

LEED Social Equity Checklist

With any building project, there are opportunities for great and positive social impacts for those affected directly and indirectly by the work. If considered from the onset of the project, the entire project team, working with intended users and members of the surrounding community, can set the stage for making the project truly reflect the desires and needs of those who will be living in it, working in it, or affected by it.

This Social Equity Checklist is intended to encourage the team to focus on what is possible - by raising questions that are not often asked, or only asked once it is too late to have real impact. If the items below are addressed fully and early, the result can be a project that will celebrate values, dreams and goals of all people involved and impacted by the work.

Ways to Use this Checklist

- This Checklist was created to stimulate discussion and consideration of ways to integrate social equity into your project. It is critical to start early -- pre-design wherever possible -- and include the whole team in the dialogue: architects, engineers, planners, owners, managers, construction/maintenance representatives, and representatives of the stakeholders affected by the project beyond the building's edge. The Checklist can also be used as the foundation for a workshop and used throughout the *entire* planning and design processes to ensure continuous input and communication with the broader group of stakeholders, including, but not limited to:
 - Community groups
 - Local experts (in environment, history, culture, economic development)
 - Tenants/occupants (including staff and facility personnel)
 - Public health professionals
 - Government officials
 - Union (and non-union) and job-training organizations
 - Neighborhood or locally-owned /entrepreneurs and business leaders
 - Educational/cultural institutions
 - Local artists and designers

A table has been created in the appendices to identify and keep track of these critical groups.

The Checklist is intended to initiate a three-step process that identifies potential strategies to enhance social impact:

- Identify
- Address
- Act

The Checklist also points to additional resources that help to take action, such as toolkits and case studies. Since many of these topics are not ones usually addressed by project teams, there are also resources that provide background, frameworks and definitions.

We suggest that you first go through the entire Checklist and quickly identify:

- Items that are of most interest ("Yes")
- Items that are not relevant to your project ("No")

- Items that could be relevant, but need more consideration, additional information, etc. (“Future Consideration Needed”)

Conduct research on the latter category and bring results back to the group for the “Yes”/ “No” decision. Briefly document your decisions.

The Checklist is not a requirement for a LEED project but an additional tool to encourage social action. However, it can set the stage to achieve one or more of the newly updated [LEED Social Equity Pilot Credits](#), and can be used to earn a point in the [Integrative Process](#) credit for LEED v4.1 BD+C and ID+C.

For the Checklist to continue to be effective, periodically revisit the Checklist, your decisions, and the actions planned or taken. New opportunities can arise over time, new relationships within the community can be built, and new strategies can be developed or advanced at any time in the process that can enhance the social impact the project can have on all members of the building community.

CHECKLIST QUESTIONS	YES	NO	NEEDS FURTHER CONSIDERATION
I. EQUITABLE PROJECT TEAMS			
<p><i>Equity in the Development Team</i></p> <p>(owner, planners, architects/designers, engineers, developers, financial firms, construction management companies)</p>			
<p><i>Good governance and reporting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you and the majority of member firms of your project team looking at governance issues by being B Corp or JUST companies or regularly reporting on ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) issues through third-party frameworks such as GRI, GRESB, DJSI? 			
<p><i>Diversity, inclusion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you intentionally adding diversity in your firms' staffs and equal opportunities within your project team, including race/ ethnicity, gender, religion, differing abilities, and other factors? • Are you examining company policies for hiring, promotion, pay and other elements to ensure equity? • Are you identifying areas where past inequities require action to remediate those inequities? • Are you mentoring for more diverse future generations? 			
<p><i>Social equity expertise/knowledge.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the project team have knowledge and experience in issues of social equity? • Can you build expertise within your core team? How will you bring in additional experts to supplement the team? 			
<p><i>Hiring local firms and companies.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you committed to hiring/training local firms and local companies? 			
<p><i>Direct community engagement.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your firms provide direct support to the community or community groups through pro bono work, contributions, other activities? 			
<i>Equity for Construction Workers</i>			
<p><i>Diversity in construction firms and workers.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a policy to identify and hire more diverse construction firms, including women-owned, minority-owned, veteran-owned firms? • Can you encourage firms to hire women, minorities, and veterans? 			
<p><i>Hiring local workers.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you ensure that contractors and subcontracts hire, and train as necessary, local workers? 			

