connect to their personal hearing aids or listen through an earpiece connected to the hearing support device. The hearing support system can also be used by individuals who control their hearing aids through an app on their phone.
- Other conference rooms at City Hall (Willamette 1 and Willamette 2), Library (Rose Room) and Public Works (Ponderosa 1 and Ponderosa 2) (**need to confirm**), have handheld hearing support devices with an earpiece.

- Visibility

- Similar to audio, written communication also provides a way for community members to understand what is occurring during a meeting. Closed captioning is becoming easier to provide with the use of zoom. During a public meeting, open house other meetings, closed captioning can be used through zoom. This requires a microphone to capture the audio and a screen to project or provide the text.
- Written text on handouts, flyers, mailers, and presentations should be easily understood and legible to community members
  - Font
    - Use basic clear fonts such as Arial, Calibri, or Veranda.
    - Avoid excessive underlining and italics
    - Avoid all capital letters, as screen readers, will read the letters rather than the words
    - Use 12-point font for standard text and 16-point font or larger text. Consider providing larger text materials when requested.
    - Colors should contrast and avoid red/ green combinations. This can easily be tested by printing in black and white.
    - Consider underlining or bolding emphasis rather than only using color to convey importance or emphasis.<sup>3</sup>

- Language

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<sup>3</sup> <https://tll.mit.edu/teaching-resources/inclusive-classroom/accessibility/#:~:text=Guidelines%20and%20Tips%20for%20Constructing,tables%20used%20explicitly%20for%20layout.>

<https://abilitynet.org.uk/factsheets/creating-accessible-documents-0#:~:text=easier%20to%20read.-,Point%20size,text%20in%20Times%20New%20Roman.>

- Write at an eighth-grade level (average reading level for adults in the United States) or below for general audiences. Reading levels can decline with age, making it easier for community members to understand materials written at lower reading levels.<sup>4</sup>
- Translation and Interpretation
  - Translation is available on the city website using the “translate” button at the top of the page. All of the website text can be translated; however, attachments will not automatically translate.
  - Translation is also available on *Let’s talk Wilsonville!* using the “select language” button.
  - Translating documents can be done through a contact transcription service approved by the Administration Department.
  - Interpretation is available through the language access line service. This requires a phone be available.
  - Google Translate App can also be used in real-time to interpret information during a program or event. This allows the individual to read the text as it is being translated. This requires a device, like an iPad, and microphone in large spaces. (Note: the translation may not be exact for technical purposes but does provide a way to describe the information and make it more accessible. The Administration Department is currently testing this tool.)
  - Additional interpretation and translation options will be explored as needed and included as tools and resources become available.
  - Depending on the specific audience, additional translation or interpretation services may be required. Contact the Administration Department to discuss.
  - Promotion
    - Add information on event agendas and flyers in Spanish noting that materials on the website and *Let’s talk Wilsonville!* are available using the “translate” and “select language” buttons on both websites.
    - Identify the interpretation service that will be available in addition to the contact information to request interpretation services in advance (public meetings).

### **Quality (Location)**

Each program and event require different site characteristics. Rather than focusing on the facilities operated by the department planning the event, consider the elements that would make the event most attractive to the target audience. To support staff facilities chart has been included in the appendix as a resource for staff to consider:

- Room/ Location Amenities
- Number of tables and chairs, required spacing between rows, AV/ tech equipment available
- Room capacity with chairs, tables, standing, accessible seating

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<sup>4</sup> <https://prsay.prsa.org/2021/11/12/what-readability-level-makes-sense-for-your-audience/>

- Restrooms
- Doors
  - Can they be propped open during events to make it easier for community members with mobility challenges?
- Accessible entrance and route to event

# Social Equity Framework: Checklist

## 1) Outcomes

- a. What are you trying to achieve with this program or event?
- b. Who is this program or event intended to serve, or which population are you trying to reach?
- c. How do you plan to advertise the event?
- d. Is outreach needed, if so, which population do you need to communicate with, and how will you accomplish this?
- e. What are the expected required resources?
  - i. Financial
  - ii. Staff
  - iii. Materials
  - iv. Etc.
- f. What are the benefits or burdens of implementing the proposed program or event?

## 2) Process

- a. What actions are needed to move this program or event forward?

## 3) Access

- a. Which language access resources should be available at the event?
- b. What type of information will be available and how should it be provided?
- c. When will the program or event take place?
  - i. Are there other city meetings, programs or events that could occur in collaboration with this event or create a scheduling conflict for community members?
  - ii. Are there cultural dates of significance that should be considered?
- d. What is the type of parking and location of parking should be available at the event?
- e. What transit opportunities are available?

## 4) Quality

- a. What amenities should be available?
- b. What amenities are needed to provide the program or event?

# Appendix

City Facility Information

City Parks Information

Cultural Calendar ([Website Link](#))

SMART Routes and Schedule ([Website Link](#))

City Calendar for city board meetings and other planned events ([Website Link](#))

## References and Resources

Meetings with city staff were conducted between January – February 2025 and reflected in memos dated

DEI Committee updates at their [REDACTED] 2025 meetings.

Definitions:

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/access>

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/economy>

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/effective>

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/efficiency>

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/outcome>

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/process>

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/quality>

Other References and Resources:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_equity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_equity)

<https://icma.org/articles/article/brief-description-local-government-systems-united-states>

<https://www.planning.org/knowledgebase/equity/>

<https://unitedwaynca.org/blog/what-is-social-equity/>

<https://tll.mit.edu/teaching-resources/inclusive-classroom/accessibility/#:~:text=Guidelines%20and%20Tips%20for%20Constructing,tables%20used%20explicitly%20for%20layout.>

<https://abilitynet.org.uk/factsheets/creating-accessible-documents-0#:~:text=easier%20to%20read.-,Point%20size,text%20in%20Times%20New%20Roman.><sup>i5</sup>

<https://prsay.prsa.org/2021/11/12/what-readability-level-makes-sense-for-your-audience/>

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