



# Equity Toolkit for Projects

AUGUST 2021





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# INTRODUCTION

There exists a growing body of research that highlights the disproportionate uptake of environmental initiatives by higher-income households in Canadian and American municipalities. This is due, in part, to low- and moderate-income households lacking access to these initiatives because of a variety of barriers, including energy poverty, access to credit, split incentives<sup>1</sup> between landlords and tenants, participation requirements, insufficient outreach and awareness, disparities in neighbourhood amenities, infrastructure, and design, colonial and political attitudes around sustainability and natural resources and other systemic barriers. These barriers are exacerbated by additional factors beyond income, including, for example: culture, citizenship, ability, age, gender, and fluency with the dominant language. These factors raise concerns of a growing divide, where differing abilities to adopt and benefit from sustainable solutions could further disadvantage certain communities.

The City of Saskatoon's (the City) [Official Community Plan \(OCP\)](#) states that, "A sustainable community is one that meets its needs today without limiting the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This means a community that sustains its quality of life and accommodates growth and change by balancing long term economic, environmental and social needs." The OCP then goes on to state that the "Plan recognizes the following principles in building a community with a sustainable quality of life: a) economic diversity, economic security, and fiscal responsibility; b) environmental protection and stewardship; c) equity in land use decisions and a fair distribution of community services". Additionally, section D2.1 of the OCP outlines policies intended to "facilitate social inclusion and equity in Saskatoon's programs, services, and activities."

This initiative also responds to the City's commitment to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, 92.

The City's Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Policy aims to transform the way decisions are made in the City by expecting that all initiatives be evaluated through the broadest definition of "sustainable", by considering their impact on environmental health and integrity; social equity and cultural well-being; economic prosperity; and good governance. The desired outcome is more balanced decisions that include, amongst other things, more equitable programs and services.

This work, in conjunction with the application of the TBL policy, is a first step in supporting City staff in developing and delivering equitable programs and projects that help achieve the City's vision, which states that "Every citizen feels a sense of belonging. People are actively engaged in the future and governance of their city. Our community spirit is strong where, through conversation and collaboration, we work as one community to move forward, together."

In order to make significant environmental progress while also upholding a just transition to a cleaner economy, initiatives must be planned and resourced to achieve broad uptake by the community; therefore, addressing constraints and intentionally applying an equity lens to how initiatives are designed, planned, and implemented is required. This Equity Toolkit creates a context and process to achieve not only equitable climate action, but also a guide for successful and fair initiatives across all City work.

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<sup>1</sup> "Split incentives occur when those responsible for paying energy bills (the tenant) are not the same entity as those making the capital investment decisions (the landlord or building owner). In these circumstances, the landlord may not be inclined to make the necessary upgrades to building services when the benefits associated with the resulting energy savings accrue to the tenant."  
<https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/energy/files/hvac-factsheet-split-incentives.pdf>

# HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

The objective of the Equity Toolkit is to aid employees in designing and implementing projects and programs that result in fair distribution of benefits across all segments of the community.

This means that particular attention needs to be paid to those with the highest needs, have low influence over the process, and/or are highly impacted by the decision, initiative, or outcome. Examples of equity-deserving groups are listed in the Appendix.

## When do I use this toolkit?

This toolkit can be accessed for guidance throughout different milestones in a project. For example:



### **Project Charter**

*When documenting the project charter*



### **Engagement Planning**

*When designing an engagement strategy for the project*



### **Procurement Process**

*When determining what criteria is required to select a contractor*

Depending on the complexity of your project, this guide should be referenced multiple times for one project.

## Steps for Success:

1. Review the background and principles.
2. Determine what equity-deserving groups may be important to your project or how these principles can be embedded in its design.
3. Reflect or discuss the [guiding questions](#) with the project team at each of the project milestones.
4. Review the checklist and determine which items are relevant to your project and at what stages they can be incorporated into your project.
5. Document the related checklist items in your project charter or scope documentation.

# BACKGROUND

Inequities can be embedded in, and perpetuated by, municipal services and programming. For example, green spaces and assets, water conservation initiatives, and waste and transportation services all face challenges related to accessibility, affordability, reliability, and equity. These issues can be particularly problematic when they result in high utility or service fees and/or affect a household's living conditions. For example, some community members struggle to afford and access clean, reliable energy, and face barriers to reduce these costs through energy efficiency measures and home improvements. This affects the well-being and basic needs of individuals and families and is just one of many examples that demonstrates the disparities and barriers that exist in our community.



In the first image, three boys of different heights are standing on boxes of the same height to help them look over a fence to watch a football game, but the shortest boy cannot see over the fence. It is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports.

**They are being treated equally.**

In the second image, the tallest boy has no box, the second tallest boy has one box, and the shortest boy has two boxes to stand on, so that they all are able to see over the fence at the same height. They are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game.

