

# Equity in Food Packaging Enforcement

Vicky Raya, Racial Equity Advisor | Pat Kaufman, Recycle/Compost Commercial Program Manager  
COG Recycling Committee: July 15, 2021



RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE  
**INITIATIVE**

## What is the Race and Social Justice Initiative?

- The Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) is a citywide effort to end institutionalized racism and race-based disparities in City government
- RSJI's long term goal is to change the underlying system that creates race-based disparities in our community and to achieve racial equity.
- It's part of every city employee's job to support the RSJI mission

# Race and Social Justice Initiative Mission

- Undo institutional racism in City government
- Promote equity & inclusion
- Partner with the community and other institutions



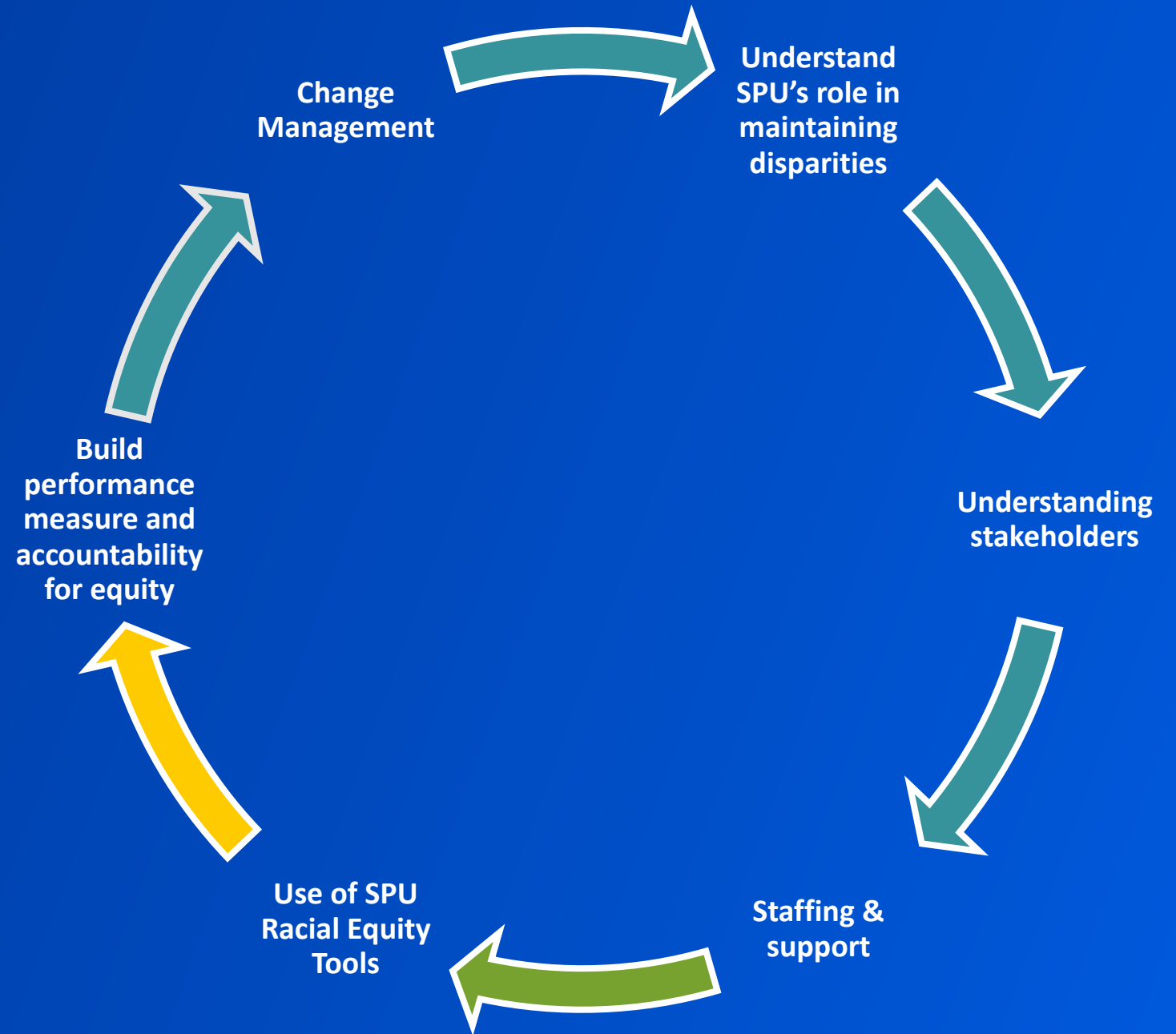
## WHY DO WE CENTER RACE?

