

City of Northfield

Racial Equity Action Plan – Adopted July 21, 2020

Background: Being a welcoming community and one that embraces a diverse population is important to the City of Northfield. In December 2016 the City Council adopted a policy regarding “employee conduct regarding immigration status”. The purpose was for Northfield to be a vibrant city where our immigrant and refugee residents can fully participate in and be integrated into the social, civic, and economic fabric of their adopted city.

In the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan for the City, the topic of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (A Community that Welcomes Everyone) was one of the six priority areas. Development of this Racial Equity Action Plan came about as City staff participated in the Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE).

Racial Equity Statement: The City of Northfield values all members of our community and recognizes the demographic makeup of our citizens will continue to change. Therefore, the City of Northfield strives to improve outreach and engagement to increase racial equity in the Northfield community. In addition, the City wants to build upon existing policies and procedures to ensure they are equitable for the Northfield community.

Need: The City of Northfield has developed this plan because:

- It is a way to be intentional about institutional culture change.
- It will help us to design strategies to focus improvements. Developing racial equity plans/tools with all departments will help us better include racial equity as a factor in delivery of services and budgeting.
- Institutional racism is something ingrained into the fabric of many institutions in the United States,. For the City, racial equity is about exploring our practices, service delivery and policies to help find ways to make our institution more racially equitable.
- Having a racial equity action plan will keep this work a priority for the City as we carry out our work and create our budgets.

Results – These are community level conditions of well-being we intend to improve. The actions and outcomes in this plan will help to move us towards these results.

1. City of Northfield services are accessible and accessed by all community members.
 - Forms, informational materials and public safety information are easily accessible in the languages used in our community.
 - Translation services are provided for in-person and phone interactions with staff.
 - Improve service delivery and application processes to be simple, convenient and easy to understand.
 - Expand broadband/internet access by working with utility service providers.
 - City Departments, Boards & Commissions take equity into account when evaluating and deciding on projects.
 - City buildings, staff and public meetings are welcoming places where all feel comfortable seeking services and participating in local government.

2. Northfield employees, elected officials and residents understand and are committed to achieving racial equity. Through training and learning opportunities we will:
 - Gain awareness of the history of race; implicit and explicit bias; and individual, institutional, and structural racism and how it impacts our lives,
 - Identify instances of implicit and explicit bias and individual, institutional and structural racism, in our lives, work and community.
 - Identify strategies that can reduce the negative influence of bias.
3. All of Northfield's Communities have opportunity and access to share in the economic prosperity.
 - As an employer, the City of Northfield provides a living wage and benefits. We will adjust our practices to hire and retain the most qualified and diverse employees possible.
 - The City of Northfield will continue to work with Healthy Community Initiative to "grow our own" local talent through TORCH and other cradle to career programming.
 - The Economic Development Authority will support Minority Owned Businesses as noted in the 2019 Summary Report: Exploration of Business Environment for Minority Owned Businesses.
 - The Housing and Redevelopment Authority and our Community Development Department will work to maintain and grow affordable housing that is safe, healthy and sustainable.
 - Explore innovative, low-carbon, transit equity options that fit the needs to help provide access to jobs and other services.

Performance Measures are noted for each action item in this plan and include such items as: trainings offered, changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, development of department level plans, hiring practices and the like.

This Racial Equity Action Plan is intended to help the City:

- **Normalize** conversations about race and equity, including the distinctions between individual and institutional racism and between explicit and implicit bias.
- **Organize** for racial equity by building organizational capacity within government and engaging communities to advance racial equity.
- **Operationalize** for racial equity by using racial equity tools and data to evaluate progress.

Resources

The Minnesota Equity Blueprint, February 2020: <https://growthandjustice.org/publication/Blueprint-online-F.pdf>, Thriving By Design Network.

Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity. December 2016. Government Alliance on Race & Equity. Authors: Julie Nelson, Lisa Brooks.

NORMALIZE			
Actions	Target Start Date	Who's Responsible	Performance Measure
Racial Equity Core Team is formed (with representation from staff across departments), to provide focus and direction to the items in this plan. This team may form smaller work groups to carry out specific tasks.	October 2019	City Administrator, Program Coordinator	Racial Equity Core Team has members and meeting schedule is set.
Racial Equity Training – Require training on an annual basis for all employees, elected officials and Board & Commission members to develop a baseline understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion and the role they play as well as building cultural competency. Work with outside consultants/contractors as needed to offer these trainings and department or topic specific training if appropriate.	December 2019	Racial Equity Core Team training work group, Program Coordinator, outside contractors	Trainings are offered. Participants show growth in knowledge, competence. Percent of employees who have attended racial equity training
Conversational Opportunities – Offer less formal opportunities such as book clubs, watching videos, or conversations around racial equity in a lunch & learn format.	July 2020	Racial Equity Core Team, Human Rights Commission (HRC), Program Coordinator, local community partners, outside contractors	Sessions are offered Surveys of participants to evaluate changes in knowledge and comfort level in having conversations around race. Qualitative written responses to questions or journaling.
Community Conversations – work with local partners to include the Northfield Public School District, Healthy Community Initiative and others to host some community conversations around racial equity.	September 2020	Racial Equity Core Team, Program Coordinator Community Partners – HRC, HCI, School District	Conversations are offered. Surveys and qualitative information gathered and used to inform areas to improve racial equity.

