Equitable Community Economic Development Assessment Tools Manual

Center for Community and Economic Development
Michigan State University
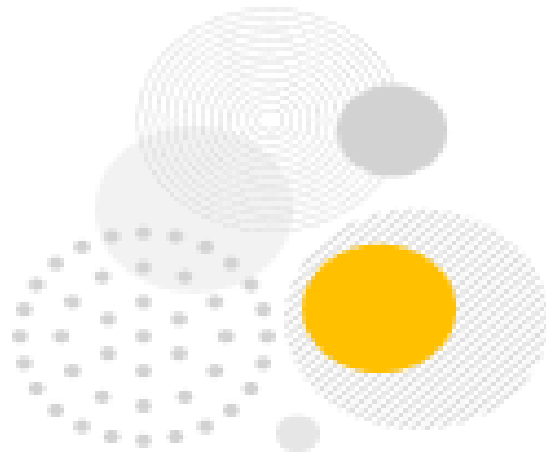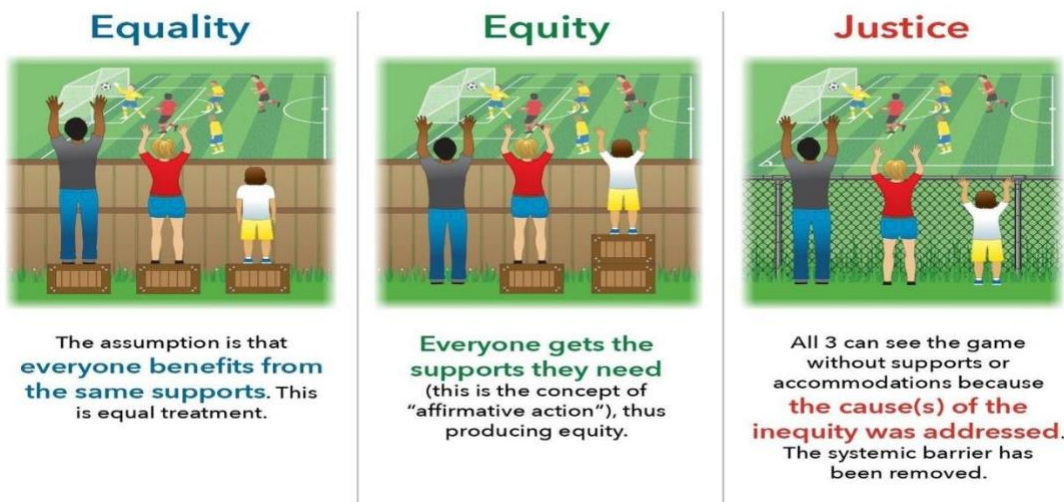**2023**

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Introduction

Equality — The assumption is that **everyone benefits from the same supports**. This is equal treatment.

Equity — **Everyone gets the supports they need** (this is the concept of "affirmative action"), thus producing equity.

Justice — All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because **the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed**. The systemic barrier has been removed.

A healthy, equitable community is one that offers complete social, physical and mental well-being at all stages of life and strives for justice and fairness in meeting the needs for all residents. The Center for Community and Economic Development is dedicated to co-creating sustainable prosperity and equitable economies with communities. To that end, we have developed a set of self-assessment or self-evaluation tools that help individuals know and rate their:

- Individual skills and competencies needed to enact equitable community and economic development
- Organizational norms/practices, culture, and structure that reinforce equitable community and economic development
- Community practices that promote equity

These tools help to identify the disparities and inequities that exist within our own practice, our organizations, and our communities, and provide a framework for developing strategies to address them.

The self-assessments are designed for utilization by professionals in the fields of economic and community development which includes health and human service professionals, community organizations, policymakers, and other stakeholders to collect data on key indicators of equity. The tools provide a systematic and structured technique for assessing equity and can help to detect patterns and trends that may not be immediately apparent.

The equitable community and economic assessment tool can be used to:

Identify disparities and inequities in the community: The tool can help to identify areas of the community where certain groups may be experiencing higher levels of disadvantage or marginalization.

Inform policy and program development: The data collected through the tool can be used to inform the development of policies and programs that are intended to address the identified disparities and inequities.

Engage the community: The tool can be used to engage community members in conversations regarding equity, and to involve them in the development and implementation of policies and programs that are designed to address equity issues.

Monitor progress: The tool can be used to track progress over time, and to assess the effectiveness of policies and programs that have been executed to address equity issues.

The community equity assessment tool serves as a significant instrument for communities that are committed to promoting equity and addressing disparities and inequities. By using this tool, communities can develop more targeted and effective strategies for advancing equity and can work towards building a just and equitable society.