**They are being treated equitably.**

In the third image, the fence has been changed to a see-through fence. All three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed.

**The systemic barrier has been removed.**

Figure 1 - Adapted from City of Ottawa, Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook

## Equity and Energy

One in five (over 2.8 million) Canadian households are living in energy poverty,<sup>2</sup> where low- and moderate-income households have disproportionately higher energy burdens<sup>3</sup> due to factors such as energy rates, climate and environmental factors, home/building performance, income, barriers to existing initiatives, and other household conditions. More than a quarter (over 117,000) of Saskatchewan households are identified as experiencing energy poverty, which is above the Canadian mean. In Saskatoon, 16% of households are experiencing energy poverty, with 66% of those being owners and 34% renters.

While energy efficiency gains have been realized in many homes and vehicles, energy costs still make up a significant proportion of household spending because energy price increases are surpassing efficiency gains. Not only that, energy poverty disproportionately affects lower income Canadians. In 2013, 30% of households earning \$27,000 or less, and almost 28% of households earning between \$27,000 and \$47,700, had to devote 10% or more of their expenditures to energy.

The [LEAP Energy Poverty Explorer Tool](#) shows the percentage of households experiencing energy poverty in Saskatoon. It includes household data by census tract for those spending 6%, 10%, and 15% of their after-tax income on energy costs.

In terms of extreme rates (spending at least 15% of income on energy) of energy poverty, approximately 8.7% of households located in Pleasant Hill, Westmount, and Mount Royal; and 6.4% of households located in Greystone Heights.

While energy poverty is experienced by households in nearly all neighbourhoods in Saskatoon, in 2020, the highest rates of energy poverty (spending 6% or more of their income on energy) were found in the following areas:

- 36% of households in King George, West Industrial, and Riversdale.
- 32% of households in Caswell Hill, Mayfair, and the Airport Business Area.
- 31% of households in Pleasant Hill, Westmount, and Mount Royal.
- 30% of households in Hudson Bay Park, Westmount, and Mount Royal.

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2 A household is defined as experiencing energy poverty (or “high energy burden”) if they spend a disproportionate amount of their income on household energy needs; this is most often considered to be households that spend 6% or more (approx. twice the national median) of their after-tax income on energy bills. Energy poverty affects both homeowners and renters. Households with low-income levels are more vulnerable to energy poverty than those with high levels of income. To learn more, visit [energypoverty.ca](http://energypoverty.ca).

3 Energy burden means the percentage of household income spent on energy services, such as heating, cooling, electricity, and fuel.

# KEY PRINCIPLES FOR STRUCTURING EQUITABLE PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

As local governments pursue the design and implementation of equity-oriented projects and programs, there are a number of principles to uphold throughout the process.

*This section has been informed by USDN's Guidebook on Equitable Clean Energy Program Design for Local Governments and Partners.*

## Listen and respond

First listen to the communities we seek to serve. The initiative should be designed to be as responsive as possible to the needs expressed by community members. A project or initiative should start with engagement efforts targeted towards the populations we seek to serve and project committees should include individuals with lived experiences in order to provide ongoing dialogue in a first-person narrative.

## Partner with trusted community organizations

Municipalities cannot tackle inequity on their own and often require partners and external players to support initiatives. Therefore, it is important to work with community organizations that serve the demographics we seek to engage with to design and deliver initiatives, as well as to build the capacity and/or resources of community organizations through partnerships.

## Recognize structural barriers

Initiatives targeting one equity-deserving group<sup>4</sup> will not necessarily serve all equity-deserving groups, as structural barriers may be different for each individual or community. Understanding who is not included in the work we do, what's contributing to their exclusion, and what we can do differently to remove structural barriers will help support a more inclusive design process.

For example, racism is a systemic and structural barrier faced by many individuals and groups. Applying an "Anti-Racism" lens is the "active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies, practices and attitudes so power is redistributed and shared equitably." Taking this approach can help us identify and define the cultural gaps that lead to widespread social inequality, achieve authentic forms of equity, and make cross-cultural understanding an effective way to create change in positive and equitable ways. — *City of Saskatoon, ayisiyiniwak: A Communications Guide*

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<sup>4</sup> See the Objective section for a list of equity-deserving groups.

## Efficiency first

The most effective way to provide both environmental benefits and cost savings through projects and programs is by reducing the need for energy or resources in the first place. Initiatives focused on conservation and efficiency are key to reducing household energy burdens.

## Reduce financial burdens

Due to varying income levels, households have different opportunities and constraints that impact their needs and ability to participate in initiatives. As such, initiatives should have a pathway(s) tailored to participation based on income levels and unique needs. Initiatives should explore ways to reduce financial and other burdens, especially for low- and moderate-income households.

