

# Equity & Empowerment Lens Handout

Additional Considerations in Applying and Adapting  
the 5P Assessment Questions

# Lens - People

## Original Questions:

- Who is positively and negatively affected by this issue and how?
- How are people differently situated in terms of the barriers they experience?
- Are people traumatized/retraumatized by your issue/decision area?

## Deeper dive considerations:

- Community and individuals – those who will ultimately live with our (the government's) decisions and the real human impact.
- Who holds disproportionate burdens and benefits in the context of the present and past – what does history tell us about now.
- Specifically naming the communities impacted without stereotype, nor treating them as monolithically the same, or being paternalistically, i.e., the “We know better than the community” mindset
- Consideration of historical traumas, relationships and access across your assessed list of People
- You, me, and government – we move within and act upon the institutions and systems, pulling the levers that influence and shape policy, programming and practice.
- Physical, spiritual, emotional and contextual effects

# Lens - Place

## Original Questions:

- How are you/your issue or decision accounting for people's emotional and physical safety, and their need to be productive and feel valued?
- How are you considering environmental impacts as well as environmental justice?
- How are public resources and investments distributed geographically?

## Deeper dive considerations:

- Community and individuals – consider what the impacts might be in the place where people live and work
- Consider impacts in terms of both the physical and emotional, and if are they healthy for everyone
- Think about changes in resources impact both those providing service and receiving it
- Consideration of historical traumas, relationships and access across places – in the community and where services are provided
- Think about how the people and their needs connect to these places be reflected in the issue, policy or program changes moving forward

# Lens - Process

## Original Questions:

- How are we meaningfully including or excluding people (communities of color) who are affected?
- What policies, processes and social relationships contribute to the exclusion of communities most affected by inequities?
- Are there empowering processes at every human touchpoint?
- What processes are traumatizing and how do we improve them?

## Deeper dive considerations:

- Consider all the processes that directly involve the people served and what level of agency they have or do not have when engaging in a particular process
- Think about who holds disproportionate burdens and benefits in the context of any given process
- Delve into any process dynamics that may impact resourcing or access
- Consideration of historical traumas, relationships and access connected to any processes
- Think about what is truly flexible and what is mandated around any given process
- Talk about the practices surrounding any given process and whether they are assumed or necessary

# Lens - Power

## Original Questions:

- What are the barriers to doing equity and racial justice work?
- What are the benefits and burdens that communities experience with this issue?
- Who is accountable?
- How is the current issue, policy, or program shifting power dynamics to better integrate voices and priorities of communities of color?
- What is your decision-making structure? Who has control and influence in shaping the policy or issues being assessed, and to what degree?

## Deeper dive considerations:

- Talk about any power dynamics that may interfere with being able to honestly discuss race and other social equity issues
- Consider how communities and staff been empowered or disempowered by the issues, policy or program at hand
- Talk about where the buck (accountability) stops and who has the power or ability to make change
- Discuss what kind of resources are really needed and does budgeting and planning really reflect the need
- Talk about the organizational and community permissions needed to really make change happen