Importance of equity in community development

Equity is a fundamental component of community and economic development, as it promotes fairness and justice, and helps to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive and succeed. Below are some reasons why equity is important in community development:

Promotes social inclusion: Equity ensures that every individual in the community has access to the resources and opportunities necessary to fully participate in society, thus helping to build a more inclusive community in which everyone feels valued and supported.

Reduces disparities: Equity helps to address the disparities and inequities that exist within communities. By promoting fairness and justice, equity can help reduce disparities in areas such as education, employment, health, and housing.

Improves community well-being: Equity promotes community well-being by ensuring that everyone has access to the resources and services necessary for a healthy and fulfilling life, such as quality healthcare, education, and affordable housing.

Increases economic growth: Equity can also contribute to economic growth by creating a more inclusive and diverse workforce, which can lead to increased innovation and productivity, ultimately yielding benefits for the entire community.

Build trust and social cohesion: Equity can help to build trust and social cohesion within the community. Ensuring fairness and justice for all individuals fosters a sense of trust and inclusivity, ultimately encouraging a collective vision for the future.

Equity is an essential component in the establishment of a healthy, robust, dynamic, and inclusive community. It promotes the principles of fairness, justice, and social integration, while facilitating the assurance that each individual possesses the chance to realize their maximum potential. By prioritizing equity in both community and economic development, it is possible to construct a society characterized by greater equality and fairness for all members.

How to Use the Tools

The three equity assessment tools are straightforward and easy to use. Each has a detailed version and a concise summary version. We recommend using the detailed version for a comprehensive assessment, whereas the summary version can be used for a quick, snapshot assessment.

The rating scales for each tool have been designed to show journeys or pathways to greater equity. Scores of 1 or 2 indicate where work is needed, while scores of 3 and 4 indicate that progress has been made towards equity, community, and economic development.

Individual Assessment

A community/economic development specialist practicing equity should possess a range of competencies to effectively promote and advance equity in their work.

The detailed Individual Assessment contains 35 competency or skill statements to rate individual proficiency along the following continuum:

1 - **Being Developed**: you demonstrate a **minimal use** of the competency and are currently developing it.

2 - **Basic:** you demonstrate **limited use** of a competency and require additional training to apply without assistance or frequent supervision

3 - **Intermediate**: you demonstrate a **working or functional** command of the competency which enables it to be exercised effectively

4 - **Advanced**: you demonstrate **in-depth** proficiency level; you can assist, consult or lead others in the application of the competency

Improving low-rated skills involves a continuous effort to develop and enhance your knowledge, skills, and abilities. Here are some steps you can take to improve your competencies:

1. Set specific goals for yourself to develop new skills or enhance existing ones.
2. Ask for feedback from colleagues, supervisors, or mentors.
3. Seek out opportunities to learn from people who have the skills and knowledge you want to develop.
4. As regular practice is essential to improving your competencies, look for opportunities to apply what you have learned in your work or personal life.
5. Reflect on your progress to see what experiences worked well and what you can improve on.
6. Keep up-to-date with equity practices in your field by reading publications, attending conferences, networking with peers and the like.

Organizational Assessment

In equitable organizations:

- Mission, values, operations, and services reflect the contributions and needs of the wide diversity of cultural and social identity groups.
- Leaders and members act on the organizational commitment to eradicate all forms of oppression within the organization.
- Members across all identity groups are full participants in decision-making.
- The organization actively works in larger communities (regional, national, global) to eliminate all forms of oppression and to create multicultural organizations.

Source:https://friendsnrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Creating-Equitable-Inclusive Organizations.pdf

The detailed Organizational Assessment contains 7 categories and 70 statements to rate organizational proficiency along the following continuum:

1. **Haven't started** work in this area yet
2. **Plans exists to use** in planning and implementation
3. **This is in place**, and we have evidence of its use
4. **This is part of our routine**, and we model it for others

Multiple individual ratings can be aggregated and averaged to understand a collective perception of organizational equity.

Improving organizational norms/practices, culture, and structure can be a complex and ongoing process. Here are some steps that can be taken to improve these areas:

1. Assess the current state by conducting surveys, interviews, or focus groups with employees.
2. Developing a vision for the desired state of the organization's norms/practices, culture, and structure.
3. Communicate the desired state to all employees and stakeholders to gain buy-in and support.
4. Develop a plan that outlines the specific actions needed to achieve the desired state.
5. Implement the plan and monitor progress regularly. Adjust the plan as needed based on feedback and results.
6. Reinforce desired behaviors by recognizing and rewarding employees who demonstrate them.
7. Evaluate the results of the efforts to improve organizational norms/practices, culture, and structure.