## Increase benefits

Initiatives should seek to deliver and capitalize on co-benefits. These benefits may be based on a number of different values, depending on who the target audience(s) is. For example, stakeholder values could include:

- **Fairness**
- **Equity**
- **Stability** (in terms of living conditions and costs)
- **Control over decisions that affect their lives**
- **Individual and/or community health**
- **Home comfort**
- **Safety**
- **Privacy**
- **Improve resiliency to a changing climate**
- **Meaningful employment**
- **Accessibility to services/programs**
- **Survival** (in terms of meeting basic needs)
- **Affordability and/or financial independence**
- **Decolonization**
- **Understandability** (in terms of clear language, ease of process, etc.)
- **Environmental health**
- **Reduction of Greenhouse gases (GHG)**

## Make it easy

Participation should be as easy as possible for all households, individuals, and/or audiences. Rather than treating everyone the same, this may mean applying different treatments to obtain equal results and providing participants with meaningful value.



## Integrate with other services

Wherever possible, align with other initiatives or other jurisdictions that serve the same target audience(s).

## Protect participants

Develop consumer and workforce protection elements—including consumer education, guaranteed benefits, capped costs, and legal protections—to avoid unintended consequences and mitigate risks for those who are participating in the initiative. Local governments and delivery agents should also be transparent about their resources and responsibilities, as well as what they can and cannot achieve for different communities within Saskatoon.

### What are Consumer Protections? And why are they needed?

Contract terms, environmental jargon, financial metrics, and technical content, each of which represent colonial practices may be unfamiliar to community members. When initiatives are difficult to comprehend, participants lose their ability to effectively negotiate or advocate for themselves and may end up victims of predatory practices.

For example, if projected savings from an energy project do not materialize, this could lead to higher utility bill payments than budgeted for. Initiatives can address this issue by requiring consumer protections be put into place, such as performance guarantees for energy improvements, free monitoring services and repairs, fixed fees that are clearly communicated and won't increase, removing terms hidden in the fine print, etc.

## Beyond carve-outs

Initiatives should do more than set aside a small portion of benefits for equity-deserving groups. Where possible, center the needs of historically underserved community groups or members in the design and delivery of the initiative. This can be achieved by applying a “Targeted Universalism” approach.

## What is Targeted Universalism?

Targeted universalism means setting universal goals that can be achieved through targeted approaches. This approach can be used in the design process to understand that setting the same goal will likely require different strategies to reach diverse groups.

In using targeted universalism, begin by designing an initiative that centers on the needs of structurally-excluded groups—design at the margins—then build a broader approach from that starting point. In theory, if an initiative is able to improve accessibility (e.g. by reducing barriers and increasing uptake) for those who have historically been underserved, it can also improve accessibility for other segments of the community who face fewer barriers.

## Research-informed decision making

Where available, initiatives should use research and baseline equity data—both quantitative and qualitative—to inform design, establish metrics, and track progress.

## Long-term commitment

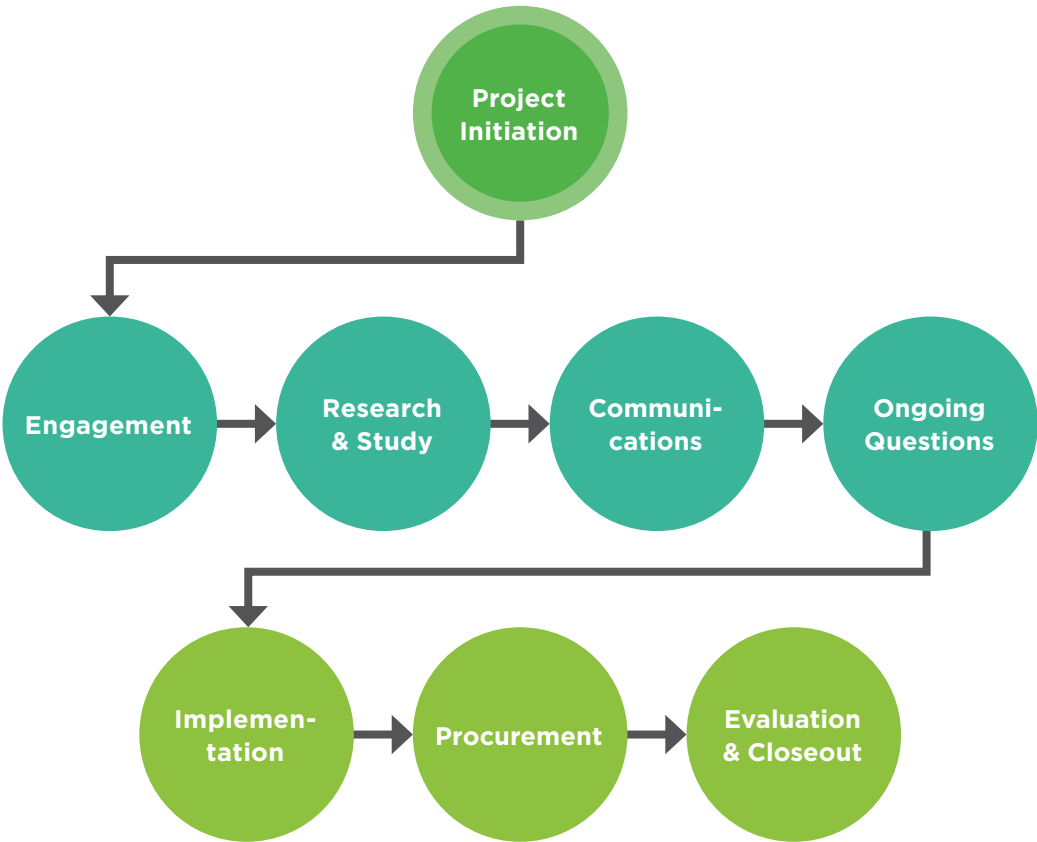
Initiatives should provide support for participants beyond the initial improvement, install, or delivery. For example, they should also offer longer-term service, upkeep, customer service, troubleshooting, and repair.

