



**RDPO**  
REGIONAL DISASTER  
PREPAREDNESS ORGANIZATION

# EQUITY FRAMEWORK

The RDPO Equity Subcommittee developed the framework in association with Amber Ontiveros & Associates, LLC. The Equity Subcommittee approved the Framework on December 1, 2023.

Amber  
**Ontiveros**  
ASSOCIATES LLC



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	2-4
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION .....	5
The RDPO Mission & Vision .....	5
What is Equity?.....	6
SECTION 2: EQUITY AT THE RDPO .....	7
What is the RDPO Equity Framework? .....	7
Guiding Principles .....	10
Contributors .....	11
SECTION 3: THE RDPO'S DEFINITION OF EQUITY .....	11
SECTION 4: PRIORITY EQUITY POPULATIONS .....	12
SECTION 5: EQUITY FRAMEWORK GOALS .....	14
SECTION 6: BEST PRACTICES FOR APPLYING THE EQUITY FRAMEWORK .....	18



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

The Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization's (RDPO) Equity Framework is the result of a collaboration of the RDPO Steering Committee, staff, and consultants and was directed by the RDPO Equity Subcommittee. This document is intended to be a living document that is reviewed and revised regularly as community needs change.

### INTRODUCTION

The RDPO is a partnership of government agencies and private and nonprofit organizations in the Portland Metropolitan Region that recognize they can more effectively respond to disasters and facilitate recovery if they prepare together. The RDPO's vision is to create a secure and disaster-resilient region in which local agencies, organizations, and communities are coordinated and prepared to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from threats and hazards of great risk to the Portland Metropolitan Region. To effectively serve all populations in its community, the RDPO recognizes that it needs to formally embed equity into its culture, policies, and procedures.

### EQUITY AT THE RDPO

The Equity Framework provides guidance for the RDPO to identify, develop, and implement strategies that will lead to more equitable outcomes in its work.

#### **The Equity Framework:**

- Provides a clear definition of equity for the organization.
- Defines priority populations and identifies methods the organization will use to meaningfully engage with these communities.
- Establishes clear vision and goals that provide context for all equity policies and practices.
- Identifies operational processes into which equity policies and practices should be incorporated.
- Provides a roadmap for how to ensure future planning, project, and outreach work will be done equitably.



In February 2021, the RDPO [Policy Committee](#) approved an [Equity Resolution](#).

**The resolution directed the RDPO to:**

- Improve understanding of disaster impacts on, and prioritize benefits and funding for, communities of color and other populations in the region disproportionately impacted by disasters.
- Create an Equity Subcommittee (EQSC) to guide these efforts.
- Strengthen equity within the organization through the development of an equity framework and equity enhancement tools.

## THE RDPO'S DEFINITION OF EQUITY

For the RDPO, equity is helping communities survive disasters and thrive afterward by ensuring that marginalized and disproportionately impacted populations have equitable access to disaster preparedness, planning, recovery opportunities, and resources.

## PRIORITY EQUITY POPULATIONS

- Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)
- People experiencing low or no income
- People living with mental and/or physical disabilities, access and functional needs, and heightened medical considerations
- People experiencing homelessness or transitional housing
- Members of the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer (LGBTQAI+) community.
- Members of multilingual communities
- Immigrants, refugees, and asylees
- Older adults
- Children and youth
- Religious minority groups
- Other marginalized, excluded, or otherwise overlooked communities



## EQUITY FRAMEWORK GOALS

- RDPO membership is more equitable and represents priority equity populations.
- Equity is embedded in Standard Operating Procedures.
- Equity is increasingly embedded in RDPO projects.
- The RDPO leverages procurement processes to advance equity goals.
- Equity is embedded in RDPO-funded public-facing messaging.
- The RDPO team is representative of the communities it serves.
- A culture of equity and inclusion is intrinsically embedded in RDPO culture.
- Equity is embedded in the design, development, and implementation of the RDPO strategic plan.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR APPLYING THE EQUITY FRAMEWORK

**The Equity Subcommittee recommends utilization of the following best practices obtained from the industry:**

- Invest in continued learning.
- Identify disparities and ensure compliance with civil rights non-discrimination obligations.
- Utilize qualitative and quantitative data in equity analyses.
- Seek public input and elevate voices from Priority Equity Populations.
- Challenge existing power dynamics and utilize a trauma-informed approach to engagement.



## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

---

The RDPO is a partnership of government agencies and private and nonprofit organizations in the Portland Metropolitan Region, including Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, and Washington counties in Oregon and Clark County in Washington State. RDPO partners work together to build and maintain regional all-hazards disaster preparedness capabilities through coordinated planning, training, and exercising, and investment in technology and specialized equipment.

RDPO partners recognize that they can more effectively respond to disasters and facilitate recovery if they prepare together. Regional collaboration increases the region's resilience to disasters, is more cost-effective for taxpayers, develops roles and relationships needed for efficient disaster response and recovery, creates more consistent public messaging, and increases the ability to involve the whole community in preparedness.

RDPO MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS	
Clackamas County	City of Vancouver
Clark County	Port of Portland
Columbia County	Metro
Multnomah County	TriMet
Washington County	City of Wood Village
City of Beaverton	Columbia City
City of Fairview	Clatskanie Rural Fire Protection District
City of Gresham	Columbia 911 Communications District
City of Hillsboro	Regional Water Providers Consortium
City of Portland	Scappoose Rural Fire District
City of Troutdale	
Visit <a href="http://rdpo.net/partners">rdpo.net/partners</a> for a full list of partners.	

## THE RDPO MISSION & VISION

The RDPO's mission is to build and maintain regional disaster preparedness capabilities in the Portland Metropolitan Region through strategic and coordinated planning, training, and exercising, and investment in technology and specialized equipment. Its vision is to create a secure and disaster-resilient region in which local agencies, organizations, and communities are coordinated and prepared to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from threats and hazards of great risk to the Portland Metropolitan Region.



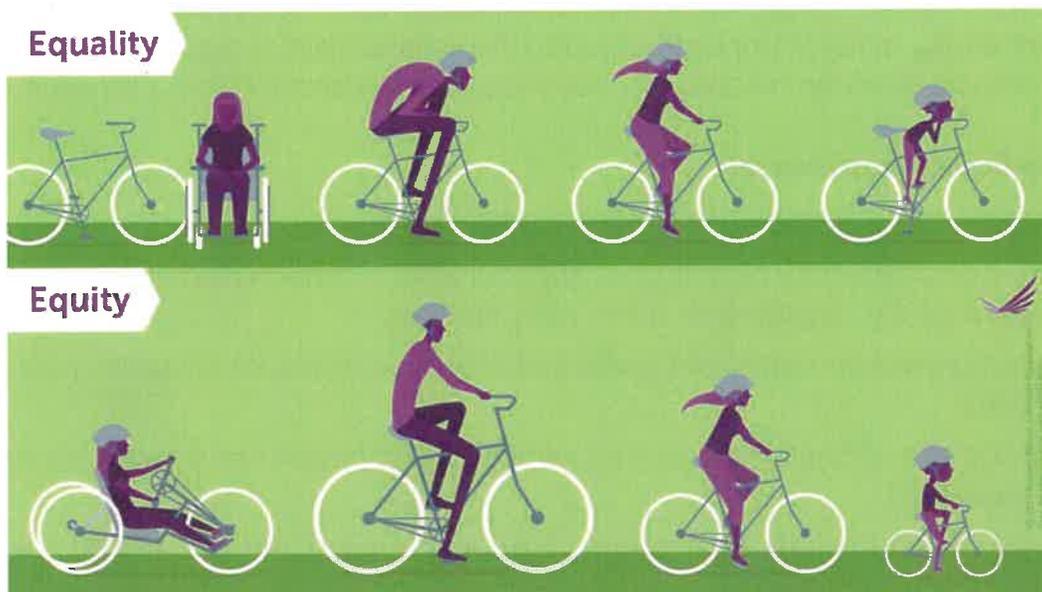
## WHAT IS EQUITY?

"Equity" has become the new frontier in organizational growth and change. But what is equity? People use the word freely, but many lack a shared understanding of what it means. Some think it is like "inclusion" or "diversity." Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines equity as, "fairness or justice in the way people are treated." This is not clear either – people potentially will have differing "definitions" for fairness or for justice. Some say equity is like equality. But it is not.

Equity is a practice of recognizing that individuals and groups have experienced different circumstances and therefore have different needs to be filled for them to succeed and thrive.

### The difference between equality and equity:

- Equality provides people the same resource(s).
- Equity provides people the resource(s) they need.
- Equity is meeting people where they are and providing them with the resources specific to their circumstances and needs.
- Equity enables the attainment of equality, inclusion, and diversity.
- Equity is both an action and an outcome.





- Equity is meeting people where they are and providing them with the resources specific to their circumstances and needs.
- Equity enables the attainment of equality, inclusion, and diversity.
- Equity is both an action and an outcome.