Remember, improving organizational norms/practices, culture, and structure is a long-term process that requires ongoing commitment and effort. It is important to involve employees at all levels in the process and to maintain open communication throughout the process.

Community Assessment

A community will be equitable when all people, – regardless of their appearance, who they know or who they love, what language they speak, what they believe, whatever their level of means or ability, when or where they were born, where they live, where they go to school or why or how long they've called this place home – have the opportunity, resources and tools needed to achieve their potential, to lead healthy and fulfilling lives with rewarding work, and to access, experience, and participate in all the community has to offer while ensuring others – now and in future generations – can do the same.

Source: https://makecommunities.com/defining-an-equitable-community/Appendix

The detailed Community Assessment contains 13 categories and 64 statements to rate community equity along the following continuum:

1. **Not a regular** community practice
2. **Efforts are underway to increase** this community practice
3. **This community practice is in place**, and we have evidence of its use
4. **This is** our community practice, and **we model** it for others

Multiple individual ratings can be aggregated and averaged to gain a collective perception of organizational equity.

Promoting equity within a community involves creating an environment that is inclusive, supportive, and fair to all members. Here are some community practices that can promote equity:

1. Foster dialogue and understanding
2. Provide education and training
3. Advocate for policies and practices that promote equity
4. Support underrepresented groups
5. Engage in community-led initiatives
6. Collaborate with community partners

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Individual Level Summary Assessment

Rating Scale

> 1 - **Being Developed**: you demonstrate a **minimal use** of the competency and are currently developing it.
> 2 - **Basic:** you demonstrate **limited use** of a competency and require additional training to apply without assistance or frequent supervision
> 3 - **Intermediate**: you demonstrate a **working or functional** command of the competency which enables it to be exercised effectively
> 4 - **Advanced**: you demonstrate **in-depth** proficiency level; you can assist, consult or lead others in the application of the competency

Directions: Using the scale above, fill in the blanks with the number that best describes your level of proficiency in relation to the competencies listed below:

___ Cultural Competence: The ability to understand and respect the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of diverse communities, and to work effectively with people from different backgrounds.

___ Intersectionality: The ability to understand the complexity of multiple forms of oppression and privilege that intersect, such as race, gender, sexuality, ability, and socio-economic status.

___ Inclusive Communication: The ability to communicate in a way that is accessible and respectful to diverse audiences, and to actively listen to and incorporate feedback from community members.

___ Systems Thinking: The ability to understand and analyze the ways in which policies, systems, and institutions perpetuate inequities and to develop strategies to promote equity.

___ Collaboration and Partnership Building: The ability to work effectively with community organizations, government agencies, and other stakeholders to promote collective action and achieve shared goals.

___ Advocacy and Policy Change: The ability to engage in advocacy efforts that promote equity, such as lobbying for policy changes, advocating for funding and resources, and raising awareness about social justice issues.

___ Capacity Building: The ability to develop and implement programs and initiatives that build the capacity of individuals and communities to promote equity and social justice.

___ Data Analysis and Evaluation: The ability to collect and analyze data to assess the impact of programs and initiatives on equity and to use evaluation findings to improve program effectiveness.

___ Reflection and Self-Critique: The ability to engage in self-reflection and critical analysis of one's own biases and assumptions, and to continually work to improve cultural competence and promote equity.

Individual Level Detailed Assessment

Skills and Competencies: A community/economic development specialist practicing equity should possess a range of competencies to effectively promote and advance equity in their work.

Rating Scale

> 1 - **Being Developed**: you demonstrate a **minimal use** of the competency and are currently developing it.
> 2 - **Basic:** you demonstrate **limited use** of a competency and require additional training to apply without assistance or frequent supervision
> 3 - **Intermediate**: you demonstrate a **working or functional** command of the competency which enables it to be exercised effectively
> 4 - **Advanced**: you demonstrate **in-depth** proficiency level; you can assist, consult or lead others in the application of the competency

Directions: Using the scale above, fill in the blanks with the number that best describes your level of proficiency in relation to the competencies listed below.

___ I understand and respect the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of diverse communities in order to work effectively with people from different backgrounds.

___ I work to increase my cultural competency; that is, my ability to understand and respect different cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, as well as to be aware of my own cultural biases and assumptions.

___ I understand the complexity of multiple forms of oppression and privilege that intersect, such as race, gender, sexuality, ability, and socio-economic status.