# GUIDING QUESTIONS

Using the [Key Principles](#) as a starting point, the next step is to design an equitable initiative by considering the following guiding questions. Employees are not required to answer these questions in writing, but they should be contemplated in the early stages of design.

Each of the icons below represent different project phases and are hyperlinked to specific guiding questions for the corresponding phase. **To jump to the guiding questions for your project phase, click the phase icon below.**

*This section has been informed by the City of Ottawa's Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook and USDN's Guidebook on Equitable Clean Energy Program Design for Local Governments and Partners.*



## Project Initiation

### Look Inward

- Do I hold assumptions about people that get in the way of how I work with them?
- Do I avoid stereotypes so I can see the individual or group for who they really are?
- Am I able to respect differences and yet recognize what we have in common?
- Am I paying attention to those who are not expressing their ideas? How do I encourage feedback and full participation from everyone?
- Am I raising issues in a way that encourages dialogue?
- Do I consider potential barriers in each situation and work to minimize them?
- Do I discourage jokes, insults, and negative comments that are offensive to people?
- Are there procedures, policies, and/or practices that support or limit my capacity to be inclusive?
- Do I acknowledge that municipal policy, procedures and governance structures often create the inequities being experienced (colonialism)?
- Do I acknowledge that racism exists in our community?
- Do I understand that people of our community have differing worldviews?
- Do I understand the relationship that Indigenous people have to the environment and land and all it has to offer? (i.e., relationship to mother earth, original stewards/ caretakers of the land.)

### Eligibility and Participants

- Who should the initiative serve? Consider: Who is of the greatest need? Who is of the highest interest? Who could benefit the most?
- What should the initiative's eligibility criteria include? (See the checklist in the next section for ideas).
- How can we ensure the eligibility criteria aren't onerous and will attract those we wish to serve?
- How will the initiative ensure that a full diversity of people can participate and benefit?
- Does the timing of events or hours of service consider potential demands on people's time (religious and cultural holidays, harvest time, family responsibilities, and individuals working more than one job)?
- Have the short- and long-term needs of residents from different equity groups been considered?
  - ▶ For example, consider using resources like the [Health Equity Impact Assessment](#) provided by the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

## Goals and Outcomes

- What are the equity concerns related to the initiative and which groups will they impact? If you are unsure check with engagement, indigenous initiatives or community development after reading through this toolkit.
- What are the potential negative impacts to the impacted groups and what are actions to mitigate those potential negative impacts?
- Have certain equity issues related to the initiative already been identified by residents or employees?
- How will the initiative contribute to more equitable access to resources, services, or benefits? How are we going to deliver an initiative that is inclusive, accessible, authentic, and representative?
- Do the goals and expected outcomes of the initiative reflect equity and inclusion?
- Have equity and inclusion considerations been included in the initiative's business plan, strategic documents, and project management documents?
- Is our team representative of the diversity of the population we are engaging? What steps can we take to ensure we are inclusive of a diversity of perspectives?
- How does the initiative respond to the needs of a historically underserved community?
- What are the costs or risks of not taking equity issues into account in this initiative?
- What are the benefits of addressing equity issues through this initiative?

## Engagement

### Guiding questions for designing the engagement process:

- Have approaches been considered that will minimize the burden of engagement and help ensure that everyone is able to fully participate?
- Who are the underserved groups (i.e. those you often do not hear from through regular engagement tactics) and what is the best way to reach them?
- Have you considered that additional budget may be required to meaningfully engage stakeholders? For example, competitive compensation for Indigenous Elders or Knowledge Keepers.
- Have we considered which people and groups may be missed by only using certain methods?
- Which employees, departments, or community agencies have experience in/with these specific communities? Can they help us do outreach?

### Checkpoint

Check in with City Engagement staff to determine engagement needs and budget for your project.

