

Operational equity review canvas: eight steps for any decision

One pattern that works for policies, forms, services, contracts, budgets, communications, technology, and program design: clarify the decision, identify affected people, examine evidence, name assumptions and risks, compare options, choose accountable owners, define accessible implementation, and schedule follow-up.

Why it matters

Equity cannot be confined to awareness content. This canvas turns it into the working steps of an actual decision while the decision can still change.

Content

Step 1. Clarify the decision. What exactly is being decided, by whom, and by when? What is already fixed and what is still open?

Step 2. Identify affected people. Who benefits, who carries the burden, and who is missing from the room? Consider community, language, disability, age, place, and the people who deliver the service.

Step 3. Examine evidence. What do we know by community, language, disability, and place? What do people who use the service say? What does the evidence not show?

Step 4. Name assumptions and risks. What are we assuming about people's access, time, documents, technology, or trust? What could go wrong for the people with the least margin?

Step 5. Compare options. Lay out at least two alternatives and compare who each helps and burdens. Include the option of not proceeding.

Step 6. Choose accountable owners. Who owns each part of implementation and each follow-up? Name people, not units.

Step 7. Define accessible implementation. How will people learn about the change, in which languages and formats, with what human alternative? What burden can still be removed?

Step 8. Schedule follow-up. When will you look at what happened, what will you look at, and who will report back to the people who gave input?

Any figures used as examples in training materials are illustrations, not DSD evidence. Use the real data owners for real numbers.

Next steps

- **Equity analysis for a decision (Practice path)** — program page /practice/gp-7
- **Equity scan or full analysis: what goes in** — program page /library/ja-equity-scan-or-full-analysis
- **Equity impact questions** — program page /library/ja-equity-impact-questions

Practice paths this supports

- Equity analysis for a decision
- New program or service concept
- Procurement or contract equity review