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EQUITY NEW ORLEANS

The Road to Equitable Government



CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
Mitchell J. Landrieu, Mayor

EQUITYNEWORLEANS

The Road to Equitable Government

EquityNewOrleans is a citywide initiative of the Office of Mayor Mitch Landrieu funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. In partnership with the Foundation for Louisiana, EquityNewOrleans assessed the role of equity in City government using a data-driven process that prioritizes stakeholder engagement. The results inform the development of future strategies and decision-making within City government.



Ask yourself, why is it that so many of us live a block away from each other, yet still live a world apart?

Residents and Friends of New Orleans:

As we get ready to celebrate our city's 300th year, I find myself reflecting more on our history, our present, and the work we have left to do to become the city I know we can be.

The people and traditions that came before us have left behind a cultural inheritance that is the envy of the nation. We have so much to treasure and be proud of. At the same time, we still face too much poverty and crime, alienation and distrust.

From higher incarceration rates to poorer health and educational outcomes, people of color in particular face many disadvantages. Stark inequities in neighborhoods, schools, and opportunities – many the results of decisions made long ago – amplify and extend those disadvantages for generations. This racial equity gap divides our community, keeping us apart and keeping us from moving forward.

Now is the time to mend that divide. That is the aim of our ambitious EquityNewOrleans initiative. Actively pursuing racial equity involves addressing structural racism and its consequences – not only in our communities, but also in government, businesses, schools, and institutions. It involves the tough, steady work of reflection, reconciliation, and revitalization. It involves all of us.

From Algiers to Gentilly, New Orleans East to Lakeview, Uptown to the Ninth Ward, we all want a bright future for our kids, economic opportunity, and safe neighborhoods. Yet the passage of time alone will not get us there. Only by working at it, and working together, will we even have a chance.

Thankfully, our rich 300 years hold important lessons, one of which is that when we are united in purpose and action, we win. So let's break down the barriers and make sure that all our neighbors can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Let's win this together.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mitch". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Mitch Landrieu
Mayor, City of New Orleans



TABLE OF CONTENTS

MISSION, VALUES & VISION 04

EQUITABLE GOVERNMENT DEFINED 06

THE EQUITY NEW ORLEANS PROCESS 08

WHAT EQUITY MEANS TO NEW ORLEANS 09

A SNAPSHOT OF CONDITIONS IN NEW ORLEANS 13

THE ROAD TO EQUITABLE GOVERNMENT 14

EQUITY IN PRACTICE 18

APPENDIX 22

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS MISSION, VALUES & VISION

MISSION

The City of New Orleans delivers excellent service to its citizens with courage, competence, and compassion. We provide unbeatable customer service driven by sound fiscal management. As good stewards of our resources, we ensure safe neighborhoods, excellent schools, good-paying jobs, and a clean environment for our citizens.

We facilitate partnerships, link strong leaders and new ideas, and leverage critical resources to move New Orleans forward. Our decisions are informed by effective communication and active citizen involvement.

We responsibly manage and preserve our City's natural resources.

VALUES

Our service is driven by core values that define and inspire how we work in the City of New Orleans.

Integrity – We are committed to serving the citizens of New Orleans, not ourselves. We are honest and trustworthy. We continually strive to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Excellence – We deliver high-quality City services focused on better outcomes for all New Orleanians. We raise and exceed the expectations of our citizens. Our service inspires others to deliver their best.

Transparency – We are clear and honest in public decision-making, provision of data, and delivery of City services.

Teamwork – We work across departments, programs, and services to deliver better results for our citizens. We are passionate about our work, have fun doing it, and celebrate a job well done.

Responsiveness – We are eager to respond to citizen requests and committed to delivering solutions in a timely manner.

Innovation – We build partnerships across City agencies and with community partners to create new solutions to the city's most intractable problems.

Diversity and Inclusion – We seek a city where all people, irrespective of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, share opportunity and responsibility, risk and reward, political power and economic prosperity.

VISION

New Orleans is a model city. We demonstrate to the world the power of strong leadership in the halls of City government and the streets. With resilience, we transform challenges into instruments of progress with the belief and assurance that change is possible.

We are a unified city where municipal employees and engaged citizens work together to create equitable, thriving communities for all. The City of New Orleans leverages the transformative power of our people to build safe neighborhoods and foster educational, economic, and cultural opportunities.

We are a creative city. We recognize limitless opportunity and appreciate the shared benefit of our neighbor's success. The richness of diversity is manifested clearly in our culture – a beautiful mosaic that only New Orleans is able to create. Our commitment to excellence, coupled with timeless cultural heritage and creative vision, ensures New Orleans' greatness for generations to come.





Equality

EQUITABLE GOVERNMENT DEFINED

An equitable city government acts with purpose to achieve just and fair inclusion, ensuring that all residents participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. It leverages its power and resources to dismantle institutional racism and discrimination wherever they exist. It implements bold strategies to eliminate income and neighborhood inequities.

