



King County

Equity in All Actions:

**Lessons Learned from the Evolution of
an Intentional Approach to Integrate
Health in All Policies in King County**

6th Biennial Childhood Obesity Conference

June 29, 2011

Equity in All Actions

- I. Foundations and Evolution of King County's Equity & Social Justice (ESJ) Work
- II. Overview of our Current ESJ Approach
- III. Some Lessons Learned

The arc of history is long, but it bends
towards justice.



Truth Crushed to the Earth Will Rise Again by Linda Beaumont

Image of the 1963 March on Washington, King County Courthouse lobby floor.

Foundations & Evolution

1986: Proposal to change the namesake of King County from William de Vane King to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

2005: Washington State legally changes the County's namesake.

2007: King County adopts a new logo, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Foundations & Evolution

2007: King County adopts a framework for the health of the public.

- Mission: “Identify and promote the conditions under which all people can...achieve optimal health.”
- Goal: “King County will employ strategies, policies, and interventions to reduce health disparities.”
- Guiding Principles: “Driven by Social Justice”

Foundations & Evolution

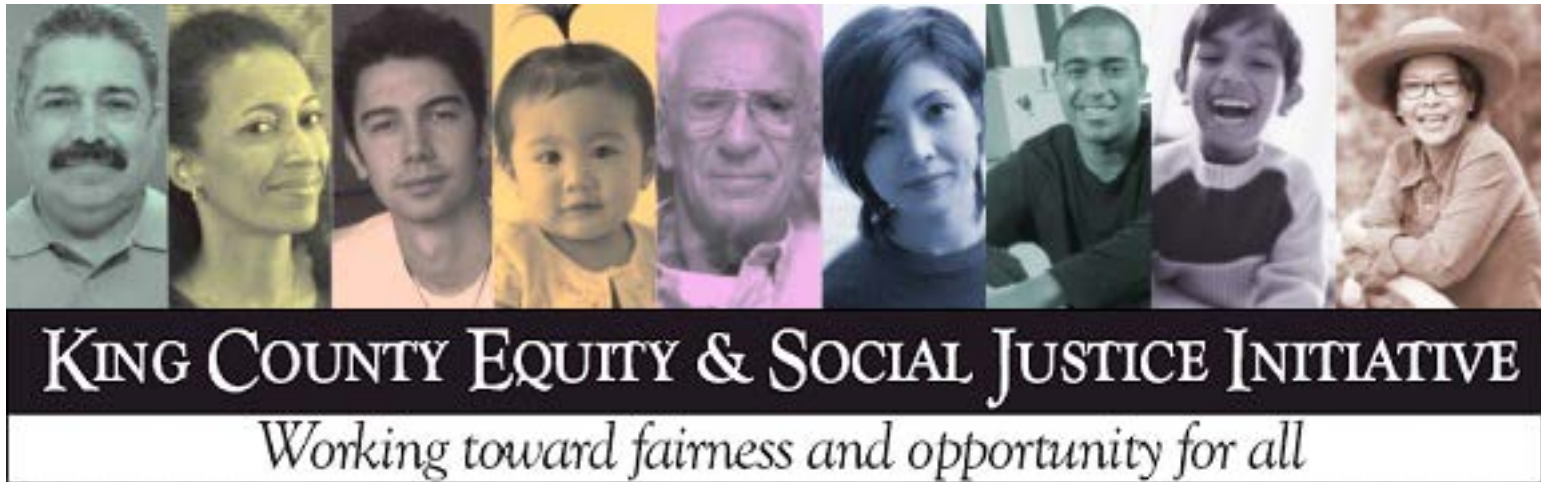
The Good: King County's indicators of quality of life and the social determinants of health are generally rated higher than average relative to other jurisdictions in the nation.

The Bad: In some cases, the disparities in King County in these indicators are wider than in other jurisdictions.

The Ugly: In some cases, the disparities are increasing.

Foundations & Evolution

2008: King County launches the Equity and Social Justice Initiative.



Foundations & Evolution

King County has the most diverse school district in the United States (NYT March 2009).

Tukwila School District

The percent chance that two students selected at random would be members of a different ethnic group.

1987 = 38% 2006 = 75%

In 2006, 2,667 students

White 29% Black 24%

Hispanic 23% Asian 22%

Native American 2%

More than 60 languages.

Foundations & Evolution

2009: Development of a countywide strategic plan.



Overview of King County's Current ESJ Approach

Integrated: King County Strategic Plan

2010: Adoption of the King County Strategic Plan

2010-2014: Working Together for One King County

ESJ Principles are embedded throughout the Plan:

- Vision: A diverse and dynamic community with a healthy economy and environment where all people and businesses have the opportunity to thrive.
- Guiding Principles include “Fair and Just”: We serve all residents of King County by promoting fairness and opportunity and eliminating inequities.

Intentional: Ordinance 16948

AN ORDINANCE establishing definitions and directing implementation steps related to the fair and just principle of the adopted 2010-2014 countywide strategic plan.

Section 1: Through adoption of the [strategic plan], King County has transformed its work on equity and social justice from an initiative to an integrated effort that applies [the plan's] principle of “fair and just” intentionally in all the county does in order to achieve equitable opportunities for all people and communities.

King County Ordinance 16948

What *is* Equity?

A system of fairness



“All people have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to attain their full potential.”

King County Ordinance 16948

What influences equity?

