



CITY OF DALLAS  
OFFICE OF EQUITY & INCLUSION  
EQUITY DIVISION



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# **2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

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# LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

## DEAR DALLASITES

*It is a pleasure to share highlights* of the important work of the Office of Equity & Inclusion – Equity Division. We like to say that “We all have a role in advancing equity,” so we share with you some of our efforts, achievements and accomplishments. Our intention is that you might be compelled to connect with us this year as we embark on the development of the first-ever Racial Equity Plan for the City of Dallas.

Before jumping into the new fiscal year’s endeavors, allow me to reflect on the accomplishments of the last year. I would like to acknowledge the leadership of Mayor Eric Johnson and the Dallas City Council and City Manager, T.C. Broadnax for their guiding leadership and support of our equity work. I would like to congratulate the Equity Division led by Dr. Lindsey Wilson. This small but mighty team took on new challenges in 2020-2021 as the pandemic persisted and caused us all to reflect on what really matters. We have decided that what really matters unequivocally is our people - those who make the city strong and resilient, those who breathe life, love, and hope into the heart of Dallas.

The City of Dallas is as unique as the many residents we serve; however, what unites us is our ability to Share, Learn, Engage, Address, and Target ways to use our influence in daily experiences to advance equity throughout every sector of our City so we can all thrive.

An even greater appreciation for the work was realized this year as the Equity Division completed its third consecutive year of Budgeting for Equity, an external evaluation assessment, and a new way of communicating equity efforts with residents through the City’s annual budget book. These endeavors combined with the division’s organizing with internal and external partners, have made this year one of critical advancement for addressing the root causes of disparities which are too often predicted by a zip code or one’s race and ethnicity.

This work will not be done overnight. It takes each of us doing our own small part.

### WHAT ROLE WILL YOU PLAY THIS YEAR?

*MY WARMEST WISHES TO YOU,*  
**LIZ CEDILLO-PEREIRA**  
**CHIEF OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION, CITY OF DALLAS**



# LETTER FROM THE EQUITY OFFICER

## DALLAS COMMUNITY MEMBERS, RESIDENTS, FRIENDS, BUSINESSES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS:

*The disparities that communities of color and lower-income neighborhoods face in Dallas are no secret.*

Though evidenced-based reports continue to demonstrate the correlation between communities of color and overall success in all areas – from education, justice, government, neighborhood, and infrastructures to public health – it is resident’s stories that continue to drive our division’s sense of urgency to move this work forward. The Equity Division recognizes that the **TIME IS NOW** and every staff in the Office of Equity and Inclusion embodies the drive, grit, and commitment to show up everyday ready to do our part to challenge and change the very institution we work within.

As I reflect back on the Equity Division’s accomplishments over the past year, I am extremely proud of our team’s continuous commitment to this work, both internally and externally. The road has not been without challenges and **THERE** is tremendous work that needs to continue to happen to reduce the disparities. This report is not to gloat about the amazing things that the division has done, nor does it capture all the intentionality that our team puts into building internal infrastructures that are aimed at systemic racism. Yet, this report truly stemmed from a conversation with a local racial equity community leader, who, during an accountability call, expressed “The Equity Division has to do a better job sharing their wins with the community.” That comment became a theme that we heard from several other community members, hence this report captures a few of this year’s “wins”.

The Equity Division has revised and implemented a new citywide Budgeting for Equity process that provided specific department recommendations, required departments to make budget commitments, and increased accountability through the budget book bullets. The Division has also implemented several tools that explicitly addressed racial, ethnic and socioeconomic disparities, strengthened internal infrastructures, and developed an Equity 101 Training for directors.

Since the onset of my tenure as the Equity Officer, we have driven the fact that “equity is everyone’s work” and will continue to acknowledge and support all city departments in understanding their role in closing the disparities that African American, LatinX/Hispanic, Native American, Asian American and other marginalized communities face. We look forward to collaborating with all of you as the City of Dallas develops their first Racial Equity Plan. Sincerely,

**DR. LINDSEY WILSON**  
**EQUITY OFFICER, CITY OF DALLAS**



# OUR ORIGIN STORY

## ON AUGUST 8, 2018

The Dallas City Council approved the [Dallas Resilience Strategy \(Resilience Resolution 181026\)](#), which called for the advancement of equity in City government through an analysis in service delivery, strategic planning, and budget allocation. The Office of Equity was formed as a result of the Resilience plan. Building on this foundation, the City of Dallas, in collaboration with external partners, published the [Dallas 2019 Equity Indicators Report](#). The report provides a two-year snapshot by race, ethnicity and in some cases socioeconomic status across five thematic areas and has been instrumental in identifying disparities. Reliable data sources such as the Equity Indicators Report help in identifying root causes and intentional actions to support and shape a city government that addresses persisting inequities that are too often predicted by race and ethnic background.

