

Example 3:

1. **Lead department:** Co-led by SPU and HSD with partnerships from DON, SCL, OPM and City Council
2. **Project title:** Increase utilization of the Utility Rate Assistance Program
3. **Briefly describe the proposed action and the desired results:**
Evaluate Utility Rate Assistance Programs, which include outreach, demographics, policies and procedures to help increase access and savings to qualified households.

The Utility Rate Assistance Program helps low to moderate income SPU and SCL customers pay their utility bills by providing a 50% discount on electric, water, sewer and solid waste charges. The Utility Rate Assistance Program is administered by the Human Services Department and funded by Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities. The purpose of the project is to examine demographic shifts in our customer base, current market penetration rates, outreach practices, effectiveness of existing program delivery mechanisms, and the impact of program policies, practices and procedures on participation rates. This evaluation will give us an updated understanding of who today's customer is, how to better meet their needs, identify barriers to participation, and inform program changes that will increase program access and economic advantage for Seattle's low to moderate income population. A report with budget considerations and proposed recommendations based on evaluation findings will be provided to City Council in May 2008.

4. **How does the proposed action impact (check all that apply):**

- ☒ **Racial disparity?**
- ☒ **Institutionalized racism?**
- ☒ **Multiculturalism?**

Please describe:

Based on the results of the evaluation, it is expected to decrease disparities by providing increased access and economic advantages to low-income to median income households and communities of color.

Through this analysis, institutional barriers have been identified within policies and procedures that currently exist. Some of these institutional barriers include:

- (1) Different income guidelines (200% Federal Poverty Level for low-income households vs. 70% State Median Income guideline for seniors who are at least 65 years old or people with permanent disability income).
- (2) More income documentation is required for low-income households vs. seniors and people with a permanent disability income.
- (3) Federally subsidized housing residents (Section 8, SHA, KCHA, HUD, Shelter+Care, etc.) are not able to qualify for rate discounts (despite their low-income status) because they receive a utility allowance along with their subsidized rent.