## SECTION 2: EQUITY AT THE RDPO

---

### WHAT IS THE RDPO EQUITY FRAMEWORK?

The Equity Framework was designed to clarify the RDPO's approach to incorporating equity into all aspects of its operations. In developing the Equity Framework, the RDPO creates a shared understanding of equity and its importance to its work and establishes clear goals toward embedding equity throughout the organization. A framework helps establish structure for institutionalizing equity principles and best practices at all levels of organizational decision points.

The Equity Framework is an official organizational document that provides guidance for the RDPO to identify, develop, and implement strategies that will lead to more equitable outcomes in RDPO work. It provides information about tools and processes that can be used so that equity remains imperative within the organization. It also offers methods by which the organization can measure its advancement toward achieving its equity goals.

#### **In brief, the Equity Framework:**

- Provides a clear definition of equity for the organization.
- Defines priority equity populations and identifies methods the organization will use to meaningfully engage with these communities.
- Establishes a clear vision and goals that provide context for all equity policies and practices.
- Identifies operational processes into which equity policies and practices should be incorporated.
- Provides a roadmap for how to ensure future planning, project, and outreach work will be done equitably.



"Not responding is a response – we are equally responsible for what we don't do."

- Jonathan Safran Foer, author

Disparate post-disaster outcomes<sup>1</sup> demand increased urgency for the RDPO to implement the principles and practices of equity. The work of the RDPO is preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that specific groups historically experience "the first and worst" consequences of emergencies or disasters.<sup>2</sup>

In February 2021, the RDPO Policy Committee approved and signed an [Equity Resolution](#), which recognized that the RDPO has "a moral, ethical, and legal responsibility to ensure equitable access to the disaster preparedness resources [it] manages." The RDPO recognizes that to realize its vision of a secure and disaster-resilient region, the organization must embed equity and representation of disproportionately impacted communities in all aspects of its work.

### **The Equity Resolution directed the RDPO to:**

- Improve understanding of disaster impacts on and prioritize benefits and funding for communities of color and other populations in the region that are disproportionately impacted by disasters.
- Create an Equity Sub-Committee (EQSC) to guide these efforts.

---

<sup>1</sup> Joseph, J., Irshad Mohammed S., and Alex, A.M. "Disaster recovery and structural inequalities: A case study of community assertion for justice." *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 66, 2021, 102555. [doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2021.102555](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2021.102555)

<sup>2</sup> 1) [un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2015-11-18/secretary-generals-remarks-second-un-special-thematic-session-water](https://un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2015-11-18/secretary-generals-remarks-second-un-special-thematic-session-water)

2) [oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/CLIMATECHANGE/Pages/messages-preparedness.aspx](https://oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/CLIMATECHANGE/Pages/messages-preparedness.aspx)

3) [partnershipfornewamericans.org/on-the-frontlines-of-relief-and-recovery-a-rapid-response-toolkit-for-immigrant-and-refugee-organizations-responding-to-extreme-weather](https://partnershipfornewamericans.org/on-the-frontlines-of-relief-and-recovery-a-rapid-response-toolkit-for-immigrant-and-refugee-organizations-responding-to-extreme-weather)

4) [preventionweb.net/news/many-families-first-disaster-can-be-far-last](https://preventionweb.net/news/many-families-first-disaster-can-be-far-last)

5) [hsgac.senate.gov/media/dems/what-they-are-saying-peters-paul-lankford-introduce-bipartisan-bill-to-simplify-application-process-for-federal-disaster-assistance](https://hsgac.senate.gov/media/dems/what-they-are-saying-peters-paul-lankford-introduce-bipartisan-bill-to-simplify-application-process-for-federal-disaster-assistance)

6) [oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/CLIMATECHANGE/Pages/messages-preparedness.aspx](https://oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/CLIMATECHANGE/Pages/messages-preparedness.aspx)

7) [wilderness.org/articles/blog/5-stories-people-impacted-climate-change-and-inspired-take-action](https://wilderness.org/articles/blog/5-stories-people-impacted-climate-change-and-inspired-take-action)  
[sfplanning.org/project/safety-and-resilience-element](https://sfplanning.org/project/safety-and-resilience-element)

8) [oxfam.org/en/there-nothing-equal-about-climate-crisis](https://oxfam.org/en/there-nothing-equal-about-climate-crisis)

9) [advancementproject.org/climate-change-not-future-problem-communities-color-now-problem](https://advancementproject.org/climate-change-not-future-problem-communities-color-now-problem)

10) [colorado.edu/today/2020/09/10/many-families-first-disaster-can-be-far-last](https://colorado.edu/today/2020/09/10/many-families-first-disaster-can-be-far-last)

11) [un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2015-11-18/secretary-generals-remarks-second-un-specialthematic-session-water](https://un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2015-11-18/secretary-generals-remarks-second-un-specialthematic-session-water)



## Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization

### Equity Framework

- Strengthen equity within the organization through the development of an equity framework and equity enhancement tools.

