



Washington State

**OFFICE OF
EQUITY**

Equity News Now

8.20



Welcome to Equity News Now!

Hello readers!

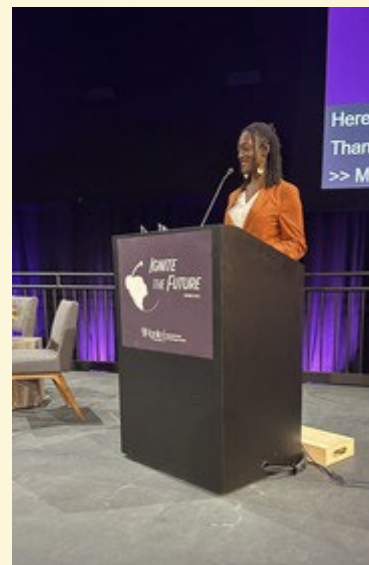
We're grateful you're here with us, following our journey to cocreate a Washington for All. Since we've switched to seasonal updates, we have a lot to share with you in this issue! We believe in transparency and accountability which is why we fully uplift all our work to our audience. Remember to [click here to read our past newsletters!](#)

Thanks for taking the time to read about all that we have going on, including:

- Our 2025-2027 Strategic Plan;
- Community Compensation Updates;
- Updates from each of our Teams;
- Our New Accessibility Corner; and
- Our Event Updates & Invitations!

We'd love to hear your feedback on our newsletter: feel free to email us at Connect@equity.wa.gov.

**What is the Office of
Equity? Click here to
learn more!**



Office of Equity Director, Megan Matthews (she/her), speaking at an Ignite the Future event



A Message from the Deputy Director



A Message from the Deputy Director

Welcome to our newsletter for August 2025! We are excited to share what we have been working on this summer and what you can expect to see from us in the coming months. We continue to build toward a Washington for All where everyone in our community is welcome and has access to resources so they can thrive.

While we are proud of the accomplishments shared in this newsletter, we know that we have a lot of work ahead in the future. Our shifting landscape offers new challenges. We cannot succeed without help from strong partnerships. Thank you for your interest in our work and for being part of our community. We invite you to join us in building a state where all belong.

Growing a Washington for All,

Andrew Chin (he/him)
Office of Equity Deputy Director



Strategic Plan



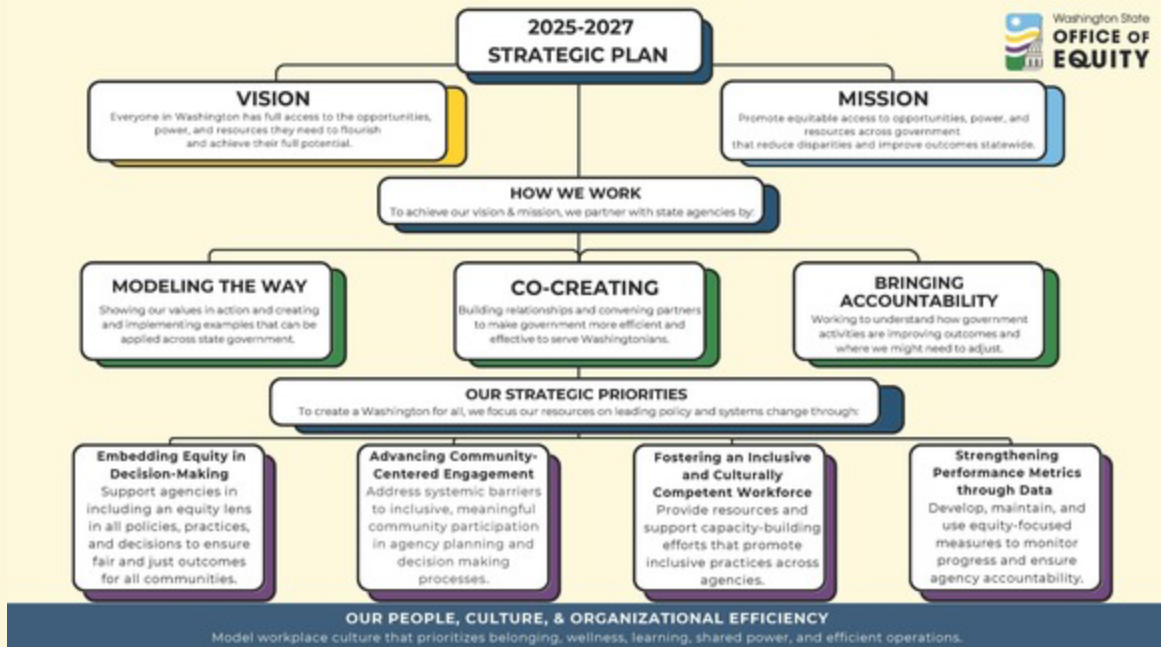
Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027