ORGANIZE			
Actions	Target Start Date	Who's Responsible	Performance Measure
Employee Racial Equity survey – Conduct employee and City Council racial equity survey on a biennial basis.	February 2020 then biennial.	Racial Equity Core Team, Program Coordinator, Communications office	Percent of employees who complete the survey. Percent of employees who understand key terms can provide examples.
Create Community Racial Equity Profile for City of Northfield – This profile will help to inform City staff, elected and appointed officials, and the community as a whole with regard to where the community currently stands with regard to racial disparities in the following areas: population, education, business, employment, economic security, housing, health, criminal justice, transportation, connectedness. This profile will serve as a benchmark for racial equity efforts and for tracking the progress of efforts to narrow disparities.	June 2020	Racial Equity Core Team, Program Coordinator Community Partners – HRC, HCI, School District	Racial Equity Profile is created and informs direction for future work.
Racial equity as core competency in select job descriptions –Departments identify as appropriate specific job classifications with key racial equity responsibilities and incorporate racial equity as a core competency / expectation into thos job descriptions.	June 2021 ongoing as positions arise	HR Director, Department Directors	Job descriptions include racial equity as core competency.
Clear racial equity expectations for managers – Training on equitable hiring practices, management and supervising employees for all staff with hiring and supervisory duties. Develop clear expectations and accountability for racially equitable work places. Develop best practices that can be used by manager within hiring processes to minimize bias and incorporate equity throughout all phases of the process.	January 2021	HR Director, Department Directors, Outside contractor	Training provided. Best practices developed and used in hiring processes

ORGANIZE			
Actions	Target Start Date	Who's Responsible	Performance Measure
Planning for retirements – Conduct an analysis of positions that have anticipated retirements in the coming five years. Work with local partners, such as HCI, to develop and implement career pathways to ensure a diverse applicant pool is prepared to compete for those vacancies.	January 2021	HR Director, HCI, Department Directors	Assessment conducted. Career Pathways plan in place and being implemented
Actively recruit and provide training – Board & Commission (city and community partners) recruitment efforts are expanded to improve recruitment to better represent the diversity of Northfield residents. Training is provided for those have not served on Boards & Commissions before to help them feel comfortable.	January 2020	Program Coordinator, Core Team, Board & Commission members, University of Minnesota Extension, Community Partners (School District, HCI, etc.)	Percent of people of color who apply for B&Cs increases. # people trained/feel confident to serve
Representation on Boards & Commissions – Collect demographic baseline of existing advisory Boards & Commissions, identify gaps; develop approaches to address gaps.	February 2020	Program Coordinator, Staff Liaisons to Boards & Commissions, HR/Communications	Accurate baseline established.
OPERATIONALIZE			
Actions	Target Start Date	Who's Responsible	Performance Measure
Remove language barriers and increase connection through translation/interpretation –The City currently offers interpretation services through a contract with Language Line. Continue to promote use of that tool and ways to provide additional in-person translation at public meetings. Promote the Google Translate feature on the City website. Explore ways to offer more of City related documents and videos in multiple languages.	January 2020	Communications Office	Use of Language Line. Public meetings where translations offered. Material on website is in multiple languages.

OPERATIONALIZE			
Actions	Target Start Date	Who's Responsible	Performance Measure
Departmental Racial Equity Plans and use of Racial Equity Tool – Core Team develops a template for departments to use to create department Racial Equity Plan and Tool. Use the Community Racial Equity profile and information gathered from Community Conversations to help identify gaps in service/access to guide departments on plan development. Each department will pilot with one program or policy in first year.	January 2021	Core Team, Program Coordinator, Department leadership, Human Rights Commission (HRC) rep.	Percent of departments who have developed Racial Equity Plan and Tool and are beginning to implement.
Board & Commissions use of Racial Equity Tool – Core Team and staff liaisons develop a template for Boards & Commissions to use to take Racial Equity into account during decisions making.	January 2021	Core Team, Program Coordinator, Staff Liaisons, Board & Commission Chairs	Percent of Boards & Commissions who are using process when making decisions.
Incorporate use of the Racial Equity Tool into the budget process - Pilot template for use in one department/expense are in the 2021 budget process. Based on what is learned modify and implement across all departments in 2022. City Council reviews decisions and the cumulative impacts of the proposed budget with Racial Equity lens.	May 2021	Core Team, Program, Coordinator, City Administrator, Finance Office	Percent of budget items reviewed using a Racial Equity Tool
Strengthen personnel policy and practices – review policies to identify racial equity barriers to hiring, retention, and upward mobility. Use the Racial Equity Tool to develop recommended changes. Barriers to be considered include minimum qualifications (education and experience equivalencies) and the role of seniority in promotions and benefits.	January 2022	HR Staff, Personnel Committee Department Biracial Equity Core Teams	Policies are revised/developed.

Establish a framework for effective and inclusive engagement with Northfield's diverse communities – Review current practices for how the city does community engagement. Develop jurisdiction policies and practices that engage diverse communities in jurisdictional processes.	January 2022	Racial Equity Core Team, Program Coordinator	Policy guidance developed Employees are using the processes and tracking: *How much did we do? * How well did we do it? * Is anyone better off
Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Training – Provide introductory Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement training to employees that routinely engage with the public.	June 2022	Human Resources, Program Coordinator, outside contractors	# of employees attending trainings Participant increase in knowledge, competence and confidence in using public engagement approach