This Equity Framework builds on the Equity Resolution and will lead directly to changes in the RDPO Strategic Plan. By incorporating an equity mindset and creating policies and procedures designed to enhance equitable outcomes, the RDPO will effectively embed equity principles throughout the organization.

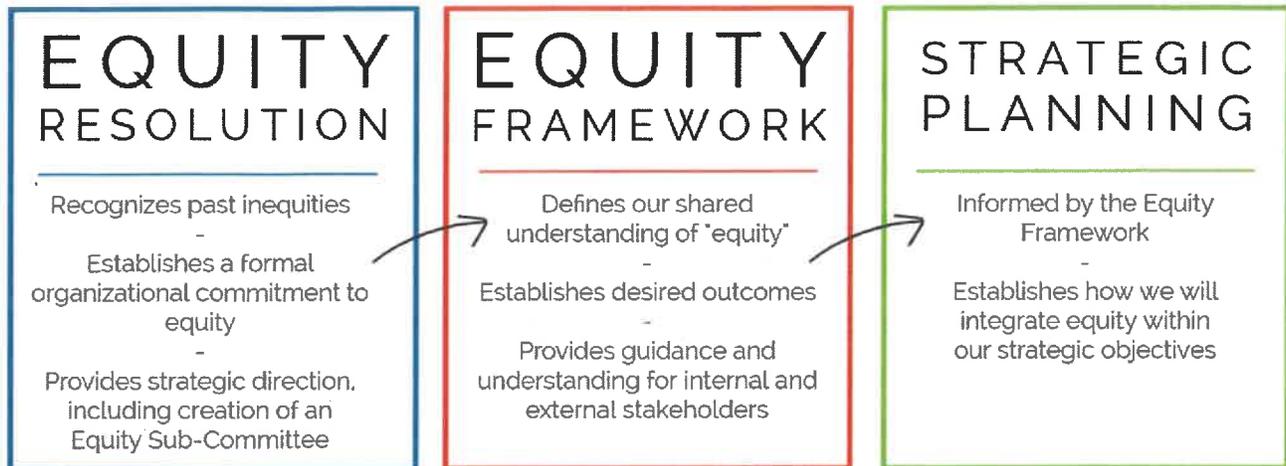
To initiate the process of creating the Equity Framework, the EQSC reviewed RDPO documents, reviewed material related to equity and organizations, participated in many discussions about equity and how to incorporate it into an organizations policies and practices, and participated in Targeted Universalism training. They also reviewed equity frameworks of governments, including the cities of Portland and Vancouver. The EQSC also participated in a series of courses about Targeted Universalism to inform the creation of the Equity Framework.

The Equity Framework provides guidance, definitions, and desired outcomes that are designed to help the RDPO incorporate equity at a foundational level through its processes, committees, and planning efforts. The framework will affect service delivery of the jurisdictional bodies in disaster preparedness.

In addition to making institutional changes to how the RDPO does business, equity planning and implementation are also about cultural transformation at the RDPO. Therefore, this Equity Framework will be a living document for the RDPO. It will need regular updates as the organization and its equity work evolves.

### **The EQSC worked to address the following questions when creating the Equity Framework:**

- **Why** does the RDPO need an equity framework?
- **How** can it be used and implemented?
- **What** equitable outcomes does the RDPO want to achieve?
- **Who** is likely to benefit or experience burden because of the RDPO's programs, services, and decisions?
- **Where** in the region are the RDPO services most needed?



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The EQSC adhered to the following principles while creating the Equity Framework.