When we look across every type of human indicator of well-being in this country whether that be life expectancy, income, job status, wealth, health, educational level, neighborhoods, involvement (or lack thereof) with the criminal justice system, etc.,

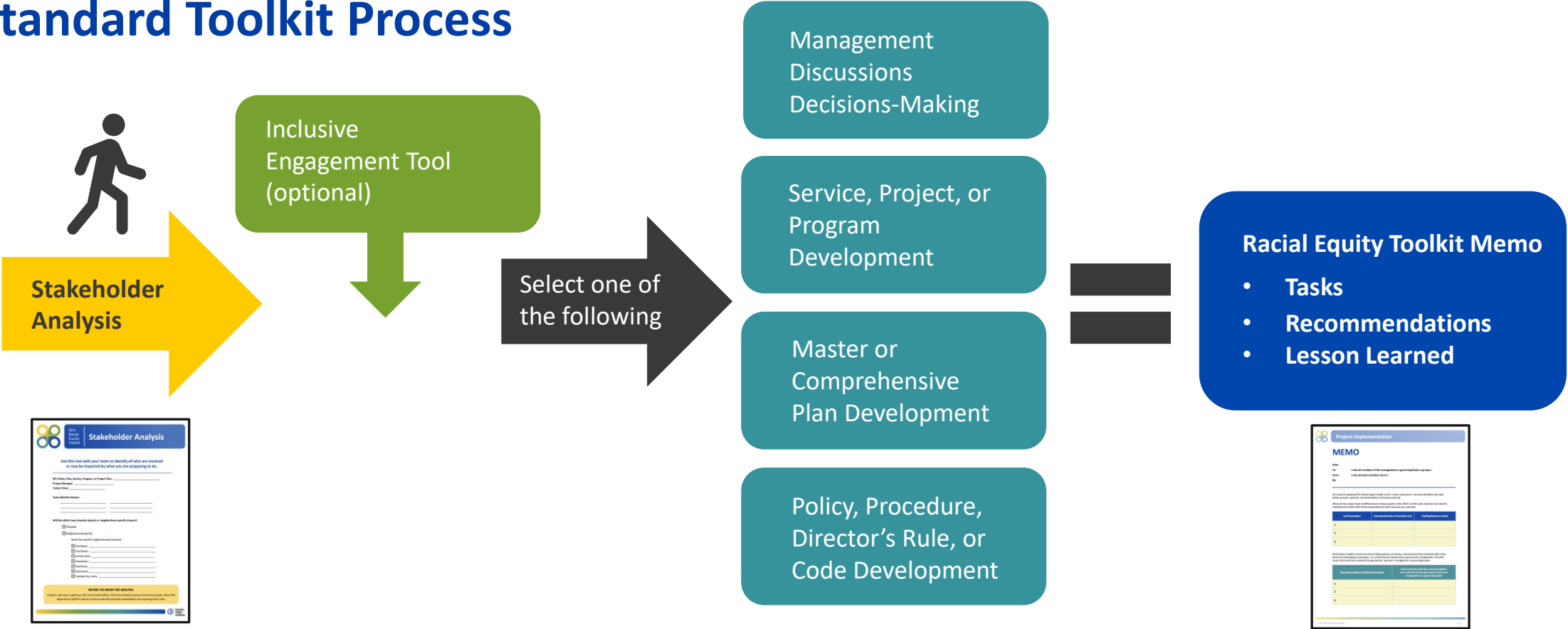
**RACE IS THE SINGLE, STRONGEST  
PREDICTOR OF OUTCOMES.**

# SPU's Approach

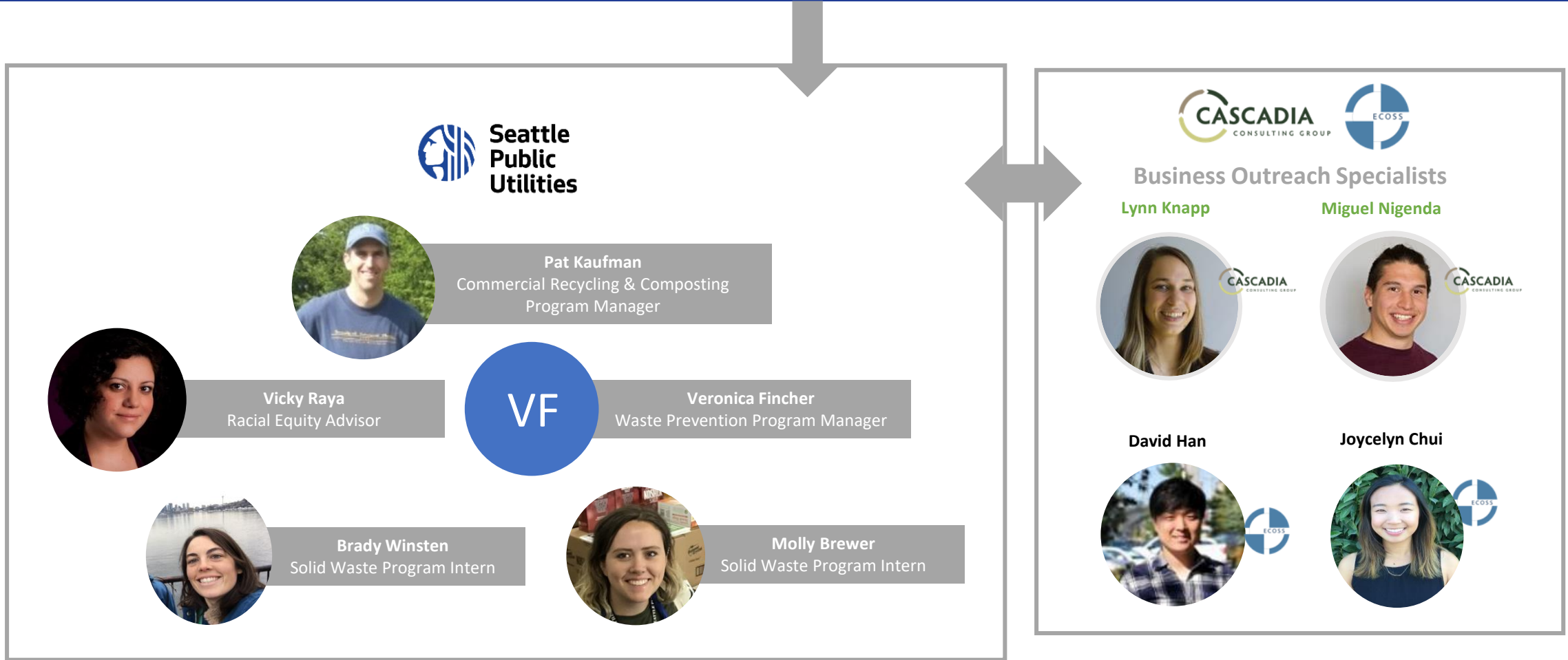
---



## Standard Toolkit Process



# Targeted Universalism Working Group



# Targeted Universalism Working Group

## THE APPROACH



Use fines as a tool to increase compliance

## THE GOAL



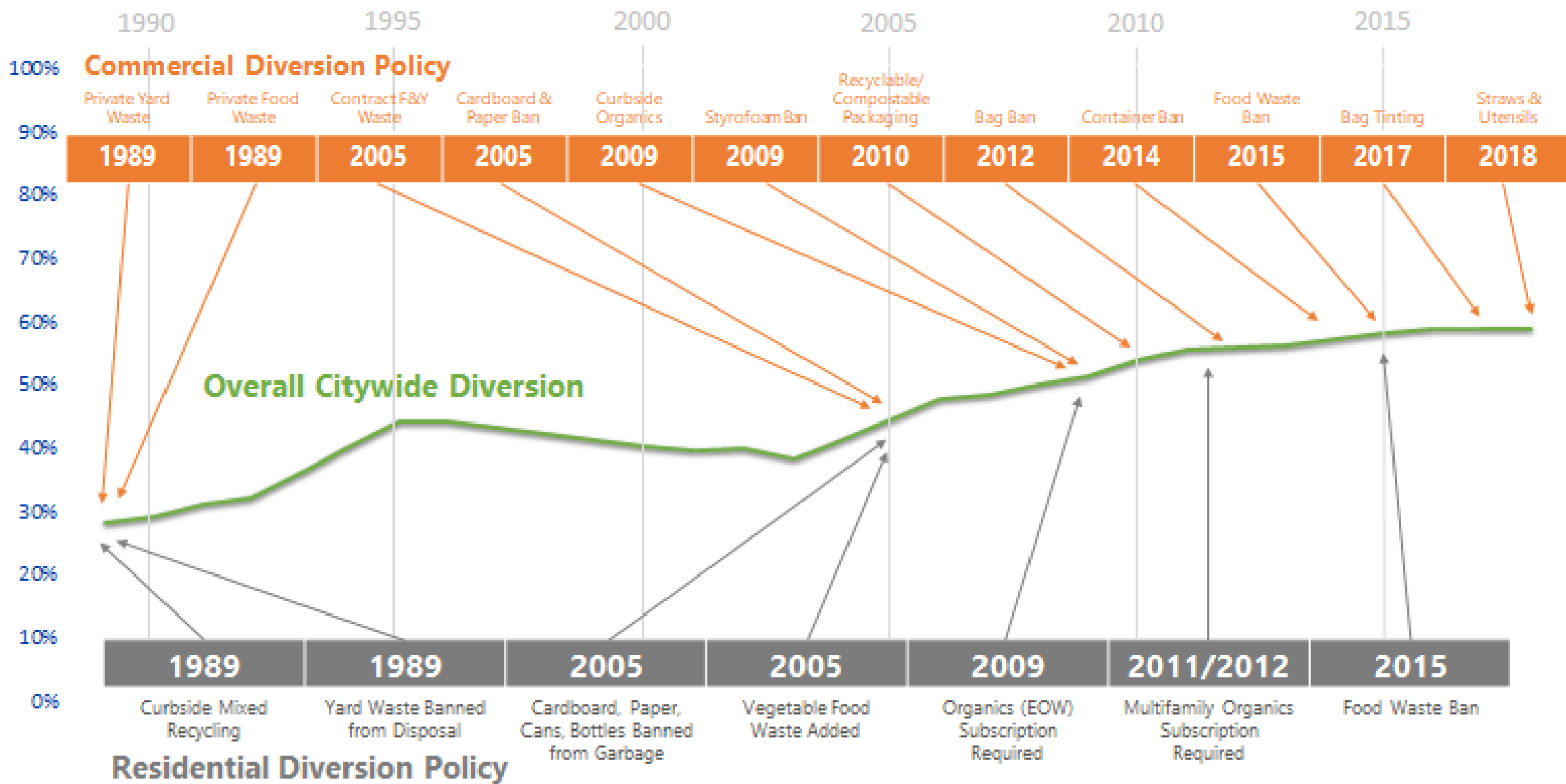
Use equitable strategies to reach compliance



# Why Targeted Universalism?



- ✓ Innovative strategies
- ✓ Avoid disproportionate fines
- ✓ Strategic allocation of resources



# Business Recycling & Composting Requirements

The City of Seattle prohibits businesses from putting recyclables and compostables in the garbage.

