

REJI ORGANIZATIONAL RACE EQUITY TOOLKIT

2ND EDITION

Tool F: Sample Equity Plan – Legal Services NYC



**WASHINGTON RACE EQUITY
& JUSTICE INITIATIVE**

Tool F: Sample Equity Plan – Legal Services NYC

This equity plan provided by Legal Services NYC
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Legal Services NYC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan

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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are core values of Legal Services NYC and fundamental to our work. Our goal is to ensure that Legal Services NYC is:

- an accepting, responsive, safe and fair workplace with a diverse staff¹ at every level
- an organization that embraces equity and challenges structures of oppression and other forms of bias, internally and externally, and in partnership with clients, low-income communities, and other allies
- an inclusive environment in which all employees are able to perform at our best; feel valued, respected, and motivated; contribute views and ideas for improvement; have professional development, leadership and learning opportunities; and challenge each other to continually build this environment and culture

To achieve this goal, we will focus on achieving the following objectives:

- I. Creating permanent systems, structures, policies, tools, venues, resources and culture that implement LSNYC's diversity, equity and inclusion commitment
- II. Ensuring that ongoing cross-racial, cross-cultural dialogue becomes an integral part of our organizational culture
- III. Building skills, knowledge, and capacities that encourage, lead, manage and sustain diversity, equity and inclusion, including: leadership at all levels that actively supports, promotes the goal and work of, and feels accountable for LSNYC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative; Union understanding, support of and participation in the Initiative; and the organization-wide ability to respond and change as diversity, equity and inclusion needs evolve
- IV. Developing a culture of self-care that supports diversity, equity and inclusion
- V. Establishing and using effective, culturally competent internal and external communication strategies to promote diversity, equity and inclusion
- VI. Ensuring that LSNYC engages with, and supports, NYC's diverse low-income communities and is responsive and accessible to them
- VII. Monitoring and evaluating the progress on and effectiveness of diversity, equity and inclusion work throughout the organization

¹ Several years ago, LSNYC adopted the *Principles Of Leadership And Diversity For New York's Legal Services Community*, <http://www.legalservicesnyc.org/about-us/diversity-at-lsnyc/principles-of-leadership-and-diversity> which say: We define diversity and inclusion broadly to mean the goals of accepting, respecting and valuing differences that may include attributes such as age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, sexual identity, disabilities, language, family circumstances and cultural backgrounds. At the time of this Plan's promulgation, LSNYC is working on a refined definition for our organization.

Action Plan:

- I. **Create permanent systems, structures, policies, tools, venues, resources and culture that implement LSNYC's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) commitment**
Strategies:
 - a. Establish and maintain a permanent citywide DEI Group (formerly called DIIIG), and DEI Groups in each borough, with clear mission and purpose; composition; authority; operating guidelines; communication responsibilities; and relationship with senior management
 - b. Continue to dedicate senior and other staff to DEI work
 - c. Communicate on an ongoing basis with all staff about DEI systems, structures, policies, tools, venues, resources and culture
 - d. Incorporate a DEI analysis and lens into all aspects of LSNYC's work
 - e. Ensure that LSNYC's facilities, communications, technology and resources are accessible and welcoming
 - f. Create and implement a robust hiring, promotion and retention approach that is designed to promote and support diversity at all levels of the organization and includes:
 - an organization-wide leadership development approach
 - a recruiting plan (lawyers of color professional groups, HBCUs, pipeline programs, etc)
 - uniform citywide Hiring Guidelines
 - a trained de-biased team for each borough's hiring committee
 - evaluation and promotion guidelines and tools
 - an exit interview process
 - g. Incorporate DEI strategies throughout LSNYC's periodic strategic planning efforts

- II. **Ensure that productive and ongoing cross-racial, cross-cultural dialogue becomes an integral part of our organizational culture**
Strategies:
 - a. Employ training strategies identified throughout this plan, including those in III., below
 - b. Develop and convene affinity groups
 - c. Create other cross-racial, cross-cultural discussion and learning opportunities throughout LSNYC
 - d. Provide tools and resources that promote the development of formal and informal safe spaces as places where challenging cross-racial, cross-cultural conversations can take place without fear of retribution

- III. **Build skills, knowledge, and capacities that encourage, lead, manage and sustain DEI, including: leadership at all levels that actively supports, promotes the goal and work of, and feels accountable for, LSNYC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative; Union understanding, support of and participation in the Initiative; and the organization-wide ability to respond and change as DEI needs evolve.**
Strategies:
 - a. Provide support, resources and funding for ongoing DEI work throughout LSNYC
 - b. Create an Orientation to DEI for new and current employees at LSNYC, and communicate about expectations for and accountability of all staff for DEI progress, including leadership.

- c. Plan and implement an ongoing citywide training curriculum to foster anti-oppressive, anti-racist equity perspectives, which includes content such as: Undoing Racism; overcoming implicit bias; leading and managing DEI; de-biasing hiring; supporting cross-cultural/cross-racial dialogue; conducting difficult conversations; understanding and tackling microaggressions; cross-racial and cross-cultural supervision; self-care; and effective affinity groups.
- d. Maintain citywide Training Cabinet with a mission that includes promotion of DEI work
- e. Identify and address borough-specific DEI training needs and present trainings
- f. Institute an orientation and training for DEI Group members

IV. Develop a culture of self-care that supports DEI

Strategies:

- a. Constitute a committee to develop a plan to build a culture of self-care at LSNYC

V. Establish and use effective, culturally competent internal and external communication strategies to promote DEI

Strategies:

- a. Create standing DEI sub-committee focused on ongoing DEI communications
- b. Develop resources for, launch and maintain intranet DEI site
- c. Continually communicate LSNYC's DEI Plan to all staff
- d. Communicate DEI work and commitment externally, including through social media

VI. Ensure that LSNYC engages with, and supports, NYC's diverse low-income communities and is responsive and accessible to them

Strategies:

- a. Review community needs assessments; develop and take action to address issues and concerns raised by the community
- b. Meet with community-based organizations, community advocates and partners to create collaborations to identify and address needs of people who are low income
- c. Train staff to effectively engage with diverse communities
- d. Cultivate Community Lawyering, which is a process through which advocates engage with the community and contribute their legal knowledge and skills to support initiatives that are identified by the community and that enhance the community's power

VII. Monitor and evaluate the progress on and effectiveness of DEI work throughout the organization

Strategies:

- a. Develop tools, record-keeping and a tracking system with identified benchmarks to evaluate the progress and effectiveness on DEI work
- b. Develop process by which all staff are asked to self-identify to monitor DEI progress, including for EEOC reporting
- c. Develop self-reporting/benchmarking evaluations for borough DEI Groups
- d. When MPG contract ends, obtain and review exit analysis
- e. Identify and acknowledge progress on DEI
- f. Hold leadership accountable for progress with specific metrics