___ I communicate in a way that is accessible and respectful to diverse audiences.

___ I communicate clearly and effectively. This includes actively listening, asking questions, and providing feedback.

___ I am an active listener: Active listening involves paying attention to what others are saying and seeking to understand their point of view. It involves being present in the moment and not interrupting or judging others.

___ Systems Thinking: I understand and analyze how policies, systems, and institutions perpetuate inequities and I am able to develop strategies to promote equity.

___ Collaboration and Partnership Building: I work effectively with community organizations, government agencies, and other stakeholders to promote collective action and achieve shared goals.

___ I am an authentic collaborator: Collaboration involves working together with others to achieve a common goal. Inclusivity can be facilitated through collaboration by involving others in decision-making processes and sharing responsibilities.

___ I build trust with all my partners: Building trust is essential in empowering others. Trust can be built through honesty, transparency, and consistency in actions and words.

___ I am an active encourager: Encouragement involves providing support and positive reinforcement to individuals as they work towards their goals. This can include celebrating successes, providing motivation, and offering praise for a job well done.

___ Advocacy and Policy Change: I engage in advocacy efforts that promote equity, such as lobbying for policy changes, advocating for funding and resources, and raising awareness about social justice issues.

___ I am an advocate: Advocacy involves speaking up for oneself or others to promote fairness and justice. It involves using one's voice and power to effect positive change and create a more inclusive environment.

___ Capacity Building: I develop and implement programs and initiatives that build the capacity of individuals and communities to promote equity and social justice.

___ Data Analysis and Evaluation: I collect and analyze data to assess the impact of programs and initiatives on equity and to use evaluation findings to improve program effectiveness.

___ Reflection and Self-Critique: I engage in self-reflection and critical analysis of my own biases and assumptions, and continually work to improve my cultural competence and promote equity.

___ I am empathic: Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. It involves putting oneself in another person's shoes and seeing things from their perspective.

___ I am respectful: Respect involves treating others with dignity and courtesy, regardless of their background or position. It involves valuing diversity and recognizing the contributions of all individuals.

___ I am flexible: Being flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances is important when promoting inclusivity. It involves being open to different perspectives and ideas, as well as being willing to adjust plans when necessary.

___ I have a positive attitude: A positive attitude can be contagious and can help to create a welcoming and supportive environment. It involves focusing on strengths and possibilities, rather than limitations.

___ I am skilled at conflict resolution: Collaboration can sometimes lead to disagreements and conflicts. Being able to manage and resolve conflicts in a constructive manner is essential for maintaining positive working relationships.

___ I work to increase my conflict resolution skills: Conflict resolution involves managing and resolving conflicts in a peaceful and productive way. It involves being able to listen to different viewpoints and finding common ground.

___ I am a creative thinker: Inclusivity often involves thinking outside of the box and finding creative solutions to problems. The ability to think creatively and generate innovative ideas can be a valuable skill in promoting inclusivity.

___ I am proficient in problem-solving: Collaboration often involves addressing complex problems, and the ability to analyze situations, identify issues, and develop solutions is critical to its success.

___ I hold myself and my partners accountable for our actions and responsibilities. This includes following through on commitments, meeting deadlines, and taking ownership of mistakes.

___ I have excellent time management skills which are essential for effective collaboration to ensure tasks are completed on schedule.

___ I employ servant leadership skills: Collaborative efforts often require leadership skills, even in informal settings. Leaders can help to guide the group towards their goals, delegate tasks, and motivate team members.

___ I am self-aware: Self-awareness involves understanding one's own biases and assumptions, as well as recognizing how one's actions and words affect others. It involves reflecting on one's own experiences and learning from them.

___ I am aware of my emotions and understand the emotions of others which is critical in collaboration. This includes empathy, self-awareness, and the ability to regulate emotions.

___ I embrace creativity and innovation: Collaboration often involves brainstorming new ideas and solutions. The ability to think creatively and generate innovative ideas is a valuable skill for collaboration.

___ I model respect: Respecting others, their opinions, and their contributions is essential to effective collaboration. It is important to create a safe and inclusive environment where all team members feel valued and heard.

____ I am open-minded: Open-mindedness involves being willing to consider different perspectives and ideas, even if they are different from one's own. It involves being flexible and adaptable to change.

____ I practice humility: Humility involves recognizing that one does not have all the answers and being open to learning from others. It involves acknowledging one's own mistakes and shortcomings.

____ I am courageous: Courage involves taking action to promote equity, even in the face of adversity. It involves standing up for what is right and speaking out against injustice.

____ I use coaching strategies: Coaching involves providing guidance and support to help individuals develop the skills they need to achieve their goals. It can include providing feedback, setting goals, and helping individuals to develop plans for achieving those goals.

