

Elements of a Cultural Equity Plan

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General Considerations When Planning for Cultural Equity:

Incorporating Disaggregated Data

In order to advance cultural equity, understanding the racial, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic composition of your region is imperative. Using disaggregated data is the first step.

[For more details on “Incorporating Disaggregated Data” view the web page.](#)

- Tell the community stories through disaggregated data collection (The [National Equity Atlas](#) is an excellent resource to complement other research and data analysis)
 - Utilize data disaggregated by race, age, income, geography
 - Identify current arts and culture investments and analysis of their equity impacts
 - Asset mapping of neighborhoods (to be elaborated upon in next section)
 - Identify cultural space needs for different communities (e.g., studio space, performance space, gallery or cultural center space, live-work space, or artist or cultural communities’ housing challenges)
 - Include an appendix with any resources/materials used in the community engagement process, data collection, etc.

Cultural Asset Mapping

Cultural asset mapping documents the hubs and histories of defining cultural assets to be preserved or leveraged for deepening belonging through the Cultural Equity Plan.

[For more details on “Cultural Asset Mapping” view the web page.](#)

Partnerships with Other Sectors and Agencies

Arts and culture agencies cannot plan for cultural equity alone. This section will identify the cross-sector partners who will be crucial to planning for and achieving cultural equity.

[For more details on “Partnering with Other Sectors & Agencies” view the web page](#)

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There are key elements that jurisdictions should consider when drafting a Cultural Equity Plan: The sections below form the outline of what a Cultural Equity Plan should contain. The chart includes helpful considerations and links to valuable references that can help cultural planners embed equity in each element.

Element Description	Considerations & Valuable References
<p>Introduction</p> <p><i>The introduction should provide a high-level overview of the purpose of the Cultural Equity Plan. It should briefly mention the goals, processes, stakeholders, and time frame of the plan.</i></p>	<p>A brief word on how equitable development is a useful and powerful strategy that benefits everyone (<i>Equitable economic development unlocks the full potential of the local economy by dismantling barriers and expanding opportunities for low-income people and communities of color. Through accountable public action and investment, it grows quality jobs and increases entrepreneurship, ownership, and wealth. The result is a stronger, more competitive city.</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight importance and rationale of cultural equity planning: changing demographics and/or economy that engender re-visioning of future direction; vibrant cultural business clusters that deserve civic support; a platform for intercultural community building; strengthening of the creative economy; engagement of diverse cultural communities in the future of the city or town • Include the need for a Cultural Equity Plan in this particular region/city: current and historic events that warrant long-term planning
<p>Definitions</p> <p><i>This section ensures that everyone has a baseline of understanding. Defining key terms such as cultural equity, inclusion, diversity, etc. will allow readers to understand the concepts referred to throughout the plan.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a glossary of defining words and phrases that will be used throughout (e.g., cultural equity, equitable development, arts, artists, creative economy, diversity, inclusion, people-of-color community, low-income, technical planning terms, cultural agencies, cultural producers, enterprises included in creative economy definitions, etc.) • Valuable Reference: In Nashville’s Creative Plan, the section on A Word About Words (pg. 5) defines arts, culture, and creative economy which are words that are used throughout the report. One should not assume that everyone who reads your report will be fluent in cultural equity language, so it’s important to make it accessible by simply clarifying terminology.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuable Reference: Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan. provides a cultural vision for Oakland (pp. 44-61) and sets the context for the vision by defining key phrases and concepts important to understanding cultural equity.
<p>Executive Summary</p> <p><i>The executive summary should be a more formal introductory element that covers the overall trajectory of the Cultural Equity Plan in brief. It should outline the equity-focused principles, policy recommendations, high-level strategies, and next steps for achieving the goals of the plan.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline main themes/sections of report • Name principles that guide the plan Identify top equitable strategies, policies, and outcomes that the plan will seek to enact • Valuable Reference: Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan (pg. 8), presents an excellent framework in the executive summary where “Equity is the driving force. Cultural is the frame. Belonging is the goal.” Calling out equity in the vision statement helps ground the entire document in the main principles you seek to achieve.
<p>Collective Vision</p> <p><i>This section should outline the vision and a set of principles that key stakeholders and community members co-develop to guide the process of achieving an equitable arts and culture sector. It is imperative to keep traditionally marginalized communities engaged in moving from concept to design to implementation. This happens through a consultative process that should be codified in the vision for equity.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the collective vision for an equitable arts and culture sector/ economy • Include the aspirations for community growth, preservation, identity, development, and change • Identify the stakeholders that were a part of crafting this vision • Include principles that will guide this work • Valuable Reference: CreateNYC (pg. 32) selected five powerful principles, including equity and inclusion. CreateNYC not only presents their principles in a great way, but they also selected important values such as <i>equity</i> and <i>inclusion</i> as a part of their plan. This is a model that a Cultural Equity Plan should be driven by. • Valuable Reference: Engage CNY's Cultural Plan (pg. 11) is an effective visual example. Engage CNY presents a visually appealing, concise diagram that clearly outlines the principles that guide the

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	<p>plan. This helps ground the plan in values that the audience can readily understand. Remember to ensure cultural equity is part of your collective vision.</p> <p>Valuable Reference: Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan lays out “A New Cultural Vision” centered on equity (pp. 44-60); and “Fulfilling the Vision” centered on the infrastructure to deliver on equity. (pp. 61-113).</p>
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Historical Context of the City

This section should highlight the city/region's historic cultural background, paying attention to its record of the treatment of its various low - income communities and communities of color. This will help the reader understand some of the nuances that come with the purpose and planning of this plan.

