



Legislation Text

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AN ORDINANCE establishing definitions and directing implementation steps related to the fair and just principle of the adopted 2010-2014 countywide strategic plan.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Through adoption of the King County Strategic Plan 2010-2014: Working Together for One King County, King County has transformed its work on equity and social justice from an initiative to an integrated effort that applies the countywide strategic plan's principle of "fair and just" intentionally in all the county does in order to achieve equitable opportunities for all people and communities. This ordinance establishes definitions and identifies the specific approaches necessary to implement and achieve the "fair and just" principle that is embedded as a core element of the goals, objectives and strategies of the countywide strategic plan.

SECTION 2. The definitions in this section apply throughout this ordinance unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

A. "Community" means a group of people who share some or all of the following: geographic boundaries, sense of membership, culture, language, common norms and interests.

B. "Determinants of equity" means the social, economic, geographic, political and physical environment conditions in which people in our county are born, grow, live, work and age that lead to the creation of a fair and just society. Access to the determinants of equity is necessary to have equity for all people regardless of race, class, gender or language spoken. Inequities are created when barriers exist that

prevent individuals and communities from accessing these conditions and reaching their full potential. The determinants of equity are:

1. Community economic development that supports local ownership of assets, including homes and businesses, and assures fair access for all to business development and business retention opportunities;
2. Community and public safety that includes services such as fire, police, emergency medical services and code enforcement that are responsive to all residents so that everyone feels safe to live, work and play in any neighborhood of King County;
3. A law and justice system that provides equitable access and fair treatment for all;
4. Early childhood development that supports nurturing relationships, high-quality affordable child care and early learning opportunities that promote optimal early childhood development and school readiness for all children;
5. Education that is high quality and culturally appropriate and allows each student to reach his or her full learning and career potential;
6. Equity in county practices that eliminates all forms of discrimination in county activities in order to provide fair treatment for all employees, contractors, clients, community partners, residents and others who interact with King County;
7. Food systems that support local food production and provide access to affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate foods for all people;
8. Health and human services that are high quality, affordable and culturally appropriate and support the optimal well-being of all people;
9. Healthy built and natural environments for all people that include mixes of land use that support: jobs, housing, amenities and services; trees and forest canopy; and clean air, water, soil and sediment;
10. Housing for all people that is safe, affordable, high quality and healthy;

11. Job training and jobs that provide all residents with the knowledge and skills to compete in a diverse workforce and with the ability to make sufficient income for the purchase of basic necessities to support them and their families;

12. Neighborhoods that support all communities and individuals through strong social networks, trust among neighbors and the ability to work together to achieve common goals that improve the quality of life for everyone in the neighborhood;

13. Parks and natural resources that provide access for all people to safe, clean and quality outdoor spaces, facilities and activities that appeal to the interests of all communities; and

14. Transportation that provides everyone with safe, efficient, affordable, convenient and reliable mobility options including public transit, walking, car pooling and biking.

C. "Equity" means all people have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to attain their full potential.

D. "Equity and social justice foundational practices" means those practices that can increase the county's influence on access to the determinants of equity when applied to the county's actions in: siting and delivery of services; policy development and decision making; education and communication within county government; and community engagement and partnerships. Equity and social justice foundational practices are goals for all governmental actions; across countywide strategic plan goals, objectives and strategies; and across agencies, programs and services. The equity and social justice foundational practices are efforts that enable King County government to:

1. Raise and sustain the visibility of the countywide strategic plan's "fair and just" principle and equity and social justice values, policies and foundational practices;

2. Increase focus on the determinants of equity in order to make progress in the elimination of the root cause of inequities;

3. Consider equity and social justice impacts in all decision-making so that decisions increase fairness

and opportunity for all people, particularly for people of color, low-income communities and people with limited English proficiency or, when decisions that have a negative impact on fairness and opportunity are unavoidable, steps are implemented that mitigate the negative impacts;

4. Foster an organizational culture that promotes fairness and opportunity;

5. Collaborate across agencies, departments and other organizations;

6. Build capacity to engage all communities in a manner that: promotes and foster trust among people across geographic, race, class and gender lines; results in more effective policies, processes and services; and supports communities' efforts to develop solutions.

F. "Fair and just" means the county serves all residents by promoting fairness and opportunity and eliminating inequities through actions to which equity and social justice foundational practices are applied.

G. "Inequity" means differences in well-being that disadvantage one individual or group in favor of another. These differences are systematic, patterned and unfair and can be changed. Inequities are not random; they are caused by past and current decisions, systems of power and privilege, policies and the implementation of those policies.

H. "Social justice" means all aspects of justice, including legal, political and economic, and requires the fair distribution of public goods, institutional resources and life opportunities for all people.

SECTION 3. To achieve the fair and just principle embedded within the countywide strategic plan goals, objectives and strategies, the executive shall:

A. Apply equity and social justice foundational practices to county actions and endeavor to integrate these practices into the county's: strategic, operational and business plans; management and reporting systems for accountability and performance; and budgets in order to eliminate inequities and create opportunities for all people and communities;

B. Establish an interbranch team to facilitate accountability of and coordination by all branches, departments, agencies, and offices of county government regarding implementation of the fair and just principle

of the countywide strategic plan. The executive shall designate a department or agency to colead the effort. The interbranch team shall be composed of the directors or their designees of all branches, departments, agencies and offices of county government. The interbranch team shall support the county's application of equity and social justice foundational practices through:

1. Development of analytical tools to support all branches' departments and agencies in identifying the equity impacts of policies and decisions and ways in which to amplify positive impacts and mitigate negative impacts;

2. Development of guidelines which can be implemented across all branches' departments and agencies for outreach, communication and community engagement to improve the scope and effectiveness of county efforts to ensure that all communities receive information and have the opportunity to shape county policies and services;

3. Identifying focus areas and supporting the development of policies and actions that improve fairness and opportunity in county government organizational practices, including all employment practices such as hiring, training, retention and promotion and business practices such as contracting, procurement and grant writing;

4. Providing a forum for exchange of information and identification of opportunities for collaboration across branches' departments and agencies on equity and social justice foundational practices; and

5. Supporting the identification of annual work plans by branches' departments and agencies on application of equity and social justice practices, including the items listed in subsection B.1. through 5. of this section; and

C. Design and publish an annual report for King County elected leadership, employees and the public on the status and trends in equity in the county and measures of accountability for work plans and results related to implementation of this ordinance.

SECTION 4. It is the intent of the council that this ordinance is a general statement of county policy

that cannot form the basis of a private right of action.