

# Toolkit: Using the Guide for Equity Consideration in Your Work

## The Guide for Equity Consideration

is designed to assist decision-makers in examining how proposed actions will affect different groups of people.

It can be used to identify and help address the unintended consequences of policies, practices, and decisions on disparate populations.

This framework is also a tool to incorporate the voices of those most impacted by decisions being made on behalf of children and young people.

It's one thing to believe in equity and reckoning with the impact of historical injustices on our communities, and another thing to meaningfully work to address inequity in our systems, policies, and practices.

The Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana (CISC) developed a *Guide for Equity Consideration* designed to help policymakers, agency officials, and advocates create more equitable communities in which all children and young people can thrive.

The Guide contains a set of **seven questions** for decisionmakers to ask themselves before enacting a new policy, or when reviewing an existing one.



### WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE:

Anybody! This Guide is relevant to staff at all levels, from senior leaders and decision-makers to those who manage processes that directly affect youth and families, and to community members advocating for improvements.

This is because the Guide's seven questions matter for everything from major policy decisions (for example: designing a system to support young people experiencing homelessness) to day-to-day processes (for example: procedures to set up parent/guardian meetings with teachers and school officials).



### WHY USE THE GUIDE:

The seven questions in the Guide provide important accountability for decision-makers to think carefully and specifically about how decisions will affect different groups of youth and families directly, why those affects are expected, and—most importantly—the degree to which the people most affected have been involved.

*"The number one thing we can do for equity in policymaking is get people at the table with life experience in the areas in which decisions are being made."*

- Julie Whitman, Executive Director, CISC

**WHEN, WHERE & HOW TO USE THE EQUITY GUIDE:**

The Guide can be useful at many points in time for decision-making, including:

- **Gathering data to inform the decision.** Are you responsible for or involved in collecting information that others will use to support a decision? Gather all the types of data and input described in the guide. In particular, that means at minimum ensuring that all data is disaggregated by race, gender, geography and any other relevant variables in the data set. Without this, it is not possible to understand different conditions that will require different solutions across the state.
- **Crafting policy or process recommendations.** Are you responsible for creating options that others will consider? Answers to the questions should help shape the options and trade-offs involved—or provide insight on whether a matter is ready for decision.
- **Presenting policy or process recommendations.** Look at the processes you manage. Are you responsible for crafting, reviewing, or presenting recommendations? You can explicitly address answers to the Guide's questions in presentations, decisional memos, or support documents created to show how equity received consideration, make sure that equity is an active part of decision-making and any public discussion, and promote accountability for equity.
- **Making the final decision.** Are you responsible for making or weighing in on the final decision? Make sure you have clear and satisfactory answers to all of the Guide's questions before moving ahead.

## The Equity Guide in Action



*What does it look like to use the Guide for Equity Consideration in your work?*

In this short video clip, Julie Whitman, Executive Director of the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana, walks through a real-world education example: reviewing the school district policy for retaining a child at grade level.

## GET STARTED

Use the Indiana Commission's 2-page [Guide for Equity Consideration](#).

Find other resources on equity in the CISC [Tools & Resources](#) section, including a glossary of key terms related to equity, inclusion, and cultural competence: [Equity Definitions](#).

**Historical inequities cannot be corrected by ignoring them.** For statewide solutions to be effective, marginalized voices must be included, data must be disaggregated (by race, geography, gender and other relevant variables) and policies and programs must be responsive to the particular needs and strengths of each community and group of children in Indiana.

- CISC Annual Report, 2020



**The Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana (CISC)** functions as a children's cabinet, or a collaborative body that brings together the heads of state/local agencies that have programs serving children and youth, to promote coordination and improve the well-being of children and families. Indiana's CISC includes all three branches of government. Learn more: [www.in.gov/children/](http://www.in.gov/children/)