## NOT ALLOWED IN GARBAGE



COMMERCIAL RECYCLING REQUIREMENTS  
EFFECTIVE JULY 2014

COMMERCIAL COMPOSTING REQUIREMENTS  
EFFECTIVE JANUARY 2015

**SMC 21.36.082**

The presence of significant amounts of recyclables and/or compostables in commercial garbage is illegal (\$50 fine).

Take steps to reduce waste and improve your recycling and compost programs.

For more information and to request free resources to improve your recycling and compost programs, contact the Seattle Public Utilities Green Business Program.

GreenBusiness@Seattle.Gov | 206-343-8505  
www.seattle.gov/util/greedyourbusiness/reducwaste

# Food Service Requirements

**RECYCLING:** Seattle businesses are not allowed to put recyclable items in the garbage.

**COMPOSTING:** Seattle businesses are not allowed to put compostable items in the garbage.

**PACKAGING:** Seattle food service businesses must use compostable or recyclable food and beverage packaging, and compostable utensils, straws and other serviceware.



**Recyclables Not Allowed in Garbage:** Seattle Municipal Code (21.36.083)  
Requires all businesses to **recycle** paper, cardboard, glass bottles and jars, plastic and paper cups, plastic bottles and jars, aluminum and tin cans. These items are not allowed in the garbage. (Effective July 1, 2014)



**Food Not Allowed in Garbage:** Seattle Municipal Code (21.36.082)  
Requires all businesses to **compost** all food and food-soiled uncoated paper, such as paper napkins, paper towels and pizza boxes. These items are not allowed in the garbage. (Effective January 1, 2015)

**Food Packaging Ordinance:** Seattle Municipal Code (21.36.086)



**1. Dine-in:** Restaurants and food service businesses that sell or provide food in one-time-use containers are required to use compostable items for dine-in service. Plastic or plastic-coated paper products may be used for dine-in service **only** if after use they are clean enough to be collected for recycling.



