

Health Equity Impact Assessment (HEIA)

When considering proposing or implementing a new policy in your community, these questions should be answered to ensure community input and involvement.

Community engagement is a critical component in the development and implementation of public policies, especially those that directly affect the health and well-being of individuals. By actively involving community members in the decision-making process, policymakers ensure that diverse perspectives are considered, leading to more inclusive and effective solutions. Engaging the community fosters trust, builds stronger relationships, and empowers individuals to take ownership of the health outcomes that impact their lives.

Health Equity Impact Assessments (HEIAs) are essential tools in this process. They provide a structured approach to evaluate the potential effects of proposed policies on different populations, particularly those who are most vulnerable or historically underserved. HEIAs help identify and address disparities, ensuring that health policies do not inadvertently worsen inequalities but instead promote equity. By integrating HEIAs into the policy-making process, organizations can make informed decisions that advance health equity and contribute to the overall well-being of all community members.

For the purposes of this document “external partners” are any company or individual outside your organization that you partner with to achieve a goal, “internal partners” are any individuals or groups within your organization that you collaborate with.

Name of individual/group completing assessment: _____

Brief Description: what is the proposed policy? Who is responsible for implementing the policy? Why is this policy necessary?

Issue Statement: Describe the issue you are trying to address with this policy.

Desired Goal: What is the desired goal/outcome?

Whose perspectives did you engage in the process of deciding on the policy for review?: Identify other people or organizations who were able to give feedback into the decision to review this policy.

For a proposed policy, explain the interest in creating it:

Describe whether any person or organization supports or opposes the policy and the reasoning behind their position, if known:

Describe or summarize any data informing the policy (compliance or training data, outcomes data, or any data that helps to understand why the policy or updates to the policy are necessary):

Is the data:

Complete	Yes	No
Reliable	Yes	No
Unbiased	Yes	No

For these next few questions, “partners” can be defined however your team or organization feels is appropriate. When thinking about the benefits and burdens, consider how outcomes or operations will be impacted, how resources will be distributed, or how an organizational or community need will be addressed.

Describe how this will affect internal partners:

- 1) How will they potentially benefit?

- 2) What are the potential burdens?

- 3) What do they value about the policy?

Will this policy affect external partners? Yes or No?

- If yes, list those partners here:

Describe how they will be impacted:

1. How will they potentially benefit?

2. What are the potential burdens?

3. What do they value about the policy?

If external partners will be impacted, identify ways you can plan to engage them. Examples include public meetings or town halls, surveys, focus groups, advisory boards, key informant interviews, etc.:

Any final decisions or actions should be communicated clearly to all partners and impacted people in a way that is accessible and meaningful to them. If community feedback is solicited and provided, it should be clear on whether and how that feedback impacted the final decision. Community members should be engaged in implementation, where appropriate.

Describe the outcomes you expect. How will this policy affect current practices or norms?

Describe how the policy is likely to improve, worsen, or have no impact on health outcomes:

1. How is it likely to improve?

2. How is it likely to worsen?

3. Will it have no impact?

4. Are there any potential unintended consequences?

Has the policy been implemented elsewhere? Yes or No?

If the policy was implemented elsewhere, describe any lessons learned: This could include information about how successful the policy was in achieving its perceived goal, whether it was subsequently revised, and any benefits.

Are there other options to achieve the same or a similar outcome? Which is the best option? Why? More than one legal or policy intervention may be necessary to achieve the goal.

Option	Reasoning
Statute	
Regulation	
Ordinance	
Organizational Policy	
Policy Guidance	
Modify Existing Policy	
Other	

Consider information gained from all of the prior steps, summarize the decision:

How often will the existing or proposed policy be reviewed?

Describe the conditions necessary for long-term success for the policy, e.g., human and financial resources, training, reasonable enforcement mechanisms, community engagement, leadership, political will, etc.:

What conditions are already in place for success?

You may not be able to answer all these questions in a way that you find satisfactory. There may not be opportunities for improvement or to engage diverse voices, and you may not find a solution that everyone agrees on. No matter the outcome, there is value in documenting the decision and communicating the result and reasoning to impacted partners.

- Did you establish why the policy is being reviewed or proposed?

- Did you explain the context of the policy?

- Did you determine the impact of the policy on internal and external partners?

- Did you identify potential outcomes?

- Did you identify ways to make your policy sustainable?

- Did you discuss the next steps?

INTENTIONAL ACTIONS. Which antiracist actions are you taking to advance health equity?

- Are you designing your program with the community? Yes, no, maybe? How?

- Which strategies are you using to connect and learn from community?
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- How are you centering the voices and feedback of BIPOC individuals in those conversations? And in your decision-making processes?
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- How do you plan to retain community participation and maintain those relationships in a meaningful way moving forward?
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- How will you ensure that your organization is internally and publicly accountable to communities most impacted by racism?
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- How does your organization benefit from conducting this evaluation?
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ASSESSMENT

Step 1. Identify racial equity results:

- What does your organization define as the most important racially equitable community outcome(s)?
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- Think about the systems your project/program/policy may impact. Can the project potentially impact systems outside the sector where you work? (for example, healthcare, education, employment, contracting, community development, housing, criminal justice, immigration, transportation)
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Step 2. Identify key priority population:

- Who does your project, policy, or program impact? Check all that apply:
 - ☐ Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC). Identify race/ethnicity:
 - ☐ Low-income individuals and/or families
 - ☐ Monolingual in languages other than English, English language learners
 - ☐ Immigrants, refugees, non-U.S. citizens
 - ☐ Older adults/elders
 - ☐ Lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual (LGBTQIA+)
 - ☐ People with disabilities
 - ☐ Neuro-divergent
 - ☐ Veteran
 - ☐ Other
- Who is your project, policy or program not reaching or impacting that it should be?

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- What geographic areas may be impacted by your work?
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- What is the racial composition of people and community groups in this city/neighborhood?
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- What does data and your conversations with community members tell you about existing racial inequities that you should take into consideration?
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- Determine benefits and burdens. Consider intersectionality across people who may be impacted.
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- What are potential impacts to racial equity in the community where you are working?
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Address each change you've made in response to identifying racial equity impacts. Think of how you will adjust your plans to AVOID the negative impacts, MITIGATE them, or ACCEPT them. If you have no choice and must ACCEPT a negative impact, identify why you had to accept that impact and what you would have needed to AVOID or MITIGATE the negative impact.

Racial equity issue (potential impact, root cause, etc.)	Avoid, Mitigate, Accept	What strategies will you use to avoid/mitigate/accept this issue?
1)		
2)		
3)		

Community Partner Worksheet

Community Groups: _____

Group Leader/Organization: _____

Is this a priority issue?: _____

Desired Solution: _____

Whose voices are missing but should be part of the conversation? List them out. _____

How will the identified partners be included in identifying and defining the issue and deciding on the approach? _____

Who in your organization is responsible for reaching out to the identified partners? List them here.

Guidance for Community-based Organizations (CBOs)

Group Name: _____

Summarize the issue:

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the highest priority, how would you prioritize the issue? _____

Why did you give the rating you did?

What would you like to see as potential solutions?

How do you want to be engaged? This could be regular meetings, emails, phone calls, etc.:

What do you value most in the outcome? For your community?:
