



MICRO-TOOLKIT:

EQUITY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC HEALTH LAWS AND POLICIES

This Micro-Toolkit is a simple, accessible framework that will guide you through 6 steps to assess potential equity implications for a new or existing policy and help you identify opportunities for improvement and for continued assessment.

This Micro-Toolkit should be used as a set of guiding questions to review an existing or proposed policy through an equity lens. For the purposes of this document, “policy” can refer to a statute, regulation, ordinance, executive order, organizational policy, formal guidance, or related documents. The Micro-Toolkit was informed by the Network for Public Health Law’s efforts in collaboration with several partners working to advance equity, including community-based organizations. The Micro-Toolkit is an endeavor by the Network to aid in this collective work. Also, for purposes of this document, “partners” can be defined however your team or organization feels is appropriate. At the end of this document you will find Appendix A and Appendix B. Appendix A provides a space to identify community partners and capture their perspectives. Appendix B provides an additional opportunity for input from community-based organizations.

Using an equity lens means taking a holistic and intentional approach to understanding a policy proposal from different perspectives and using that information to shape the final decision. This document is intended to inform discussion, but discussion should not be limited to the confines of the document. We encourage you to adapt this tool to suit your team or organization’s needs. The Micro-Toolkit will help your team start a discussion on equity, but the discussion should continue beyond this assessment. For more information or to discuss next steps your team can take to advance equity, please reach out to the Network for Public Health Law.

What is a Micro-Toolkit?

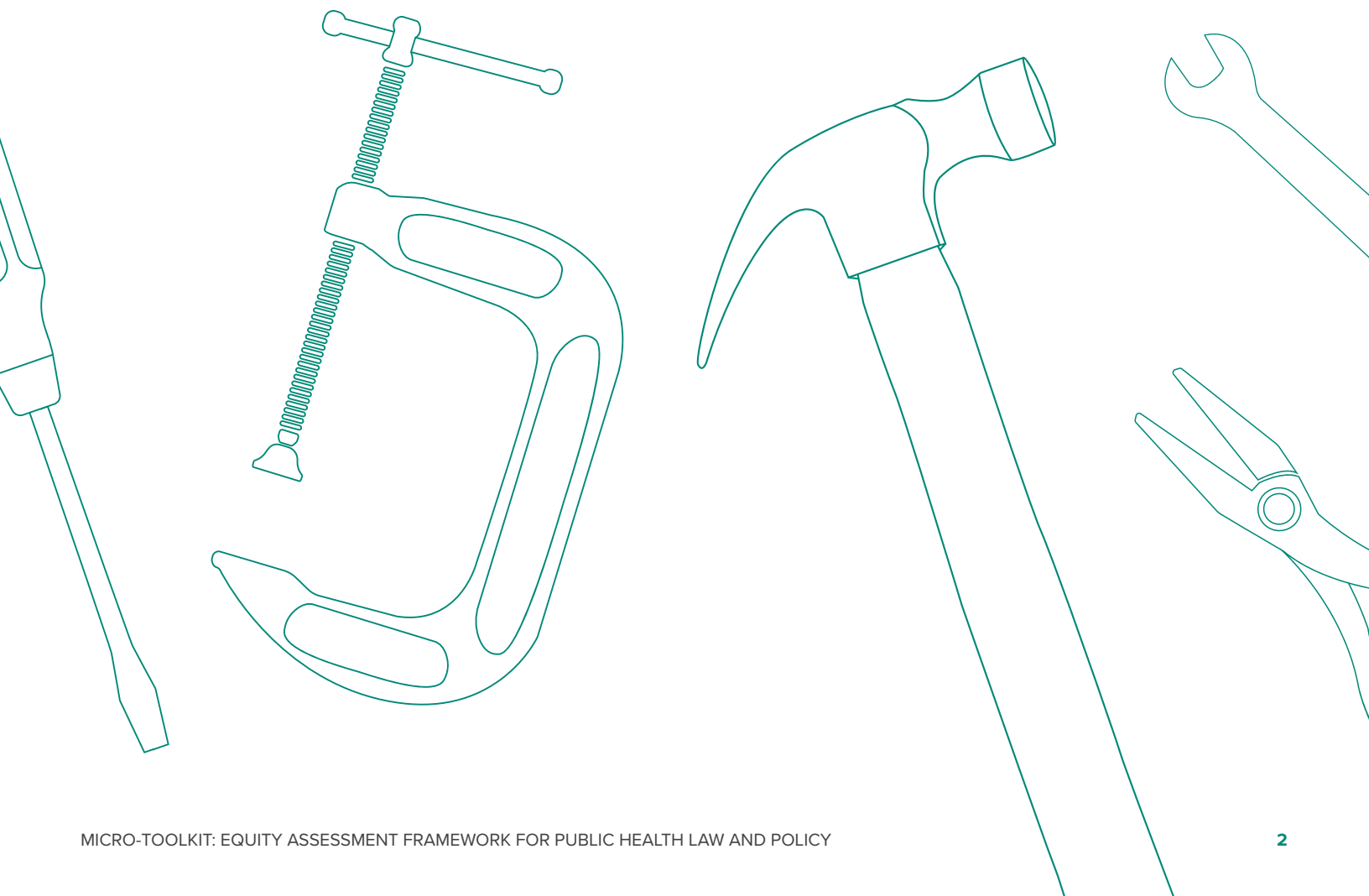
A Micro-Toolkit provides a simple framework to guide an equity analysis without the need for in-depth training or additional resources. This can also be used following training to streamline the analysis process.

