Furthering Social Justice & Racial Equity in Iowa City
Social Justice and Racial Equity (SJRE) is not a Secondary Priority

• City Strategic Plan
• City Council Resolutions and Public Statements
• Annual Equity Report Card
• City Manager’s Equity Roundtable
Leveraging External Partnerships

Municipal Equality Index
- All-gender single-occupancy restrooms in public facilities and parks
- Youth bullying prevention policies
- Inclusive workplaces and recruitment strategies

Government Alliance on Race & Equity
- Staff and community education
- Best practices
SJRE in Law Enforcement

Annual Disproportionate Minority Contact Study for Traffic Stops and Related Outcomes

• Partnership with St. Ambrose University (Davenport, IA)
• Presented publicly to the City Council annually
• Led to changes in consent search policies and has helped reduced disparity in citations
  • Disparity in stops and arrests continue to be a focus for the Police Department

Other Initiatives:

Data Driven Justice Initiative
• Homeless Corrdinating Board Collaboration
• Helped Launch Iowa’s First ‘Housing First’ development data analysis

Equity in Investigations
• Victim Focused
• LGBTQ Awareness
Analyzing City Operations

Deployment of Equity Review Tool

• Each year, selected City department must analyze policies to root out unconscious bias of past decisions.
• Started in 2016 and have been utilized by Police, Fire, Neighborhood and Development Services, Finance, Human Resources, Human Rights, Parks and Recreation, Library, and the Housing Authority.

Example Outcomes:

• Elimination of Library fines for children’s and teen collections (2019) -- fines had disproportionate impact on low-income, minority populations that have natural transportation barriers.
• Police Department partnership with local mechanic shops to provide free vouchers for drivers pulled over with burnt out lights (paid through forfeiture funds) -- Equipment violations found to have disproportionate impact on low-income, minority populations.
• Launch of a utility donation fund to help off-set disproportionate impact of water shut-off policies on low-income and minority populations.
Empower the Community

SJRE Grant Program - Encourage, Empower, and Engage Social Justice and Racial Equity Initiatives to Eliminate Inequities in Iowa City

- employment
- education
- housing
- criminal justice
- Health
- building community

Example Grants:

- Refurbishing impounded bicycles and providing bicycle safety and maintenance instruction to youth living in poverty
- Launching the Refugee and Immigrant Association’s “The Awareness and Prevention of Social Conflict Initiative to address cultural challenges facing refugees and immigrants living in Iowa City”
- Inside Out Reentry 2-say summit to cultivate a supportive community for returning citizens

$127k awarded in first three years
$75k pending for fourth year
Takeaways

- Acknowledgement of problems followed by honest disclosure and sustained dialogue
- Issues are systemic and individual, national and local, long-term and immediate. Thus solutions are complex and multifaceted. No single-committee, task force or city can solve the community problems.

_Cities must seek to lead, organize and empower_

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