- **Embed equity at all levels and phases of organizational work.** For example, embed equity in hazard mitigation, planning, preparedness, communication, response, and recovery. Ensure the RDPO's approach to its work is centered around the understanding that marginalized communities often experience the greatest losses and have the most barriers to disaster recovery.
- **Understand, acknowledge, and commit to addressing historical inequities.** As a result of racial and ethnic segregation, discrimination, and negative systemic impacts on other marginalized groups, many communities in the Portland region have been exposed to inequities with public systems and services. Understanding, acknowledging, and learning from past inequities related to disasters and emergencies is key to transforming organizational systems and policies and improving outcomes for groups that have been historically, and are currently, the most impacted by disasters.
- **Understand and acknowledge "intersectionality."** Coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, this term describes the ways in which race, class, gender, and other aspects of our identity intersect, overlap, and interact with one another, informing the way in which individuals simultaneously experience oppression and privilege in their daily lives interpersonally and systemically. Intersectionality recognizes that aspects of our identity do not work in silos. Intersectionality provides a basis for understanding how these individual identity markers work with one another.
- **Address disproportionate impacts.** The RDPO's goal is to develop processes that address the needs of groups that are disproportionately impacted by disasters.



## CONTRIBUTORS

The EQSC was established in April 2022 as a subcommittee of the RDPO Steering Committee. EQSC members represent multiple government agencies and community-based organizations in the Portland Metro Region.

- Alicia Sojourner, City of Vancouver
- Andrew Degner, City of Gresham Public Works
- Courtney Yan, Washington County Emergency Management
- Diana Avalos Leos, Latino Leadership NW
- Jacinta Cruz, NW Oregon Health Preparedness Organization (HPO)
- Lauren Rosenstein, City of Portland Police Bureau
- Rebecca Geisen, Regional Water Providers Consortium
- Regina Ingabire, City of Portland Bureau of Emergency Management
- Dr. Steven Holt, Try Excellence
- Tatiana Elejalde, City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights

## SECTION 3: THE RDPO'S DEFINITION OF EQUITY

---

For the RDPO, equity is helping communities survive disasters and thrive afterward by ensuring that marginalized and disproportionately impacted populations have equitable access to disaster preparedness, planning, recovery opportunities, and resources.

### Equity:

- **Seeks** to integrate the views of those impacted by decisions, particularly those who have been marginalized in policy making activities.
- **Identifies** the needs of all people in our community and formalizes the means to meet those needs.
- **Provides** different levels of support based to individual groups based on their specific needs. This achieves fairness in outcomes.
- **Replaces** policies and practices that result in a disparity of outcomes based upon an individual's circumstances such as race, sex, gender identification, income, ability, language, culture, sexual orientation, etc.
- **Develops** processes that address the needs of groups that are disproportionately impacted by disasters.
- **Supports** disproportionately impacted populations by applying resources to address impacts and enable communities to access prevention, training, education, and services related to disasters and recovery.



"It is, however, important to understand that giving a man his due may often mean giving him special treatment. I am aware of the fact that this has been a troublesome concept for many liberals since it conflicts with their traditional ideal of equal opportunity and equal treatment of people according of their individual merits. But this is a day which demands new thinking and re-evaluation of old concepts."

*- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., minister & activist*

## SECTION 4: PRIORITY EQUITY POPULATIONS

---

As part of its efforts to develop an inclusive equity strategy, the RDPO will intentionally engage key communities. This includes communities that have been historically excluded from disaster planning conversations and are more likely to experience significant disaster impacts because of historic and current marginalization and exclusion.

Social norms and matters related to equity are rapidly evolving issues. The RDPO recognizes this and is committed to review and revise this Equity Framework regularly with a special focus on priority equity populations. This will help ensure it continues to identify and demonstrate awareness and sensitivity to groups in the community that experience inequity.

### **These populations include but are not limited to:**

- **Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).**<sup>3</sup> BIPOC community members often are, and historically have been, excluded from or marginalized within public decision-making processes due to barriers created by systemic and institutional discrimination.
- **Women.** Women, including white women, who have historically been discriminated against in access to contracts.
- **People experiencing low or no income.**<sup>4</sup> Individuals who are living near or below the poverty level have much less access to support and information. They have severely limited financial resources to mitigate the impact of disasters on their own.