Social and political factors +

Economic factors +

Geographic and environmental factors

= ***Determinants*** of equity

Ordinance 16948: Determinants of Equity

Equity in County organizational practices

Availability of family-wage jobs/job training

Community economic development

Affordable, quality & healthy housing

Early childhood development

Quality education

Healthy built & natural environments

Community & public safety

Equitable law & justice system

Access to affordable, healthy food & food systems

Access to parks & nature

Access to all modes of safe and efficient transportation

Access to affordable, culturally appropriate

Strong neighborhoods and
social networks

health & human services

King County Ordinance 16948

ESJ Foundational Practices

- Raise and sustain ESJ visibility
- Focus on determinants of equity
- Consider ESJ in all decision-making
- Foster an organization that promotes opportunity
- Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate
- Build capacity to engage all communities

King County Ordinance 16948: Actions

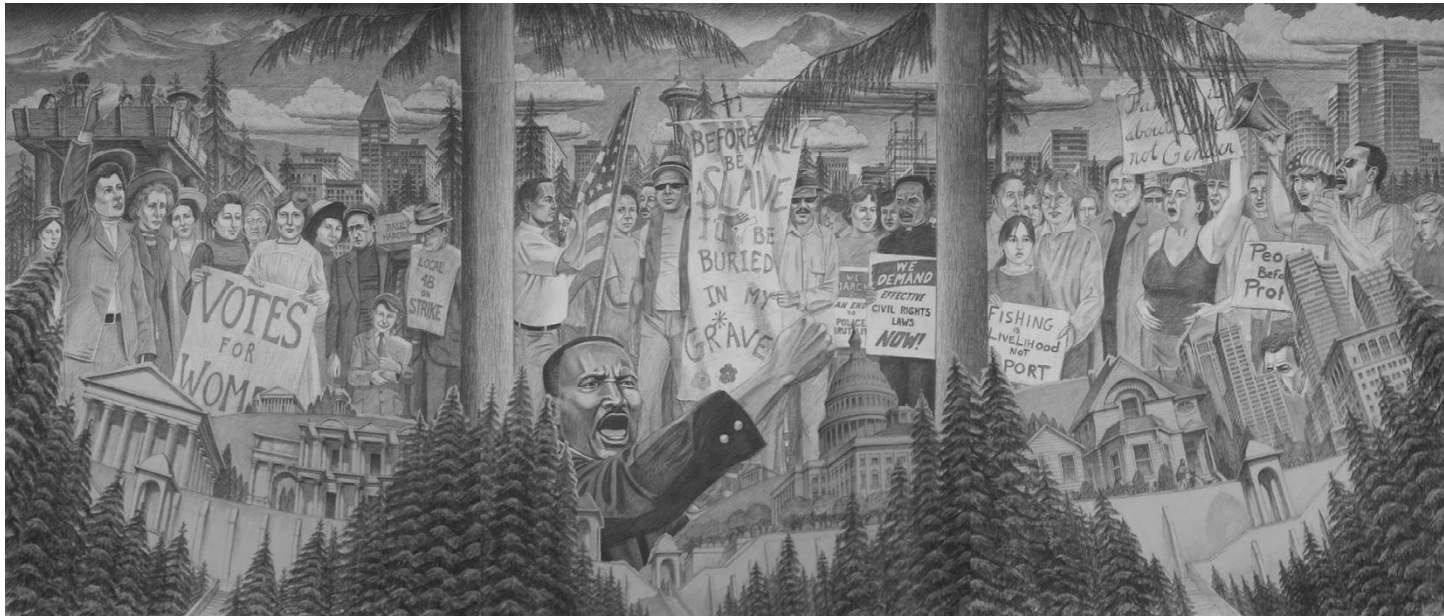
- Integrate ESJ practices into the County's actions, plans, management systems, and budgets.
- Create an inter-agency team to:
 - Facilitate information sharing and accountability for annual agency commitments
 - Improve fairness in countywide practices
 - Develop tools and resources to inform decision-making and community engagement
- Report annually on ESJ measures and results.

Lessons Learned

How to gain traction on
a “Health in All Policies” approach

Build on Your Unique Strengths

We can't have every county rename themselves in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King.



Fair Distribution of Wealth by Douglas Cooper
King County Courthouse Lobby wall mural

Health → Equity

Language is Important

Health Disparities → Equity & Social Justice

Health Dept → All Departments

Equity & Social Justice → Fairness & Opportunity

Broadens the audience even further

We are still evolving.

Policy → Action

How do you get to Carnegie Hall?

Theory → Practice

Feel Good → Do Good

Talking to Ourselves → Working with Others

Even small actions make a difference, if only in your organizational culture.

Integrated but Intentional

You don't need money, but you do need focus.

One more thing to do → Part of everything you do

Not my job → Everyone's job

Paralysis → Routine

Perception of barriers → Opportunities revealed

Siloed → Collective action

Visionary but Practical

Cultivate leadership at all levels.

Political leadership: Articulate values, connect the work to everyone, affirm the importance of the work to other organizational objectives. Plain talk.

Departmental leadership: Relate the work to different fields and work groups.

Employees: Act as champions throughout the organization. Make the work live and discover opportunities.

Visionary but Practical II

Create a framework that relates your organization to the broader context.

Allows everyone to see where they fit in.

Gives everyone a place to start the work.

Helps to define the role of your organization in broader social change/impact.

Helps explain what you are – and are not – doing.

Helps you define reasonable measures of progress.

Accountability Produces Results

Let people start where they are, while pushing them forward and acknowledging progress.

Accountability mechanisms can be simple.

Integration of ESJ values into accountability and management systems reinforces intentionality and produces results.

Fail Forward

We don't have all the answers, but...

We know what result the status quo produces.
Let's try something different.

Resources & Contact Information

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King County Strategic Plan 2010–2014

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/strategy/StrategicPlan/CountyStratPlan.aspx>

King County Equity & Social Justice

www.kingcounty.gov/equity

King County Communities Count:

www.communitiescount.org