It also deliberately engages those who have been excluded from decision-making based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, nativity, disability status, and sexual orientation. And it expands community voice, power, and ownership to develop effective solutions that improve outcomes for all. The result is a stronger, more resilient, and more prosperous city.

Developed in partnership with City Leadership & Community Stakeholders on May 23, 2016.



Equity

WHY PRIORITIZE EQUITY?

Current inequities in health, resources, and opportunities due to economic, racial, and geographic disparities threaten New Orleans' ability to fully recover and grow to its full capacity and promise.

WHAT WAS THE GOAL OF THE EQUITY NEW ORLEANS PROCESS?

The goal of this initiative was to help City government understand and address inequities in a data-driven, strategic manner. Specifically, we examined the best and most immediate opportunities to demonstrate equity in City policies, programs, and service delivery.

THE EQUITY NEW ORLEANS PROCESS



BEST PRACTICES
REVIEW



COMMUNITY
LISTENING SESSIONS



STAKEHOLDER
INTERVIEWS



CITY EMPLOYEE
SURVEY



DEFINE
"EQUITABLE GOVERNMENT"



EQUITY
TRAININGS



DATA
ANALYSIS



IDENTIFICATION
OF ACTIONS

WHAT EQUITY MEANS TO NEW ORLEANS



We asked residents to share their vision of an equitable government.
This is a snapshot of what we heard...

I certainly think that fairness, inclusion...really what is just and right, really speaks to the definition of equity.

If you really want to be a great city, this is how you determine whether or not you are great. These are the outcomes and how are you doing across them. Are all communities thriving? You can't be a great city if you have communities that are left behind. Period.

There have to be people that don't believe this is the way to go, otherwise, it would just be done. There would not be all these strategies and efforts and initiatives. It would be that this is just the way we do business. Clearly there must be a very influential segment of people who wouldn't align or don't yet understand why this shift toward equity strategies would be beneficial for them, beneficial for people...the right thing to do.

Clearly any conversation we have in New Orleans about equity invariably involves issues of race and class. I think we have to look at how we address issues of access to resources that help to eradicate some of those historic disparities, particularly around access to wealth and building wealth in the community.

At the root of these structural barriers, I think is a certain level of individual, group and institutional understanding about why things are the way they are. Not realizing that there has been this history of racism and inequity that has been building for decades...hundreds of years in this city. When people resist efforts for equity, I think it comes from really not understanding about how things got to be the way they are.

We have a lot of legal constructs that are State-driven and anchored, that extend this sort of plantation reality. That has been what we have seen in the American South and that has been a very specific strategy by the opposition to equity.

The city will never completely be where we want it to be without everyone having the opportunity to opt-in.



A SNAPSHOT OF CONDITIONS IN NEW ORLEANS

DEMOGRAPHICS

67% of our residents were people of color in 2014, up from **60%** in 1980.

82% of our youth today are people of color, compared to **63%** percent of seniors.

In **2044**, people of color are projected to become a majority in the U.S. New Orleans passed this milestone long ago.

READINESS

33% of our region's jobs will require an associate's degree or above in 2020.

21% of African Americans and **25%** of Latino immigrants have that level of education.

11% of African Americans ages 16–24 are not in school and do not have a high school diploma, while only **3%** of Whites that age are in the same situation.

Although education is a leveler, racial and gender gaps persist in the labor market. At every level of educational attainment, people of color have worse economic outcomes than Whites.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Today **47%** of jobs are low wage and **19%** are high wage, compared to **26%** in 1990.

14% is the current unemployment rate for African Americans.

The rate is **5.5%** for Whites.

CONNECTEDNESS

27% of African Americans live in high-poverty tracts, compared with **8%** of Whites.

91% of White households have at least one car, while only **74%** of African American households do.

ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF INCLUSION

\$18.4 billion more would have been added to the New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner region's economy in 2014 if racial gaps in income had been closed.

That's a **24%** increase.

THE ROAD TO EQUITABLE GOVERNMENT

14

New Orleans is a city on the rise and will be stronger when all New Orleanians are more fully included in economic, political, and civic life. EquityNewOrleans will intentionally leverage the power of City government to dismantle lingering barriers to opportunity and make equity – just and fair inclusion – our reality. We will do this by embedding equity throughout City departments, programs, and services – from economic development to health and more.

The actions below will lay the groundwork to transform New Orleans into a truly inclusive city and demonstrate how local government can work hand-in-hand with residents, community partners, and business leaders to build cities where all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

Establish an Equity Office

This office will serve to:

- Promote equity and reduce disparities within City government
- Provide guidance, education, and technical assistance to City departments as they develop sustainable methods to build capacity in achieving equitable outcomes
- Work to produce measureable improvements and disparity reductions in City policies, programs, and service delivery

Take Executive & Legislative Actions Declaring Equity as a Key Value in City Government

Officially name equity as a fundamental value and goal to be pursued by City government.

