



Decision Point Guide

October 2025

Decision Point Guide

Purpose

The Decision Point Guide is a tool for applying an equity lens to the WSF's actions. This approach offers practical application of decision-making using actionable solutions.

It encourages the user to critically examine the presence of bias, personal motivations, and past practice to analyze the impact of a decision or action on reinforcing historical inequities, acknowledging the emerging inequities, or further entrenching institutional policies that limit access for demographic groups.

Effective use of the Decision Point Guide will help ensure the most impacted populations of a policy, practice, or decision are heavily considered, and their voices are heard. It generally encourages community involvement, recognition of bias, and recognition of potential impacts, so equity for all can be promoted for years to come.

Management of Decision Point Guide

It is recommended that all identified leadership staff support the planning, management, and implementation of the Decision Point Guide and utilize it as a lens to reach equitable outcomes. Outlined in this Decision Point Guide is an overview of elements included, as well as the key considerations for the WSF as it continues along its equity journey.

Overview	A high-level overview of the purpose and content included in the Decision Point Guide.
How to Use the Decision Point Guide	Who, what, where, when, why
Audience	Water Supply Forum Regional Entities and Leaders
Factors of Influence	Highlight possible factors of influence that will impact the implementation process (i.e., Time, Budget, etc.) .
Equity Analysis – Programs Development and Implementation	Questions to consider before you embark on a project or decision. Phases would include the following: Planning, Design, Delivery, and Evaluation.
Equity and Analysis – Other Decisions	Considerations in each of the phases of the decision-making process to apply to strategy development, leadership readiness, outreach, and accessibility.
Best Practices	Explore application of best practices regarding strategy development, implementation actions, workplace culture, and data tracking.

Decision Point Guide

The Decision Point Guide is a tool for applying an equity lens to the Water Supply Forum's (WSF's) actions. This approach offers practical application of decision-making using actionable solutions.

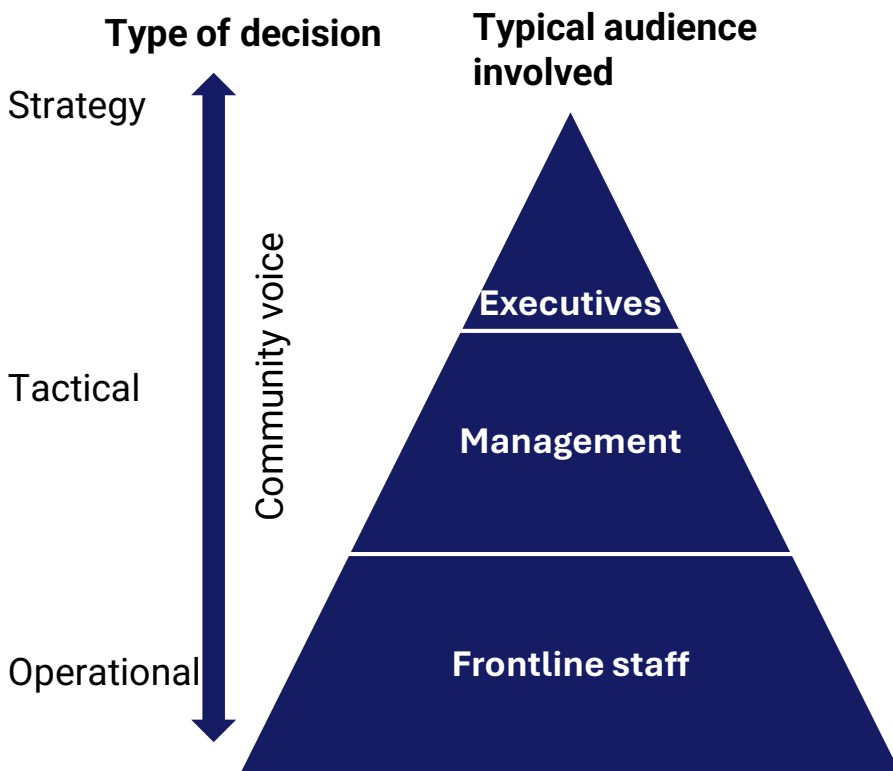
The Decision Point Guide is primarily focused on the general issues of accessibility and the role of leadership, outreach, and policy-making in relation to emergency drinking water distribution. The guide encourages the user to critically examine the presence of bias, personal motivations, and past practice to analyze the impact of a decision or action on reinforcing historical inequities, acknowledging the emerging inequities, or further entrenching institutional policies that limit access for demographic groups.

Effective use of the Decision Point Guide will help ensure the most impacted populations of a policy, practice, or decision are heavily considered, and their voices are heard and implemented. It generally encourages community involvement, recognition of bias, and recognition of potential impacts, so equity for all can be promoted for years to come.

Strategy decisions are those which have **long term influence and impact** on the organization, staff, and community.

Tactical decisions are those which effect **medium-term impact, change, and influence**. This typically includes planning, resource control, and logistics.

Operational decisions are those which support **day-to-day activities** like short-term tasks, scheduling, and managing deadlines.



Community voice means **community members are involved** in the organization's decision-making process, including during implementation, and solution-building.

Decision Point Guide | Template

What decision is being made?

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Who is responsible?	Who is accountable?
Who is responsible for making the decision?	Who else supports this decision?
	Who needs to be informed or made aware?

What are the impacts of the decision?

Direct	Indirect

Who is the most impacted audience? (individual, staff, community member, etc.)

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How are they involved in the decision-making process? How are their needs being elevated?

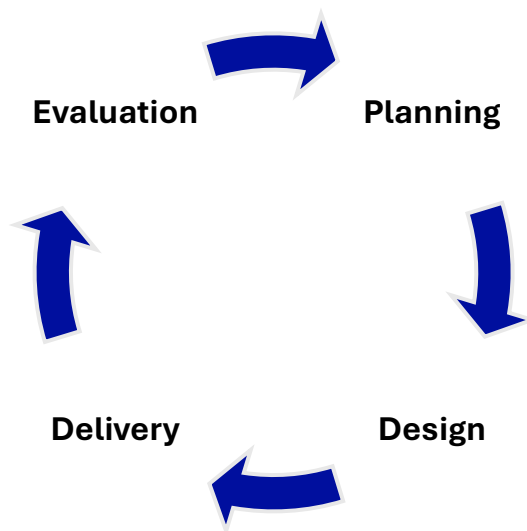
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Decision context/rationale	Intended Results

Decision Point Guide | Equity Analysis

Identify the decision to be made and acknowledge the different factors of influence:

- **Planning:** Determine a need, rationale, or understanding of the decision to be made
- **Design:** Develop objectives, outcomes, goals, and purpose
- **Delivery:** Create a detailed plan including the who, why, when, how, and where
- **Evaluation:** Develop a plan for evaluating the outcomes and impact of the decision made



How to use

Use the Decision Point Guide during the planning, design, delivery, or evaluation phase of making decisions for policies, programs, and initiatives. Infusing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into the threads of every decision will support growing organizational capacity around DEI and provide more equitable, action-oriented solutions.

Equity Analysis

Planning

Equity Indicator	Y/N	Evidence If no, what would help make it a 'yes'?
Does this decision prioritize historically and systemically excluded groups, populations, or communities?		
Is there accessibility equity directly involved in the policy or program (e.g., gender or sex, different ability, neurodiversity, age, linguistic. or racial)? In what ways can you improve?		
Has a need for this decision, policy, or initiative been identified?		
Has data been collected and documented to support this need?		
Does the decision address social conditions that have historical, systemic inequities (e.g., housing, education, employability, economic disparities)?		
Is there a financial cost associated with this decision, policy, or initiative?		If yes, what cost? What is the source of funding?
Are mobile distribution units or pop-up stations available for unhoused populations and those without transportation?		

Additional questions/considerations:

1. What are the intersectional considerations that must be addressed?
2. What type of requirements and expectations are associated with this policy/program?

Equity Analysis

Design

Equity Indicator	Y/N	Evidence <i>If no, what would help make it a 'yes'?</i>
Are there developed SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) objectives or goals?		<i>If no, why not?</i>
Are there clear outcomes associated with this decision?		<i>What knowledge, attitudes, skills, or aspirations are you hoping to change?</i>
Are there any assumptions to be made about the decision at hand?		<i>What do we know to be true about our factors of influence?</i>
Does time have an influence or impact on making progress on this decision?		

Additional questions/considerations:

1. In what ways can community members or families be part of the design of the solution that is intended to support their success?
2. What frameworks have been considered when designing this solution/decision? Have you considered both best practice and emergent learning?
3. How does your individual role contribute to the design and development of this decision?

Equity Analysis

Delivery

Equity Indicator	Y/N	Evidence <i>If no, what would help make it a 'yes'?</i>
Does a detailed plan exist on how this decision will be made?		
Is there a clear understanding of methods, assumptions, rationale, and justification?		
Are clear roles outlined for different people within the WSF and the community?		
Are the needs of historically excluded groups and people addressed?		
Are you balancing water distribution to ensure priority access for vulnerable groups?		
Are you using data to guide equitable water distribution allocation?		
Are there additional topics/items for discussion that have not been addressed in this decision?		

Additional questions/considerations:

1. What additional topics or issues of equity surfaced in the delivery of this decision?
2. What structures are in place to ensure a participatory process and equitable distribution of power and influence?
3. In what ways do you see this decision evolving in its next iteration?

Equity Analysis

Evaluation

Equity Indicator	Y/N	Evidence <i>If no, what would help make it a 'yes'?</i>
Have you included all stakeholders or constituents in identifying how this decision affects them?		
Have you identified and gathered all resources, funding, and support needed for evaluation?		
Does your method include and acknowledge the experience of those historically and systemically excluded?		
Do you have a data collection plan (both quantitative and qualitative)?		
Do you have a plan to return learning and share the information with the WSF and the community?		

Additional questions/considerations:

1. What value does the role of evaluation and decisions in the evaluation phase play at the WSF and the community?
2. Why might a transparent data collection strategy and plan support successful outcomes and metrics?
3. How can the WSF be a better community partner through the return of learning and knowledge?
 - How does that help build trust and credibility?
4. How does this decision align with the WSF's mission and values?

Equity Analysis

Policy

Equity Indicator	Y/N	Evidence <i>If no, what would help make it a 'yes'?</i>
Are our current policies being audited for equity, and how so?		
Can you list out current policies and the impact on marginalized communities in your area?		
How do I handle situations where my colleagues or supervisors display bias in policy discussions and decisions?		
How can I elevate marginalized voices in decision-making processes at my organization?		
Are the policies I follow reinforcing systemic inequities, and if so, how can I advocate for change?		

Additional questions/considerations:

1. What are the needs and concerns of diverse stakeholders?
2. How can we gather feedback from employees from diverse backgrounds?
3. How can we ensure our decisions are informed by diverse perspectives?
4. What additional steps should the organization take to improve diversity efforts?
5. How do our central policies and practices actively reduce disparities in access or outcomes for the families we serve?

Equity Analysis

Leadership

Equity Indicator	Y/N	Evidence <i>If no, what would help make it a 'yes'?</i>
Am I challenging the status quo when it protects inequitable systems or practices?		
Am I ensuring leadership reflects the identities and experiences of the communities we serve?		
Am I reviewing and revising policies that may unintentionally uphold systemic inequities, specifically those related to the communities in our jurisdiction?		
Am I inviting families to shape the emergency services - especially those who have been historically marginalized or underserved?		
Am I disaggregating our data to understand how different groups experience our programs?		

Additional questions/considerations:

1. Am I embedding equity into our organizational mission, not just our messaging?
2. Am I listening to the communities most impacted – and acting on what I hear?
3. Am I questioning whose comfort is prioritized in our policy decisions?
4. Am I leading with curiosity and humility when gaps or disparities are brought to light?
5. Am I sharing power with community members, not just offering them a seat at the table?

