

# REJI ORGANIZATIONAL RACE EQUITY TOOLKIT

2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION

*For Washington Civil Legal Aid Organizations and Partners for  
Equity & Justice Everywhere*



**WASHINGTON RACE EQUITY  
& JUSTICE INITIATIVE**

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## FOREWORD

August 2020

“Racism in America is like dust in the air. It seems invisible – even if you’re choking on it – until you let the sun in. Then you see it’s everywhere.”

- Kareem Abdul-Jabar

Racism and white supremacy - features, not defects of our society - were intentionally designed into our systems to perpetuate white superiority and dehumanize others as inferior, both shaping the political, economic, and cultural environment we all operate within and presuming the subordination of Black, African-American, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other people and communities of color. Driving deep divisions, manifesting in inequitable treatment, power, and allocation of resources relative to those experienced by white people, this visceral and dehumanizing reality for those most harmed by racism underscores the lack of fairness and accountability of our law and justice systems.

Led by the Washington State Supreme Court, many law-related entities in our state have responded to the civic discussion reignited by the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Aubrey, Charleena Lyles, Manuel Ellis, and so many others. The Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee is a bipartisan body that oversees the Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA). OCLA’s mission is to meet the civil justice needs of low-income residents of our state. This cannot be done by us or others without deliberate anti-racism policies and practices. In 2018, the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee and OCLA adopted Washington State’s Race Equity and Justice Initiative Acknowledgements & Commitments. In doing so, it pledged to listen, learn, and act—as individuals, as a governmental body, and in setting our expectations for and oversight of the services funded through OCLA.

Today, more than ever, and with a renewed sense of urgency prompted by the racial justice demands and uprisings across Washington and the country, all law and justice bodies and the people associated with them must take action towards anti-racism. We must do it today, and every day after that - internally within our organizations and institutions, and externally in solidarity with community-based movements. Those who are white are the inheritors and beneficiaries of the privileges of a racist society. They must therefore carry a heavier burden to expose and dismantle racist systems, cultures, and practices compared to our colleagues who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color. When those who are least harmed due to their white privilege remain willfully ignorant of the inequitable administration of justice in our society, law and justice systems are then themselves complicit in the perpetuation of racism and white supremacy.

Building on the work of the 1st Edition developed by JustLead Washington and informed by many within Washington's equity and justice community and REJI communities, the OCLA is pleased to engage JustLead again to bolster the necessary race equity work needed with this 2nd Edition of the REJI Organizational Toolkit. What already offered a wealth of resources, information, ideas, and strategies designed to help organizations develop critical capacities to guide both their internal operations and their external equity & justice work, has now been further improved with additional tools and insights. Regardless of your role (client advocate, community worker, volunteer program manager, program administrator, etc.,) we encourage you to use - and continue to help us improve - this Toolkit to inform all aspects of your race equity work.

*Jim Bamberger*

**Jim Bamberger**

Director, Washington State Office of Civil  
Legal Aid

*Sarah Augustine*

**Sarah Augustine**

Chair, Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee

## INTRODUCTION

The Washington Race Equity & Justice Initiative (REJI) began in 2015 when a small volunteer group of advocates using their expertise and resources working within the civil, criminal, and juvenile justice systems organized to repudiate and resist what was at the time yet another headline of racism suffered by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). The echoes of REJI's inception are heard back to the beginning of [settler colonialism](#) and when the first enslaved Africans were brought to the colonized Turtle Island of First Nations in 1619. It continues to be heard today with the police killing of George Floyd, needless legal battles to secure rightful COVID-19 stimulus funding for sovereign tribal nations, people who are undocumented being left out of stimulus funding entirely, and anti-Asian racism in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today, through the enduring pandemics of COVID-19, economic fallout, and violence against Black communities, we see the harms of structural racism and poverty on communities of color again, along with other intersecting and compounding forms of structural oppression, such as anti-Indigeneity, ableism, heteropatriarchy, misogyny, and anti-immigrant animus. The means used to inflame stress, injury, and death on BIPOC and other marginalized groups include mass dehumanization and constant "othering."

As one of its primary concepts, REJI, and the work of its partners and accomplices, is to place all people in the center of what Othering and Belonging Institute Director John A. Powell calls the [circle of human concern](#), a framework of belonging.

REJI's ongoing work seeks to disentangle the notion that race equity work is an "add-on" and instead addresses the inherent responsibility of legal advocates to practice equity and justice in all its work, continually revise the ways the legal system - constructed to uphold white supremacy - perpetuates oppression today, and expand the circle of human concern.

### ***WHAT IS STRUCTURAL RACISM?***

**The ways in which complex systems of organizations, institutions, individuals, processes, and policies interact to create and perpetuate inequitable outcomes for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).**

## REJI VISION

REJI visualizes a just society that respects fundamental human rights and allows all members to thrive and have what they need. We envision a community free from oppression and state-sponsored harm, where everyone is valued and treated with dignity and respect. Everyone deserves access to affordable, safe, and stable housing; quality education and health care; a legal system that delivers justice for those who need it; ample and nutritious food; clean water; freedom from environmental hazards; and a society that prioritizes the and health and well-being of people above all else.

## HOW REJI DOES ITS WORK

REJI operates as a coordinated statewide network, providing resources and support infrastructure for racial justice efforts within the legal community in Washington State. REJI works closely with the Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid, Legal Foundation of Washington and the Washington Access to Justice Board to ensure legal advocates across the State have the tools and resources to disrupt 'business as usual' and promote fairness and racial equity within their work to transform our law and justice system. This work requires accountability to and centering the leadership of communities most harmed by white supremacy, who are closest to the problem, so know best what needs to change yet whose efforts are often thwarted to affect change.

### **WHAT IS RACIAL JUSTICE?**

**Proactive creation and reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes, and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.**

## REJI ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & COMMITMENTS

As REJI took shape as a space for collective learning and action, participants identified the need to organize around a set of principles to guide their work. To start, participants designed a statement to both explicitly and publicly acknowledge how the legal system was designed by people in power to uphold white supremacy, resulting directly in the racial inequities we see within the law and justice systems. The commitments aim to list high-level steps that advocates and organizations can take to undo the structurally racist forces permeating our institutions and systems.

These “**REJI Acknowledgments & Commitments**” have become a framework to guide REJI's priorities and help REJI Partners hold one another accountable for ongoing work around race equity. The language of the Acknowledgments & Commitments is strong and directive, as in this polarizing time, it has become more important than ever for those of us dedicated to equity & justice to resist and transform structures, policies, processes, and practices that perpetuate harm and disparate outcomes for communities of color. To view a full list of REJI Partners, go to [www.wareji.org/partners](http://www.wareji.org/partners).



**Terms included below are defined throughout the Toolkit and are hyperlinked in the electronic version.**

*The REJI Acknowledgements and Commitments are in the process of being updated with REJI Partners after the Spring 2020 racial uprisings prompted by the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. To view the latest version, please visit [www.wareji.org](http://www.wareji.org).*



As members of the  
Washington Race Equity &  
Justice Initiative, we  
acknowledge:

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT 1

In America, policies, structures, and systems exist that deny individuals and communities of color what is necessary for a full and fair life. Since their inception, these [structurally racialized](#) systems have been marked by conscious and [unconscious](#) racial bias that pervades our society, to the benefit of white people, and to the disadvantage of Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT 2

These racialized systems work to keep communities of color outside of the [Circle of Human Concern](#) and perpetuate harm. Examples of how laws, rules, and norms operate today include disproportionately pulling members of communities of color into the [civil, juvenile & criminal justice](#) systems; zoning and forcing communities into [substandard and unaffordable housing](#); denying adequate [health care, education](#), and jobs; seizing familial and community land and wealth; threatening personal and physical safety; and isolating communities of color from social, economic and political power.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT 3

Bias and structural oppression based on factors such as gender or gender identity, immigration status or nationality, age, disability, religion, poverty and social class, sexual orientation, membership in an Indigenous (native) group or ethnicity are harmful to individuals, communities, and the notion of a just society. Further, the damaging effects of oppression are [multiplied when race intersects with these other identity factors](#).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT 4