Make Equity a Component of the Budgeting Process

City departments and offices will assess the equity and social impacts of budget requests to ensure that programs, projects, and other investments help reduce disparities, promote service-level equity, and support participation.

Create Departmental Equity Plans

City departments across all issue areas will create their own equity plans; accepting responsibility to reduce disparities, create opportunities within their scope of influence, and engage community and private sector partners to address challenges at scale. These plans are to be outcome-driven, and departments will be expected to report not only on actions, but also on the outcomes of those actions.

Implement an Equity Assessment Tool

At the front end of decision-making processes, City staff will use this tool to:

- Thoughtfully evaluate the potential racial equity impacts of a policy, program, policy or initiative and adjust the approach to maximize equity outcomes
- Consider existing, or other data and information, to gauge improvements
- Consider and engage stakeholders in the decision-making process

Establish City of New Orleans Equity Teams

Engage leadership and staff to become advisors, champions, and users of racial equity tools to advance equitable outcomes. Equity teams would increase awareness of and attention to racial equity in policy and practice.

Establish an Equity-focused Performance Management Program

This program will track implementation of the equity strategy through identified indicators, measuring change over time to assess the impact of specific public-sector investments and policy changes.

Establish a Racial Equity Community Roundtable

This roundtable will forward the work of equity in City government. It will include leaders from all sectors that will both inform the City's work to advance equity, and increase the use of an equity lens within the community and their own organizations.

City of New Orleans Equity Trainings

- **Racial Equity Training** for all employees and members of boards and commissions – including the implementation of a “Train the Trainer” model, focused on building internal capacity. The training will provide increased understanding of institutional barriers and the role, responsibilities, and opportunities for government to advance racial equity both internally and in partnership with other institutions and the community

- **Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Training** for employees to effectively plan and implement inclusive engagement strategies to help ensure that participation in public engagement efforts more fully reflects the demographics of the New Orleans community

Promote Workforce Equity

- Create a City workforce demographics dashboard
- Analyze hiring processes for racial disparities
- Develop specialized HR racial equity and tools training

Develop a Guide to Equity in Outreach and Public Engagement

The City will develop a guide designed to increase access to information, resources and civic processes to communities through racially and culturally inclusive outreach and public engagement practices.

EquityNewOrleans Public Awareness Campaign

Create a visual campaign to increase awareness about why equity matters and City government's role in advancing equity.

15

THE VISION OF AN EQUITABLE CITY GOVERNMENT

WHAT ELSE DO YOU ENVISION?:

RESIDENTS ARE INFORMED AND SEE THEMSELVES REPRESENTED IN CITY GOVERNMENT.

RESIDENTS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE DECISION-MAKING.

WHY DOES EQUITY MATTER TO YOU?:

"WE ALL WANT THE SAME THING- A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR OUR KIDS, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS."

WHY PRIORITIZE EQUITY?

"WE ALL DESERVE THE SAME HEALTH, RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES. RACE, GEOGRAPHY AND ECONOMICS SHOULDN'T CHANGE THIS!"

RACIAL INEQUALITIES

ARE ADDRESSED.

THE WORK FORCE IS DIVERSE, WELL EDUCATED AND EQUIPPED WITH IN DEMAND SKILLS.

EQUITABLE SYSTEMS AND POLICIES LEAD TO A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL.

EQUITY

START HERE

HOW CAN CITY GOVERNMENT BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND AND ADDRESS EQUITY?

1. USING A RACIAL EQUITY FRAMEWORK

2. BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

3. BUILDING IN INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

JUST, INCLUSIVE AND FAIR

WHAT ELSE COULD WE DO?:

A FEW EXAMPLES OF CURRENT WORK

- NOLA FOR LIFE
- CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

- THE NETWORK FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
- RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITY

WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE DO?:

4 COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS

300 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

EQUITY TRAININGS

★ ONGOING DIALOGUE AND DISCUSSION
★ BEST PRACTICES

★ NATIONAL EXPERTS
★ AND SO MUCH MORE...

EQUITY IN PRACTICE

Since 2010, Mayor Landrieu has directed City government to address generational opportunity gaps, the results of which have been significant. Today, these efforts continue to make New Orleans a more equitable place to live, work, and learn.

THE NETWORK FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

www.thenetworkneworleans.org

The Network for Economic Opportunity partners with anchor institutions, employers, and community-based organizations that support investing in workforce pipelines and hiring locally. The Network seeks to meet the growing demand for high-skilled job openings at New Orleans companies.

