

# COOK COUNTY RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN 2021 – 2023



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*Toni Preckwinkle*  
**Toni Preckwinkle**  
Cook County Board President

# COOK COUNTY RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN

## FOR OFFICES UNDER THE PRESIDENT

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### INTRODUCTION

Cook County Offices Under the President (OUP) has worked hard over the last two years to advance equity for all residents in Cook County. Through its 2018 strategic plan, *Cook County Policy Roadmap: Five-Year Strategic Plan for Offices Under the President*, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle made a commitment to intentionally focus on advancing racial equity over the next five years. OUP set in motion many actions to establish a solid foundation for racial equity. From investing in the Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) membership to creating a Racial Equity Leadership Council to the recommendations from the Cook County Committee on Addressing Bias, Equity, and Cultural Competency to hiring the inaugural Director of Equity and Inclusion, OUP has demonstrated its commitment to building infrastructure to create and sustain equitable delivery of Cook County services.

OUP seeks to address and eradicate institutional and structural barriers to racial equity that exist in its operations. Cook County's mission is to be a good steward of public resources by building equitable and sustainable communities for all residents bolstered by core values of:

- ▶ **Equity:** Cook County's focus on racial equity centers around ensuring residents can enjoy the full extent of recognized civil and human rights and includes work to protect those rights at all the intersections of identities residents hold.
- ▶ **Engagement:** Incorporating resident engagement, Cook County commits to creating opportunities for residents and partners to participate in planning and decision making that will lead to tangible results.
- ▶ **Excellence:** Cook County will be good stewards of resources and deliver vital services in a transparent, accountable, and effective manner.

In partnership with the Racial Equity Leadership Council Core Team, *Policy Roadmap* implementation teams and led by the Director of Equity and Inclusion, Cook County has outlined a Racial Equity Action Plan to cover 2021-2023, the last two years of the current *Cook County Policy Roadmap*.

The plan is comprised of five strategies, broken down into action steps complete with a timeline, accountability measures, performance measures, and desired outcomes. Each of these strategies aligns with the Open Communities (Good Government) policy priority outlined in the *Policy Roadmap*.

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### STRATEGY 1: INTRODUCE AND IMPLEMENT RACIAL EQUITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

*In collaboration with the Open Performance cross-departmental team, the President's Office creates a measurement tool of racial equity progress with an initial baseline assessment and periodic measurement milestones.*

Action Step	Timing	Accountability	Performance Measure
1.1 Launch education campaign for introduction of racial equity assessment tool	June 2021	President's Office	TBD
1.2 Build a Budgeting for Equity Plan	May - June 2021	Budget Director, Director of Policy, Director of Equity and Inclusion	Percent of departments using updated budget business case template
1.3 Use tool in <i>Policy Roadmap</i> updates	TBD	President's Office	Usage of tool in all six policy priorities in updated <i>Policy Roadmap</i>
1.4 Use tool in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Equity Fund idea vetting and feasibility studies	Autumn 2021	Equity Fund Task Force, ARPA Executive Leadership Council	Usage tool in all applicable funding recommendations
1.5 Incorporate racial equity tool in budget process	February 2021 - July 2022	President's Office, Bureau of Finance	Percent of new revenue proposals and augment revenue business plans

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### STRATEGY 2: CREATE AND DRIVE ADOPTION OF RACIAL EQUITY POLICY

*Build a jurisdictional policy to operationalize racial equity vision and actions. The policy will bring together key racial equity programs across OUP and solidify continued focus on racial equity until such time that racial inequities are no longer a challenge in Cook County.*

Action Step	Timing	Accountability	Performance Measure
2.1 Collaborate with Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) and Legal Counsel to create Racial Equity Policy	February - August 2021	President's Office, BHR	Agreement and adoption of policy
2.2 Launch Racial Equity Policy	September 2021	President's Office	Publishing policy publicly and in policy library for employee access
2.3 Socialize Racial Equity Policy	October 2021	President's Office, BHR	Percent of departments in compliance with racial equity policy

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### STRATEGY 3: LAUNCH RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR OUP EMPLOYEES

*Develop a racial equity training framework and workplan to add racial equity and cultural competency courses to the OUP learning and development system. Data from the racial equity baseline assessment will shape content and training for all OUP employees.*