**2. Take-out:** Packaging may be recyclable or compostable for take-out service. (Effective July 1, 2010)



**3. Foam Banned:** Businesses are prohibited from using plastic foam (EPS, Styrofoam™) packaging. (Effective January 1, 2009)



**4. Compostable Serviceware:** Food service businesses are required to use compostable straws and compostable utensils. Disposable plastic straws and utensils are prohibited. (Effective July 1, 2018 —flexible plastic straws are allowed when required by customer for physical or medical condition.)

Keeping recyclable and compostable material out of the landfill reduces waste and pollution. By switching to recyclable or compostable packaging, businesses can reduce their garbage service and save money. Providing **only** compostable serviceware is simpler for both business and customers, as everything used for food service can simply be placed in the compost bin.

Contact Seattle Public Utilities Green Business Program  
for free assistance and resources for complying with these ordinances.



Seattle Public Utilities



seattle.gov/util/greedyourbusiness  
206-343-8505  
greedyourbusiness@seattle.gov

For interpretation services please call SPU at 206-484-3000.  
電話口語通訳サービス 206-484-3000.  
통역 서비스를 원하시면 206-484-3000 번호로 전화해 주십시오.  
電話通訳サービスは電話で206-484-3000.  
Para servicios de traducción, por favor llame al 206-484-3000.  
Para os serviços de interpretação, por favor ligue para 206-484-3000.  
Mauk yu tsau dhih vu thung dhih sin gai ul 206-484-3000

# Compostable or Recyclable? Navigating the packaging market



# Compostable or Recyclable? Navigating the packaging market

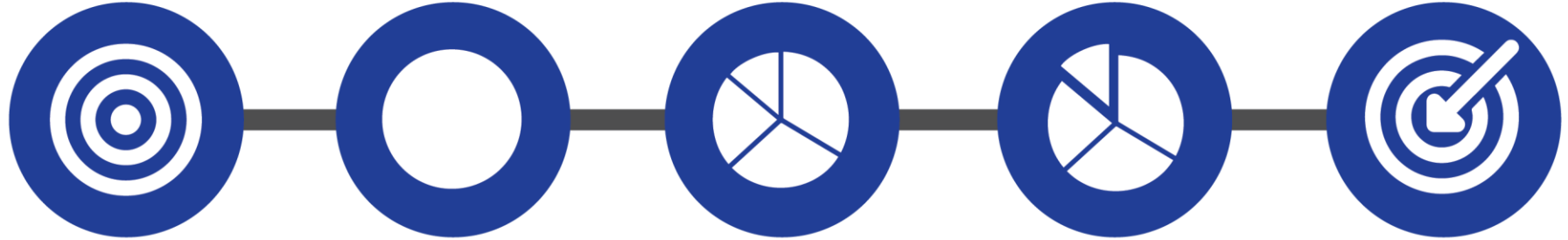


# Targeted Universalism

- ✓ Inclusive policies and programs
- ✓ Universal goal with targeted strategies for different communities to reach that goal



# Alignment of SPU Targeted Outreach with Targeted Universalism



## STEPS OF TARGETED UNIVERSALISM

- 1 Define a universal goal
- 2 Measure overall population
- 3 Measure performance of population segments
- 4 Understand how structures and other factors support or impede groups' progress
- 5 Implement targeted strategies

## STEPS OF PROPOSED SPU APPROACH

- 1 Define goal of 80% food packaging compliance
- 2 Collect baseline and ongoing FSB compliance data
- 3 Analyze compliance by segment group
- 4 Develop innovative strategies based on sector, language spoken, and other factors
- 5 Annually identify priority segments and implement targeted strategies

# Sectors & Segments

## KEY

### Food service ordinance

- Foam packaging
- Compost/recycle packaging
- Straw and utensil
- Compost service
- Indoor collection bins