- **Context setting** should document honest legacies (e.g., city is XX years old; land originally inhabited by XX indigenous communities; city settled by XX cultural groups; key industries and economic assets; which cultural communities identified with various geographies and economies of the place; demographic change over time and trends shaping changes; languages spoken by school children).
- **Valuable Reference:** [Berkeley's Cultural Plan](#) (pp.6-7) is a good start. Berkeley's Community section is a great example of how to tell a city's story of arts and culture. It clearly frames why arts and culture are so important to the city, economically and socially.
- Include and highlight racial/economic disparities and conflicts and cultural assets (e.g., what social movements, unrest, displacement forces, etc., shaped neighborhoods and city/town/etc.; what cultural assets are valued by various communities or city as a whole)
- Document the [trajectory for demographic population change](#) in your city. How should this inform your Cultural Plan? The National Equity Atlas is a comprehensive resource for data to track, measure, and make the case for inclusive growth in America's regions, and states, and nationwide. The Atlas contains data on demographic change, racial and economic inclusion, and the potential economic gains from racial equity for the largest 100 cities, largest 150 regions, all 50 states, and the United States as a whole.
- **Valuable Reference:** [CreateNYC](#) (pg. 26). CreateNYC's *The Moment* section highlights the challenges in the current political climate and acknowledges mass incarceration, systemic racism, and climate change as issues that need to be dealt with. Calling out these issues shows that the city is invested in addressing these tough problems.

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Planning Process

This section will detail the step-by-step process the planning team engaged in to make this project happen. It should highlight the best practices used to engage low-income communities of color, as well as areas for improvement for future similar projects. This documentation can serve as a learning guide for other agencies who want to meaningfully engage community in city planning.

Considerations:

- Funding Sources (include resources to engage communities of color, low-income communities, and artists in the planning process)
- Key Stakeholders (public, private, community)—that will engage with a commitment to equitable development. Planners, developers, consultants, community partners all need to be dedicated to equity process and outcomes.
- Consultations with industry leaders, philanthropy and other cities that have completed cultural plans to leverage existing expertise. *Example:* [CreateNYC](#) (pg. 54) consulted with Denver, Boston, and Chicago; all cities that have recently completed cultural plans to take lessons from the field.
- Document findings of the Community Engagement Process (see [Nashville](#) pp. 6-7): Nashville’s Community Engagement Process highlights community challenges and opportunities, that inform how decisions and resource allocations were made.
 - Outreach to disadvantaged communities
 - Inclusion of communities of color/low-income/disabilities
 - Offer varied and culturally relevant methods of engagement ([CreateNYC](#) pp. 47-58): CreateNYC held focus groups, large meetings, ping pong games, barber shop visits, social media outreach, and one-on-one office hours. They documented a great summary of the number of events, number of individual participants, neighborhoods reached, etc.
 - Translate resources into languages that ensure accessibility to all residents. *Example:* [CreateNYC](#) translated materials into six languages (pg. 52)
- Establish goals, principles, decision points, adoption, timeline with equity implications in mind.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell the community stories through disaggregated data collection (The National Equity Atlas is an excellent resource to complement other research and data analysis)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Utilize data disaggregated by race, age, income, geography○ Identify current arts and culture investments and analysis of their equity impacts○ Asset mapping of neighborhoods (to be elaborated upon in next section)○ Identify cultural space needs for different communities (e.g., studio space, performance space, gallery or cultural center space, live-work space, or artist or cultural communities' housing challenges)○ Include an appendix with any resources/materials used in the community engagement process, data collection, etc.• Valuable Reference: Pasadena (pp. 12-18). Pasadena's <i>Planning</i> section summarized their planning process concisely, with high-level descriptions of who was involved, the processes they used to collect data, community engagement, and even broke it down into three phases, which can be helpful for keeping up with the various activities.
<p>Landscape Analysis</p> <p><i>A landscape analysis takes inventory of the current demographics, resources, policies, and practices in place to help set the context for the Cultural Equity Plan.</i></p>	<p>For more details on "Completing a Landscape Analysis" view the web page.</p>

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<p>Cultural Equity Goals</p> <p><i>The key to a successful plan is to set realistic and achievable goals with a focus on equity outcomes. This section should detail tangible short and long-term goals for cultural equity in your region.</i></p>	<p>For more details on “Aligning Policies to Achieve Cultural Equity Goals” view the web page.</p>
<p>Timeline & Table Setting</p> <p><i>The goals set up in the previous section should be outlined here with milestones set for a realistic time frame and cultural equity as the priority. The infrastructure and resources needed to achieve them on time will also be identified in this section.</i></p>	<p>For more details on “Establishing a Timeline and Setting the Table” view the web page.</p>

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<p>Conclusion & Next Steps (or updates)</p> <p><i>This section should wrap up the report by summarizing high-level themes, lessons learned, and next steps to be taken. If this is a website, consider updating with all equitable achievements every 6 months. Some specific things to consider:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Document equity lessons learned from the process (strengths & areas for improvement)• Reiterate the collective vision and explain how having a more equitable approach to planning and development will benefit your community• Summarize next steps for reaching set equity goals• Valuable Reference: (CreateNYC's What Now & Moving Forward sections are prime examples, pp. 9 & 165)
<p>Appendixes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• References to resources and tools used in the plan, as well as for community members to stay engaged• Timelines of proposed next steps• Policy agenda for securing equity, with lead responsibility assigned• Outline of budget needs/proposals• Outline list of competitive grants and their deadlines; who will apply to them