In this newsletter, we are pleased to share the Washington State Office of Equity's 2025-2027 Strategic Plan.

To create a Washington for All, our strategic priorities focus our resources on leading policy and systems change. We do this by:

- Embedding Equity in Decision Making,
- Advancing Community Centered Engagement,
- Fostering an Inclusive and Culturally Competent Workforce,

- And Strengthening Performance Metrics through Data.



[Click here to download a PDF of our 2025 - 2027 Strategic Plan.](#)

Our office stays committed to our duties, as laid out in the [RCW 43.06D](#). In action, this looks like advancing our partnership with state agencies. We focus on building relationships and convening partners, which demonstrates our values across state government. By collaborating, we are working to understand how government activities are improving outcomes.

Thank you for reading our Strategic Plan!



Community Compensation

Community Compensation Allocation Application Review Has Begun!

Community Compensation Allocation Applications have been coming in, and we are excited to announce that the first round of reviews is now underway!

[Click here to access the Community Compensation Forms & Surveys Center.](#)

The Community Compensation Allocation Request form officially opened on July 1st. As part of the review process, the Office of Equity will forward approved requests to the Office of Financial Management (OFM). By August 15th, OFM has notified approved agencies with a memo outlining the amount of funding awarded. After applications are submitted, OFM will be working directly with each agency's finance team to distribute funds accordingly.

For full details about how the process works, **[please click here to visit the Community Compensation Guidelines webpage.](#)**

Important Reminders:

- **Though the first round of reviews have happened, the request form will remain open until all funds are expended.**
- **Keep in mind that each agency is allowed to submit only one application.** If multiple applications are submitted from the same agency, all submissions will be denied. The agency will then be asked to coordinate and submit a single final version. To avoid delays, make sure to collaborate with your designated budget representative before applying.

If you have any questions or need support, please reach out to us at LivedExperience@equity.wa.gov. We're here to help! We appreciate your continued commitment to advancing equity and community voice across Washington State.



Access & Accessibility Bench

On the Access & Accessibility Bench we are making it a priority to listen to our communities!

The work to improve the first version of our [Community Engagement Toolkit](#) continues. The newly formed Community Engagement Toolkit Workgroup will advise on this project. The work group had their first meeting in July. We're looking forward to robust discussions with community members with lived experience who have

served on state workgroups. Feedback from the group will help us grow and improve our toolkit materials. If we want a government that works for all, everyone should be able to participate!

Our team is meeting with community partners that provide language services and resources across the state. We are learning a lot about what's working well. There is also room for improvement in the moments when customers interact with state government. With such language diversity in Washington, these conversations are crucial to advance language access. It is our goal to continue to make equitable communication a priority in our state!

[Above Left Photo: Our Language Access Program Manager, Perla Gamboa (she/her), promoting language services in partnership with the City of Tacoma team.]



Perla pictured with two partners from United Way of Pierce County at an event hosted by Mi Centro in Tacoma, WA.



Communications Bench

The Office of Equity Communications Bench has been busy this summer!

Our biggest announcement is the launch of our new website: WAForAll.wa.gov. This website is a one-stop spot of resources for Washingtonians. Putting this site together has been such a collaborative process. We worked alongside state agencies, community organizations, and many more. We're excited to have a space that puts resources at the center and allows people to easily find what they need. Check it out and add resources you may know of with the '[Share Your Resources](#)' button!

Launching the Elevating Enterprise Comms series was another milestone for our team. These sessions are meant to share best practices in communications with communications employees throughout the state. Building relationships is key to our work in the office. We wanted to extend that approach to other people who work in this field. The first session focused on how we build our teams. Our August session was all about digital accessibility, facilitated by our Digital Communications Accessibility Coordinator, Vic Vong (they/them)! Reach out over email at Connect@equity.wa.gov if you would like to learn more!



