



WATER SUPPLY FORUM

Serving Snohomish, King & Pierce Counties

Equity Toolkit

October 2025

Equity Toolkit: Goals & Components

The Water Supply Forum (WSF or Forum) has developed this Equity Toolkit to provide emergency preparedness and disaster planning support to Forum members and regional partners that include tools and resources to ensure inclusive and equitable disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, focusing on the needs of vulnerable populations. It includes key recommended resources to help individuals and/or organizations navigate broad scenarios or more specialized equity resources. This Equity Toolkit will help the WSF become a stronger equity-focused organization by supporting service priorities and the Forum's emergency and disaster response to ultimately result in coordinated emergency management within the region.

GOALS:

1. Increase community partners' understanding of what equity means as part of emergency preparedness and disaster planning and how each plays a role within an organization.
2. Provide better and more equitable services across communities and neighborhoods.
3. Guide equity actions of community partners in response to disaster planning and/or response management.
4. Demonstrate how to plan and do better when emergencies happen to help distribute and provide access to water to vulnerable populations.

COMPONENTS:

1. Incorporating Equity Principles
2. Prevention and Mitigation
3. Preparedness and Resilience Building
4. Response and Relief

Using the Equity Toolkit

This Equity Toolkit is designed to guide the WSF members and partners through the process of building equity-based knowledge and practices into the emergency management process, including in prevention and mitigation, preparedness and resilience building, and response and relief efforts for regional emergencies.

The first component introduces high-level concepts on equity-based emergency management and is then followed by additional components that cover individual emergency management phases. Each component can serve as a stand-alone resource, and some communities or regional partners might find certain components are more relevant to their community or partner needs than others. With that said, we recommend reviewing each of the components in this Equity Toolkit to ensure equity is built into each phase of the emergency management continuum and to ensure better and more equitable services across vulnerable communities and neighborhoods to create clear accountability and communication support.

For each component below:

- **Build** knowledge
- **Leverage** best practices and resources
- **Support** accountability, communicate, and evaluate

COMPONENT 1: Incorporating Equity Principles

COMPONENT 2: Prevention and Mitigation

COMPONENT 3: Preparedness and Resilience Building

COMPONENT 4: Response and Relief

Water Supply Forum

Equity Toolkit Components



Build, Leverage, Support

Ensure principles of equity, inclusion, transparency, and accountability govern all aspects of disaster planning and emergency management by regional partners in service to historically marginalized or underserved populations in communities and neighborhoods.

Building Knowledge on Key Questions at Outset:

1. Who are the most affected community members who are concerned with or have experience related to this proposal?
2. How have you involved these vulnerable community members in the disaster planning and emergency management process?
3. What has your engagement process told you about the burdens or benefits for different groups?
4. What has your engagement process told you about the factors that produce or perpetuate inequity related to access to water during emergencies and natural and/or man-made disasters?

Support, Communicate, Evaluate:

- Communicate the definition of equity to regional partners and residents
- Tailor communications to historically marginalized or underserved populations that explains to residents on how equity can benefit them
- Conduct regular evaluation surveys to ensure regional partners, organizations, elected officials, and residents understand what equity means and how it shows up in disaster planning and emergency management scenarios

Build and Support

Ensure regional partners can implement prevention and mitigation measures that provide equitable outcomes for historically marginalized or underserved populations in neighborhoods.

Building Knowledge on Key Questions at the Outset:

1. How will preventive and mitigation impacts be documented and evaluated? Are you achieving the anticipated outcomes? Are you having an impact on historically marginalized or underserved populations in the community?
2. What are your messages and communication strategies that will help advance equity in the prevention and mitigation process for vulnerable populations?
3. How will you continue to partner and deepen relationships with historically marginalized or underserved populations and regional partners to advance equitable practices, processes, and procedures in the sustainable long haul?

Support, Communicate, Evaluate:

- Support regional partners, WSF members, and elected officials in communicating preventive and mitigation measures that are implemented to provide equitable access to potable water during emergencies
- Partner with faith-based organizations, senior centers, shelters, and cultural groups to understand community-specific needs. Establish memorandums of understanding.
- Engage schools, hospitals, and local nonprofits to support logistics and outreach.
- Communicate disaster and emergency preparedness and resilience information to historically marginalized or underserved populations at the neighborhood and community levels (including those who may need non-English resources).
- Conduct regular evaluation surveys with regional partners, organizations, elected officials, and residents on the efficacy of equitable practices and outcomes in accessing portable water during disaster planning and emergency management scenarios.

Build and Support

Ensure regional partners and WSF members can be equitably prepared and help build resilience with historically marginalized or underserved populations in neighborhoods to access water in natural and/or manmade disasters or emergencies.

Building Knowledge on Key Questions at the Outset:

1. How will impacts be documented and evaluated? Are you achieving the anticipated outcomes? Are you having an impact on the community?
2. What are your messages and communication strategies that will help advance equity in preparing and conducting resilience building when providing access to drinking water for historically marginalized or underserved populations during disaster and emergency planning?
3. How will you continue to partner and deepen relationships with communities to advance equitable practices, processes, and procedures as part of regional emergency planning?
4. How do you build regional partners into official policy and operations?

Support, Communicate, Evaluate:

- Support regional partners.
- Communicate disaster and emergency preparedness and resilience. communications to historically marginalized or underserved populations at the neighborhood and community levels (including those who may need non-English resources).
- Conduct regular evaluation surveys with regional partners, organizations, elected officials, and residents on the efficacy of equitable practices and outcomes in accessing portable water during disaster planning and emergency management scenarios.

Build and Support

Ensure regional partners and WSF members can provide a coordinated and equitable response and relief structures for historically marginalized or underserved populations in communities and neighborhoods to access water during and after natural disasters or emergencies.

Building Knowledge on Key Questions at the Outset:

1. How will impacts be documented and evaluated? Are you achieving the anticipated outcomes? Are you having an impact in the community?
2. What are your messages and communication strategies that will help advance equity in the response and relief process for vulnerable populations?
3. How will you continue to partner and deepen relationships with communities to make sure your work to advance equitable practices, processes, and procedures is working and sustainable for the long-haul?

Support, Communicate, Evaluate:

- Communicate disaster and emergency response and relief to historically marginalized or underserved populations at the neighborhood and community levels (including accounting for those who may need non-English resource information).
- Tailor communications to vulnerable populations.
- Conduct regular evaluation surveys to ensure regional partners, organizations, elected officials and residents on how efficacy equitable practices and outcomes in accessing portable water during disaster planning and emergency management scenarios.

Leveraging Resources

Incorporating Equity Principles Resources:

- City and County Health Departments
- Washington Department of Health
- [An Equitable Water Future: A National Briefing Paper](#)
- Racial Equity Toolkit An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity, Local and Regional Government Alliance on Racial Equity, www.racialequityalliance.org

Prevention and Mitigation Resources:

- City and County Offices of Emergency Management
- School Districts
- Utilities Emergency Management Departments
- Washington State Emergency Management

Preparedness & Resilience Building Resources:

- American Red Cross
- Other Utilities
- Department of Ecology
- School Districts
- County Health Districts
- Regional/Local Fire Departments
- Tribal Governments/Commissions

Response & Relief Resources:

- American Red Cross
- Regional Fire Departments
- City and County Offices of Emergency Management
- Regional/Local Fire Departments