Who should use this Micro-Toolkit?

This toolkit is intended for policymakers and partners who lead, shape, or influence policy decisions and who are seeking easy and accessible equity tools that can be practically applied.

Why should I use this Micro-Toolkit?

This Micro-Toolkit provides a way to assess the equity implications of existing or proposed policies. It is meant to guide a discussion around how equity is considered in both process and outcomes and can help identify opportunities for improvement.



PROCESS



STEP ONE

ESTABLISH WHY THE POLICY IS BEING REVIEWED OR PROPOSED

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STEP TWO

EXPLAIN THE CONTEXT OF THE POLICY

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STEP THREE

DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF THE POLICY ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS

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STEP FOUR

IDENTIFY POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

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STEP FIVE

CONSIDER OTHER POLICY PATHWAYS

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STEP SIX

MAKE IT SUSTAINABLE

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STEP ONE

ESTABLISH WHY THE POLICY IS BEING REVIEWED OR PROPOSED

Policy or Law Name:

Existing

Proposed

Current Policy Type	Citation or Reference	Brief Description
Statute		<p><i>The description could include who is responsible for implementing the policy, how long it has been in effect, or when it was last updated.</i></p>
Regulation		
Ordinance		
Organizational Policy		
Policy Guidance		
Modify Existing Policy		
Other:		

Issue Statement:

Describe the issue you are trying to address. For example, the policy is outdated, is inconsistent with a newer policy, or is due for a regularly scheduled review.

Desired Goal:

Individual or Group Completing Toolkit:

Who identified the policy for review and why?

Be specific. This could be your agency head, general counsel, program director, a working group, or an external partner.

Whose perspectives did you engage in the process of deciding on the policy for review?

Identify other people or organizations who were able to give feedback into the decision to review this policy.

STEP TWO

EXPLAIN THE CONTEXT OF THE POLICY

For an existing policy, explain why it's in place and what issue it addresses. For a proposed policy, explain the interest in creating it.

Describe whether any person or organization supports or opposes the policy and the reasoning behind their position, if known.

Describe or summarize any data informing the policy (compliance or training data, outcomes data, or any data that helps to understand why the policy or updates to the policy are necessary).

Are the data:	Complete	Yes	No
	Reliable	Yes	No
	Unbiased	Yes	No

For information on bias in data, please take a look at the [*Do No Harm Guide: Applying Equity Awareness in Data Visualization* published by the Urban Institute.](#)

STEP THREE

DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF THE POLICY ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS

For purposes of this document, “partners” can be defined however your team or organization feels is appropriate. When thinking about the benefits and burdens, consider how outcomes or operations will be impacted, how resources will be distributed, or how an organizational or community need will be addressed.

Describe how this will affect internal partners:

How will they potentially benefit?

What are the potential burdens?

What do they value about the policy?

Will this policy affect external partners?

Yes

No

If yes, list those partners here:

Describe how they will be impacted:

How will they potentially benefit?