### Business sectors

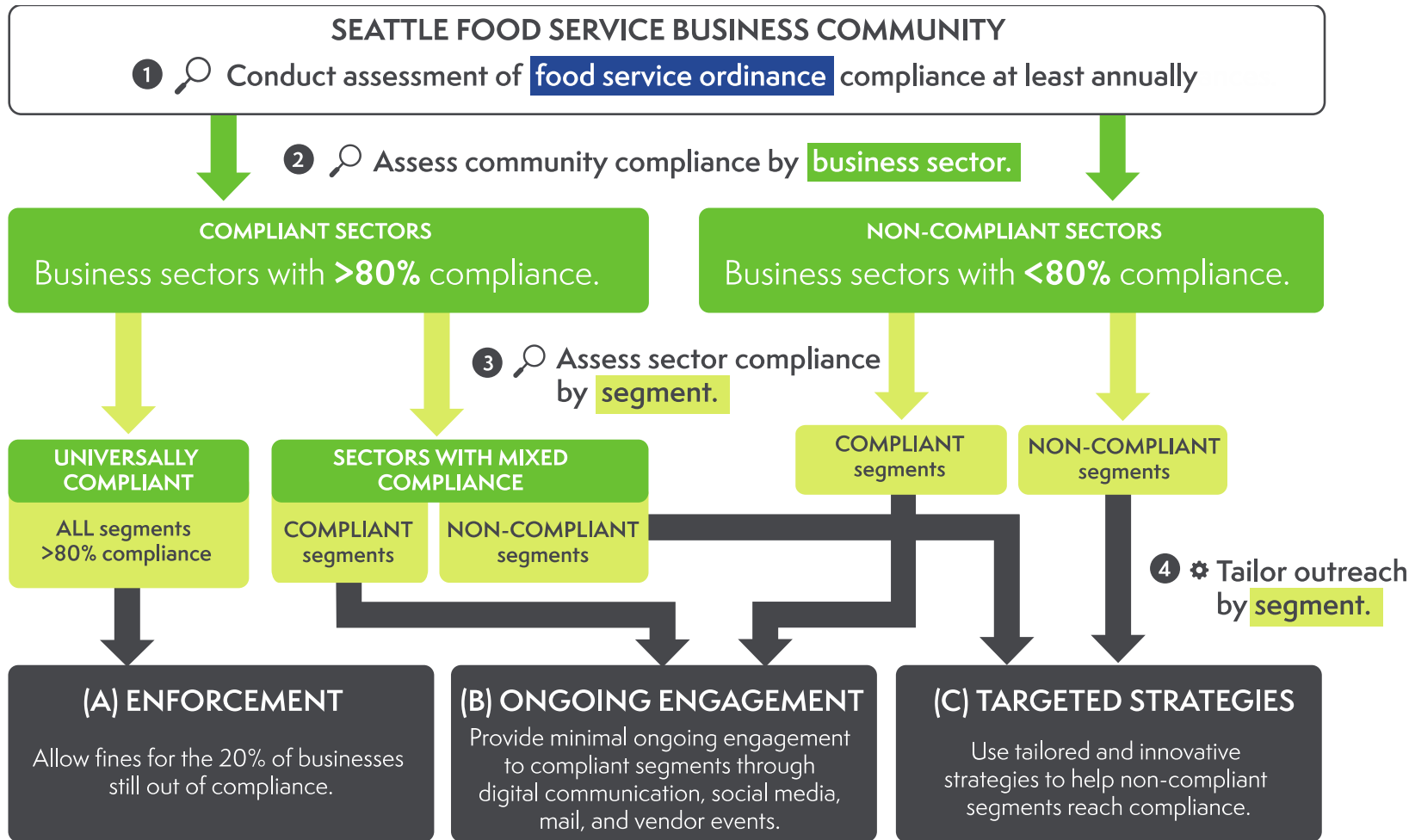
- QSR
- Sit down restaurant
- Cafe: Bakery & Dessert
- Cafe: Bubble tea
- Food truck
- Grocery w/ food service
- Grocery w/out food service
- Convenience stores

### Segments

- Ethnicity
- Language
- Council District (1-7)
- Type of ownership (corporate, franchise, independent)



# SPU Approach to Targeted FSB Outreach



## KEY

### Food service ordinance

- Foam packaging
- Compost/recycle packaging
- Straw and utensil
- Compost service
- Indoor collection bins

