

RCW 70A.02.050 Equitable community engagement and public participation. (1) By July 1, 2022, each covered agency must create and adopt a community engagement plan that describes how it will engage with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations as it evaluates new and existing activities and programs. This plan must describe how the agency plans to facilitate equitable participation and support meaningful and direct involvement of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. The plan must include:

(a) How the covered agency will identify and prioritize overburdened communities for purposes of this chapter;

(b) Best practices for outreach and communication to overcome barriers to engagement with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations;

(c) Use of special screening tools that integrate environmental, demographic, and health disparities data, such as the environmental health disparities map, to evaluate and understand the nature and needs of the people who the agency expects to be impacted by significant agency actions under RCW 70A.02.060 and processes under RCW 70A.02.080 to overcome barriers to participation;

(d) Processes that facilitate and support the inclusion of members of communities affected by agency decision making including, to the extent legal and practicable, but not limited to, child care and reimbursement for travel and other expenses; and

(e) Methods for outreach and communication with those who face barriers, language or otherwise, to participation.

(2) Covered agencies must regularly review their compliance with existing laws and policies that guide community engagement and must comply with the following:

(a) Title VI of the civil rights act, prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, or national origin and requiring meaningful access to people with limited English proficiency, and disability;

(b) Executive Order 05-03, requiring plain talk when communicating with the public; and

(c) Guidance related to Executive Order 13166, requiring meaningful access to agency programs and services for people with limited English proficiency.

(3) In developing and updating its plan, each covered agency must consider any guidance developed by the council pursuant to RCW 70A.02.110.

(4) A covered agency may coordinate with the office of equity to identify policy and system barriers to meaningful engagement with communities as conducted by the office under RCW 43.06D.040(1)(b). [2021 c 314 s 13.]

Conflict with federal requirements—2021 c 314: See note following RCW 70A.02.005.