Organizational Level Summary Assessment

Rating Scale

>1 - Haven't started work in this area yet

>2 - Plans exists to use in planning and implementation

3 - This is in place, and we have evidence of its use

4 - This is part of our routine, and we model it for others

Directions: Using the Rating scale above, fill in the blanks with the number that best describes your organization with the statements listed below.

Inclusivity:

___ Everyone has a voice and that no one is excluded from the decision-making process.

Collaboration:

___ Work together with community members, organizations, and stakeholders to identify and address community needs.

Equity:

___ Provide fair and equal opportunities for all members of the community, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic status.

Sustainability:

___ Develop strategies and solutions that are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable over the long term.

Empowerment:

___ Provide resources, support, and education to help community members build their skills, capacity, and leadership.

Building an organizational culture of equity - Remember, creating an equitable culture is a journey, not a destination. It requires commitment, patience, and ongoing effort:

___ Define equity for our organization

___ Assess the current culture of our organization

___ Develop and implement an equity action plan

___ Leadership is engaged in all equity efforts

___ Progress, or the lack of progress, regularly communicated

___ Equity training provided

___ We hold ourselves and our organization accountable for progress towards creating an equitable culture.

___ We celebrate successes along the way.

Organizational structures of equity - Designed to promote fairness, inclusion, and equality within an organization:

___ Diverse hiring practices

___ Equal pay policies

___ Policies support inclusive practices

___ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee established

___ Employee Resource Groups (ERG) in place

___ Ongoing leadership training and development

Organizational Level Detailed Assessment

Rating Scale

1 - Haven't started work in this area yet

2 - Plans exists to use in planning and implementation

3 - This is in place, and we have evidence of its use

4 - This is part of our routine, and we model it for others

Directions: Using the rating scale above, fill in the blanks with the number that best describes your organization with the statements listed below.

Inclusivity: **Ensuring that everyone has a voice and that no one is excluded from the decision-making process.**

___ Promote active and representative citizen participation so that community members can meaningfully influence decisions that affect their situation

___ Outreach is conducted to engage people of all backgrounds

___ Provide opportunities for all community members to participate in decision-making regarding the development and implementation of community and economic development initiatives

___ Promote access to organizational and community resources and amenities so all community members benefit

Collaboration: **Working together with community members, organizations, and stakeholders to identify and address community needs.**

___ Assist community members in designing and implementing a plan to solve agreed-upon problems by emphasizing shared leadership and active citizen participation

___ Seek alternatives to any effort that is likely to adversely affect the disadvantaged segments of a community

___ Actively work to increase leadership capacity, skills, confidence, and aspirations in the community development process

___ Share ideas, resources, and skills to achieve a shared outcome

___ Informal partnerships between individuals or groups to more formal arrangements, such as joint ventures or strategic alliances are valued and pursued

___ Provide opportunities for individuals and groups to share their knowledge, expertise, and resources.

___ Provide opportunities for individuals to bring their unique perspectives and ideas to the decision table

___ Increase efforts for effective communication, trust building, and a willingness to compromise and work towards a shared vision.

___ Ensure a willingness to address conflict and work through disagreements in a constructive and respectful manner.

Equity: **Striving to provide fair and equal opportunities for all members of the community, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic status.**

___ Promote active and representative citizen participation so that community members can meaningfully influence decisions that affect their situation

___ Champion the concept of fairness and justice in the distribution of resources, opportunities, and outcomes among individuals or groups

___ Acknowledge that people have different needs, challenges, and strengths, and that fairness requires treating people differently based on their circumstances and needs

___ Recognizes that treating everyone the same may not result in fairness or justice, especially for those who face systemic barriers or discrimination.

___ Addresses the root causes of disparities in resources and opportunities, and design policies and programs that meet the needs of all individuals and communities.

___ Promote targeted interventions to address the needs of historically marginalized or underserved populations, such as providing affordable housing, healthcare, education, or job training.

___ Challenge discrimination and bias, promoting diversity and inclusion, and advocating for policies and practices that promote fairness and justice for all

Sustainability: **Developing strategies and solutions that are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable over the long term.**

___ Help community members understand the economic, social, political, environmental, and psychological impact associated with alternative solutions to the problem.

___ Meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

___ Recognize the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic systems and seeks to balance their needs in a way that ensures long-term viability.

___ Adopt practices and policies that promote the responsible use of natural resources, reduce waste and pollution, and promote social and economic equity.

___ Recognize the limits of the planet's resources and working to ensure that they are used in a way that can be sustained over the long term.

___ Promote sustainability using a multi-disciplinary approach that involves collaboration between governments, businesses, communities, and individuals.

