**Washington State Office of Equity**

**Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) Team**

**Best Practices**

Updated 4/25/2022

# Background Information

## Why are we using a Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) framework?

Exclusion, marginalization, and oppression of Black, Indigenous, People of Color, people with low income, immigrants and refugees, people living with disabilities, and other groups has resulted in deeply entrenched educational, economic, and health inequities. We use a PEAR framework to acknowledge, reconcile, restore, and repair the impacts of historical and present inequities and injustices and embed the values of equity, racial justice, access, and belonging in state agency decision-making and actions.

We are committed to reframing state government to work in a way that reduces disparities, including racial and ethnic disparities, and improves equitable and just outcomes for everyone in Washington now and for future generations.

## What is a PEAR Team?

Per [Executive Order 22-04](https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/exe_order/22-04%20-%20Implementing%20PEAR%20%28tmp%29.pdf), agency leaders are responsible for establishing and delegating authority to their PEAR Team. Their PEAR Team will report directly to executive leadership and will be comprised of agency executive leaders, the agency equity officer, employees, and external customers, partners, and experts for key business lines. Agency heads are the leaders of their PEAR Team.

## What is the role of a PEAR Team?

The PEAR Team’s role is to assist agency leaders in meeting deadlines and duties outlined in Executive Order 22-04 and other related duties as delegated by their agency leader. PEAR Teams are relational partnerships in action. PEAR Teams are a commitment to partnering with impacted employees, communities, and other interested parties and embedding the PEAR framework in all agency decision-making and actions.

## What is the purpose of this document?

To provide agency leaders with best practices for establishing PEAR Teams that support the PEAR framework in all agency decision-making and action.

# PEAR Teams Best Practices

## Be clear about your PEAR Team guiding principles.

### **Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) work is everyone’s work.**

PEAR outcomes cannot be achieved simply by following a checklist or placing the responsibility on one individual, office, or community. Leaders from all organizational levels and sectors (public and private) must come together on the PEAR Team to focus their efforts on creating a PEAR ecosystem in Washington state. State government is being called upon to solve complex challenges in the 21st century, such as historical levels of disparities in health, education, and income. Siloed and inconsistent efforts have not and will not effectively solve these problems.

### **We focus on root causes of disparities and where there is the greatest need.**

Our systems have created disparities because they were not designed to serve all people. As Dr. Joy DeGruy, author of the book *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* states, “We blame the people [experiencing disparate outcomes] and it is almost always the system.” We must reimagine our systems to reduce and eliminate entrenched disparities. PEAR Teams will help state agencies build relational partnerships with impacted employees and communities to identify and address the root causes of disparities and focus their investments where the need is greatest.

### **We commit to building relational partnerships.**

PEAR Teams bring an opportunity to build relational partnerships with impacted employees and communities. To quote Dr. Joy DeGruy, “This is heart work; it is not about what is between your ears. If you do not have a heart for the people, we do not want you around them.” There is no checklist for relationship-building. PEAR Teams must commit to developing their relationship-building skills to connect and collaborate with impacted employees, communities, and other interested parties.

Relational partnerships center basic human needs, such as:

* The need for trust
* The need to have hope
* The need to feel a sense of worth
* The need to feel competent
* The need for love and belonging

Relational partnerships are also based on the following values:

* Authentic relationships
* Collaborative decision-making
* Genuine accountability
* Learning and continuous improvement

## Assess barriers to building relational partnerships.

Assess your agency’s current culture and environment and identify barriers to building relational partnerships with impacted employees and community. The success of your PEAR Team, and ultimately our PEAR ecosystem, depends on relational partnerships between PEAR Team members and between community and state agencies.

The following questions will get you started on your assessment:

* Where are we already engaging with impacted employees and communities and have established relationships?
* Where have we been unsuccessful in establishing relationships with impacted employees and communities? Why?
* Which impacted people groups are missing?
  + Who can connect my agency with impacted people groups missing from our PEAR Team?
* How can we leverage existing relationships and resources?
* What aspects of our agency’s culture prioritize processes, policies, and structures over people?
  + What barriers have community members already identified (e.g., events are not scheduled after work hours, inaccessible meeting locations or platforms, difficulties requesting language and communication services, the agency’s lack of awareness of their cultural norms and values)?
  + What barriers have employees already identified (e.g., lack of work-life balance, unclear expectations and roles, difficulty getting reasonable accommodations, exclusion from agency decision-making)?
* Does our agency decision-making model exclude impacted people groups? If so, how will this be addressed by our PEAR Team?
* What does the data show about the people groups disproportionately impacted by agency actions and decisions? How will they be represented on our PEAR Team?

Once identified, remove any obstacles that prevent your agency from being in relational partnership with impacted employees and communities. Is there anything the agency leader needs to do or say to clear the way for community to partner in an environment of transformation, where they can participate as they are and still be valued as genuine partners?

## Remove financial barriers for community member participation on PEAR Teams.

We must remove financial barriers for community member participation on PEAR Teams to support equitable and sustainable policy outcomes. The passage of [Second Substitute Senate Bill (2SSB) 5793](https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2021-22/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5793-S2.SL.pdf?q=20220417141127) removed a major barrier for compensating community members with low income or lived experience who provide their expertise. This law goes into effect June 9, 2022. Until the Office of Equity establishes the enterprise guidelines for compensation, consider these best practices:

* Determine whether a stipend or compensation process already exists somewhere in your agency.
* If you must create a new process, co-create the process with community members. The process should balance the agency’s needs and the community’s needs. Consult with your agency’s fiscal and policy departments to navigate laws, policies, and budget.
* Make the process simple and accessible for community members to navigate, which may require providing language and communication services, guidance, and assistance.
* Follow [Office of Financial Management’s guidelines](https://ofm.wa.gov/it-systems/accounting-systems/statewide-vendorpayee-services) if a statewide vendor number is needed.
* Pay community members a living wage, up to the ceiling of $200 per day per 2SSB 5793, which may be higher than minimum wage.
* Reimburse community members for adult care, childcare, and travel.
* Note: If a community member receives $600 or more in a calendar year, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires a 1099-MISC form to be sent.