



**City of Seattle**  
Human Services Department

August 10, 2010

To: Nick Licata, City Councilmember, Chair  
Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee

From: Sara Levin, Deputy Director (for Dannette Smith, Acting Director)

CC: Darryl Smith, Deputy Mayor  
Julie Nelson, Office of Civil Rights

Subject: Seattle Human Service Department's report on 2010 Race and Social Justice Initiative Work Plans

I am looking forward to sharing HSD's Race and Social Justice Work Plan with the Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee on August 11. I am pleased that RSJI continues to be a priority, not only for the Mayor, but for City Council as well.

Use of the RSJI filter and the Racial Equity Toolkit in making policy, program and budget decisions is more important than ever in our current environment. This is of vital importance to our work when you consider that people of color are more likely to be homeless; children of color are more likely to be behind in school; youth of color are more likely to be "disconnected" from school and the workplace; and victims of domestic violence are more likely to be people of color. The recession is impacting low-income groups,

**History of HSD's work on RSJI**

The Human Services Department has valued diversity, cultural competency and cultural relevancy as key aspects of our mission for many years. HSD's race and social justice work builds on a long history of anti-racism work in the department. Beginning in the early 1990's, HSD began to assess how its staff, policies, and practices created barriers to equal access and opportunities. HSD, in partnership with community members, service providers, educators and other government staff engaged in training and ongoing efforts to improve racial equity within institutions and in the community. In 1998, HSD made a commitment to undoing racism by engaging in a department-wide process to adopt and implement anti-racism principles.

The Race and Social Justice Initiative has provided the institutional support and framework to incorporate racial equity and social justice within our operations and practices.

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## **Past HSD RSJ Accomplishments**

### Workforce Equity

HSD's Mentoring program was developed in response to need identified by the Change Team, the Mentoring program provides a platform for employees at every level to grow professionally and develop their skills and abilities. Since its inception in 2007, the mentoring program has completed three cycles (21 mentor-mentee matches, 42 participants) - 48% of the mentors and 57% of mentees were people of color. The 2010 cycle began in June with 17 matches (34 participants).

### Training

In 2009, HSD's RSJI Change Team 's Cross Cultural Training Committee hosted two trainings: "The Spirit of Our People (native American) " and "Class in America 101". The programs attracted over 150 City staff.

HSD's Change Team and Health Promotion Team to hosted a four part training series: "Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making us Sick" to increase awareness of health disparities among communities of color, and their causes.

### Immigrant & Refugee Initiative

HSD has implemented a number of projects and procedures aimed at improving access to information, services and resources for immigrant and refugees. These include:

- Translated key documents, informational brochures and program resources in multiple languages. Since 2006, HSD has spent \$711,195 on interpretation and translation. (This does not include services provided through the community based agencies or the translation of citizenship materials through the New Citizen's Initiative.) The annual expenditures have increased substantially since 2006, when the Translation & Interpretation requirement was initiated, and HSD began tracking expenditures.
- In 2008, HSD allocated \$100,000 to enhance the New Citizen Initiatives in order to provide citizenship information to the broader immigrant and refugee community who are not eligible for NCI services. These funds were used to support the Seattle Public Library for the development of naturalization materials and outreach and education to the broader immigrant and refugee community and to fund N400 Application fees for low-income Seattle residents.
- In 2009, Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Prevention (DVSAP) implemented the toll-free "Peace in the Home" Helpline. Peace in the Home Helpline offers one-call access that connects non- and limited-English speaking domestic violence victims to a community-based agency that can serve their language and service needs. Callers can get help in 14 languages: Amharic or Amaryna, Chinese, Japanese, Khmer, Lao, Russian, Romanian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog Thai, Tigrigna, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.

## **HSD's 2010 RSJI Work Plan Highlights**

Besides the important work to address institutional disparities in City government, HSD's 2010 work plan is focused on being intentional and strategic in the way we imbed a racial equity lens in our work. We are working in 2010 to:

- Develop a coordinated outreach and engagement plan to seek community input into our programs and practices;
- Incorporate RSJ best practices into 2010 Request for Investment processes such as including specific goals and outcomes to emphasize program goals of reducing racism and decreasing racial disparities; incorporating strategies, goals and practices to address changing needs, racial demographics, and cultural needs; and expanding opportunity and/or access for those who historically have been excluded;
- Assess and improve services to immigrant and refugee, and other underserved communities; and
- Create data systems to measure and communicate how our programs address disparities.

### **2010 Accomplishments (to date)**

Racial Equity Toolkit: Efforts to strengthen HSD's understanding and application of the racial equity toolkit :

- Provided training in the Budget and Policy Filter to HSD's management team and Change Team leads.
- Revised the Request for Investment Planning Template to incorporate the RSJI Budget and Policy Filter questions.
- HSD is currently revising our client demographic profile to expand ethnicity data collected on immigrant and refugee communities. Proposed changes were presented to the City Immigrant & Refugee Advisory Board in July 2010.

### Examples of Division RSJ Efforts

- Youth Development and Achievement: To improve youth of color's access to services, a Request for Investments for Employment Services for Homeless Youth and Young Adults prioritized services to homeless youth of color, especially African American youth who do not identify as homeless. In addition to a provider forum, a forum for youth of color was held to gain feedback on the employment services desired by youth. The RFI and rating guide placed heavy weight on providing culturally competent outreach and employment services to youth of color.
- Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Prevention (DVSAP) hosted a forum with criminal justice system and domestic violence providers serving Limited English Proficient survivors to come together and address barriers/challenges that may impede access to justice and to generate recommendations for system improvement.
- Aging & Disability Services (ADS): increased funding by \$30,000 in 2010 to add the evidence-based Enhance Fitness program to six refugee/immigrant congregate meal

sites with 116 participants. In partnership with the University of Washington, ADS expanded the PEARLS minor depression therapy intervention to approximately 15 Russian clients and 10 Somali clients using interpreters. Evaluation results show that the PEARLS model decreased levels of depression for Russian clients; however, the PEARLS model was not culturally appropriate for Somali clients.