CHECKLIST QUESTIONS	YES	NO	NEEDS FURTHER CONSIDERATION
• Do you encourage training and promotion of these workers?			
<i>Education and Training for construction workers.</i> • Do you provide equity training and diversity training for the construction team? Skills training for workers? Other training and education opportunities for workers, such as English as a Second Language, financial skills, literacy, etc.?			
<i>Health, safety and labor rights for construction workers.</i> • Have you discussed ways to improve health and safety conditions for workers involved in the project during construction and operations (ex. providing rest breaks, access to clean drinking water, restrooms and a space for breaks or cooling area)? • Is safety training provided during work hours and is personal safety equipment as well as worker's compensation insurance provided without cost to all workers? • Is your firm and those of the organizations involved with the project providing equitable, non-discriminating treatment, fair working conditions, accurate job classification, and living wages? • If housing is provided, do conditions meet at least minimum requirements for space, sanitation, privacy, and health? • Have you designed the project to reduce potential hazards for construction workers as well as maintenance workers during operations?			
II. EQUITABLE PROCESS			
<i>Initial Project Planning, Data Collection and Analysis</i>			
<i>Planning Checklist.</i> • Are you using the Social Equity Checklist as part of your early planning?			
<i>Community needs assessment.</i> ▪ Have you analyzed the makeup of the users and surrounding community to be able to meet their needs, particularly more vulnerable/under-served populations? ▪ Have you studied the history of the surrounding community and understand how it impacts the present strengths and needs of the community? ▪ Can you identify the most pressing public health, equity, social, and economic issues of the surrounding community in which the project is located? What are the top 3? Can your project help the community address any of these issues?			
<i>Community Engagement</i>			

CHECKLIST QUESTIONS	YES	NO	NEEDS FURTHER CONSIDERATION
<p>Affected community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you identified the project's stakeholders, including neighbors, existing organizations and institutions, and representatives of the surrounding community? 			
<p>Listening and collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you employing staff experienced in facilitating fair, effective community engagement? • Have you collaborated with the people of the community, and learned their needs, goals, and visions before refining/finishing development of project goals/scope and intended outcomes? • Have you considered setting up a paid advisory board to help ensure the community's goals are understood and considered over time? 			
<p>Communications and Visual Representation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you considered all of your communication strategies in relation to the surrounding community, including social media, timing/staging of meetings or methods of attaining public input, site signage, manuals, etc.? Incorporating a place for stories/ photos/ history/ feedback? • Are your renderings ethnically and culturally inclusive and reflective of the project's surrounding community? 			
<p>Feedback loop for meaningful engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a mechanism for continuing to listen to, and engage with/respond to, the community throughout the project's design, construction and/or the life of the project? • Do you have metrics for measuring success towards the goals set for the project? Is the process and building data accessible to the public? 			
III. EQUITABLE DESIGN			
Equitable Design for Project Occupants and Visitors			
<p>Inclusion and Accessibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you make your project welcoming, inclusive, and accessible for all who will live, work, learn, or play in the buildings or on the grounds? • Are there any specific needs of occupants and visitors that should be considered? 			
<p>Equitable Transportation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will your project be accessible by quality transit for all who live, work, learn, or play in your project? • Will transit be available at the times needed by all, including those who work swing shifts and overnight? Will "mini transit" be available for off-peak hours if needed? 			

CHECKLIST QUESTIONS	YES	NO	NEEDS FURTHER CONSIDERATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are alternatives such as bike paths and pedestrian paths connected to networks that serve all or only a subset of those who will live, work, learn, or play in the project? 			
<p><i>Health and safety.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you ensure health and safety for all who use the project? • What is needed in the project design to protect health and safety of those who might be more vulnerable or at risk, such as young children, the elderly, and others? • Do you have health objectives for the project in terms of air, water, light, comfort, materials, community, etc? 			
<p><i>Equitable Space Planning and Amenities.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you allocate space and design work areas to increase collaboration and reduce hierarchies? • Can you allocate space for personal needs of occupants and visitors? • Can you enhance spaces for occupants at all levels of abilities? • Can you increase comfort, connection to nature, and other factors that enhance well-being for all occupants and visitors regardless of rank or position? 			
<i>Equitable Design for the Surrounding Community</i>			
<p><i>Displacement/ other impacts on current community.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you take steps to prevent your project from causing displacement or alienation of existing residents, local small businesses, and institutions, such as encouraging home/retail ownership /new tax policies for people and shops and services already in the neighborhood, in order to stabilize what is already successful? • Can you ensure your project does not create barriers to current patterns of community? 			
<p><i>Community access to space/services.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can your project provide access/programming that address an existing gap or meet a current need within the building or beyond for use by the surrounding community? 			
<p><i>Accessibility.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can your project go beyond ADA in being accessible to all? 			