- Is there a history or current sensitive matters —between the City and the community, or between communities—that needs to be considered? Has trust been built (or broken) as a result of past activities?
- Have the target audiences already been consulted in the past on the same/similar topic? What were the findings at that time? How will they feel about being engaged on this topic again? Will this cause engagement burnout?
- How do individuals and groups want us to include them? Can you contact them to ask prior to engagement? Remember, there can be significant diversity within groups.
- In terms of venues/events, is the environment welcoming and/or familiar to participants, especially for those who may be reluctant to share their views? If not, what can we do to change this?
- Does the pace, format, and language of the engagement accommodate everyone, including participants who are least likely to speak up and for whom the information may be new?
- Are the insights from groups with lived experience of systemic barriers and inequities reflected in the final product?
- How will we report back the findings to the full diversity of people who were involved in the engagement activity?
- Internally could speak to Reconciliation ambassadors – on how to engage a broad variety of Indigenous communities
- Consider having an Elder/Knowledge Keeper/Cultural Advisor on your project team from the outset – by contract
- Consider vetting this project through an internal advisory group and/or ITAG to ensure you aren't missing anything important
- Recognize the expertise that people belonging to different equity-deserving groups may bring to your project. This may include lived experiences, but also knowledge from different cultures and expertise as professionals in various fields.
- With Indigenous engagement use direct quotes and check it multiple times to receive permission

### Real world context:

Understand that despite good intentions and best efforts, some equity groups may not have time to engage on projects or the energy to care about city programs as they are more focused on basic needs for survival such as shelter, food or safety. For examples on how to mitigate inclusion issues, see the checklist for success section on *accessing the initiative or engagement*.

## Research & Study

### Research & feasibility study considerations:

- What current research, background information, statistics, or demographic data would help us understand the people or communities that face systemic barriers and inequities in relation to the initiative? Can that information also help us identify what is needed to ensure they will benefit?
- Are there good equity and inclusion practices in other cities, departments, or community organizations that can inform the initiative? The City of Vancouver, City of Lethbridge and City of Edmonton are great examples for Indigenous inclusion and equity.
- Have we checked existing policies that may inform how we address equity in this initiative?
- What information do we have access to? What additional information should be acquired before developing the initiative?
- Will our research identify specific areas where we may unintentionally be limiting equity and inclusion?
- Are we making any assumptions that we need to verify? And how will we verify them?
- Where appropriate, how will we report back the findings to the people who were involved in and/or could benefit from the research?
- Can you consult local experts or community members for your research? Can this be done early on or more than once throughout the project?

### Checkpoint

If developing an initiative with broader policy or organizational implications for the corporation, consult with a Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Coordinator

## Communications

### Guiding Questions for communications planning:

- Have we considered all possible target audiences? Who might be at risk of exclusion?
- Who is facilitating or planning the communications? Ensure a diverse set of individuals for the communications planning are utilized.
- What specific communication strategies are needed to reach them? Note: these may be different than regular/traditional/conventional communication strategies that are universally used
- How will our communication materials get out to the community organizations and networks that serve diverse populations? How will we ensure materials and information are relayed on to (and understood by) those we seek to reach?
- Have we communicated with network organizations to determine the most optimal

groups to communicate with?

- How do our messages foster inclusion, respect, and equity?
- Are our materials and communication strategy in plain language and easily understood by diverse audiences?
- Should delivery in multiple languages be considered? Is there a need for translation services?
- Is plain language used?
- Are there concepts, terms, or images that may be culturally specific and need to be added or changed to make messages more accessible?
- Do images represent the full diversity of our community? And do they capture the diversity within specific communities of people?
- Do images portray individuals in a way that promotes equity and breaks stereotypes (for example, who is in an active role vs a passive role, who is at the centre, who is serving and who is being served)?
- Will target audiences relate to and feel included and respected in the way they are represented?

## Implementation

### Funding and financing considerations

- What human and financial resources are needed to develop and deliver the initiative in a way that incorporates an equity lens?
- What financing mechanisms exist (either cash reimbursement, project grants, gifts, loans or in-kind services) that could be used to deliver the equitable sustainable initiative?<sup>5</sup>

### Participant interaction and access:

- Has our initiative been mapped out in order to understand the full participant interaction process? For example, how will people access the initiative? What steps are involved? Where might barriers and/or bottlenecks occur? At what stage in the participant “journey” do barriers exist?



<sup>5</sup> Examples of financing mechanism are provided on page 44 of [USDN's Guidebook on Equitable Clean Energy Program Design for Local Governments and Partners](#).