___ Adopt innovative technologies and practices, such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and green infrastructure, as well as promoting social and economic equity and justice.

Empowerment: **providing resources, support, and education to help community members build their skills, capacity, and leadership.**

___ Engage community members in problem diagnosis so that those affected may adequately understand the causes of their situation.

___ Help community members understand the economic, social, political, environmental, and psychological impact associated with alternative solutions to the problem.

___ Enable individuals or communities to gain more control over their lives and to make decisions that affect them. It involves increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to exercise power, take action, and influence outcomes.

___ Provide education, training, access to resources, and opportunities for participation in decision-making processes.

___ Promote social, economic, and political justice that enables marginalized and disadvantaged individuals and communities to overcome barriers and inequalities.

___ Contribute to the development of more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive societies.

___ Promote individual empowerment by building the confidence, skills, and knowledge of individuals to take control of their lives and make informed decisions.

___ Promote collective empowerment by the mobilization of groups around common goals, such as women's rights, environmental protection, or social justice.

___ Promote community empowerment by empowering communities to take control of their own development and to shape their own futures.

Building an organizational culture of equity: Remember, creating an equitable culture is a journey, not a destination. It requires commitment, patience, and ongoing effort.

Define Equity:
___ Define what equity means for your organization. This definition is in our mission statement or other organization documents.
___ Create a shared understanding of equity that reflects your values, mission, and vision.

Assess the Current Culture: Take a critical look at the current culture of your organization.
___ Identify any policies, practices, or behaviors that might perpetuate inequality.
___ Identify areas where change is needed.

Develop a Plan:
___ Develop a plan for creating a more equitable culture in your organization.
___ Set goals and create action steps that are specific, measurable, and achievable.

Engage Leadership: Leaders play a critical role in building a culture of equity.
___ Engage your leadership team in the effort to create an equitable culture.
___ Provide them with the necessary training and resources to support the effort.

Communicate: Communication is key in creating a culture of equity.
___ Communicate your commitment to equity to all members of your organization.
___ Use various channels such as town halls, staff meetings, and newsletters to keep everyone informed.

Provide Training:
___ Provide training to all employees on unconscious bias.
___ Provide training to all employees on cultural competency.
___ Provide training to all employees on inclusive leadership.
___ All trainings are ongoing and tailored to meet the needs of different departments and teams.

Hold Yourself Accountable: Hold yourself and your organization accountable for progress towards creating an equitable culture.
___ Establish metrics to measure progress and regularly review them.

Celebrate Success: Celebrate successes along the way.
____ Recognize individuals and teams who have made significant contributions towards building an equitable culture.

Organizational structures of equity: Designed to promote fairness, inclusion, and equality within an organization.

Diverse Hiring Practices:
___ Remove bias from job descriptions
___ Use blind hiring practices
___ Actively recruit from underrepresented groups
___ Workforce is diverse and reflective of the community it serves

Equal Pay Policies:
___ All employees are paid equitably for their work regardless of gender, race, and background etc.

Inclusive Policies: Policies that support inclusive practices
___ Flexible work arrangements
___ Parental leave
___ Accommodations for disabilities
___Equitable benefits

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committees:
___ DEI Committee established
___ DEI committee or task force includes representatives from different departments and levels of the organization
___ Equity is a priority in decision-making processes
___ Identify areas where change is needed

Employee Resource Groups (ERG): (An employee resource group is a voluntary, employee-led group whose aim is to foster a diverse, inclusive workplace supported by an organization)
___ ERGs in place
___ ERGs represent different communities within the organization
___ ERGs are a platform for underrepresented groups to connect, share experiences, and advocate for change

Leadership Training and Development:
___ Provide leadership training and development opportunities that focus on inclusive leadership, cultural competency, and addressing bias
___ Leaders have the skills and knowledge needed to promote equity within the organization

Community Level Summary Assessment

Rating Scale

1. Not a universal community practice
2. Efforts are underway to increase this community practice
3. This community practice is in place and we have evidence of its use
4. This is our community practice and we model it for others

Directions: Using the scale above, fill in the blanks with the number that best describes your community with the statements listed below.