The effects of bias and structural racialization are especially damaging to the social fabric of our democracy when they are woven into the law, legal profession, and justice system, where they can weaken the ability of these systems to safeguard equity & justice under the rule of law.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT 5

Progress toward equity & justice has largely come from the wisdom and courage of people from communities most harmed by bias and systemic oppression. Thus, race equity work must be pursued in direct solidarity with, and guidance from Black, Indigenous, and communities of color and community-based movements.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT 6

True justice cannot be achieved until the legal and justice systems, and all who work in these systems are conscious of and able to counter the impact of racialized systems, racialized structures, and bias. Doing so requires acknowledging that different groups are situated differently and that targeted, intentional approaches are needed to reach just and equitable outcomes.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT 7

Structurally racialized systems take their most direct and immediate toll on communities of color. They are also damaging to white people, as white privilege is understood, whether

consciously or not, to be unearned and gained through the stolen humanity of others. This means that white people and Black, Indigenous, and people of color have very different, as well as common work to do to expose and dismantle racialized systems.



As members of the Washington  
Race Equity & Justice Initiative,  
we commit to:

### **COMMITMENT 1**

Work together with, take guidance from, be part of, and hold ourselves accountable to community-based movements in communities most affected by structural racialization and structurally racialized systems.

### **COMMITMENT 2**

Change structures, policies, processes, and practices in the law, legal profession, and justice system that allow harm and disparate outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and communities of color to continue unabated.

### **COMMITMENT 3**

Promote and support legal and policy reforms that advance race equity & racial justice, recognizing that differently situated groups may require different strategies to achieve more equitable outcomes.

### **COMMITMENT 4**

Continuously examine whether we and the organizations we work with operate in ways that align with the race equity and justice values and goals we support. This commitment includes ensuring that race equity is reflected in policies and practices for recruitment and hiring, work acceptance, priority-setting, governance, organizational culture, communications, and community partnerships and accountability, particularly with low-income Black, Indigenous and communities of color.

### **COMMITMENT 5**

Continually explore how race and poverty intersect to make worse the impacts of racial discrimination.

### **COMMITMENT 6**

Expand and strengthen the REJI alliance to include diverse partnerships and the sharing of our resources with anyone who is committed to dismantling structurally racialized systems.

### **COMMITMENT 7**






Ensure our organizations invest in active, ongoing learning that will teach us to see, reveal, and transform structures that create racialized outcomes and push communities of color outside the circle of human concern. This commitment requires that we help members of our organizations and communities to actively and expressly challenge the use of racist language and behaviors, openly listen when we ourselves are challenged, and learn techniques and tools for reducing and eliminating implicit and explicit bias.

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## USING THIS TOOLKIT

Recognizing how the law and justice system is complicit in perpetuating white supremacy necessitates taking steps to dismantle that complicity. As REJI continues to evolve, it has become a resource for REJI Partners and advocates to build alignment between racial justice values and internal policies and practices. With this need in mind, the REJI Toolkit supports organizations in their work towards racial equity within their operations, programming, workplace culture, governance, partnerships, and advocacy. As an alignment tool, the REJI Toolkit guides you through several aspects of what it means to undertake race equity at the organizational level.

-  **Part 1** explores the basics of racial justice and racial equity work, defining key terms, and explaining foundational frameworks. This section provides a foundational understanding of racism in the US to generate alignment on the critical knowledge race equity advocates must have and nurture.
-  **Part 2** considers what initial building blocks and preparatory work an organization should invest in before undertaking race equity work. This section aims to set clear expectations of what race equity work requires emotionally and pragmatically to ensure the journey ahead is meaningful for all members of the organization and appropriately communicates the long-term journey of this work.
-  **Part 3** explores the common phases of organizational race equity work to provide an understanding of how, despite every organization being at different levels of readiness, certain activities must be undertaken to ultimately create a plan and structure to support ongoing deep and transformational work.
-  **Part 4** explores the REJI Assessment Tool and its five dimensions of race equity work: 1) Securing Organizational Commitment; 2) Creating an Equitable Organizational Culture; 3) Recruiting, Hiring, & Retaining a Diverse Workforce; 4) Developing Accountability to and Partnership with Communities of Color; and 5) Applying an Anti-Racist Analysis to Programs, Advocacy, & Decision-Making.
-  The **Appendix** contains supplementary tools and templates that can help organizations to apply a race equity analysis to their work. The final sections of the Toolkit also include a **Glossary** of terms and concepts used throughout the Toolkit as well as a **Resource List** of additional articles, reports, and toolkits for additional learning.