## IN 2018

The City of Dallas became a member of the [Government Alliance on Race and Equity \(GARE\)](#). In partnership with GARE, the City of Dallas started by training approximately 300 of our executives, managers, and budget staff on the GARE framework to advance racial equity over the course of six workshops. Recognizing that transformative change requires the prioritization of racial equity beyond leadership and management training, we launched an Equity Core Team.

## ON MAY 22, 2019

The Dallas City Council adopted the [Equity Resolution 190804](#), that established the Budgeting for Equity (BfE) process utilizing an Equity Tool to make every effort to commit more resources to areas and populations based on data where needs are greatest and intended to close gaps and widen opportunities for all Dallas residents.

## IN OCTOBER 2020

The Office of Equity merged into the newly formed Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) as the Equity Division along with four other divisions. OEI aims to create a welcoming, just, and inclusive city where all residents have the opportunity to thrive. The goal is to support City government in understanding, addressing, and dismantling racism and how it affects human and social services, economic development, and public safety.

# OUR MISSION

**THE CITY OF DALLAS IS COMMITTED TO BUILDING A SERVICE FIRST CULTURE GUIDED BY THE FOUR CORE VALUES OF SERVICE:  
EMPATHY \* ETHICS \* EXCELLENCE \* EQUITY**



The Equity Division works with and across City departments and other stakeholders to help shape a city government and Dallas where every resident has the necessary resources and services to thrive; while reducing disparities and improving outcomes for all.

The City of Dallas has adopted GARE's Theory of Change to guide our commitment to advancing racial and ethnic equity:

## **NORMALIZING**

Key terms, concepts, and sense of urgency to advance equity within city government.

## **ORGANIZING**

Internal and external key stakeholders to advance equity within and across city departments.

## **OPERATIONALIZING**

Tools, principals, and practices that lead to equitable policies, programs and procedures within city government.

**THE CITY OF DALLAS IS COMMITTED TO SEEKING TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE BY CONTINUING TO MAKE EQUITY A FOCAL POINT THROUGH ALL POLICIES, BUDGET DECISIONS, PROCEDURES AND CITY PROGRAMS.**

# MEET THE TEAM

## KEVIN ACOSTA

### *Partnership Liaison*

Kevin brings over 20 years of multidisciplinary experience in local government, communications, community engagement, business development, and consensus building. He has leadership in navigating multicultural environments, lived experience overseas, and multilingual ability (fluent in Spanish and Japanese). Kevin provides facilitation, technical assistance, and trainings to internal and external audiences with the primary goal of closing disparity gaps. Mr. Acosta is a part of the Employee Resource Group advisory committee and a co-founder of the Diversity Celebration Committee. Kevin holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies and Japanese Studies from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA.

## LISA RAINEY, PHD

### *Equity Coordinator*

Lisa joined the team as a temporary employee to support the division's budgeting for equity reviewal process. She is a fourth year Texan who has spent her time learning the area through sight-seeing tours, volunteering in her local community, and working in nonprofit management. As an undergraduate Political Science major, Dr. Rainey interned with City government and saw first-hand how resources and services impacted residents' lives. She now uses those early career experiences as well as academic and real-life knowledge to support departments in equity efforts for residents with greatest need.

## LINDSEY WILSON, PHD

### *Equity Officer*

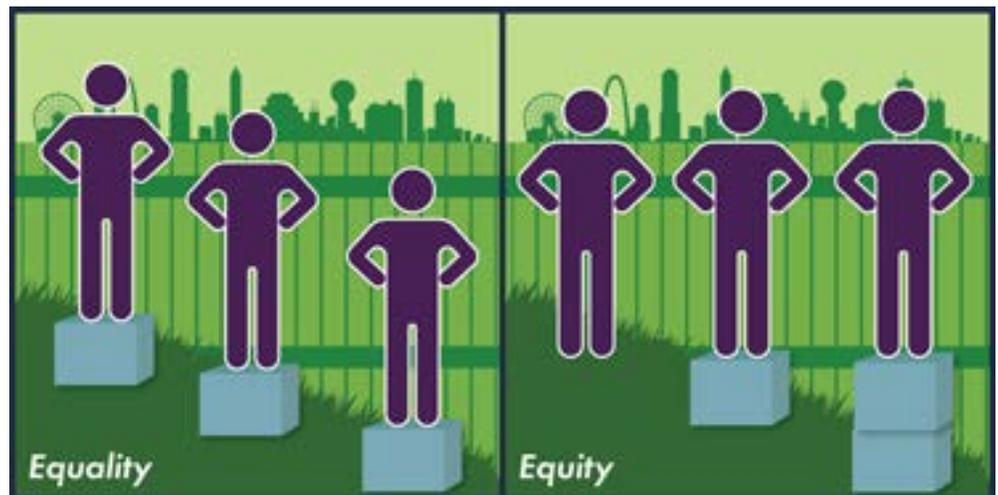
Lindsey is the Equity Officer for the City of Dallas. She holds over 14 years of experience in local government and has a background in postsecondary education. Dr. Wilson leads the Equity Division, working alongside City departments to embed equitable principles, practices and measurements in all city operations. Additionally, she supports departments in analyzing procedures, facilitates critical conversations about targeted efforts to reduce racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities, and works to strengthen robust community collaborations. Dr. Lindsey Wilson's motto is "Equity is Everyone's Work" and she seeks to centralize it in all of her endeavors.

# EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY

## EQUITY

Means that each person has the resources and services necessary to thrive in each person's own unique identities, circumstances, and histories; reduces disparities while improving outcomes for all. **Racial Equity** occurs when people are thriving and neither race nor ethnicity can be used to predict outcomes.

EQUALITY AND EQUITY  
ARE TWO SEPARATE  
CONCEPTS AS ILLUSTRATED  
IN THIS GRAPHIC.  
EQUALITY PROMOTES  
SAMENESS, WHILE EQUITY  
FOCUSES ON FAIRNESS.



*In viewing the equality image*, each resident has the same exact stool to support their ability to view the Dallas Skyline, yet only the resident at the top of the grassy hill has **access** to view the entire Skyline.

*When looking at the equity image*, it accounts for how the grassy hill **impacts** each person's view. The Equity Division considers the grassy hill to represent the unique circumstances and histories as well as different experiences communities have with systems and institutions.

Rather than offering each person the same solution, equity takes into consideration the unequal foundation and its current implications. This is critical to offering fair and impartial access to resources, opportunities, and dismantling systems that perpetuate inequities.

**THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN EQUITY AND EQUALITY IS VITAL TO CITY GOVERNMENT'S ROLE AND TO EMPLOYEES' ROLE IN UNDERSTANDING, ADDRESSING, AND DISMANTLING INEQUITIES FACED BY COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AND LOWER-INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS.**

# OUR INITIATIVES

## BUDGETING FOR EQUITY OVERVIEW

The City of Dallas is one of four government entities implementing a Budgeting for Equity (BfE) process on a consistent annual basis. In Fiscal Year 2020-2021, the process continued to evolve to align with best transformative practices. In addition to every department completing the [10-question tool](#), this year's departments:

- Budget Adjustment Request required departments to analyze how funds could [impact communities of color and historically marginalized communities](#).
- This year departments were asked about the development of long-range planning and investment strategies. Received a comprehensive assessment with tailored recommendations and best practices.
- Highlighted specific budget commitments to advance equity in the equity section of the [City of Dallas Annual Budget Fiscal Year 2021-22](#).

As data demonstrates, incorporating an equity analysis in city budgeting is critical. Continued support by our leadership and best practices of other cities has improved the City's efforts on an ongoing basis.

## BUDGETING FOR EQUITY AT A GLANCE

- Assess the equity impacts of budget decisions for potential benefits and burdens to communities of color and lower-income communities.
- Identify whether budget requests and enhancements advance equitable outcomes for residents.
- Verify programs, projects, plans, and investments to help reduce disparities.
- Increase community engagement in improvements, reductions and overall budget development.
- Confirm, commit, and communicate specific resource allocation to advance equity.

**THE BFE PROCESS REQUIRES INTENTIONAL WORK FROM ALL CITY DEPARTMENTS, THAT LEAD TO OUTCOMES.**

# OUR INITIATIVES

## DALLAS EQUITY INDICATORS INITIATIVE

In 2019, the Chief of Equity & Inclusion and city leadership committed to ensuring the [Equity Indicators Report \(Ei\)](#) would not sit on the shelf, yet guide the City's understanding of root causes and historical inequities. The Equity Division organized both internally and externally to tackle disparities highlighted in the report.

### EFFORTS AT A GLANCE

- Hosted the [2nd Annual Equity Indicators Symposium](#) - Building an Equitable and Inclusive Economic Bounce Back.
- Established a [Dallas365](#) goal in alignment with Achieved Resilient Dallas goal 1C.2.
- Developed a tool and process to support departments in the alignment of services using disaggregated data.
- Leveraged the report to support departments in using data for their department budget decisions.
- Integrated the indicators into the Budgeting for Equity process, and supported departments in highlighting how investments will address indicators.

Pivoting with the current times, the City of Dallas partnered with EveryTexan to focus on 13 indicators guided by the Covid-19 pandemic.



