

Equity Framework

Guiding questions for equity-centered decision-making and action in procedures, engagement, assessment, planning and implementation

For Internal Decision-making

Outreach and Engagement
Assessment
Allocation of Resources

For Community Work

Outreach and Engagement
Assessment
Planning
Action / Implementation

Allocation of Resources

Questions to ask when deciding how to spend time, who to provide support to, what level of support to provide, etc.

Goal: Support communities with the least capacity

<u>Question</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1. According to the Maine SVI Index, does the community have a low, medium, or high social vulnerability?	
2. Besides the SVI Index ranking, are there other indicators (population under 4,000, lack of capacity, situational need, etc.) that place this community in greater need than others?	
3. What systems (partnerships, funding, TA, etc.) are in place or are being put in place in order to ensure project sustainability for the community?	

Outreach and Engagement

Questions to ask to help achieve equitable engagement

Goal: Inclusion → Belonging

Question	Notes
1. Who is currently involved and who else needs to be included? Who will be impacted, negatively, neutrally, and positively, by the process and/or decision? See <i>"List of Suggested Groups to Engage"</i>	
2. How will we increase diversity to demographically represent the community impacted by the process and/or decision?	
3. What are the barriers to access, participation, or decision making?	
4. Who is leading what types of efforts in our community and how can we connect with multiple types of leadership (visionary, problem solvers, connectors, media savvy, etc.)?	
5. What are more equitable, inclusive, and/or creative alternatives to how we are currently engaging or organizing?	

Assessment and Planning

Questions to ask when assessing and planning

Goal: Equity centered processes and outcomes – Equitable adaptation

<u>Question</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1. Who are the most marginalized populations affected by the project?	
2. Do we have data to understand how these populations are affected by the project?	
3. What are the specific impacts of climate change on the geographical area and population of interest, and how long into the future are those impacts expected to occur?	
4. How has social vulnerability been considered in what is being proposed?	
5. What cultural or mindset considerations are essential to the success of the project?	
6. Is there a way to address historical inequities in this project?	
7. How does the project ensure both short- and long-term equitable outcomes?	

8. What built and natural infrastructure is the most important to ensure the safety of the town and its residents and should be prioritized in terms of making a community more resilient to climate change?	
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Guidance

Excerpted from [Centering Equity in Climate Resilience Planning and Action](#):

Equity in climate resilience means that one's race, class, ability or other characteristic is not a determinant in how well one is equipped to deal with climate change. Equity is defined as the equal and fair distribution of opportunities, resources, and environments free from climate hazards and risks regardless of individual/group identity or background (Chu & Cannon, 2021). Equity and equality are not the same thing. Equality is treating everyone the same, while equity is ensuring everyone has what they need to be successful. While equality aims to promote fairness, it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and has the same needs and goals (Kapwa Consulting, 2020).

Equity is both a state of being and a process. The four different forms of equity are:

- A. Procedural equity: Ensuring that processes are fair and inclusive in the development and implementation of any program or policy.
- B. Distributional equity: Ensuring the resources or benefits and burdens of a policy or program are distributed fairly, prioritizing those with highest need first.
- C. Structural (intergenerational) equity: A commitment and action to correct past harms and prevent future negative consequences by institutionalizing accountability and decision-making structures that aim to sustain positive outcomes.

A fourth aspect is overarching and integrates with the previous three:

- D. Cultural equity: A commitment to undoing racism and anti-blackness through an intentional deconstruction of White supremacist assumptions and behaviors and the concurrent construction of equitable multicultural norms (Kapwa Consulting, 2020)

Because equity leads with race, racial equity is the condition where one's race identity has no influence on how one fares in society. Racial equity is one part of racial justice and must be addressed at the root causes and not just the manifestations. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race (US Climate Action Network, 2021). An important component of racial equity is economic equity: a condition when all persons, including economically disadvantaged people and communities, have "full and fair" access to jobs, opportunities, services, housing, and public transportation (Yen Liu & Keleher, 2009 in Hughes et al., 2021).

Resources Red = highly recommended reading

[Centering Equity in Climate Resilience Planning and Action](#)

[Making Equity Real in Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience Policies and Programs – A Guidebook](#)

[How Public Agencies Can Address Public Input Fatigue – \(Equitable Engagement Best Practices\)](#)

[Tribal Climate Adaptation Guidebook](#)

[Community-Driven Resilience Planning](#)

[Maine Climate Council Equity Subcommittee Initial Recommendations](#)

List of Suggested Groups to Engage

Town / City Officials, Staff, Volunteers

- Town Manager / Mayor
- Town Select Board / City Council
- Fire Chief or other emergency responders
- Town planning staff
- Public works staff and/or others in charge of critical infrastructure
- Codes/zoning staff
- Economic / Community Development staff
- Committee Representatives: Resilience, Climate, Sustainability, Energy, Sea Level Rise, Conservation, Economic/Community Development, Planning, Housing, etc.

School District

- Principal
- Superintendent
- School Board
- Finance Department representative
- School Staff
- Students
- PTO or other school support organization representatives

Organizations

- Local environmental NGO staff
- Audubon Center, Land Trust, and/or Conservation Assistance Network
- Representatives from Public Health, Social Services, Senior Services and other community-based organizations serving vulnerable populations
- Local Community/ Economic Development Corporation
- Representatives from historical society, rotary club, library, or other service organizations

Community Groups and Community Members

- Person(s) doing equity work, locally
- Environmentally engaged student(s) or representative from school/youth groups
- Member(s) of the local business community, especially from industries vulnerable to climate change (e.g. local farming/fishing community, nature-based tourism)
- Representatives from neighborhood associations

Frontline Communities and People Facing the Greatest Climate Risks

- Communities of color
- Elderly people
- Natural resource industry communities
- Immigrants
- Industrial employees
- Low-income residents
- Non-English speakers
- Outdoor workers
- People exposed to increasingly poor air quality and increased pollution
- People with pre existing illnesses
- People without access to insurance
- Public housing residents
- Refugees
- Single-headed households
- Small businesses
- Students
- Transient and unhoused populations
- Tribal communities and tribal members
- Women
- Young children