Since 2014, the Network has led the following economic opportunity advancements:

Adult Workforce

- African American male non-employment rate dropped from 52% to 44%
- Coordinated a partnership among five (5) workforce Opportunity Centers to scale local innovations to prepare the hardest-to-employ individuals for career pathways

Youth Workforce

- Since 2010, provided 9,906 jobs to youth through the Summer Youth Employment Program
- Since 2010, created jobs for a total of 16,906 youth in the greater New Orleans area, 98% of whom were African American

Local Workforce

- Implemented the Hire NOLA local hiring policy that links employment opportunities created by City contracts and economic development to our qualified local workforce through the use of two key strategies: setting local participation goals and establishing a first source requirement
- In 2016, the City of New Orleans met the local worker participation goal set by the Hire NOLA ordinance for applicable projects
- In May 2016, City Council unanimously passed rules for a Living Wage Ordinance

DBE Participation & Build NOLA

- Certified DBE firms were awarded \$95.1 million in City contracts, yielding a participation rate of 41.10% on a 35% goal
- Connected DBE firms to over \$32.3 million in private sector contracts
- Graduated four (4) Build NOLA cohorts, prepared certified firms for City projects, and generated \$4 million in public and private contracts to graduates
- Launched the \$1.5 million Build NOLA Mobilization Fund Pilot Project to finance DBE firms on municipal projects with a goal to build the fund to \$10 million by 2018



CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

www.nola.gov/ocjc
www.safetyandjusticechallenge.org/challenge-site/new-orleans

Since the start of the Mayor's administration, major reforms have taken place in the criminal justice system.

- Agencies are focusing their resources on those people who pose the greatest risk to public safety, and they are implementing national best practices that will connect people to treatment rather than prosecution, safely reduce the jail population, and save taxpayers' money
- The NOPD has prioritized arrests for violent crimes, and issues summonses to appear in court for less serious offenses rather than booking those people in the jail
- A risk assessment conducted on felony defendants provides information to judges to allow them to make bond decisions that prioritize public safety
- A new ordinance will allow nearly all people held with a municipal charge to be released on a non-financial bond, which prevents people from sitting in jail on a minor charge just because they lack the financial means to secure release
- Additionally, the Mayor's Office received \$1.5 million from the MacArthur Foundation as part of their Safety and Justice Challenge to implement a set of initiatives that will reduce the jail population 21% by mid-2019, bringing the New Orleans jail population closer to the national average for cities our size



Safety and Justice Challenge, MacArthur Foundation

HOUSING POLICY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

www.nola.gov/community-development

In 2016, the Office of Community Development completed Housing for a Resilient New Orleans, a five-year plan to create or preserve 7,500 affordable housing opportunities for residents. Central to this equity-focused plan was the development of HUD's Assessment of Fair Housing plan.

In partnership with the Housing Authority of New Orleans, we became the first city in the nation to develop, submit, and have approved an Assessment of Fair Housing plan. This plan outlines specific goals, strategies, and timeframes to expand access to high-opportunity neighborhoods for low-income residents and residents of color while supporting investments in underserved communities to improve the quality of life there.

The Office of Community Development (OCD) uses strategic investments and partnerships to implement the plan that supports its vision where all New Orleanians live in vibrant neighborhoods with a range of safe, quality housing options that are affordable to them and with access to jobs, services, and neighborhood amenities that support their families and well-being.

In 2016, OCD provided approximately 750 households – including seniors, those of low income, those experiencing homelessness, and those living with HIV/AIDS – the ability to attain or retain access to affordable housing through rental housing development, rental housing assistance, homeownership development, mortgage assistance, home repairs, and operation of assisted living facilities.



NOLA FOR LIFE

www.nolaforlife.org

Launched in May 2012, NOLA FOR LIFE is New Orleans Mayor Landrieu's comprehensive strategy to tackle the City's historically high murder rate. In the four and a half years since the NOLA FOR LIFE launch, the murder rate is 21 percent lower than in the four and a half years prior to the strategy's launch. Highlights include :

- New Orleans has seen a 57% reduction in gang violence, which is directly targeted through our Group Violence Reduction Strategy
- CeaseFire, an initiative that targets a high violence area of Central City, has seen a 47% reduction in shooting victims in its target population

- RISE – Reintegration Services participants have a 9% recidivism rate, compared to the state recidivism rate of 16%
- Over 5,000 students have been impacted across 11 partner schools through school climate interventions
- 300 local organizations across every sector have engaged with NOLA FOR LIFE



affecting children, youth, and families. Through these efforts, programs and services will be strengthened by a greater focus on addressing root causes and delivering more customized and culturally appropriate services to the communities that we serve. By focusing upstream to change the living conditions that create health inequities, poor health can be prevented among vulnerable populations and widespread benefits achieved across the entire city.

HEALTH EQUITY

www.nola.gov/healthequity

Over the past year, the New Orleans Health Department engaged in a health equity planning process, including (1) an organizational assessment to determine its capacity to reduce health inequities and improvements needed to become an equity-focused public health agency, (2) discussions with approximately 30 representatives from community-based organizations and city government agencies to identify health equity priorities and strategies throughout New Orleans, and (3) strategic planning led by a cross-departmental workgroup.

