

# Office of Equity Task Force

## Operating Principles



Adopted: August 19, 2019

### **EMBRACE EQUITY**

We are on a journey toward well-being, where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential, as defined by those impacted by inequity. Embracing equity requires us to identify, name, and dismantle institutional racism and oppression.

### **FOCUS ON RACISM**

Racism, a construct of white supremacy, is used to oppress communities as the 'Other.' We are committed to promoting equity for all historically marginalized communities. We recognize that different forms of discrimination and oppression are related to each other, and we will take these relationships into account. We also recognize that racism is ingrained in our history and deeply embedded in our institutions today, leading to the inequities we see across all sectors. We seek to challenge and undo all forms of oppression, and we are committed to centering racism as our primary focus.

### **CENTER COMMUNITY**

We recognize that we can only achieve equity if communities impacted by inequities are at the center of our work. We acknowledge that communities know best their assets, needs, and solutions. We recognize and share power and structure our meetings to foster meaningful engagement. Community engagement will be intentional and inclusive. We will create opportunities as a Task Force, individual members, and staff to listen, learn, and seek input to guide our work. We will incorporate stories of lived experience into our reports and recommendations.

### **COMMIT TO BOLD ACTION**

Eliminating racism and oppression requires revolutionary change. We commit to using the authority we have and our collective influence to propose changes that interrupt and dismantle historical systems of institutional racism and oppression. We will use our time in Task Force meetings to engage in discussions that lead to actionable recommendations. We will commit as individual Task Force members to be bold and serve as leaders for equity in our respective roles. We share a commitment to being comfortable with discomfort as a bold action.

### **BE VIGILANT FOR ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES AND IMPACTS**

We commit to using an equity lens in the development of recommendations as a Task Force and in our decisions as individual members. Policy, program, and budget decisions can have adverse consequences and impacts if equity is not intentionally and systematically considered. We honor the Seven Generation Principle<sup>1</sup> as standing in the present, while looking back three generations to the wisdom and experience of our ancestors, thinking about issues in the current context, and planning forward for three generations for the protection of our children and the generations to come.

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<sup>1</sup> We acknowledge the Tribal and Urban Indian Pulling Together for Wellness Leadership Advisory Council, American Indian Health Commission for Washington State for sharing this articulation of the Seven Generation Principle.