- How could participant barriers (such as those listed below) be overcome?
  - ▶ Stigma or perception of being classified as low income or experiencing energy poverty
  - ▶ up-front costs
  - ▶ ongoing/maintenance costs
  - ▶ no/low participant knowledge of the process to participate in, install, and/or maintain the action
  - ▶ Inability to access financing
  - ▶ the participant's home does not support infrastructure upgrades
  - ▶ language and/or cultural barriers
  - ▶ challenges associated with navigating a cumbersome process / red tape
  - ▶ multiple points of contact with the delivery agent
  - ▶ key audience(s) don't know about or understand the value/benefit of participating
  - ▶ key audience(s) don't have decision making power, don't realize their decision making power, or authority to take up the action
- Are there policies, procedures, practices, and/or attitudes that prevent some people from fully engaging in our initiative? See the box below for a real world example.
- How many participants or households is the initiative aiming to serve? How many are likely to participate? What are the anticipated participant uptake rates?

### Real world context:

Colonialism and colonial systems had and continue to have far-reaching impacts on Indigenous communities. When non-Indigenous people settled on land now known as Saskatoon, it was on traditional Indigenous territories. Indigenous people were excluded from the newly settled city by being displaced, removing their ability to self-govern, reflect their culture and traditions, and continue their relationship with the land. Ongoing colonialism and colonial structures within the City continue to create barriers.

Being aware of the negative and systemic barriers that continue is important as we attempt to correct past injustices on our path to reconciliation. How can we reimagine our processes to assure that Indigenous peoples are included? Who are City services, developments, and initiatives structured to serve? Who is benefitting and who is left out? The City needs to work with and listen to Indigenous communities and governments as the solutions to systemic problems are likely to come from within the Indigenous community.

## Procurement

### Guiding questions for the procurement process:

- Have you reviewed the [procurement policy](#)?
- Can those the initiative is aiming to serve also have a role in delivering the initiative?
- Can the initiative create opportunities for under-represented people to acquire experience?
- Have we considered the City of Saskatoon's [Diverse Supplier guidelines](#) in our procurement documents?
- Do job requirements and/or procurement selection criteria unnecessarily limit who would qualify?
- Is interview process or location a barrier to diverse demographics?
- Have we considered where to post employment opportunities and procurement documents to ensure that the widest diversity of people are able to access them? Do we encourage community agencies to access the City's career and procurement sites so that we can broaden the applicant pool from diverse groups?
- Do your procurement practices consider and include Indigenous-owned businesses?
- Are interview panels and evaluation committees composed of individuals who are able to represent and value diverse backgrounds and experiences?

### Partners

- Have we identified and recruited key partners that are needed to make the initiative successful? For example, the City has a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatoon Tribal Council.
- What are the roles and responsibilities of each partner and of the City?
- Have we determined who should administer the initiative? For example, under what circumstances should the initiative be led by the City of Saskatoon (supported by partners), and under what circumstances should the initiative be led by a partner (supported by the City of Saskatoon)?

## Ongoing Considerations

### Participant protection measures:

- What is being done to ensure that participants are physically, financially and legally protected if they choose to participate? What is being done to ensure that participants are protected from any unintended consequences of participating in the initiative? For ex. Women, children and LGBTQ2S+ are especially vulnerable. (See the checklist section for examples on keeping participants safe).

- Have consumer-friendly measures been put into place, such as easy-to-understand applications, disclosures, contracting terms, negotiating checklists, etc.?
- Protect privacy of participants by properly storing personal information and only collecting what is needed for an initiative.
- Has a Code of Conduct including a declaration of conflict of interest been developed for external delivery agents, installers, and consultants?
- Has a dispute resolution process been set up to manage inquiries and complaints associated with breaches to the Code of Conduct, unacceptable or predatory practices, etc.?
- Have minimum benefits and/or savings requirements been established?

## Evaluation & Close Out

### Evaluation and continuous improvement:

- How will we measure the extent to which the initiative improves equity and access? What indicators will be or have been developed to show that the initiative benefited the desired audiences? Consider working with a professional evaluator during this stage of the project.
- What methods are we using to evaluate the initiative? Consider working with a professional evaluator.
- Is there baseline data identified to measure the initiative's success against? Do our data collection methods enable us to gather the appropriate data?
- If gathering participant feedback, are the methods accessible to those the initiative aimed to serve? How can we make it easy for respondents to participate? Would it be useful to gather feedback from those who stopped using the service and/or those who never used it, in order to assess any unknown biases?
- When analyzing our data, did we maintain a diversity of perspectives in the findings?
- Have we validated the findings with the community so as to minimize any biases?
- Have we considered models that integrate community members in the monitoring and evaluation process?
- How can we report back to the people who participated in the evaluation process?
- When undertaking a review of the initiative, what opportunities are there to enhance equity and inclusion? How will we use lessons learned to make improvements?

# CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

After reviewing and discussing the guiding questions, the checklist should be used throughout different milestones to integrate the concepts into the design of projects and programs. While the guiding questions are meant to be reflected on or discussed within the project team, the checklist represents tangible elements that can be incorporated into the project.

