

The Science & Technical Support Section: Equity and Social Justice Business Plan Statement

By Larry Jones and Jim Simmonds

King County's Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Program directs county agencies to make the 14 determinants of equity increasingly available through their actions (see **Table 1: Determinants of Equity**). ESJ calls for a focus on both equity in the development and decision processes (process equity) and equity in the distribution of project benefits and burdens (distributional equity) This represents an effort to ensure that all residents in King County have equal opportunities in life and King County government acts in a fair and just manner at all times (www.kingcounty.gov/exec/equity.aspx).

TABLE 1: 14 Determinants of Equity

Equity in county practices that eliminates all forms of discrimination in county activities in order to provide fair treatment for all employees, contractors, clients, community partners, residents and others who interact with King County;
Job training and jobs that provide all residents with the knowledge and skills to compete in a diverse workforce and with the ability to make sufficient income for the purchase of basic necessities to support them and their families;
Community economic development that supports local ownership of assets, including homes and businesses, and assures fair access for all to business development and retention opportunities;
Housing for all people that is safe, affordable, high quality and healthy;
Education that is high quality and culturally appropriate and allows each student to reach his or her full learning and career potential;
Early childhood development that supports nurturing relationships, high-quality affordable child care and early learning opportunities that promotes optimal early childhood development and school readiness for all children;
Healthy built and natural environments for all people that include mixes of land use that support: jobs, housing, amenities and services; trees and forest canopy; clean air, water, soil and sediment
Community and public safety that includes services such as fire, police, emergency medical services and code enforcement that are responsive to all residents so that everyone feels safe to live, work and play in any neighborhood of King County;
A law and justice system that provides equitable access and fair treatment for all;
Neighborhoods that support all communities and individuals through strong social networks, trust among neighbors and the ability to work together to achieve common goals that improve the quality of life for everyone in the neighborhood;
Transportation that provides everyone with safe, efficient, affordable, convenient and reliable mobility options including public transit, walking, carpooling and biking.
Food systems that support local food production and provide access to affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate foods for all people;
Parks and natural resources that provide access for all people to safe, clean and quality outdoor spaces, facilities and activities that appeal to the interests of all communities; and
Health and human services that are high quality, affordable and culturally appropriate and support the optimal well-being of all people;

Advancing equity and social justice foundational practices is an important element of the Science Section's program. It is critically important to the success of our work – that the data and information we provide meet the needs of an increasingly diverse King County population.

The determinants of equity that the Science and Technical Support section can focus on include the following:

- **Equity in County Practices;**
- **Education;**
- **Healthy Built and Natural Environments;**
- **Food Systems;**
- **Parks and Natural Resources;**

While the ways in which the Science Section can best advance ESJ will continue to evolve, the Section's ESJ commitments currently include the following:

- The Science Section recognizes that cultural competency is an ongoing learning process and the section will actively include ESJ training and education into individual and section work program activities.
- Each Science Section staff member shall demonstrate effective, non-biased, and appropriate interaction with all customers, audiences, co-workers, and institutions.
- The Science Section will look to raise visibility of ESJ by integrating Equity and Social Justice Practices into all aspects of our work.
- The Science Section will recognize and identify bias in our service delivery and effectively implement corrective practices.
- The Science Section shall communicate information and education that is beneficial to the health of the environment and resident well-being in all communities.
- The Science Section will work to build community trust, interest, and support for our work.

Contributor to King County's SciFYI

Jim Simmonds

Jim Simmonds is the Water Quality Unit Supervisor of King County's Science and Technical Support Section. He has over 25 years' experience monitoring and modeling environmental conditions, managing environmental investigations, managing environmental data, and assessing potential impacts of stormwater, wastewater, and environmental contamination. He has been with King County for 17 years.



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Section Manager: Dave White

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Send questions, comments and future story ideas to:

Kate O'Laughlin - kate.olaughlin@kingcounty.gov,
206-477-4789

Jim Simmonds - jim.simmonds@kingcounty.gov,
206-477-4825

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