

Policy and Decision-making Questions

Identifying and eliminating the root causes that lead to inequities is the heart of our Lens work. Our goal is to providing support, tactical assistance, and a toolkit to engage institutions in deep, reflective conversation, planning, and action to promote transformational change. We know that all organizations follow a set of guiding practices to allocate resources, create policy, and make decisions. We also know that existing processes are often inequitable. For this reason, we have included two additional Lens versions that build upon the nine questions in the *Lens At A Glance* to more specifically address critical root cause areas in organizational structure and practice: resource allocation, and policy and decision-making.

Policies and decisions within organizations can be spoken or unspoken, formal or informal. We must understand the impact of policies on all stakeholders, and take measures to enhance positive and decrease negative outcomes that occur as a result. Before starting this *Policy and Decision-making Version*, please review the *Lens At A Glance*, paying particular attention to the section about barriers to success (Question #7). Identifying barriers and constraints is essential when assessing decisions in the areas of resource allocation, as many are dependent on external factors such as federal mandates, grant requirements, and personnel rules and regulations.

Questions

1. Who does the policy or decision benefit? Community members? The organization? Both?
 - If the answer is one or the other, how can your organization incorporate the needs of both?
2. What forces are restraining your decision or policy? What are your supportive or driving forces?
 - Specifically, what community support exists for or in opposition to the proposal? Why? (City of Seattle, Racial and Social Justice Initiative, Budget Policy Filter)

3. How does your organization use data that reports specifically on inequities?
 - Pay particular attention to data on the experiences and outcomes for communities of color, immigrants, and refugees.
4. How does the policy or decision explicitly acknowledge the value of equity and racial justice to the organization?
5. How are you integrating diverse perspectives, even when you do not agree with them?
6. How does the policy/decision perpetuate or help to dismantle historical, legal, or political oppressions set in the past?
 - General examples of oppression include exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence (See Concept Paper on *Hierarchy and Root Causes*).
 - Specific examples include policies that perpetuate redlining, exclusion of native voice in land use decisions, impacts of gentrification, inequitable homeownership and rental laws, exclusion of communities most affected by inequities in decision-making, etc.
7. How does the policy or decision anticipate and address influence or differential power within the organization? (Lopes and Thomas, p.243)
 - For example, performance reviews could include an appraisal of a manager's or supervisor's ability to provide employees from diverse backgrounds with ongoing support and necessary resources to perform well in their jobs, in addition to being monitored for basic performance.