

# **Environmental Justice Task Force**

## **Operating Principles (Revised Draft)**

Proposed: November 21, 2019

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

### **EMBRACE EQUITY**

Equity means fairness and justice focused on ensuring everyone has the opportunity to meet their full potential. Equity takes into account disadvantage experienced by groups.<sup>1</sup> Equity is not equality. Equity is achievable, but requires prioritizing resources and support towards communities facing inequities. Our work prioritizes communities of color and low-income communities in both urban and rural regions of Washington. Embracing equity requires us to identify, name, and dismantle institutional racism, economic injustice, and oppression, and the roots of poverty.

### **FOCUS ON RACISM**

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 the intersections of various identities 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 will seek to challenge and undo all forms of oppression, and are committed to making anti-racism work a primary focus.

### **CENTER COMMUNITY**

We recognize that we can only achieve equity if the communities suffering from inequities are at the center of our work. We acknowledge that each community knows their assets, and needs, and as such, can speak best to the viability and impact of proposed solutions. We strive to recognize and share the power we have as representative of our organizations, and to structure our meetings to foster meaningful, community-oriented engagement. Stakeholder and community engagement will be intentional. We will create opportunities as a Task Force, individual members, and staff to listen, learn, and seek input to guide our work. We will strive to incorporate stories of lived experience into our reports and recommendations.

### **COMMIT TO BOLD ACTION**

Inequities exist because of racism, economic injustice and systemic oppression that hinder opportunities for individuals and communities to thrive. Eliminating racism, economic injustice, and oppression requires bold change. We commit to using our power, privilege and collective influence to propose changes that interrupt and dismantle historical systems of 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 champions for equity in our respective roles.

### **BE VIGILANT FOR UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES**

Policy, program, and budget decisions can have adverse, unintended consequences if principles of equity are not intentionally and systematically considered. We commit to using an equity lens in the development of recommendations as a Task Force and in our decisions as individual members. We honor the Seven Generation Principle<sup>2</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> Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities. Equity Language Guide. December 2018. Accessed November 11, 2019 < [https://healthequity.wa.gov/Portals/9/Doc/Publications/Reports/EquityLanguageGuide\\_Final\\_.pdf](https://healthequity.wa.gov/Portals/9/Doc/Publications/Reports/EquityLanguageGuide_Final_.pdf) >

<sup>2</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.