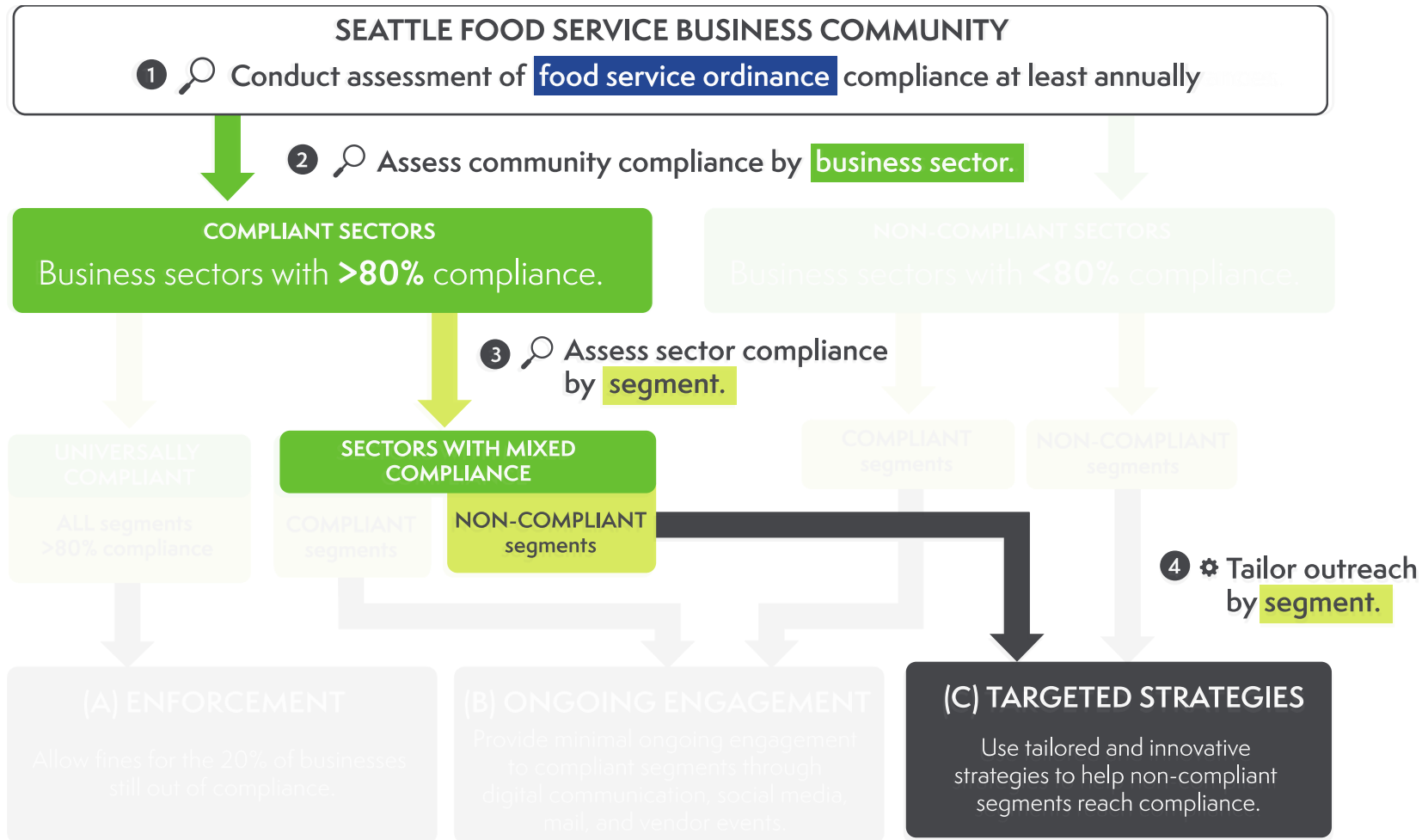
### Business sectors

- QSR
- Sit down restaurant
- Cafe: Bakery & dessert
- Cafe: Bubble tea
- Food truck
- Grocery w/ food service
- Grocery w/out food service
- Convenience stores

### Segments

- Ethnicity
- Language
- Council District (1-7)
- Type of ownership (corporate, franchise, independent)