Office of Equity Director Megan Matthews (she/her), Communications Director TraeAnna Holiday (she/her), and Events Manager Tanisha Roberts (she/her), pictured at the Juneteenth Flag Raising hosted by Black United In Leadership & Diversity (BUILD). TraeAnna is found in the front wearing white. Megan is found in the back row, in the center. Tanisha is found on the right, behind the person in the tan suit.

We are also grateful to announce winning the Disability Inclusion Network (DIN) RADD award for their "Team" category. It is a huge honor to be acknowledged for the

work we do to make our communications accessible. [Learn more about DIN by clicking here!](#)

From highlighting the work of other teams within the office to amplifying work throughout state government and community, our team has been working diligently to craft messages in a fun and innovative way. We look forward to continuing our campaign for WA for All as there are some cool spotlights to the site we'll be sharing throughout the coming months.



Community Advisory Board

Community Advisory Board Project Updates

This summer, the Community Advisory Board (CAB) has partnered with the Innovation & Performance bench to provide feedback and input on the Statewide Impact Areas. We have collaborated as specific groups within the CAB to provide feedback. Each group has leveraged their own experiences and expertise to provide feedback on community priorities, metrics, and concerns that are widespread across Washington.

We shared best practices for recruitment, bylaws, and more to assist the Community Reinvestment Project to establish their Local Advisory Teams.

We collaborated on the Community Engagement Toolkit Listening sessions. In this session we co-facilitated a meeting with leaders throughout Washington state government to get their feedback and questions on the Toolkit.

Community Advisory Board Member Updates

The Office of Equity Community Advisory Board (CAB) is made up of twelve Washington residents and is facilitated and managed by two Office of Equity staff members.

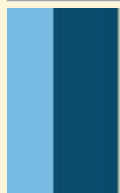
This summer, we were able to expand our board by 1 position. This brought the total number of board members from 11 to 12. We have 4 new members on our bench, which has added new perspectives and energy to our board. In the process, we learned a lot about what it looks like to engage in equitable recruiting processes that

are rooted in compassion and understanding. This showed us the importance of truly understanding the culture of our board.

Learn a little more about our Community Advisory Board:

- We are proud of our CAB Member Alaura Miller (she/they) for her graduation in June! They will be moving to a graduate program this fall to study Psychology and earn a master's degree.
- Drayton Jackson (they/them) was recently hired as the Executive Director of Communities of Concern. They will be overseeing a community coalition of organizations that provide capital funding to community. This looks like developing a \$64 million affordable housing project.
- Yaslin Torres-Pena (she/her) was selected to be part of the Tri-Cities Diversity and Inclusion council board of directors.
- Jense Rosenow (she/her) presented a workshop titled "Refuel and Thrive: Beating Burnout and Secondary Trauma" at the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals Conference.

The CAB is always uplifting and continuing to find ways for our board to share their perspectives and voices. We are excited about potential upcoming retreats to build relationships with one another. We look forward to building partnerships and coalitions with other boards in state government. We have been implementing new involved methods of engagement in budgeting and policy within our office.



Innovation & Impact Bench



Innovation & Performance Bench

A lot has been happening on the Innovation & Performance Team, so here's a quick overview of what's going on:

Focus on Impact

The Office of Equity is transitioning language from PEAR to Impact. The Innovation & Performance team is working hard to create tools and resources for agencies to help with this change. You can learn more about it [by clicking here to download a pdf.](#)

As part of this work, our team has been supporting the Impact Leadership Series, a conversation with agencies to guide equitable systems change across state government.

In the first half of the year, we focused on building a strong Impact Team and using our Community Compensation program, Community Engagement Toolkit, and Shared Power in our work.

In the second half of the year, we will help agencies evaluate their internal systems and create strategies for [Executive Order 24-05](#).

[Photo Caption: Washington State Governor Bob Ferguson (he/him) and our Statewide Equity Accountability Analyst Aylis-Jay Lind (they/them) at the Pride Flag Raising in June.]