---

<sup>3</sup> Dorazio, J. "How FEMA Can Prioritize Equity in Disaster Recovery Assistance." Center for American Progress (CAP), July 19, 2022. [americanprogress.org/article/how-fema-can-prioritize-equity-in-disaster-recovery-assistance](https://americanprogress.org/article/how-fema-can-prioritize-equity-in-disaster-recovery-assistance)

<sup>4</sup> Parker, S. "Living with Low-Income and Economic Marginalization (LIEM) – how can psychologists help?" The SES Indicator, December 2019. [apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicator/2019/12/low-income-marginalization](https://apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicator/2019/12/low-income-marginalization)



- **People living with mental and/or physical disabilities, access and functional needs, and heightened medical considerations.**<sup>5</sup> This population bears increased burden, especially when a response to a disaster requires mobility or limits access to medical assistance, electricity, or social support programs.
- **People experiencing homelessness or transitional housing.**<sup>6</sup> This population has severely limited resources to respond to a disaster and much less access to important and time-sensitive information regarding an active disaster.
- **Members of the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer (LGBTQAI+) community.**<sup>7</sup> This population, which includes transgender and gender fluid populations, may hesitate or refuse to reach out to government agencies and ask for assistance during an emergency or disaster due to past experiences of discrimination.
- **Members of multilingual communities whose primary language is not English, including non-English speakers and those learning English.**<sup>8</sup> It is the responsibility of government agencies to provide access to language assistance, as these groups experience institutional language barriers. Therefore, it is imperative that preparedness and disaster information are available in a wide variety of languages and message delivery options.
- **Immigrants, refugees, and asylees.**<sup>9</sup> These individuals often lack access to necessary information due to multiple barriers, such as language, lack of support systems, lack of knowledge about available resources, etc. These barriers are required to be removed to ensure the RDPO meets federal non-discrimination laws.
- **Older adults.**<sup>10</sup> During and after disasters, older adults are less likely to have access to multiple sources of information and are more likely to have increased mobility and other functional needs.
- **Children and youth.**<sup>11</sup> Children and youth are particularly vulnerable in disaster situations due to a lack of control over their circumstances and dependence on

---

<sup>5</sup> Kahn, D. and Wolman, J. "Disasters are a disability issue." Politico, January 6, 2023,

[politico.com/newsletters/the-long-game/2023/01/06/disasters-are-a-disability-issue-00076713](https://www.politico.com/newsletters/the-long-game/2023/01/06/disasters-are-a-disability-issue-00076713)

<sup>6</sup> Vickery, J. "Homelessness and inequality in the U.S.: Challenges for community disaster resilience." Emerging Voices in Natural Hazards Research, 2016, 145-177.

[sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/B9780128158210000138](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/B9780128158210000138)

<sup>7</sup> Frank, T. "LGBTQ People Are at Higher Risk in Disasters." E&E News, December 23, 2020, [scientificamerican.com/article/lgbtq-people-are-at-higher-risk-in-disasters](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/lgbtq-people-are-at-higher-risk-in-disasters)

<sup>8</sup> Uekusa, S. "Disaster linguicism: Linguistic minorities in disasters." Language in Society, 48:3, (February 26, 2019), [cambridge.org/core/journals/language-in-society/article/disaster-linguicism-linguistic-minorities-indisasters/64F90D7B92E953BC719B0080986DD821](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-in-society/article/disaster-linguicism-linguistic-minorities-indisasters/64F90D7B92E953BC719B0080986DD821)

<sup>9</sup> Seglah, H. A. and Blanchard, K. Invisible Again: Hyper-Marginalized Groups and Disaster Data. 2022, [preventionweb.net/publication/invisible-again-hyper-marginalised-groups-and-disaster-data](https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/invisible-again-hyper-marginalised-groups-and-disaster-data)

<sup>10</sup> Older people in disasters and humanitarian crises: Guidelines for best practice. HelpAge International, [helpage.org/silo/files/older-people-in-disasters-and-humanitarian-crises-guidelines-for-best-practice.pdf](https://www.helpage.org/silo/files/older-people-in-disasters-and-humanitarian-crises-guidelines-for-best-practice.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Fothergill, A. "Children, Youth, and Disaster." Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Natural Hazard Science, July 27, 2017, [oxfordre.com/naturalhazardscience/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199389407.001.0001/acrefore-9780199389407-e-23;jsessionid=598A46322B6BAB44B0118F970BD8729B](https://www.oxfordre.com/naturalhazardscience/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199389407.001.0001/acrefore-9780199389407-e-23;jsessionid=598A46322B6BAB44B0118F970BD8729B)



others to advocate on their behalf. Additionally, children are often not eligible to receive disaster recovery supports without a parent, guardian, or supervising adult.

- **Religious minority groups, including but not limited to Muslim and Jewish communities.**<sup>12</sup> These groups often experience high rates of discrimination and faith-based violence which can put them at greater risk during disasters.
- **Other marginalized, excluded, or otherwise overlooked communities.**<sup>13</sup> This may include other populations who have been disenfranchised, such as formerly and currently incarcerated individuals or others who may not be typically included in disaster planning processes.