CHECKLIST QUESTIONS	YES	NO	NEEDS FURTHER CONSIDERATION
<p><i>Resilience.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you familiar with the major physical, social or economic impacts from climate change, social upheaval, cyberattacks, etc. that can affect the surrounding community? • Does your project help the community to build resiliency and social infrastructure and mitigate or adapt to negative impacts? 			
<p><i>Infrastructure impacts.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you considered and incorporated new or upgraded infrastructure (water, power, access, transit, resiliency, emergency responders, etc.) to respond to needs created by the project and its inhabitants? 			
<p><i>Celebration of "Place".</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there ways your project can acknowledge and celebrate the place, culture and history of the surrounding community and make it a meaningful and inspiring part of the project? 			
<p><i>Local hiring/economic benefit.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can your project support local hiring and training and/or use of local businesses and products beyond the construction phase, especially to support disadvantaged populations? 			
<p><i>Good neighbor.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can your project be a good neighbor during demolition, construction and operations in terms of noise, air/water pollution, waste, access, information, etc.? 			
<p><i>Health and well being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the building address identified public health issues in the community surrounding the project? 			
IV. EQUITABLE SUPPLY CHAIN			
<i>Equity for Supply Chain Communities</i>			
<p><i>Health and safety for fenceline and other impacted communities.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you considering the impacts of product life cycles in terms of extraction and material processing/manufacturing on nearby fenceline communities? • Are you considering the impacts of transporting materials through communities? 			
<i>Equity for Workers in the Supply Chain</i>			

CHECKLIST QUESTIONS	YES	NO	NEEDS FURTHER CONSIDERATION
<p><i>Human rights for workers in the supply chain.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you increasing your awareness and avoidance of potential human rights abuses along the project's supply chain by having a responsible sourcing policy for selecting materials and products? • Have you identified potential "hot spots" for abuses in those supply chains? • Have you communicated to manufacturers that this is a priority? 			

Goals:

How could the project (design, construction, operations, team, process) be adapted in response to these considerations?

What are 5 strategies you will put in place throughout the design, construction and/or operations of the building?

Notes & Comments:

- 1. Equity Project Teams**

- 2. Equitable Process**

- 3. Equitable Design**

- 4. Equity in the Supply Chain**

Stakeholder Table	
Stakeholder Name or Group	Stakeholder Role <i>(Community Member, Local Expert/Organization, Public Official, Tenant, Health Professional, Union, Educational/Cultural Institution, etc.)</i>

Glossary:

- **Accessibility:** the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people with [disabilities](#)
- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) / Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG):** a corporation's initiatives or criteria to assess and take responsibility for the company's effects on environmental and social wellbeing and ethical corporate governance, often beyond the extent required by regulation
- **Diversity:** recognition and respect of unique differences across individuals, along the dimensions of race, national or ethnic origin, place of residence, language, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideology / status
- **Displacement:** physical, economic, or social exile of current residents, businesses, and institutions from their existing location; in the context of gentrification, typically the displacement of lower-income groups due to the influx of more affluent residents
- **Human Rights:** universal, interdependent, and indivisible [rights and freedoms](#) inherent to all human beings regardless of status, as expressed and guaranteed by law
- **Public Health:** the science of protecting and improving the health of people and their communities where they live, learn, work, and play
- **Resilience:** the ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from, and more successfully adapt to adverse events
- **Responsible Sourcing:** voluntary commitment by companies to take into account social and environmental considerations when managing their relationships with suppliers
- **Stakeholder:** entity or individual that can reasonably be expected to be significantly affected by the project's activities, products and services, or whose actions can reasonably be expected to affect the ability of the organization to successfully implement its strategies and achieve its objectives
- **Social Equity:** the fair, equitable, and just implementation and formation of policy, representation in decision making and management, and distribution and access to resources and opportunities. It is defined slightly differently by different groups across professions and focus areas, with the specific focal areas tailored to those items that are within the purview of these various groups.
- **Supply Chain:** the entire process of making and selling commercial goods, including every stage from the supply of materials and the manufacture of the goods through to their distribution and sale
- **Well-being:** state in which individuals realize their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and are able to make a contribution to their community