Data Drives Innovation

The Statewide Impact Analysts have been analyzing statewide dashboards to understand Community Conditions. We've tried many different ways to show where communities need the most help. We are proud of the tool we've developed that will truly help communities. Check out some of the dashboards we've recently launched:

- [Community Condition Dashboard: Examining Homelessness in Washington](#)
- [Community Reinvestment Project Accountability Dashboard and Hub](#)
- [Washington State Patrol Strategic Recruitment and Retention Plan](#)

Washington Impact Hub

Soon, you will find the Community Conditions Dashboards and other resources on the Washington Impact Hub, which is currently under development. This site will include tools to:

- Build Your Impact Team
- Onboard New Team Members
- Conduct an Organizational Impact Assessment
- Explore Impact Service Lines
- Investigate Community Conditions
- Develop a Strategic Action Plan
- Report and Analyze Agency Performance
- Build Accountability

Showing Up

We've learned that teamwork is essential. We have a lot of work to do, and we can't do it alone. Even though we often like to solve problems solo (as Equity work can be

one tenacious person making systems change by their fingernails), working with teammates makes it more rewarding. We've also learned to take ownership of our roles and that being focused on the community is both possible and necessary. We've grown more confident in speaking up for equity, even when it's tough.

We had the immense pleasure of presenting at Esri's inaugural Equity & Social Justice Seminar.



From left: Statewide Spatial Equity Analyst Ruth Diaz (she/her) & Anisha Govindankutty (she/her), Innovation & Performance Director Caitlyn McNabb (she/her), and ESRI's Equity and Civic Nonprofits Industry Lead Sophia Garcia (she/her) pose for a photo at Esri's Equity & Social Justice Seminar.

What's Next

Our team has exciting community-focused work coming up as we continue to promote equity initiatives across state government. We'll set metrics for agency performance reports before their submission dates. This is still developing, but we're hopeful for new ideas and renewed commitment as we move forward in 2025.

As part of the Office of Equity's collaboration with the Department of Commerce, we have recently launched [the Community Reinvestment Project \(CRP\) Dashboard](#)—a first-of-its-kind tool that shows how \$200 million in state funding

was reinvested into communities most harmed by the War on Drugs. This dashboard provides real-time data on funding, services, and outcomes—bringing transparency, accountability, and visibility to one of the most significant equity investments in Washington’s history.

Stay tuned as we work on launching these other important projects:

- Technical Support and Consultation for Executive Order 24-05
- Impact Leader Series Part II: Assessing Organizational Impact + Agency Impact Plans
- Innovation Labs + Community Impact Plans
- Improved consultation and customer service

We can't wait for everyone to see our efforts! Creating these dashboards is just one part of our mission; it's also about connecting with people and discussing the data to make a real difference. Our team is looking forward to seeing how well our products help people learn and gather feedback to improve them.



Legislative Bench

Our Policy & Legislative team continues to share and connect EQUITY’s work with Washington legislators. Our team maintains important connections to decisionmakers in the Legislature. We also work to continue our collaboration with our internal partners, which is an important part of our work!



Names left to right: Negheen Kamkar, Caitlyn McNabb, Omar Santana-Gomez, Brenda O'Brian, Sam Fennell, Maria Siguenza, Sawyer Tuttle, Andrew Chin, Lisa Keating, Megan Matthews, David Puente Jr., Nam Nguyen, Samantha Grono, Elizabeth Gordon, Charlotte Kerney. Pictured next to a mural of Dolores Huerta at Mi Centro, a community-based non-profit that works with Latino and Indigenous Native families in Tacoma Washington.

On July 2nd, the Office of Equity hosted our monthly meeting with our Washington state commission, Washington agencies, and Washington agency committee partners. This monthly check-in serves as a time where group members can share updates. We also work to find ways where we can partner together on different bodies of work. Members of this workgroup include the:

- Washington State LGBTQ Commission,
- Washington State Women's Commission,
- Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs,
- Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs,
- Washington State Commission on African American Affairs,
- Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs,
- Governor's Office of Indian Affairs,
- Governor's Committee on Disability Issues & Employment,
- And the Office of Financial Management.

This group mostly meets virtually, and so doesn't get to meet in person often. We were delighted to have the opportunity to host July's meeting at [Mi Centro](#). Mi Centro is a community-based non-profit that works with Latino and Indigenous Native families in Tacoma, Washington. We are thankful for Mi Centro for hosting and look forward to continuing our partnership in creating a Washington for all.