___ Inclusive: Our community welcomes and celebrates diversity in all its forms

___ Inclusive: People of all backgrounds feel valued and respected and have a sense of belonging in the community

___ Fairness: Our community prioritizes fairness in the distribution of resources, services, and opportunities

___ Fairness: In our community everyone has access to quality education, healthcare, housing, transportation, and other essential services

___ Collaboration: Our community fosters collaboration among individuals, organizations, and institutions to create positive change

___ Collaboration: Community members work together to identify and address the needs of all members of the community

___ Empowerment: Our community empowers individuals and groups who have been historically marginalized or excluded from decision-making processes

___ Empowerment: Our community creates opportunities for all community members to participate in the decision-making process and have their voices heard

___ Sustainability: Our community is sustainable, built on principles that promote long-term social, economic, and environmental well-being

___ Sustainability: Our community prioritizes the needs of future generations and works to ensure that resources are used responsibly and efficiently

___ Safety: Our community prioritizes safety for all individuals. This includes physical safety as well as emotional and psychological safety

___ Safety: Community members work together to address issues such as crime, violence, and discrimination

___ Accessible: Our community is accessible to all individuals, regardless of physical or mental abilities

___ Accessible: Our community prioritizes the needs of individuals with disabilities and work to remove barriers to full participation in community life

Community Level Detailed Assessment

Equitable communities are those in which all individuals have access to the resources and opportunities necessary for a high quality of life, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, or socio-economic status.

Rating Scale

1. Not a regular community practice
2. Efforts are underway to increase this community practice
3. This community practice is in place, and we have evidence of its use
4. This is our community practice, and we model it for others

Directions: Using the rating scale above, fill in the blanks with the number that best describes your community with the statements listed below.

Inclusivity: Ensuring that everyone has a voice and that no one is excluded from the decision-making process.

___ All residents are included in the civic space of our community

___ All residents are included in civic participation

___ Our community welcomes and celebrates diversity in all its forms

___ Community decision-making process includes diverse voices and perspectives from multiple community sectors.

___ Community and economic development initiatives include diverse voices and perspectives from multiple community sectors.

___ Barriers to participation in community and economic development initiatives are resolved

___ Each member of the community has an equal opportunity to participate in community and economic development initiatives

___ People of all backgrounds are valued and respected and have a sense of belonging in the community

___ Communication with diverse community members is transparent and culturally responsive

Collaboration: Working together with community members, organizations, and stakeholders to identify and address community needs.

___ The continuum from networking to coordinating to cooperating to collaborating to co-creating is understood and utilized

___ The decision-making process for community and economic development initiatives involves collaboration with diverse community members, organizations, and stakeholders, especially those experiencing issues of concern

___ Building trust and relationships with diverse community members is a priority

___ Collaborative efforts with diverse community members address systemic disparities and promote equity

___ Communication with diverse community members is transparent and culturally responsive

___ Community members, organizations, and stakeholders identify and prioritize community needs

___ Collaboration with historically marginalized communities and individuals is prioritized in community and economic development efforts

___ All community members, organizations and stakeholders have an equal opportunity to participate in community and economic development initiatives

___ Collaboration is continuously evaluated and improved

___ Community fosters collaboration among individuals, organizations, and institutions to create positive change

___ Community members work together to identify and address the needs of all members of the community

Equity: Striving to provide fair and equal opportunities for all members of the community, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic status.

___Underserved neighborhoods and groups are prioritized in community and economic development initiatives

___ Bias and discrimination in the community and economic development process is actively addressed and eliminated

Physical resources

___ All residents have access to parks and playgrounds close to their neighborhoods

___ All residents have access to green spaces close to their neighborhoods

___ Affordable and safe housing is available to all our residents

___ Residents have access to program and services that help with home ownership

___ Public housing officials rely on resident input for public housing policies

___ We live in an environmentally clean community

___ The number and location of community centers in my community are sufficient

Services

___ Everyone has access to quality education, healthcare, housing, transportation, and other essential services

___ The community prioritizes fairness in the distribution of resources, services, and opportunities

___ Elderly and other vulnerable populations can easily access resources

___ Elderly and other vulnerable populations benefit from the resources available in the community

___The community has ownership/control over areas of basic needs and services

Quality Education

___ Everyone has access to quality education

___ All school districts in our community have adequate resources

___ Teachers and school staffs are paid living wages

Quality Healthcare

___ Everyone has access to quality healthcare

___ Community health centers and hospitals in our community are available and easily accessed by residents

___ The number of health care professionals is sufficient (nurses, doctors, midwives, specialists, etc.).

___ Social determinants of health underpin health systems and services in our community

Quality Transportation

___ Residents in all neighborhoods have access to quality public transportation

___ Public transportation works during the weekdays

___ Public transportation works during the weekends

___ Public transportation is available after hours

___ The roads/ streets of all neighborhoods in my community are in a good condition

___ My community has sidewalks to walk in all neighborhoods

Quality Public Safety

___ Residents in all neighborhoods are safe in the community

___ Residents in all neighborhoods are safe at home

___ Police security cameras are use across the entire community

___ Our community prioritizes safety for all individuals and families. This includes physical safety as well as emotional and psychological safety

Quality Communication

___ All residents can easily access information related to quality-of-life issues

___ All residents have access to community / neighborhood news

___ Residents positively interact with their neighbors

___ All residents have access to high-speed internet infrastructure

Job/Employment:

___ Our community provides employment opportunities and treats everyone equally in the application process

___ Entrepreneurial resources, including loans and grants, are available to all residents

Sustainability: Developing strategies and solutions that are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable over the long term.