Action Step	Timing	Accountability	Performance Measure
3.1 Create racial equity training measurement model with the office of Research, Operations and Innovation (ROI)	February - March 2021	President's Office, ROI	% of model completed
3.2 Conduct baseline assessment survey of all OUP employees	May - June 2021	President's Office, ROI	% of employees filling out survey
3.3 Create initial racial equity training modules with BHR and ROI.	June 2021	President's Office, BHR, ROI	% of module completed
3.4 Train OUP employees on first module	First module complete by April 2022	President's Office, BHR, ROI	% of employees completed first module
3.5 Secure training vendor for phase two training needs	October/ November 2021	President's Office, Procurement	Executed contract in place
3.6 Train OUP employees on second module	2022	President's Office, BHR, ROI, vendor	% of employees completed second module

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### STRATEGY 4: LAUNCH AND IMPLEMENT LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY

*Build language access policy and drive adoption with vendor support for OUP and serve as a guide for separately elected offices. Initial policy and program seeks to begin process of ensuring access to county services for all residents regardless of native language or ability.*

Action Step	Timing	Accountability	Performance Measure
4.1 Develop Language Access Policy with Director of Policy and Director of Equity and Inclusion	February 2021	President's Office	Completion of Language Access Policy
4.2 Create curriculum and conduct Language Access training	February - May 2021	President's Office and BHR	% of departments with trained Language Access Liaison
4.3 Monitor Language Access service usage	Ongoing	President's Office, Procurement	% of contract amount used
4.4 Create recommendations for continuing Language Access services vendor	February 2022	President's Office, Procurement	New executed contract with efficiencies and expanded scope

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### STRATEGY 5: CREATE AND LAUNCH LATINX AGENDA FOR ADMINISTRATION

*Develop a targeted strategy to build and nurture relationship with LatinX community members to ensure administration is aware and can act upon policy issues most important to Cook County residents of Latin American descent. This strategy directs both internal and public-facing activities to ensure a holistic approach to how to best reach this diverse and sizable population of Cook County.*

Action Step	Timing	Accountability	Performance Measure
5.1 Design and build Latinx strategy in consultation with Latinx caucuses	Summer 2021	Director of Equity and Inclusion, Intergovernmental Affairs	Completion of strategy
5.2 Develop pathway for career and professional development opportunities focused on Latinx employees	Fall - Winter 2021	Bureau of Human Resources, Director of Equity and Inclusion	% of Latinx-identified employees making use of professional development and promotional opportunities
5.3 Expand existing communication and outreach plan to specifically target and elevate Latinx community voices	Ongoing	President's Office Department of Communications	% of digital Spanish-language communications with increased engagement

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## OUTCOMES

With these strategies in place and action steps initiated, these are the outcome categories Cook County aims to impact:

### **Budgeting for Equity**

*Apply racial equity assessment to budget decisions*

Through building repeatable program and initiative evaluation and optimization processes with racial equity metrics, Cook County Offices Under the President will bring equity to budgeting and put equity into action. Adding racial equity priorities to all decision-making intersections ensures that over time, Cook County will impact the socioeconomic factors that drive inequities.

### **Embed Equity within Organizational Structure**

*Establish racial equity organizational framework and initial workplan*

As Cook County looks to integrate racial equity principles in our work, Cook County must lay out an initial organizational framework. Many of the foundational efforts put in place helped this effort:

- ▶ Establishing Racial Equity Leadership Council;
- ▶ Joining the Government Alliance on Race and Equity G.A.R.E.;
- ▶ Building relationships with neighboring jurisdictions to learn from their equity work;
- ▶ and hiring a Director of Equity and Inclusion.

### **Build Individual and Collective Cultural Competence**

*Nurture individual leaders and build organizational cultural competence*

Beginning with building an initial baseline assessment and data gathering process, Cook County will develop individual and organizational cultural competence. The President's Office will set a cadence for annual measurement and look to optimize individual and organizational capacity for equitable actions.

### **Improve Public Access**

*Increase engagement by removing language barriers*

Cook County launched a language access policy and program to make government accessible to every resident by providing information and services in multiple languages and formats based on our residents' needs. Removing language barriers to access County services will ensure that the many immigrants and non-native English speakers that comprise over 20% of Cook County's population have equitable access.

### **Design and Build Latinx Strategy**

*Develop Pathway to Empower Latinx Employees and Uplift Community Voices*

Cook County Offices Under the President will implement the Latinx Agenda to develop a career pathway and support specifically for Latinx employees to increase representation of Latinx staff in OUP. Cook County will also work diligently to uplift diverse community voices and policies and decision-making.





**Toni Preckwinkle**  
Cook County Board President

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