From these activities, a strategy focused on policy and systems change has been developed to address key social determinants of health in New Orleans, especially those

WELCOME TABLE NEW ORLEANS

www.welcometableneworleans.org

Since his time as Lt. Governor, Mayor Landrieu has had a keen interest in racial reconciliation and community building. In 2004, he learned of the work of The William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation based at the University of Mississippi. At the time, The Winter Institute had been working exclusively on reconciliation efforts in Mississippi. With Louisiana and Mississippi sharing similar histories with race-related conflicts, then Lt. Governor Landrieu began conversations with the institute to share its proven model with Louisiana. Those conversations slowed when Hurricane Katrina hit, but when Mayor Landrieu assumed office in 2010, the opportunity to engage in racial reconciliation efforts rose to the forefront again.

From 2014 to 2016, hundreds of diverse residents from across the city participated in Welcome Table New Orleans (WTNO) circles. The circles met in Algiers, Carrollton,

Central City, Mid City, New Orleans East, and St. Roch. Additionally, residents participated in a Mother's Circle as well as a Business and Civic Leader's Circle. The circles followed a facilitated process of discussions and relationship building in safe, civil spaces.

WTNO participants, mostly strangers to one another when they began, shared a variety of experiences including exchanging personal histories and perspectives and discussing events that had caught the nation's attention. Additionally, they participated in workshops on implicit bias, race, and reconciliation, and they attended weekend retreats. Their efforts helped them to explore their own thoughts and feelings on race and call attention to the need for racial reconciliation in New Orleans and across the country. Each circle created a reconciliation project that has informed, educated, and engaged the people of New Orleans.

RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

www.nola.gov/resilience/

In August 2015, the City of New Orleans released one of the world's first comprehensive strategies for building city resilience. Resilient New Orleans builds on more than 10 years of planning and visioning for our city, leveraging the work we are already doing while proposing bold strategies with committed partnerships to move from recovery to resilience for the next 300 years.

Using the City's resilience strategy, Resilient New Orleans, as a guide, the Office of Resilience and Sustainability (ORS)

works with other City departments and agencies to advise on the strategic pursuit of comprehensive resilience priorities across environmental, social, economic, and infrastructural improvement goals. ORS also leads the outreach efforts associated with resilience-building projects and the management of the projects associated with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – National Disaster Resilience Competition award. Above all, ORS leads the strategic combination of efforts to achieve multiple benefits for public, private, and nonprofit initiatives in New Orleans.