Treating different things the same can generate as much inequality as treating the same things differently."

- Kimberlé Crenshaw, civil rights advocate

## SECTION 5: EQUITY FRAMEWORK GOALS

---

At the RDPO, equity is not about keeping up appearances and "checking the boxes." Too often, organizations go through the motions of implementing equity policies and involving the community in conversations without developing processes to ensure that there is buy-in and implementation to create lasting change. The goals developed here are actionable, measurable, and serve to guide the RDPO. They create measurable actions that ensure equity efforts are tangible and enable the RDPO to be held accountable for enacting and measuring change.

**GOAL 1:** RDPO membership is more equitable and represents priority equity populations.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1:** As appropriate, examine and increase the number of RDPO committee, workgroup, subcommittee, and task force members who are also members of the RDPO priority equity populations and possess the skill and experience needed to participate.

<sup>12</sup> Avis, W. "Challenges religious minorities face in accessing humanitarian assistance." K4D Helpdesk Report, 666, (2019), [gsdrc.org/publications/challenges-religious-minorities-face-in-accessing-humanitarian-assistance](https://gsdrc.org/publications/challenges-religious-minorities-face-in-accessing-humanitarian-assistance)

<sup>13</sup> Golembeski, C., Armstrong, A., Irfan, A., Méndez, M. and Shapiro, N. "Climate Change and Incarceration." Think Global Health, April 29, 2022, [thinkglobalhealth.org/article/climate-change-and-incarceration](https://thinkglobalhealth.org/article/climate-change-and-incarceration)



- ACTION: Review the RDPO's Social Vulnerability Tools<sup>14</sup> and other social vulnerability data to determine whether the RDPO priority equity populations list in Section 4 of this document needs to be updated.
- ACTION: Reflect on methods for increasing priority equity population membership, taking into consideration that including different groups may require tailored approaches.
- ACTION: Assess feasibility, approach, and budget for establishing sustainable paid volunteer opportunities for RDPO stakeholders, including community organizations and community leaders, to participate in RDPO committees and work groups.

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Ensure RDPO employees, committees, and workgroups receive regular and updated implicit bias, equity in disaster planning and response, and other appropriate trainings biennially.

- ACTION: Identify training opportunities that are best suited to achieve the goal.
- ACTION: Schedule and budget for these trainings as a core activity and cost for the RDPO.

**GOAL 2:** Equity is embedded in RDPO Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

OBJECTIVE 2.1: Update all committee, workgroup, subcommittee, and task force SOPs to include equity principles.

- ACTION: Develop guidance to support RDPO groups in creating equity enhancements for their SOPs.
- ACTION: Dedicate RDPO team time to support groups to revise and update their relevant SOPs.

**GOAL 3:** Equity is increasingly embedded in RDPO projects.

OBJECTIVE 3.1: Increase equity elements in the project application and evaluation criteria:

- ACTION: Review the project application and evaluation criteria to ensure equity elements are clear and robust. Incorporate new elements or adapt existing elements as our learning of equity grows.

<sup>14</sup> [rdpo.net/social-vulnerability-tools-project](https://rdpo.net/social-vulnerability-tools-project)



OBJECTIVE 3.2: Increase the number of project applications that receive at least 80% of available equity points.

- ACTION: Assess equity scores on past proposals and establish a target for increasing equity in future proposals.
- ACTION: Provide training and technical support for applicants based on the results of the assessment.

OBJECTIVE 3.3: Increase the number of project applications that receive input from RDPO priority equity populations prior to submission.

- ACTION: Develop a methodology and explore ways to fund community engagement to support project development.
- ACTION: Provide work groups with guidance and support for connecting with and including priority equity populations.

OBJECTIVE 3.4: Ensure that at least one member of the EQSC participates in the Evaluation Committee.

- ACTION: Develop a model that supports participation of EQSC members in the Evaluation Committee, including budget to provide financial support if needed.

**GOAL 4:** The RDPO leverages procurement processes to advance equity goals.

OBJECTIVE 4.1: Reduce barriers that inhibit access to contracting opportunities for contractors and vendors that represent RDPO priority equity populations and that have the appropriate skill and expertise, as allowable by law, administrative rules, or local ordinances.

- ACTION: Increase contracting opportunities for priority equity populations in procurement processes that utilize RDPO-administered funds. Specifically increase opportunities for minority-owned, women-owned, and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses, as well as emerging small businesses
- ACTION: Develop procurement guidance for maximizing participation of minority-owned, women-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned businesses, as well as emerging small businesses in procurement processes that utilize RDPO-administered funds.