What are the potential burdens?

What do they value about the policy?

If external partners will be impacted, identify ways you can plan to engage them. Examples include public meetings or town halls, surveys, focus groups, advisory boards, key informant interviews, etc.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Any final decisions or actions should be communicated clearly to all partners and impacted people in a way that is accessible and meaningful to them. If community feedback is solicited and provided, it should be clear on whether and how that feedback impacted the final decision. Community members should be engaged in implementation, where appropriate.

The Community Partner Worksheet, which provides a space to identify community partners and capture their perspectives, is attached as **Appendix A** as a supplement to Step 3. **Repeat Step 3 as many times as needed for all people or groups who may be impacted.** The Guidance for Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) Worksheet, which provides an additional opportunity for input from CBOs, is attached as **Appendix B**.

STEP FOUR

IDENTIFY POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

Describe the outcomes you expect. How will this policy affect current practices or norms?

Describe how the policy is likely to improve, worsen, or have no impact on health outcomes:

How is it likely to improve?	How is it likely to worsen?	Will it have no impact?
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Has the policy been implemented elsewhere? Yes No

If the policy was implemented elsewhere, describe any lessons learned:

This could include information about how successful the policy was in achieving its perceived goal, whether it was subsequently revised, and any benefits, like return on investment (if data are available).

STEP FIVE

CONSIDER OTHER POLICY PATHWAYS

Are there other options to achieve the same or a similar outcome? Which is the best option? Why? More than one legal or policy intervention may be necessary to achieve the goal.

Option	Reasoning
Statute	
Regulation	
Ordinance	
Organizational Policy	
Policy Guidance	
Modify Existing Policy*	
Other	

Consider information gained **from all of the prior steps**, summarize the decision.

*As stated above, “policy” can refer to a statute, regulation, ordinance, executive order, organizational policy, formal guidance, or related documents.

STEP SIX

MAKE IT SUSTAINABLE

How often will the existing or proposed policy be reviewed?

Describe the conditions necessary for long-term success for the policy, e.g., human and financial resources, training, reasonable enforcement mechanisms, community engagement, leadership, political will, etc.

What conditions are already in place for success?

CHECKLIST

You may not be able to answer all these questions in a way that you find satisfactory. There may not be opportunities for improvement or to engage diverse voices, and you may not find a solution that everyone agrees on. No matter the outcome, there is value in documenting the decision and communicating the result and reasoning to impacted partners.

- Did you establish why the policy is being reviewed or proposed?
- Did you explain the context of the policy?
- Did you determine the impact of the policy on internal and external partners?
- Did you identify potential outcomes?
- Did you consider other policy pathways?
- Did you identify ways to make your policy sustainable?
- Did you discuss the next steps?

For questions and technical assistance, including additional resources, contact the Network for Public Health Law.

APPENDIX A

COMMUNITY PARTNER WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to supplement your analysis of external partners who may be impacted under **Step 3 of the Micro-Toolkit**. Specifically identify any community-based organizations and leaders who may be impacted by the policy and use this worksheet to identify and capture their perspectives.

Community Groups:		
Group Leader/Organization:	Group Leader/Organization:	Group Leader/Organization:
Response:	Response:	Response:
Is this a priority issue?	Is this a priority issue?	Is this a priority issue?
Desired Solution:	Desired Solution:	Desired Solution:
Whose voices are missing but should be part of the conversation? List them out.		
How will the identified partners be included in identifying and defining the issue and deciding on the approach?		
Who in your organization is responsible for reaching out to the identified partners? List them here.		

APPENDIX B

GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOs)

CBOs can use this worksheet to guide discussion around equity considerations for a policy and provide feedback to elected officials and governmental bodies. This helps elected officials and governmental bodies see historical context, opportunities, data, and other concerns not identified or captured in their own assessment.

Determine whether your organization or community considers the issue a priority, what your proposed solutions are, and how you want to be included in identifying and defining the issue as well as deciding on the approach.

Group Name:

Summarize the issue:

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the highest priority, how would you prioritize the issue?

Why did you give the rating you did?

What would you like to see as potential solutions?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

How do you want to be engaged? This could be regular meetings, emails, phone calls, etc.

What do you value most in the outcome? For your community?