

Building equity into an idea while it takes shape

Equity is easier to shape while an idea is still taking form. Before the design is settled, name who it is for, who may carry the burden, and which access needs may have been assumed. Also name who should be involved, who is responsible for the decision, and when the work will be reviewed.

Why it matters

Adding an equity section after the design is complete may leave the original barriers in place. Asking these questions early can change the design itself.

Content

Start with people: who is this for, who may be missing from the design process, and who carries the burden when the service does not work.

Name access assumptions early: broadband, a printer, English literacy, a car, daytime availability, or a phone that takes calls. Each assumption can keep someone from taking part.

Before creating an online option, decide how people can get help by phone, on paper, or in person. Make sure staff are available to support those options.

Identify vital documents and the languages people will need. Plan and budget for translation with human review early rather than waiting until after launch.

Involve the right partners before the design is fixed: an Equity Director, accessibility and language access leads, and community partners with purpose, authority, and compensation agreed.

If the work touches a Tribal Nation, Native children, Tribal data, services, or land, government-to-government consultation comes first. Do not place a Nation in a generic stakeholder list.

Write down who is responsible for the decision and each follow-up, along with the next review date. That clarity turns the checklist into accountable work.

Next steps

- **Explore questions for your stage of planning** — program page [/practice/gp-1](#)
- **Open the equity and access checklist** — program page [/library/ja-launch-embed-checklist](#)
- **Request a consultation if the stakes or gaps are high** — program page [/support/request](#)

Practice paths this supports

- New program or service concept