Tribal Relations Bench

This summer, the Tribal Relations Bench has been hard at work. We have been helping plan Director Megan Matthew's next visits with six tribal nations across Washington. These visits are already shaping new relationships and show our commitment to a Washington for All.

We also welcomed a new team member. As our agency transitioned back aspects of the State's digital equity efforts due to the lack of continuing resources, Tribal Liaison for Digital Equity, Casey Wynecoop (he/him), stepped into our more general Tribal Relations Liaison role. Their leadership is helping us connect with more communities, including those outside of reservation boundaries. Our team wrapped up our digital equity analysis and shared it with the Department of Commerce.

We are now rolling out the newest version of our tribal consultation manual. It includes new tips on informal tribal consultations. We may also add sample memorandums of understanding and data sharing agreements for others across the state to use in their planning.

As an important part of our work, our small but mighty Tribal Relations Bench has stayed focused on building trust. We are proud of how our team supports each other, keeps learning, and keeps listening. In the months ahead, we are excited to grow our partnerships, keep the tribal tours going, and share tools that reflect the voices of tribal and Indigenous communities across the state.



Accessibility Corner



Accessibility Corner

Language and communication access for all is key to the work we do. When people can't express themselves in English, they face a barrier that stops them from fully participating in society. Communicating in a respectful and meaningful way in the language people prefer, helps everyone.

Ever wonder about the different options to connect with communities that speak languages other than English? Here are some examples:

- Translation of written information is effective especially if documents use plain language that is clear and easy to translate. Summaries and one-pagers are preferred for all reading levels. Translations should be tailored for the correct meaning and cultural nuance of the readers.
- Providing oral interpretation during meetings and presentations can be a great tool also. For either simultaneous or consecutive interpretation, there are certified and qualified interpreters in most of the languages we serve in Washington.
- Many of our community partners have had great success providing information through short videos too. In-language videos or videos with subtitles are great ways to communicate messages to a larger audience.
- Community engagement is key! People and advocates that navigate government systems in their languages have lived experience and know what they need. They can lead the work ahead of us to make Washington a state where we all thrive.

At the Office of Equity, our team works hard to provide information in plain language and to break language barriers. Want to be part of the conversation? Send us an email at Access@equity.wa.gov

Event Updates

Event Updates



Community of Practice

The Office of Equity has been extremely fortunate to have so many guest presenters this year for the Community of Practice (CoP). Please be sure to register for the Office of Equity's next CoP presentation by the [Commission on Asian Pacific Affairs](#).

[Click here for our Zoom link to register for our next session.](#)

In May the Office of Equity's Digital Equity Team came and gave a presentation on the vital work they were doing to further internet access and basic digital skills statewide.

In June we hosted Lisa Keating (she/her), the Executive Director of [the Washington State LGBTQ Commission](#). Lisa provided participants an update on their work throughout the state.

In July we had a collaborative presentation led by Elizabeth Emmett (she/her) and members from Washington State Department of Health and Washington State Healthcare Authority. The focus was on the [988 Crisis Line](#) and the important services they provide to residents around the state.



The Equity Learning Series

Our monthly Equity Learning Series is still going strong! These webinars are geared towards increasing the knowledge, skills, and ability of us all within State Government. We do this to fulfill one of our main goals: delivering services equitably to meet the unique needs of every person in Washington.

We have three series coming up. Make sure to click the links below to register and learn more about each session:

- [Using Mindfulness & Stress Management in Times of Change - September 17th](#)
- [Preventing Veteran Suicide by Combating Stigma: Building Awareness and Support - September 18th](#)
- [Disability in the Court System Webinar Series - October 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th, & November 15th](#)

We hope to see you there!



2025 Regional Digital Equity Coordination Sessions

Thank you again for the contributions, resources, and stories you shared throughout the 2025 Regional Digital Equity Coordination Sessions (RDECS).

Together, we:

- Co-created nine virtual sessions and reached 350+ people in all 39 counties
- Engaged 100+ organizations and facilitated over 50 community presentations
- Developed a social media asset toolkit
- Compiled highlights and quotes from every session
- Shared information about federal and local support programs
- Organized resources and promising practices into a guide to support *coordinated collective impact for all*

For more information and to access the resources mentioned above, [click here to check out our RDECS webpage for more resources](#).

Thank you!



Thank You!
