

# Agency practices that support societal equity

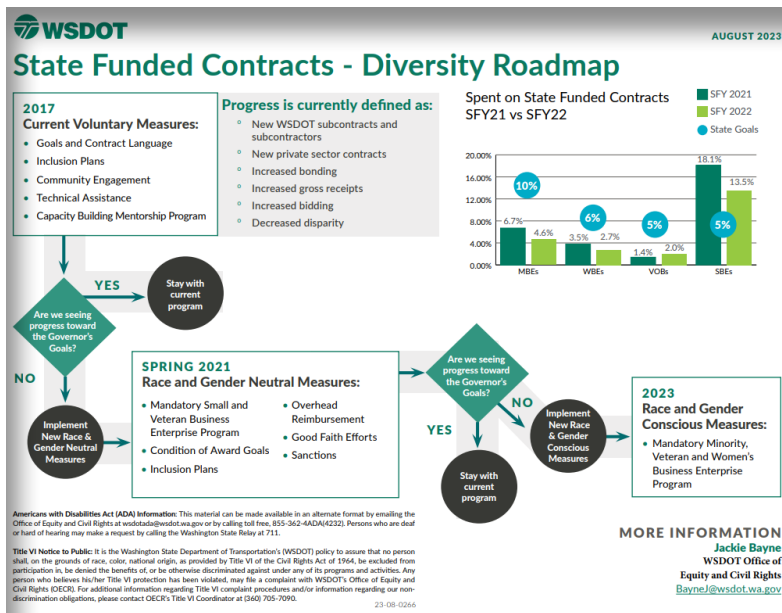


Image courtesy of Washington State DOT

Washington State DOT has developed a program that aims to support small, minority, women, and venter-owned businesses.

## SCAN FOCUS

An equitable transportation network strives to serve and support all members of a community without disproportional impacts or barriers to access. The U.S. Department of Transportation has developed an equity action plan for expanding access and opportunity for everyone, representing a shift in the way public transportation is viewed across the country. Similarly, many state and local transportation agencies have already begun to examine how their practices, policies and planning decisions affect equitable outcomes and make adjustments that prioritize impartiality. Domestic Scan 22-03 reviewed states' best practices and noteworthy solutions that strive to make transportation access fair and equal for all community members.

## PERSON-TO-PERSON RESEARCH

After an initial review of innovative practices in equitable decision-making across the country, the team invited eight state departments of transportation (DOTs) and one individual to participate in a five-day virtual webinar in May 2023 to discuss their equity practices. The scan team members then compiled their findings and developed recommendations that all transportation agencies can follow to integrate equity into their organizational plans.

## NEXT STEPS Put It into Practice

### EXPLORE NEW IDEAS

The strategies that have worked well for other public and private organizations may suit your agency's needs as well.

### GET INVOLVED

Help problem-solve with AASHTO's committee on design at [transportation.org/committees](https://transportation.org/committees).

### READ MORE

The full Scan 22-03 report will be available soon at [domesticscan.org/scan-studies](https://domesticscan.org/scan-studies).

### SUGGEST FUTURE SCANS

What topic do you have for an NCHRP Domestic Scan? See [domesticscan.org/](https://domesticscan.org/).

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Integrating equitable practices into an agency’s existing programs and policies requires dedicated champions and leadership support, as well as a consistent and methodical approach. Barriers to effective change frequently include politics and disparities between state and federal priorities, which can make it difficult for states to develop and fund programs that address transportation inequality. Also, a lack of data and a limited understanding of what the different types of collected information mean can hinder meaningful progress.



Kansas DOT’s public-facing performance dashboard increases transparency and holds the agency accountable for meeting its stated goals.

## PUTTING IT TO WORK

With these challenges in mind, the scan team identified several recommendations for effecting agency-wide change:

- Analyze the agency’s organizational structure to identify opportunities for priority realignment, including the vision, mission, goals, and strategic plan.
- Track, measure and show progress using online dashboards.
- Create an equity communications plan and announce goals to increase transparency.
- Eliminate the phrase, “the right thing to do” from the list of reasons for pursuing equity in order to overcome political fluctuations.
- Do something. It’s okay to start small and use existing data.

## SHARING THE RESULTS

Scan team members plan to present their findings at a variety of state, local and national gatherings of transportation professionals.

**ABOUT THE PROGRAM:** The NCHRP U.S. Domestic Scan Program (NCHRP Project 20-68, [domesticscan.org](http://domesticscan.org)) recognizes the value of firsthand sharing of new technologies and practices. Launched in 2006, the program typically sponsors two or three scans per year, putting state and federal DOT practitioners who need solutions in touch with innovative peers around the country, speeding the transfer of technology and know-how. During the intense experience of the scan (typically one to two weeks), participants see how a new technology or practice works in the real world. They also develop close professional relationships that remain readily available to them years later.

# SCAN PARTICIPANTS

**STRATEGIC GOALS**

- SAFETY
- ECONOMIC VITALITY
- EQUITY
- CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY
- INNOVATION

**SCAN TEAM**

- Jeremy Thompson, AASHTO Chair, Ohio DOT
- Lyndsay Quist, Indiana DOT
- Elizabeth Williams, Massachusetts DOT
- John Martin, Michigan DOT
- Amy Matisoff, Michigan DOT
- Mackenzie Turner Bargen, Minnesota DOT
- Sandra Norman, Virginia DOT

**PEER EXCHANGE PARTICIPANTS**

Caltrans	Oregon DOT
Georgia DOT	South Carolina DOT
Kansas DOT	Washington State DOT
Minnesota DOT	Dr. Mehri Mohebbi, Consultant
New Jersey DOT	

**SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT**

Tanisha J. Hall | [hallt@fairpointeplanning.com](mailto:hallt@fairpointeplanning.com)

**NCHRP ASSOCIATE PROGRAM MANAGER**

Sid Mohan | [smohan@nas.edu](mailto:smohan@nas.edu)

**SCAN MANAGEMENT**

Harry Capers | [hcapers@arorapc.com](mailto:hcapers@arorapc.com)

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