<b>Condition for Success</b>	<b>Guidance</b>
<b>Residents can access the initiative and/or the engagement process</b>	<p><b>Timing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Plan events (either single or multiple) and service delivery hours for times that work best for the target audience(s) and/or reach the widest groups of people. This may be outside of regular City work hours (i.e. evenings and weekends).</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Work around potential demands on people’s time (religious and cultural holidays, harvest time, family responsibilities).</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide ample time for engagement to give people space to share their perspectives</li></ul> <p><b>Location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use locations that are accessible by public transportation and are close to where the target audiences live.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use venues that the community is familiar with and already tends to gather in.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use venues that are culturally safe and allow for prayers, or smudging for example.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Offer travel stipends or public transit fare.</li></ul> <p><b>Accessibility:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider accessibility for physical, visual, and hearing impairments. For example, ensure venues have wheelchair access or an elevator.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Offer child or dependent care during the time of the event or when a service is being delivered.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider multiple formats to deliver the event or service (such as online, in-person, various venues, and different levels of time commitments).</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Always use plain language and when required deliver events in multiple languages or provide translation services.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider additional supports that may be needed to create safe spaces for participation by asking participants what they need. This could include pre-meetings or follow up sessions with some participants. See the Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership’s Guide <a href="#">Creating a Culture of Inclusion</a>.</li></ul>

### Compensation:

- Consider whether compensation for participation is required and/or appropriate (such as honorariums or other financial compensation; donation of products, services, or resources; in-kind support).
- Include funds for participant compensation in the project budget. Note the amount of compensation depends on the participants and their involvement in your project. Consult engagement, Indigenous Initiatives or Community Development Departments if you are unsure how much funding should be dedicated to compensation for participants.

### Cost, time, and other barriers to initiating participation are minimal

- Create avenues to participate that do not require technology, as computer or phone access may be limited for some households. Alternatively, virtual engagement can be an opportunity to consult a broader audience as transportation and daycare for example are eliminated for participants.
- Provide quick responses to inquiries, in a format preferred by the participant.
- Minimize/remove costs for participation.
- Minimize the amount of documentation required to sign-up (for example, only ask for information that's necessary and ensure that information is clear and easy to understand).
- Where appropriate, align the initiative's eligibility requirements with pre-existing initiatives/services that residents are already accessing. For example, to reduce the need for participants to fill out paperwork twice, participants accessing specific types of assistance should automatically qualify for the City's equity-focused initiatives (For example, those living in affordable housing or accessing social/financial assistance through Saskatchewan's Income Support, Assured Income for Disability, Seniors Income Plan, Transitional Employment Allowance, Employment Supplement, Provincial Training Allowance, etc.).
- Connect initiatives with pre-existing low-income leisure passes or discounted bus passes at the municipal level.
- Create a flexible registration process (how, when, and where applications are filled out).
- Provide an option for participants to fill the application out with the service provider (either in person, online, or over the phone).

**Residents are safe and protected**

- Set out safety protocols for participants, contractors, delivery agents, installers, volunteers, etc.
- Consider safety concerns related to the venue (or related to getting to/from the venue).
- Consider whether households will be comfortable with the service provider visiting and/or conducting work in their home. For example, will certain members of the household need to be home?
- Create easy-to-understand, consumer-friendly disclosures of contracting terms, remove hidden terms and fine print, and provide legal protections if necessary.
- Set up the initiative so that participants receive minimum guaranteed benefits or savings.
- Offer free monitoring services and repairs for an adequate amount of time for equipment replacement programs.
- Ensure participant costs are capped and that no surprise fees result.
- Allow opportunities for participants to provide anonymous feedback and/or complaints.
- Set up a dispute resolution process that anyone involved can access (including participants, contractors, delivery agents, installers, volunteers, etc.).
- Care, compassion, and seeing an issue through will build trust. For example, if a resident calls about an initiative that is not your area of expertise, follow the inquiry through to the right individual and avoid passing people off to another department.

If the initiative requires third-party contractors to provide a product or service to the participant:

- Prepare consumer negotiating checklists for participants to use (such as a list of questions to ask, qualifications to request, and other considerations when selecting a contractor).
- Set out expectations and requirements for contractors.
- Generate a list of qualified/trusted contractors.
- Require contractors, delivery agents, installers, volunteers, etc. to sign a Code of Conduct.

