



# COOK COUNTY OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

## RACIAL EQUITY POLICY

Approved: September 7, 2021

Effective: September 13, 2021

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### A. Overview

Offices Under the President (“OUP”) has made equity a value and priority alongside excellence and engagement. As a result, OUP is implementing the Racial Equity Policy to ensure that equity is operationalized in an intersectional way.

Racial equity is essential for national, regional and local prosperity. As Cook County undergoes demographic shifts matching the current national trends in which younger people of color are growing into the majority population, it continues to strive to ensure that people of all races and ethnicities can participate as stakeholders and reach their full potential. Equity and inclusion is more than just the right thing to do; it is an absolute economic imperative.

Embedding racial equity into local government is particularly important given the history of metropolitan development in the United States and especially here in Cook County. Cook County is highly segregated by race and income as a result of public policies that led to patterns of exclusion.

### B. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a racial equity framework that will advance and promote inclusion of all racial categories in OUP operations to ultimately achieve equity for all people.

### C. Intent

This policy is intended to be interpreted consistent with and subject to applicable law. It supersedes all previous policies and/or memoranda that may have been issued from time to time on subjects covered in this policy. This policy is not intended to supersede or limit the County from enforcing programs or provisions in any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Should any provision in this policy conflict with a specific provision in the Cook County Personnel Rules, the provision(s) in the Personnel Rules shall take precedence.

### D. Severability

If any section or provision of this document should be held invalid by operation of law, none of the remainder shall be affected.

### E. Jurisdiction

The Office of The President (“OOP”) is authorized to develop the Racial Equity Policy pursuant to Executive Order 2021-2.



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**F. Areas Affected**

This policy applies to all officials, employees, interns, and other persons in bureaus and departments in OUP and/or covered by the Cook County Employment Plan.

**G. Nondiscrimination**

Cook County prohibits the discriminatory application, implementation, or enforcement of any provision of this policy on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, source of income, gender identity or housing status, or any other protected category established by law, statute or ordinance.

**H. Employee and Management Responsibilities**

All employees and other persons in bureaus and departments under the jurisdiction of the Cook County Board President are responsible for ensuring adherence to the values and requirements set forth herein.

The Director of Equity and Inclusion in the Office of the President will monitor County practices to ensure compliance with, and answer questions concerning, the information presented in this policy.

**I. Definitions**

For purposes of this policy, the following terms shall be given the following meanings adopted by the Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) and/or the Center for Assessment and Policy Development as set forth below:

*Equity* means full inclusion of all residents in the economic, social and political life of Cook County, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, age, ability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, neighborhood of residence or other characteristics.(adopted Cook County OUP version)

*Racial equity* is the condition that would be achieved if one’s racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares.

*Racial equity planning* is the development of policies, practices and strategic investments to reverse racial disparity trends, eliminate institutional racism and ensure that outcomes and opportunities for all people are no longer predictable by race.

*Racial equity framework* means a comprehensive approach and understanding of racial equity principles and strategies that clearly articulate the differences between individual, institutional and systemic racism as well as implicit and explicit bias.

*Racial equity action plan* means a comprehensive plan to incorporate and embed racial equity principles and strategies into operations, programs, services and policies.



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**J. Policy and Procedures**

This policy defines equity for OUP as it relates to the formulation of policy, updating policy, and the tangible delivery of government services and resources. It is intended to integrate a racial equity framework for OUP to set and report on goals of training and capacity building of County personnel, racial equity action planning and community engagement.

**Goal Setting.** Within 90 days of the effective date of this policy, Department Heads shall work with the Director of Equity and Inclusion to develop and incorporate goals for advancing racial equity. Such goal setting shall also be incorporated into personnel performance goals and evaluations in the future, as applicable.

An initial baseline Racial Equity assessment survey was conducted in advance of this policy being launched in order to develop and incorporate goals for advancing racial equity. The assessment survey will inform initial program content and goals.

Goals to advance racial equity will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Director of Equity and Inclusion and the various Department Heads. The Director of Equity and Inclusion shall also work with the Department Heads to determine what data should be extracted and reported to evaluate goal performance.

**Reporting.** All Department Heads shall make the agreed upon data as a result of goal setting available to the Director of Equity and Inclusion, BHR Chief (or Designee) and Budget Director annually and upon request in order to measure the progress toward these goals. The Director of Equity and Inclusion will provide to the President a formal report bi-annually (every two years) on progress in advancing racial equity, based on reports submitted by Department Heads.

The Racial Equity assessment survey used to establish goals along with periodic qualitative data gathering will serve as a key overall program data repository of progress for Cook County OUP racial equity efforts. The collaborative coalition of BHR, the Director of Equity and the Office of Research, Operations and Innovation (ROI) will periodically review measurement tools and results for optimization, as needed. The results will inform additional program content and goals. Data sets will be appended as new employees are onboarded to Cook County OUP and overall OUP wide measurement will follow a specified cadence thereafter.

**Training.** BHR will provide mandatory equity and inclusion training for all OUP employees. In collaboration with the President’s Office and the Director of Equity, mandatory training will include racial equity foundational learning for all employees and annual learning plans for topics across individual and organizational competency growing equity knowledge and imparting equitable practices in government service.

**Procurement Opportunities.** Cook County Government Office of Contract Compliance will collaborate with the Director of Equity and Inclusion on a periodic basis to review the participation of minority and women-owned businesses (MBE/WBE) in the procurement process as both prime and sub-contractors



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for Cook County Government and the Cook County Health and Hospitals System (CCH). The Director of Equity and Inclusion as well as the Office of Contract Compliance will focus on outreach, certification and compliance to ensure advancement in racial equity.

### K. Responsibilities

1. The Director of Equity and Inclusion is responsible for: the racial equity strategic planning and program implementation in collaboration with BHR, ROI and the OUP Budget Office. The Director of Equity and Inclusion is charged with working with the various Department Heads to determine racial equity goals and review said goals on an annual basis. The Director of Equity and Inclusion is further responsible for reviewing the data and reports submitted by Department Heads as a result of racial equity goal setting. The Director of Equity and Inclusion will provide to the President a formal report bi-annually (every two years) on progress in advancing racial equity, based on reports submitted by Department Heads.
2. Department Heads are responsible for: creating, reviewing and updating policy, practices and annual budget planning with a racial equity lens using tools provided by the Director of Equity and Inclusion as well as from the results of data reporting and goal setting. Department Heads are responsible for submitting data and reports to the Director of Equity and Inclusion in a time and manner as directed by the Director of Equity and Inclusion.
3. Budget Director is responsible for: collaborating with the Director of Equity and Inclusion to create, implement, monitor and optimize a Budgeting for Equity protocol.
4. The Director of Contract Compliance is responsible for creating, reviewing and updating policy and practices related to the advancement of racial equity in contracting in collaboration with Director of Equity.
5. OUP Employees and Employees governed by the Cook County Employment Plan are responsible for completing the racial equity training programs as they are released by BHR and the Presidents Office.

### L. Resources

General information concerning the information provided in this Policy may be obtained via email at [racialequitypolicy@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:racialequitypolicy@cookcountyil.gov).

### M. Confidentiality

Cook County maintains confidentiality of information, to the extent required by applicable law.