**GOAL 5:** Equity is embedded in RDPO-funded public-facing messaging.

OBJECTIVE 5.1: By December 2024, conduct an analysis of PublicAlerts.org to ensure it is meeting the needs of the RDPO priority equity populations. Update PublicAlerts.org website in a way that is reflective of the analysis in a timeframe to be determined.

- ACTION: Hire a contractor to conduct a usability study of PublicAlerts.org. Study participants should be members of the RDPO priority equity populations.
- ACTION: Update PublicAlerts.org to reflect feedback provided by the usability study.

OBJECTIVE 5.2: By December 2025, develop a regional disaster messaging standards toolkit that will be applied to future RDPO-funded disaster messaging projects.

- ACTION: Hire a contractor to develop a regional disaster communication standards toolkit. It should contain clear equity standards based on laws, guidance, research, best practices, and community feedback related to crisis communications and emergency alert and warning. It should include optimal communication methods, tactics, and messages for increasing awareness and understanding of disasters among RDPO priority equity populations.
- ACTION: Ensure all future projects with a disaster messaging component incorporate and adhere to the regional disaster messaging standards.

OBJECTIVE 5.3: Within five years, translate all RDPO-funded disaster messaging projects into the safe harbor languages identified using legally defensible analysis. Ensure all future RDPO-funded disaster messaging projects include translation.

- ACTION: Create a budget line item for this work.
- ACTION: Institutionalize ongoing funding for translation work.
- ACTION: Require all projects that involve disaster messaging to include translation into identified safe harbor languages.

**GOAL 6:** The RDPO team is representative of the communities it serves.

OBJECTIVE 6.1: The RDPO team reflects the communities it serves, including priority equity populations.

- ACTION: Develop an RDPO Recruitment and Hiring Guide that incorporates guidance from Human Resources equity experts and is compliant with all federal, state, and City of Portland Equal Opportunity Employer regulations and policies.



**GOAL 7:** A culture of equity and inclusion is intrinsically embedded in the RDPO culture.

**OBJECTIVE 7.1:** Create an environment in which team members, partner organizations, and stakeholders feel a sense of belonging and lifelong learning.

- **ACTION:** Provide opportunities for learning and self-reflection to develop a culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **ACTION:** Conduct a biennial survey of employees, partner organizations, and stakeholders that asks if the RDPO fosters self-reflection and personal growth towards understanding and embracing equity using an operational framework.

**GOAL 8:** Equity is embedded in the design, development, and implementation of the RDPO strategic plan.

**OBJECTIVE 8.1:** Incorporate the Equity Framework in all strategic planning processes.

- **ACTION:** Invest in technical resources and expertise to inform the design, development, and implementation of the RDPO strategic plan.
- **ACTION:** Include measurable outcomes that advances equity goals within the RDPO Strategic Plan.

## SECTION 6: BEST PRACTICES FOR APPLYING THE EQUITY FRAMEWORK

---

Industry best practices for RDPO to consider in its implementation of the Equity Framework.

- **Invest in continued learning.** Invest in continued organizational learning and create space for individual and collective growth. Understand that advancing equity is a continuous process of improvement.
- **Identify disparities and ensure compliance with civil rights nondiscrimination obligations.** It is vital to ensure that all programs, services, and activities are compliant with civil rights nondiscrimination obligations under Title VI and ADA Title II. Conduct regular research to identify disparities. Solicit information from RDPO partners on their experiences implementing equity-related actions and policies.



- **Utilize qualitative and quantitative data in equity analyses.** Use data to develop solutions that minimize burdens and maximize benefits to all communities. Collaborate with communities to identify data needs and to obtain qualitative and quantitative data. Engage communities to help interpret the data and develop policies and programs that meet community needs.
- **Seek public input and elevate voices from priority equity communities.** Strive to identify communities that are at a higher risk of being negatively affected by disasters and emergencies and solicit their voices, concerns, goals, and experiences to help shape future programs, services, and activities.
- **Challenge existing power dynamics and utilize a trauma-informed approach to engagement.** Empower marginalized communities. Use culturally appropriate and trauma-informed strategies to increase public participation. Use plain, accessible language. Ensure that the public feels welcome and encouraged to participate in decision making, raising concerns, asking questions, and presenting new ideas.

"He who seeks equity must do equity."

- *Joseph Story, Former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court*