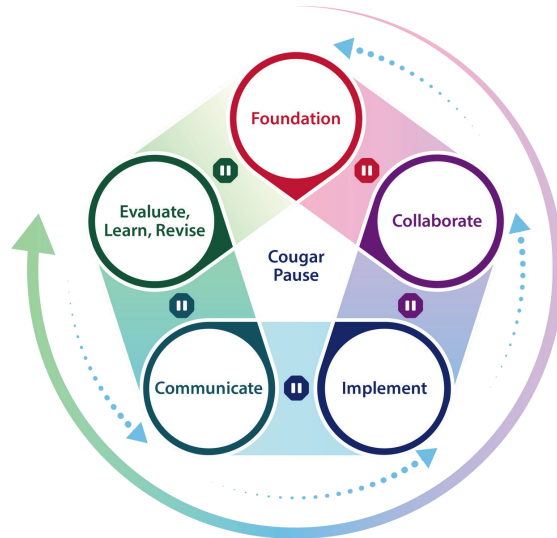


# The Cougar Pause

A Strategic Equity Resource for Planning, Decision Making,  
and Conscious Reflection



## What is The Cougar Pause?

The Cougar Pause is a Strategic Equity Resource designed to increase our chances of making decisions that lead to more equitable outcomes. It is meant to take out the guesswork of what equity work looks like in action. It consists of a set of critical questions that individuals or work teams can ask themselves while navigating decisions, both big and small. These questions prompt users to pause in their thinking and broaden their perspectives, leading to greater awareness about where we have choice and ability to confront disparate results.



### Get started:

- Read through all the questions.
- Go back through and answer the questions that you can.
- Once you've answered the questions, figure out what information is missing and what you still may need to know before moving on.
- Based on the answers to your questions and what you need to know, what actions are you going to take?

# Foundation



- What is the primary goal of this work? What is the deeper purpose behind it?
- What specific outcomes are you aiming to accomplish? Why are these outcomes important?
- Who are you centering in this work? Be specific about their identities and narrow your focus. Examples might be bilingual high school students at Milwaukie High School, or Black male students currently attending CCC full-time. (For support, please refer to the Identity Groups resource document.)
- How will this work support or challenge those whom we are centering?
- What parameters inform or constrain your work? What are the potential tradeoffs and benefits?

# Foundation



- Are you the most informed person to answer these questions?  
If not, who else might you bring in to help?
- What knowledge, insights, biases, or assumptions are you bringing into this work –from background research, existing feedback, Clackamas Community College cultural norms, etc.?



# Collaborate



- Who do you need to engage with and hear from about this work? Prioritize the centered audiences identified during the Foundation phase.
- What techniques will be most effective and relevant when listening to and collaborating with your centered audiences (such as online surveys, focus groups, types of questions asked, anonymous feedback, etc.)?
- How will you best support diverse opinions so they can be shared during this collaboration, in a courageous space, while mitigating power dynamics?



# Implement



- How did you incorporate what you learned during your collaborations into this implementation plan?
- How is your plan specific and responsive to the needs of those we are centering, and how does it best support their full participation?
- Do you have sufficient time and resources allotted to the work to avoid overwhelming the people involved? If not, can you get more time or the resources you need?
- What indicators will you use to evaluate the results and outcomes of the work?
- How are you adapting your work as it's implemented to respond to newly emerging needs, situations, and feedback from centered audiences?



# Communicate



- How is your communication plan culturally responsive and tailored to specific audiences?
- What information can you share to help audiences understand how this work will impact/benefit them? What else do they need to know?
- What are the best ways/formats to communicate with all of your audiences, especially those centered in this work?
- When will you begin communicating? Who is best suited to deliver communication to your centered audiences?



# Evaluate, Learn & Revise

- How is your communication plan culturally responsive and how do you feel you have progressed toward achieving your initial goal?
- What outcomes, successes, and/or unintended consequences are you observing across different groups or segments? How might your reflections and observations influence what you do in the future?
- What are your key lessons learned? How might you share these lessons with others?
- What accommodations and revisions would you make to the work in the future?
- How did this tool support your work? How can you use it differently in the future to be more effective?





**NEED HELP?** If you have questions about using this tool, please email **[diversity@clackamas.edu](mailto:diversity@clackamas.edu)**.

