

Equitable policy, program, and service design

Building equity into the decisions that shape who gets what, how, and with what burden: policies, program design, budgets, forms and notices, technology, and service delivery.

Goals: Eliminate disparities; Communication and accessibility

Why it matters

Engagement that arrives after a decision is final cannot change it. The DHS equity policy makes an equity scan or full analysis part of some decisions, and good practice makes it part of all of them.

Questions to begin with

- What is the decision, and when does it stop being changeable?
- Who benefits, who carries the burden, and who is missing from the room?
- What evidence do we have by community, language, disability, and place, and what does it not show?
- What are the alternatives, who owns implementation, and when do we look again?

Work you can take forward

Complete an equity scan or full equity analysis

A documented analysis that names affected communities, evidence, benefits and burdens, alternatives, engagement, implementation owners, and follow-up.

Program and policy staff · Division and administration leadership · Fiscal, contracts, and procurement · Supports required work

- **Equity scan or full equity analysis: what goes in and who decides which applies** — program page </library/ja-equity-scan-or-full-analysis>
- **DHS Equity Analysis Toolkit** — program page </library/ext-dhs-equity-toolkit>
- **Operational equity review canvas: eight steps for any decision** — program page </library/ja-operational-equity-canvas>

Ask: We are changing a program rule that goes to leadership. Does this need an equity scan or a full analysis, and what goes in it?

Plan a new program, service, or digital application

An equity and access checklist completed while the design is still open, with responsibilities and a review date.

Program and policy staff · Service delivery and support planning

- **Building equity into an idea while it takes shape** — program page </library/pn-embed-early>
- **Equity and access checklist for new work** — program page </library/ja-launch-embed-checklist>
- **Questions about the steps, time, and effort a process requires** — program page </library/ja-process-burden>

Ask: We are planning a new online application. What equity questions should we settle before the design is fixed?

Change a policy, form, notice, or letter

Plain-language, accessible, workable material with sources labeled and barriers removed before release.

Program and policy staff · Communications and language access

- **Checklist for changing a form, notice, or letter** — program page </library/ja-form-notice-change>
- **Plain language and accessible documents checklist** — program page </library/ja-plain-language>
- **Language access checklist** — program page </library/ja-language-access-checklist>

Ask: We are revising a renewal notice. What access and burden questions should we work through?

Design or improve a service with the people who use it

Person-centered, accessible service design that reflects the disability rights and community-based service frameworks DSD works within.

Service delivery and support planning · Program and policy staff

- **Disability rights and service delivery: the frameworks DSD works within** — program page </library/lm-disability-rights-and-service-delivery>
- **Operational equity review canvas: eight steps for any decision** — program page </library/ja-operational-equity-canvas>

Ask: How do we redesign an assessment process so it is person-centered and accessible without adding steps?

Tools and frameworks

- **Tool card: Minnesota Equity Analysis Toolkit** — The State of Minnesota's official equity analysis toolkit, published by Minnesota Management and Budget, used with the DHS Equity Policy. Public. Permitted use: cite, link, follow. The policy owner determines when it is required.
- **Tool card: GARE Racial Equity Toolkit** — The Government Alliance on Race and Equity describes racial equity tools as structured ways to integrate explicit consideration of racial equity into decisions, policies, practices, programs, and budgets. Public. Permitted use: cite, link, adapt the method with attribution.
- **Tool card: Charting the LifeCourse** — A framework and set of tools for people with disabilities and families to plan a good life across the lifespan, developed at the University of Missouri Kansas City

Institute for Human Development. Some materials are licensed; check reuse terms. Permitted use: cite, link, use published tools within their terms.

In DSD work

One DSD adds division programs and service-delivery frameworks, scenarios from DSD work, and the consultation pathway for a real decision.

- Home and community-based services policy
- Support planning and access
- Positive supports and person-centered practice
- Olmstead work

Connected programs

- Home and community-based services policy and waivers
- MnCHOICES assessment and access
- Support planning and case management
- Positive supports and person-centered practice
- Olmstead and community integration
- Employment and day services
- Brain injury, guardianship, and related programs

Situations to explore

- A waiver policy change is going to leadership next month
- Redesigning an assessment process without adding steps