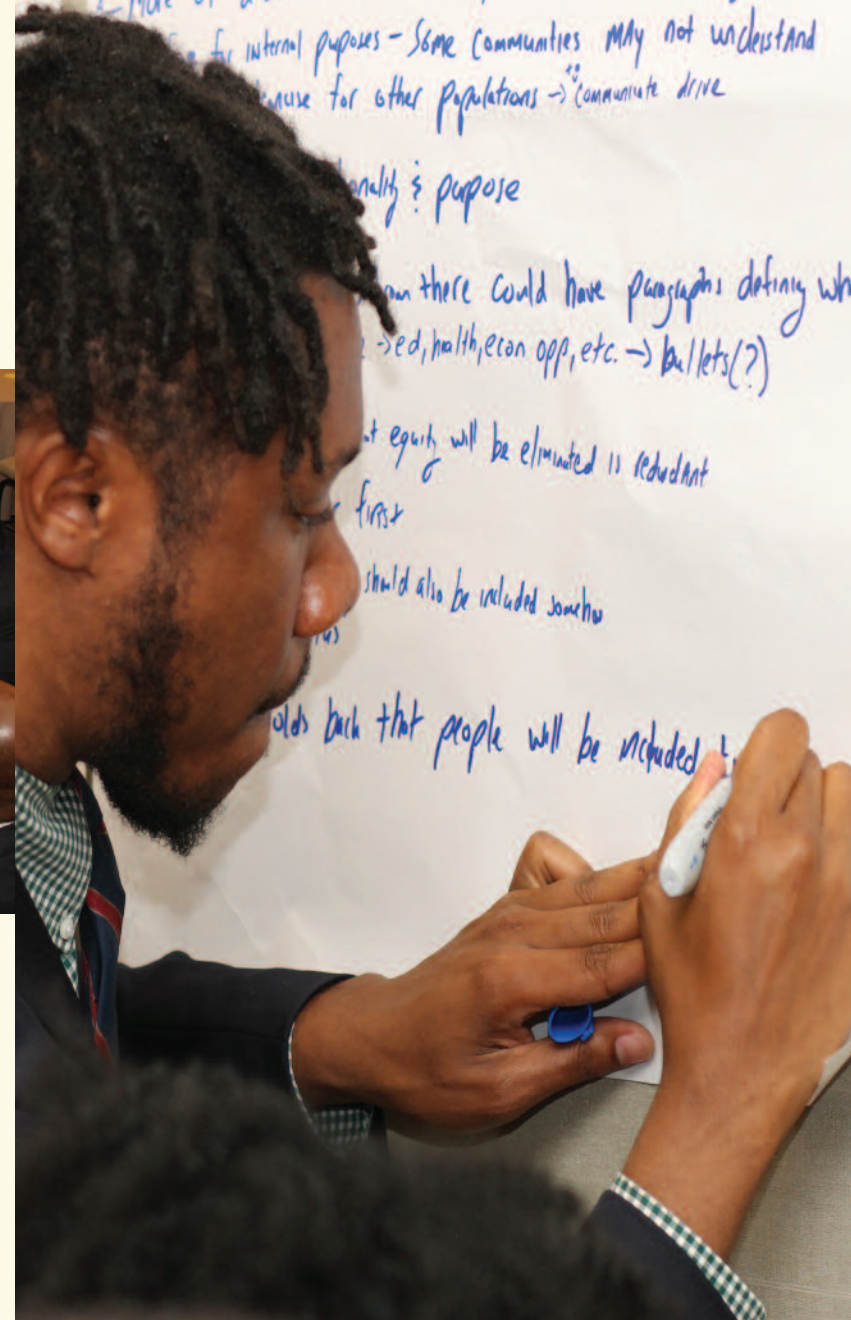
APPENDIX

Over the last year, the EquityNewOrleans process sought to identify how City government could begin to understand and address equity in a data-driven, strategic manner. In order to establish a baseline of understanding of equity across city life, a multi-method data collection strategy with an intensive stakeholder engagement component was utilized. Data were then analyzed using content analysis to ascertain key themes identified by stakeholders. This helped to inform the City in developing an equity strategy for City government to create policies and procedures that would support a sustainable approach to equitable government.¹



Throughout this process, the activities were documented in a way that would allow for the development not only of an equity strategy for City government, but also of a blueprint for implementation. The data-gathering process provided critical feedback from participating stakeholders throughout the process, which informed the development of the resulting actions. Specifically, we aimed to identify and develop key internal strategies to address systemic and structural inequities experienced by the residents of our city. We sought to identify the structural inequities that exist, as best practices indicate that any resulting framework of inclusion should use an institutional approach to direct meaningful change and sustainable impact.

This process utilized a formative assessment in order to evaluate and understand the role that equity plays within City government and to develop a plan that allows government administrators to consider, develop, and implement strategies that ensure that government operates in an equitable manner. National organizations such as PolicyLink² and the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)³ have studied and worked to normalize and operationalize equity in government. Municipalities such as Portland⁴ and Seattle⁵ have successfully embarked on this journey, recognizing that equity in government is both just and important to sustaining healthy, vibrant, and inclusive cities. The resulting strategy for equitable government provides a foundation to drive City policy in the future, impacting programs and services, while using data to inform further equity-driven strategies and decision-making.



MAJOR ACTIVITIES

The following major activities took place over the past year, with the goal of releasing the City of New Orleans Equity Strategy in the second quarter of 2017 and the subsequent implementation of immediate, high-impact actions. Each of these activities served to advance the central tenet of this effort: identifying and developing specific ways to address equity within City of New Orleans government.

- Best practice research from peer cities
- Engagement with local and national equity experts
- Interviews and focus groups with stakeholders both internal and external to City government
- Informative, facilitated community listening sessions held across the City to engage with and hear from residents
- Learning opportunities for City of New Orleans department heads and managers
- An analysis of existing data sources and the collection and analysis of primary data
- Survey of City of New Orleans employees
- Identification of equity actions
- Development of key indicators to measure progress



Data Collection

Primary data were collected from a variety of places, including but not limited to community listening sessions, focus groups, and individual interviews with stakeholders from across the city. Secondary data were examined from resources within and external to city government, including both local and national organizations. A mixed-methods research design employed an analytic strategy that involved the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data in order to triangulate results and to

inform the implementation of the process as well as its evaluation. The data were put in the context of the many years of reform that have taken place within City government, as well as the national context of municipalities that have implemented an equity strategy. One unique and important feature of this mixed-method research design was that it provided a framework for triangulating data in order to further ensure its accuracy, quality, and reliability.



24

PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

Interviews, Focus Groups, and Community Listening Sessions

Stakeholders played a critical role in the process through their participation and engagement in the EquityNewOrleans process. Their thoughts, attitudes, and perspectives on equity were the substance of this innovative process to discern inequities across the City by gathering and analyzing data on what key stakeholders view as priorities in addressing inequity. Stakeholders then were engaged through interviews, listening sessions, and focus groups. Potential interviewees were provided with a one-page EquityNewOrleans information sheet and the following questions in advance of their interview:

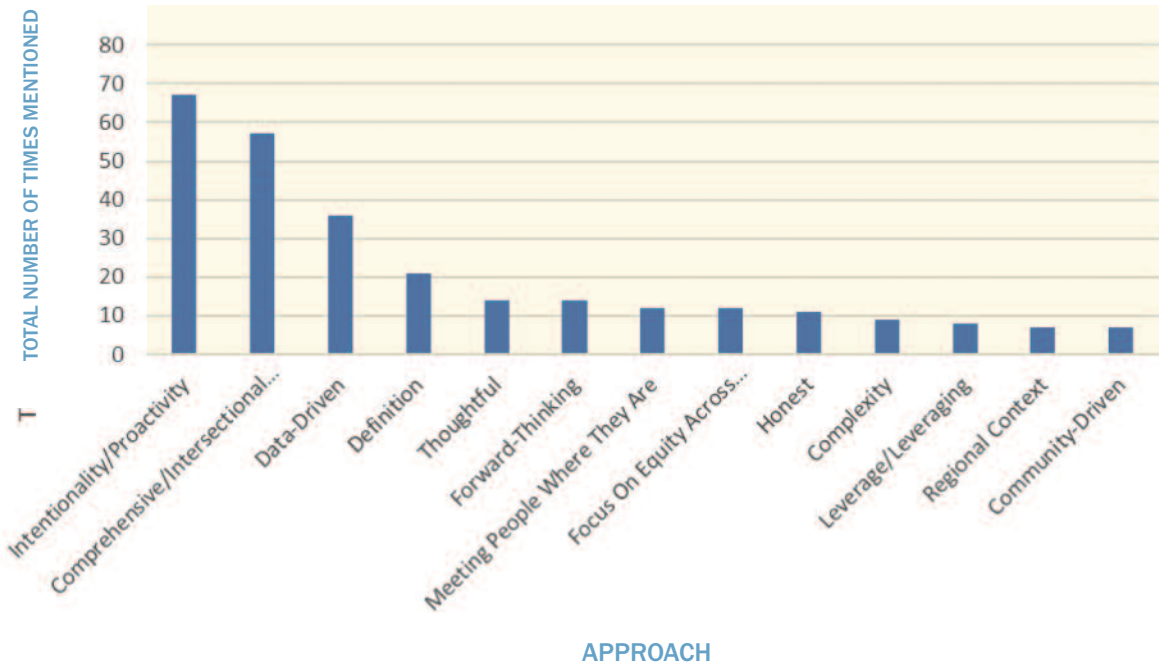
- What is important to you about an equitable City government, and why does this matter to you?
- What do you think that the City is doing well in terms of making sure everyone is included in economic, social, and political life?
- Are there specific things that this administration has done that you think are improvements in terms of inclusion? Conversely, where is improvement needed?
- What do you see as the key barriers or challenges in terms of the City integrating equity throughout its activities?

- Are there any promising strategies from outside of the City that you think could be models for New Orleans?
- As the City moves forward in this process, is there anyone that you think should be engaged in the dialogue?

Once interviewed, participants were asked for other key stakeholders they recommended we contact. Using this second sampling technique, snowballing, provided an excellent cross-section of stakeholders from across New Orleans. A sample of 152 interviews were used in analysis for this framework, but over 300 have been completed, and we continue to work towards a goal of interviewing 1,000 stakeholders by the end of 2017.

Interviewed stakeholders also provided insight on the approach that should be taken to developing an equity strategy. For instance, several stakeholders mentioned that the approach to equity should be proactive, data-driven, and thoughtful. Figure 1 shows the themes most commonly identified by stakeholders to inform an approach to developing an equity strategy for City government.

Figure 1. Stakeholder perspective on an Approach to Developing Equity Strategy by total number of times mentioned.



25

PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

City of New Orleans Survey

A survey was developed and released in March 2017 in order to assess City employees' perceptions and attitudes regarding equity across City government in New Orleans. Similar surveys from other municipalities were consulted (e.g., Dane County Wisconsin Racial Equity Analysis⁶, Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative Employee Survey⁷, and the City of Madison Employee Engagement & Equity Progress Report⁸) to guide development of this research instrument.

Questions included, but were not limited to, the following: workplace demographics, understanding of the

EquityNewOrleans initiative, perceptions about the importance of understanding of equity in the workplace, and social demographics. The survey was designed and pre-tested to ensure maximum readability, reliability, validity, and cultural appropriateness. The survey was imported into SurveyMonkey, a third-party online mechanism that allows for ease of use and maximum anonymity for participants. Survey results were used to triangulate findings from interviews, listening sessions, as well as secondary data collection. The aim of the survey was to identify a baseline of City employees' perceptions of equity as a priority for City government.

SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION

In addition to collecting and analyzing these primary data, existing data were reviewed from ResultsNOLA, the City of New Orleans' Performance Management Report⁹, and multiple external data reports¹⁰, in order to triangulate our findings with the qualitative data. We leveraged data and methods put forth by best practices from peer cities across the country,

