



LOCUS Guide to Equity Action Plans: *Department of Commerce*

In April 2022, the Biden Administration released the federal government’s first ever Equity Actions Plans for over 90 federal agencies. These strategies delineate department-specific long range goals and operational priorities that aim to improve the delivery of equitable outcomes for all Americans through systemic reforms and investments in historically underserved communities. The actions proposed in these plans will have broad impacts on land use, infrastructure investment, housing and regional planning, which are summarized succinctly in these LOCUS guides.

Equity Priorities:

The Department of Commerce’s Equity Action Plan acknowledges that all communities, workers, inventors, and entrepreneurs must have equal opportunity to participate in the economy to successfully drive U.S. economic competitiveness, strengthen domestic industry, and spur the growth of quality jobs in all communities across the country. The programming and policies outlined in the Equity Action Plan aim to create a more inclusive economy for people who are often left behind, including women and people of color, by committing to actions across five pillars: investing in underserved communities; knowledge sharing of tools and resources; opportunities for training and technical assistance; helping people realizing gains from their participation in the economy; and providing data-driven services to underrepresented groups.



Image by Unsplash user Adrian Sulyok



Key Equity Actions:

- Launch new programs with national strategies that focus on reaching underserved communities. By partnering with different government and external parties, by providing support to increase awareness of opportunities, and by providing technical assistance, resources will reach new geographic regions and communities to help ensure their success;
- Grow underserved business enterprises by providing one-on-one counseling and technical assistance to grow revenue, increase employment, and support incubators and programs to help businesses develop the networks and experience to pitch investors;
- Initiate educational programs for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), women's colleges, and community colleges to provide students and faculty with intellectual property protection curriculum to increase access and opportunity for patenting, which is an essential step in the innovation pipeline, allowing entrepreneurs to develop new products and drive long-term economic competitiveness;
- Widen educational outreach by providing new industry forums, conferences, and meetings aimed at underserved communities, particularly emerging small- to medium-sized businesses.

Land Use or Real Estate Highlights:

- Expand broadband coverage through nearly \$50 billion in state and community-level grant funds for infrastructure deployment, affordability, and digital inclusion efforts, particularly in rural areas, on tribal lands, and in low income communities;
- Increase awareness, accessibility, and use of science and data in underserved communities by leveraging cross-bureau and external strategic partnerships. For example, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will work to enhance community engagement to ensure historically underserved and socially vulnerable communities can access appropriate resources to build climate resilience;
- Refine the recently launched Community Resilience Estimates (CRE) for Equity, a tool that measures an individual, household, or community's capacity to absorb, endure, and recover from the socioeconomic impacts of a disaster.

Measuring Impact:

Each of the six pillars include proposed strategies to track progress and impact, related to the specific actions proposed. Some notable metrics include:

- Growth of quality jobs in all communities across the country;
- Double the number of International Trade Administration (ITA) clients assisted in the next two fiscal years to increase knowledge of export mechanics, financing, foreign legal and regulatory requirements, access to industry specific market research, and avenues for meeting potential foreign partners and clients;
- Expand Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) programs in geographic regions and communities where MBDA has not been present;
- Increase student participation in industry internships across minority-serving institutions (MSI), placing up to eight interns in the first year and up to sixteen interns in the second year;
- Require bureaus to conduct regular equity assessments, which will focus on external service delivery; and
- Expand inclusive language in national-level communications, including providing supporting materials that are in secondary languages, such as Spanish.

Read the Department of Commerce's Equity Action Plan [here](#).