



DIVISION: COMMUNITY HEALTH

# EQUITY PROGRAM



## ADVANCING EQUITY FOR A HEALTHIER KITSAP

Our Equity Program was created in 2021 to carry forward the directives of a Kitsap Public Health Board resolution declaring racism a public health crisis. Our program works within the Health District and in our community to listen, collaborate, address inequities, and strive to create an environment where everyone can thrive.

## WHAT WE DO

Since our establishment in 2021, our core activities have included:

- Leading efforts to develop, support, implement, and evaluate initiatives outlined in Board Resolution 2021-01, Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis.
- Building relationships with communities experiencing health inequities.
- Working with Health District programs to review their services and procedures using a racial justice and equity lens.
- Partnering with our Epidemiology Program to identify potential trends and create accessible and inclusive data visualizations.
- Partnering with our Communications Program to promote inclusive language and communication methods within the Health District to advance health equity in our community.
- Promoting and supporting effective community engagement strategies to bring community voice and feedback into Health District program planning and operations.
- Facilitating, participating in, and tracking Health District activities – both internal and co-created with partner agencies — to address systemic inequities.



*Our Equity Program team attends numerous community events to engage with community members and offer information about Health District services and programs.*

## AT A GLANCE

**PROGRAM NAME:** Equity

**MANAGER:** Jessica Guidry

**2021 FTE STAFF:** 2

Learn more about our ongoing work at [kitsappublichealth.org/about/equity.php](https://kitsappublichealth.org/about/equity.php)

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# 2022 HIGHLIGHTS EQUITY PROGRAM



**A meeting of the Kitsap Health Equity Collaborative.** The collaborative launched in 2022 as a way for community organizations to collectively address systemic inequities that effect the health of people in Kitsap County.

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

**Maria Fergus**  
*Community Engagement Specialist*

People are surprised when I tell them that my role was birthed from a public concern of a community member about inequities in health and safety. They voiced that concern with others and together they worked toward the Kitsap Public Health Board’s resolution 2021-01 declaring racism a public health crisis.

*The power of people uniting to create such impact in our community speaks to the power of civic engagement and our leadership’s receptiveness to community input.*

When I found out about the opportunity to join the Equity Program, it was a no-brainer. I knew I wanted to be part of what the Kitsap



Public Health District was doing to address structural inequities.

The most rewarding part of my job is speaking with community members one-on-one as they visit our resource table or contact the District with specific concerns or ideas for partnership. Seeing how quickly we can amplify events and partner to address these concerns is also very rewarding.

## 2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Supported the Kitsap Public Health Board’s nonelected member recruitment process
- Conducted agencywide equity assessment to identify strengths and opportunities for growth
- Implemented first employee equity training
- Launched Kitsap Health Equity Collaborative
- Staffed booths, served as panelists and conducted informational sessions at events, representing the Health District
- Provided technical assistance to other programs on integrating equity into outreach and enforcement
- Supported outreach activities related to mpox response
- Assisted with Spanish interpretation and translation
- Supported Kitsap Community Resources’ Community Needs Assessment and Virginia Mason Franciscan Health’s Community Health Needs Assessment processes



## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023

**We look forward to continuing to create and build relationships with communities**

**and other organizations to better address health inequities.** This has helped us to lay the foundation for Kitsap Health Equity Collaborative and we will work on forming the Collaborative’s priorities in the coming months.

We partner with other Health District programs to **increase our agency’s presence** at equity-centered community meetings, fairs, conferences, and other events. And we will continue equity trainings with Health District employees and implement an **equity-focused review and feedback process** for our policies, programs and community engagement.

## LEARN MORE & CONNECT

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