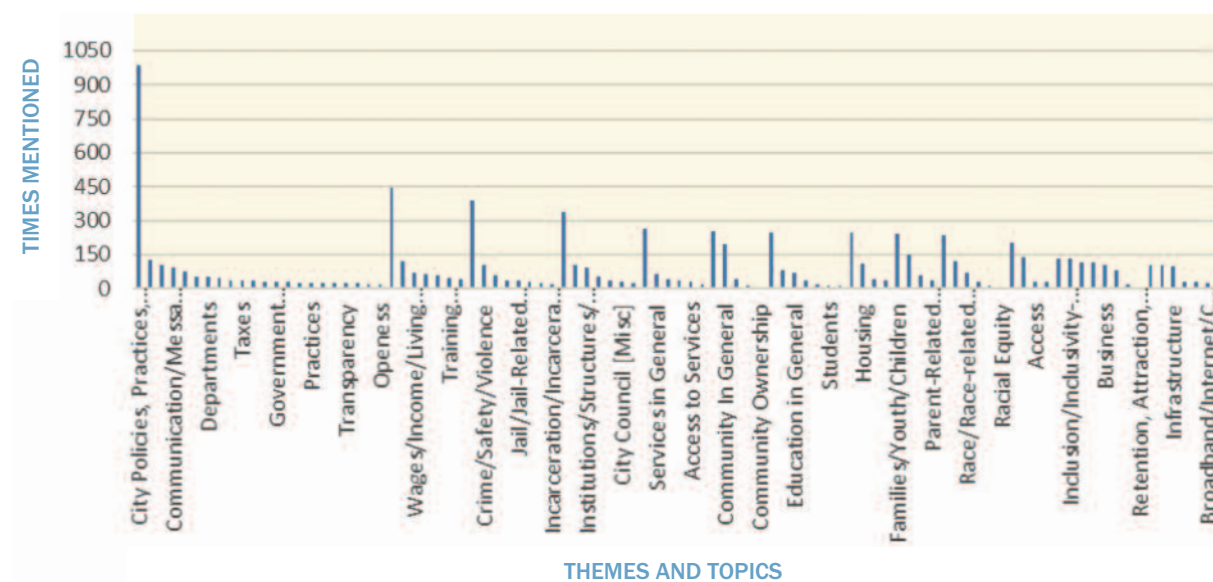
in addition to PolicyLink's All in Cities¹¹ initiative, to inform our procedure and assessment. Finally, we used these data to identify key themes, associations, and factors in establishing data from sources such as PolicyLink's Equity Profile of New Orleans¹² to fully grasp what the equity landscape looks like across the City of New Orleans.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Interview data were transcribed and coded into units, codes, and themes. Each transcribed interview was crosschecked to ensure reliability and validity of findings. First, interview transcriptions were coded into general themes that were both pre-specified and emergent. "Codes" are segments of interview text that range from several sentences to several paragraphs and address a specific theme. This method allowed theory to inform the coding, but not determine it.

This first phase of coding resulted in a list of broad themes found in the interviews. Additional sub-coding was then conducted to better understand the role of personal characteristics and context in equity perceptions. 350 codes generated 56 themes. Once the thematic analysis was conducted, a frequency analysis was performed in order to categorize the top themes identified by stakeholders as seen in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Themes and Topics by Total Number of Times Mentioned.



Taken together, these analyses served to illustrate the important and necessary process by which the key stakeholders were identified and their perceptions of equity within government recorded. These findings further show the realization of the goal of including a multitude of voices and perspectives as well as the data-driven strategy to increase awareness and understanding of equity across the City. Many stakeholders were eager to share their thoughts on equitable government, specifically relaying what the City did well and where it could improve. Participants were generally enthusiastic about this process and its outcomes.

Findings from the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected have yielded important insights on how the City¹³ can more adequately address issues related to equity. These findings, in conjunction with similar programs in other cities

(e.g., New York City ; King County, WA¹⁴; and Portland, OR¹⁵), have been used to inform how the City should move forward to collect equity-related data. These insights will be used to develop final indicators to inform future data gathering on services and access by residents throughout City government to assess equitability. Such a step provides a structure to sustain equity efforts for future administrations by informing future actions that City government should take to ensure that equity continues to be a consideration as a part of the decision-making process. Furthermore, the findings of this process and best practices developed here will be disseminated and shared with other cities interested in developing their own equity strategy. In 2018, the City of New Orleans will begin to report on indicators to measure change over time and track the impact of specific public sector investments and policy changes.

Conclusion

This process sought to identify key equity areas of focus for City government through inclusive stakeholder engagement. Doing so has provided necessary insight into areas of improvement around policymaking, the delivery of City services, program development, and community engagement. This process has provided data-driven evidence for the next

steps that City government can take to ensure that the City of New Orleans continues to strive for equitable gains. Findings reported here have aided in the creation of the equity strategy for the City, offer a model for other cities, and will inform process and policymaking in the future.

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³ Government Alliance on Race and Equity website: <http://www.racialequityalliance.org/>

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THANK YOU



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The Road to Equitable Government

We would like to thank the many stakeholders who participated for their commitment and dedication to creating a more equitable New Orleans for all.

Judy Reese Morse
Deputy Mayor, Citywide Initiatives

Roxanne V. Franklin
Director, Equity Strategy

Katie E. Spillman
Project Coordinator, Equity Strategy

R. Erich Caulfield
Project Research Analyst

Clare E. B. Cannon
Project Research Evaluator