# How It Works



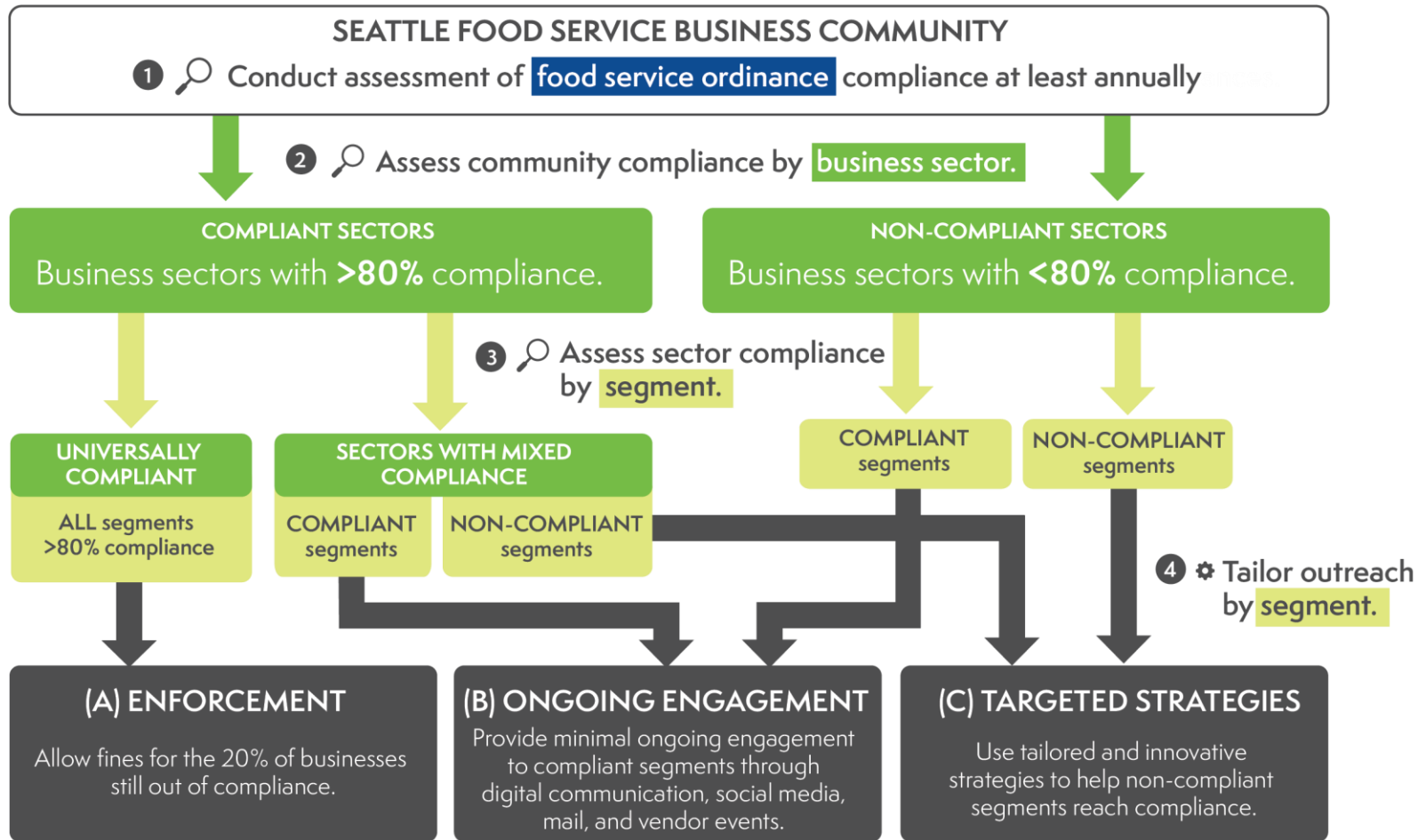
- 1 Business is subject to Seattle's FSB Ordinance
- 2 Business is a Quick Service Restaurant (QSR), a sector with >80% compliance with FSB Ordinance
- 3 Business is in a segment (primary language spoken) that is less than 40% compliant
- 4 Business receives targeted, in-language outreach

# Next Steps

- Stakeholder engagement
  - May make changes based on feedback
- Pilot phase



# Questions?



## KEY

### Food service ordinance

- Foam packaging
- Compost/recycle packaging
- Straw and utensil
- Compost service
- Indoor collection bins

### Business sectors

- QSR
- Sit down restaurant
- Cafe: Bakery & dessert
- Cafe: Bubble tea
- Food truck
- Grocery w/ food service
- Grocery w/out food service
- Convenience stores

### Segments

- Ethnicity
- Language
- Council District (1-7)
- Type of ownership (corporate, franchise, independent)