# OUR INITIATIVES

## NORMALIZATION

As a majority internal department, the Equity Division primarily works with City departments to identify, address, and eliminate systemic barriers in order to advance equity. One of the ways this is achieved is through individual technical assistance sessions that require:

- Intentional focus on historical implications, lessons learned from community engagement and national best practices.
- A high level of responsiveness and building internal relationships to support City departments.
- On-going work to implement and embed equity principles, practices, and techniques.
- Specific efforts to increase the number of City staffs' understanding and implementation of tools that explicitly address disparities communities of color and lower-income neighborhoods experience.

Additionally, this past year the Equity division created opportunities to normalize equity by offering:

- Train the Trainer sessions
- Equity Lunch N' Learn series
- Equity 101 Trainings
- Equity N' Work column in employee newsletter

Additionally, the division organized with external partners to provide equity related experiences to community members and other stakeholders to offer:

- **Undesign the Redline** in partnership with **designing the WE**
- **Understanding Institutional & Structural Racism** in collaboration with the Center for Urban and Racial Equity (CURE)
- **Self-Community Care Workshop** for organizations combating institutionalized racism, in partnership with CURE

# OUR INITIATIVES

## CITYWIDE EQUITY CORE TEAM



The Equity Core Team (ECT), established by [Equity Resolution 190804](#), is composed of City staff at various levels who are responsible for coordinating, developing, implementing, and measuring equity plans in their respective departments and across the organization leading with race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

To continue to advance equity throughout City government, the Equity Division leads the organization of the ECT by coordinating trainings, providing technical assistance sessions, and most recently launching the Equity Core Team Kitchen.

ECT members collaborate within a working cohort to share and advance equitable principles and practices. The “kitchen” is a metaphor for a space where ideas, approaches, and strategies to normalize, organize and operationalize equity happen, in addition to establishing priorities, partnerships and data points to drive results.

Throughout the year, several ECT members in collaboration with the Equity Division led intentional actions in their department that promoted equitable practices and principles. While this space does not capture the many equity efforts occurring across city departments, here are a few examples:

- **Equity In Action (EIA)** – launched by Planning and Urban Design (PUD), is a weekly forum centered around racial equity. Following the senseless killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and many others, PUD responded by moving to actionable steps that outlined a plan for the department to address racial equity. Staff have reported that EIA has supported the department to analyze the current inequities centered in their work, leading the department to reshape how they do community outreach. Taking a deeper look at how certain projects affect under resourced communities, staff are now asking the critical question, “how are we benefitting and burdening the community?”
- **Utilizing disaggregated data** – ECT members centered the disaggregation of data by race, ethnicity and language to Dallas Water Utilities’ Minor Plumbing Repair Program. The program offers assistance with minor plumbing problems and fixtures that may cause water waste and higher water bills to qualifying customers with minor freshwater leaks. Analysis of who the program was serving and not serving was helpful to identify residents’ access barriers.



# OUR INITIATIVES

## MOVING FORWARD IN 2021-22

**March 24, 2021**, marked a pivotal point in the City of Dallas as the approval of its first **Racial Equity Resolution** was unanimously passed by City Council. While the resolution reaffirms the city of Dallas' commitment to promote equity through all City policies and enhance efforts aimed at understanding, addressing, and dismantling racism and how it affects the delivery of human and social services, economic development, and public safety, it also directs the City Manager to begin working with external stakeholders to prepare a racial equity plan.

While much internal and external progress has been made by the City of Dallas, the prioritization of intentionally centering communities who are disproportionately impacted by racial, ethnic and socioeconomic status must continue to drive our efforts.

### HERE ARE A FEW SPECIFIC EFFORTS GEARED TO NORMALIZE, ORGANIZE AND OPERATIONALIZE EQUITY.

**NORMALIZING EQUITY IN 2021-22.** The Equity Division will continue its engagement with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, launch required Equity 101 Training for department directors, and continue to provide tailored technical assistance sessions for City departments.

**ORGANIZING INTERNAL STAFF AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS IN 2021-22.** While Preliminary work to target Dallas communities most impacted by racial, ethnic and socioeconomic inequities has begun, the Equity Division is planning to complete a Racial Equity Plan and launch the plan summer 2022 to the greater Dallas community. Leading the development of the Plan will be a robust external community engagement that will guide city departments in establishing equity performance goals to be integrated into the Racial Equity Plan. Additionally, organizing for equity will look like (a) offering equity focused seminars, meetings and symposiums (b) continued outreach to external partners and their efforts to advance equity and (c) an intentional roll-out of internal plans to implement initiatives aimed at reducing racial and ethnic disparities.

**OPERATIONALIZING EQUITY EFFORTS IN PROCESSES, PLANS, PROCEDURES AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS IN 2021-22.** The Division will continue its budgeting for equity process, provide technical assistance to support citywide plans or policy recommendations. In addition, focus on implementing tools and other resources that center on eliminating racial, ethnic and socioeconomic disparities across various departments and finalizing an equitable investment framework for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).