<p><b>Residents can envision themselves as part of the initiative</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use images that reflect local settings, people and places.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use local community leaders as champions for your initiative, or ambassador testimonials or influencers to reach different demographics (for example, TikTok can be used for youth).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider how individuals and groups self-identify and want to be portrayed.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reflect the demographics of the community (culture, gender, age, abilities, sexual orientation, etc.).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use story-telling techniques, emotion, ceremonies and cultural norms that make the initiative relatable to those you wish to serve.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Frame the initiative in reference to the community's priorities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Residents believe the initiative's benefits to be worthwhile</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider what values are held by those you wish to serve. Then consider how the initiative helps fulfill or respond to those values.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider what factors might convince someone to participate, and why.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use statistics to convey impacts a group of residents can have on city.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use step incentives. For example, the more one conserves, reduces waste, or increases energy efficiency, the larger the incentives.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Communicate co-benefits of project or program at an individual level.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Residents are aware of the initiative</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider how the target audience communicates with one another and their preferred method of communication.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How, where, and from whom do they access information (for example, existing meetings or community gatherings, bulletin boards, door to door, direct mail, community or faith-based organizations, schools and educational institutions, community newspapers, social media, etc.)?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use a range of methods to get the word out. For example, emails, community newsletters, direct text messages, social media, school presentations, community association workshops.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Try to reach people in their own setting(s) where they are most comfortable, such as home, school or community centers.</li> </ul>

**Residents understand the message**

- Use plain language (spoken and written).
- Communicate using accessible formats. This may require spoken language, braille, sign language, large font size, supporting graphics/icons, etc.
- Consider whether multiple languages should be used and/or whether a language or cultural interpreter should be made available.
- Learn about the images, lingo, colours, or symbols that have meaning to the groups we are trying to reach.<sup>6</sup> Consider how to use them appropriately and when not to use them at all. Seek guidance from community organizations. For example, [Ayisiyiniwak](#) (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) has descriptions of colors, symbols and other cultural references important in Indigenous communities. (p. 6–9)

**Residents trust the messenger**

- Include equity and inclusion in the initiative’s goals, business plan, strategic documents, and project management documents.
- If hiring consultants, comply with the City’s Purchasing Policy, as well as the corresponding Diverse Supplier guidelines.
- Choose a contractor that employs members of the target audience to ensure similar identities, experiences and understands their perspective. For example, when engaging Indigenous residents, hire an Indigenous contractor.
- Build legitimacy by co-branding or co-communicating with agencies or organizations that are trusted by the community. To do so, ask the community which organizations they trust and collaborate with those entities.
- Select words or phrases that resonate more positively with potential participants (for example, “income-qualified” rather than “low-income”; “no-cost” rather than “free”; “over 65” rather than “senior”; “vulnerable populations” or “structurally excluded” rather than “marginalized” etc.).
- Consider whether certain meeting etiquette, protocols, and/or non-verbal communication cues need to be followed.<sup>7</sup>
- Utilize a referral program or emphasize word-of-mouth in outreach.
- Incorporate the City of Saskatoon’s Diverse Supplier guidelines in our procurement documents.
- Take courses offered through the [City of Saskatoon’s Learning & Development site](#), as well as other organizations, to learn more about equity issues facing our community.
- Be aware of triggering topics, such as gender based violence, and consult the appropriate experts in the community to speak on these topics.

<sup>6</sup> The City of Saskatoon’s *ayisiyiniwak: A Communications Guide* includes some examples for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

<sup>7</sup> For example, when working with Indigenous stakeholders, certain protocol should be followed during meetings or visitations. See the City of Saskatoon’s *ayisiyiniwak: A Communications Guide* for guidance.



## APPENDIX - DEFINITIONS

**Anti-racism:** the policy or practice of opposing racism and promoting racial acceptance.

**Diversity:** Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, encompassing the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. While diversity is often used in reference to race, ethnicity, and gender, we embrace a broader definition of diversity that also includes age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. The definition also includes diversity of thought: ideas, perspectives, and values. It is recognized that individuals affiliate with multiple identities

**Equity:** “Equity is treating everyone fairly by acknowledging their unique situation and addressing systemic barriers. The aim of equity is to ensure that everyone has access to equal results and benefits. Considering a situation from the perspective of those who risk exclusion is a key step in promoting equity.”<sup>8</sup>

Equity can be achieved when fairness is increased and improved within organizations’ and governmental systems’ processes, procedures and allotment of resources. Tackling equity issues requires an ongoing understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society.

**Equity-deserving groups** may include, but are not limited to:

- Persons with disabilities
- Indigenous peoples
- Racialized groups
- LGBTQI2S+ communities
- Immigrants, refugees, newcomers, and those with English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Low income persons/households
- Youth
- Seniors
- Persons living with mental illness
- Victims of violence
- Persons with low literacy

**Inclusion:** The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. It’s important to note that while an inclusive group is by definition diverse, a diverse group isn’t always inclusive. Increasingly, recognition of unconscious or implicit bias helps organizations to be deliberate about addressing issues of inclusivity.

**Initiative:** A program, project, policy, procedure, plan, strategy, etc. that is being undertaken by the City.

**Racism:** Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or structurally excluded.

**Systemic Barriers:** “Obstacles that exclude groups or communities of people from full participation and benefits in social, economic and political life. They may be hidden or unintentional but built into the way society works. Our assumptions and stereotypes, along with policies, practices and procedures, reinforce them.” — *City of Ottawa, Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook*

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8 *City of Ottawa, Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook*

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