___ Our community's economic development initiatives prioritize social equity and environmental sustainability

___ Our community is built on principles that promote long-term social, economic, and environmental well-being for all residents, in all neighborhoods

___ Our community is built on principles that promote local ownership/control of basic needs services and resources

___ Our community prioritizes the needs of future generations and works to ensure that resources are used responsibly and efficiently

Empowerment: Providing resources, support, and education to help community members build their skills, capacity, and leadership.

___ Our community empowers individuals and groups who have been historically marginalized or excluded from decision-making processes

___ Our community creates opportunities for all community members to participate in the decision-making process and have their voices heard

___ Our community is accessible to all individuals, regardless of physical or mental abilities

___ Our community prioritizes the needs of individuals with disabilities and work to remove barriers to full participation in community life

___ Resources and information about community and economic development initiatives are accessible to all members of the community

Glossary

Accessible – Making sure that all members of the community have access to the same resources, services, and opportunities, and that those resources, services, and opportunities are tailored to meet the needs of the community.

Collaboration – Exchanging information, altering activities, sharing resources, and enhancing the capacity of one another for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.

Community – A group of individuals who share common characteristics, interests, or geographic location, come together to pursue a common goal, share experiences, support one another, and form social connections.

Diversity – The presence of a wide range of individual differences within a group or organization, including differences in race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, socioeconomic status, and other characteristics. Diversity is an important factor in creating an inclusive and equitable environment.

Empowerment – Providing resources, support, and education to help community members build their skills, capacity, and leadership. Empowerment is the granting of autonomy and self-determination to individuals and communities. This allows them to express their interests in a responsible and autonomous manner, acting with their own authority.

Equality – State of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities. It can refer to the equal distribution of resources, opportunities, and privileges among all members of a society. It can also refer to the idea of treating everyone with respect and dignity, regardless of race, gender, age, or other factors.

Equitable community - A community in which all members have equal access to resources, opportunities, and services, regardless of their race, gender, religion, or other factors. It is a community that works to ensure that everyone has the same chance to succeed and reach their full potential.

Equity – Fair and just treatment of all individuals

Fairness – Is the quality of being just, impartial, and reasonable. It is treating people equally without favoritism or discrimination.

Inclusive – Including all people, regardless of their differences, such as race, gender, age, or ability. It is the opposite of exclusive, which means excluding certain people or groups.

Individual skills & competencies – The abilities and knowledge that an individual has acquired through experience, education, and training. These skills and competencies enable an individual to perform a specific job or task.

Justice – The quality of being just, fair, and reasonable, especially in the way people are treated or decisions are made.

Safety – The state of being protected from harm or other non-desirable outcomes.

Servant Leader –   Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership states that while traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the "top of the pyramid," servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.

Sustainability –   The practice of using resources in a way that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

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About the Center for Community and Economic Development

Michigan State University is the nation's premier land-grant university, and in that tradition, the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED) is committed to developing and applying knowledge to address the needs of contemporary society.

Our mission is to advance MSU's land-grant mission by creating, applying, and disseminating valued knowledge through responsive engagement, strategic partnerships, and collaborative learning. We are dedicated to co-creating sustainable prosperity and equitable economies with communities.

Since its establishment in downtown Lansing, Michigan, in 1969, CCED, in partnership with public and private organizations, has developed and conducted numerous innovative programs that address local concerns while building the capacity of students, scholars and communities to address future challenges. Student, faculty, and community involvement is a crucial element of the CCED's mission. The CCED focuses its resources on the unique challenges of distressed communities throughout the state of Michigan.

In carrying out the mission of the CCED we:

- Create and **support** an innovative learning environment for collaborative learning in community and economic development

- Provide **training** and direct assistance designed to increase the capabilities of community-based organizations, private enterprises and public institutions

- Conduct **research** that assists in the development and implementation of effective problem-solving strategies

- Provide a **multidisciplinary** capacity to respond to the complex, interrelated issues of distressed communities

- Promote and **expand** MSU's capacity to provide needed training, direct assistance, and research to address the issues of communities