Equity Analysis

Outreach

Equity Indicator	Y/N	Evidence <i>If no, what would help make it a 'yes'?</i>
How do we garner feedback and data from local communities to ensure our actions are data driven?		
Are we connected to local organizations to ensure a wider range of access to local marginalized communities?		
Are there barriers (transportation, language, digital access, etc.) that might prevent some families from fully participating – and what are we doing to remove them?		
How do we incorporate voices from marginalized backgrounds into our policies and practices? Does an outreach plan exist?		
When inequities are revealed, do we have a process for making changes quickly and transparently?		

Additional questions/considerations:

1. What are the preferred methods of communication for different groups within the community?
2. Do we offer materials and communication in multiple formats (e.g., printed, digital, audio, video) and languages?
3. Do we work with trusted community leaders and organizations to build relationships to reach marginalized groups?
4. Are our public meetings and online platforms accessible to people with disabilities?

Equity Analysis

Accessibility

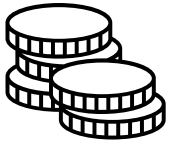
Equity Indicator	Y/N	Evidence <i>If no, what would help make it a 'yes'?</i>
Are the services I am providing accessible to all families, regardless of language, disability, or socioeconomic status?		
Am I considering how systemic barriers (e.g., housing instability, racism, immigration status) impact the emergency services?		
Are our emergency services co-designed with input from the families and communities most impacted?		
Am I advocating for services that meet the needs of the demographic groups rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach (i.e. multiple platforms, points of access, language offerings, and ability)?		
What outcomes are we tracking, and do we disaggregate data to examine disparities and make these findings public?		

Additional questions/considerations:

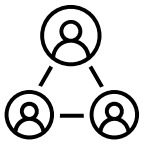
1. How can I challenge practices that disproportionately impact marginalized communities?
2. What barriers exist within my agency that make it harder for certain communities to access support?

Decision Point Guide |

Factors of influence



Funding and resources availability give decision-makers more flexibility and power when making decisions at the organizational and systems level. Resources like staff capacity, training and education, and access to funding are often factors that help support new programming, bolster initiatives, and drive process. Conversely, a lack of funding and resources can sometimes pause these efforts, sometimes stalling or delaying their progress.



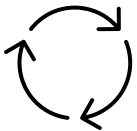
Being human is natural to our experience. In a perfect world, things may be more cut and dried, yes or no, and right or wrong. By adding the aspect of being human, we open ourselves to human emotion and human experience, which helps color and influence our values, opinions, judgements, and decision-making. This nuance layers and adds dimension to decision-making and forces us to ask the tough questions and face hard conversations.



Technology, software, and equipment go along with the ability to make decisions from the systems level all the way down to the day-to-day operations. Having reliable and up-to-date technology, software, and equipment can support effective and efficient processes and tasks. Knowing that this comes with a price tag, investing in these resources can be a tremendous benefit and a potential barrier in terms of financial cost.



Time is a resource and can be used to leverage decision-making to support thorough, well-developed, informed decisions. Alternatively, it can be seen as a challenge, with its implications of limited time being a barrier for making progress.



Phase of decision-making will influence how, when, why, and who is involved in the decision-making process. Consider the following phases:

- **Planning:** Determine a need, rationale, or understanding of the decision to be made.
- **Design:** Develop objectives, outcomes, goals, and purpose.
- **Delivery:** Create a detailed plan including the who, why, when, how, and where.
- **Evaluation:** Develop a plan for evaluating the outcomes and impact of the decision made.

Resources

Additional Equity Decision-Making Tools

1. [Clark College, Office of Equity and Inclusion](#)
2. [Harvard University, School of Public Health – Office of Diversity and Inclusion Equity Lens for Decision Making Tool](#)
3. [MP Associates, Maggie Potapchuck Equity Decision Tool](#)
4. [BBC - Factors that Affect Decision Making](#)

Additional Decision-Making Tools (non-equity specific)

1. [SOAR analysis](#)
2. [Decision matrix](#)
3. [Decision tree](#)
4. [Ishikawa diagram](#)
5. [Force Field analysis](#)
6. [RACI chart](#)
7. [Interest/influence mapping](#)