## ABOUT JUSTLEAD WASHINGTON

In 2017, REJI's volunteer network identified the need to create an infrastructure to carry out its core priorities. REJI partnered with JustLead Washington, a nonprofit established to support and grow the network of community leaders working toward equity & justice in Washington State. JustLead provides staffing and coordination for the REJI network and helps carry out the transformative learning, consulting, resource development, and other priority work identified by REJI Partners. With advice and support from REJI, JustLead staff and consultants have created this Toolkit at the request of REJI Partners. For more information, please visit [www.justleadwa.org](http://www.justleadwa.org).



## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

AS A STATEWIDE NONPROFIT, JUSTLEAD WASHINGTON ACKNOWLEDGES THE WAYS WE BENEFIT AS AN ORGANIZATION AND AS INDIVIDUALS FROM ONGOING SETTLER COLONIAL VIOLENCE AGAINST THE FIRST NATIONS OF THIS LAND. WE ARE COMMITTED TO CENTERING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THESE LANDS TO DISRUPT, DECOLONIZE, AND INDIGENIZE SYSTEMS AND SPACES THAT CAUSE HARM.

## PART I: UNDERSTANDING RACE EQUITY

### *What Is Racial Equity? Why Does It Matter?*

While our nation was founded on ideals of equality and unalienable rights with “the establishment of justice” as the first affirmation in the U.S. Constitution, American society has not ensured these aspirational ideals are a reality for everyone. As local and national events continually reveal – from the disproportional racial impact of COVID-19, racialized emergency responses of Hurricanes Katrina in New Orleans and Maria in Puerto Rico to toxic lead contamination in the Flint, Michigan water supply, families being separated both from our carceral centers and at the border, to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Charleena Lyles, Riah Milton, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Philando Castile, and many others by law enforcement – [the ideals of this country remain out of reach](#) for Black, Indigenous, and communities of color and any communities that is “othered” by dominant culture, white supremacy, colonialism, capitalism, and heteropatriarchy.

#### **WHAT IS RACIAL EQUITY?**

*The condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares.*

*([Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#))*



Racism is an adaptive problem that will never be solved with a technical solution. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the underbelly of structural racism by revealing how inequitable our systems are for Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color. Even amidst the despair of injustice, we see an unprecedented level of energy for and commitment to racial justice work. In the wake of civil unrest prompted by murders of Black people at the hands of police in the Spring of 2020, Angela

Davis said, [“We are in the midst of the most intense expression of anti-racist collective sentiment this country has ever seen.”](#) Michelle Alexander urged us to seize the moment

stating, [“America, This Is Your Chance.”](#) And Ta-Nehisi Coates [expressed hopefulness on how progress is finally being made.](#)

In the current climate, those working within the law and justice system are increasingly viewed as “first responders” in defense of democratic ideals. Breakthroughs in brain science help us better understand the why and how of bias so that we can overcome the harm done when it goes unchecked and enters our decision-making. And, always the case within our institutions, studies continue to show in an incontrovertible way how diverse teams significantly outperform homogeneous groups in problem-solving and generating creative and adaptive solutions, leading to an upsurge in organizations acknowledging the importance of transforming their workplaces.

## ***The Structural & Historical Context of Racism***

To understand racism, we must deconstruct the systems we interact with every day to understand the ways in which they create harm. Using a framework from the Shriver Center on Poverty Law and many racial justice advocates and organizers, applying a ‘systems thinking’ approach means embarking on a process of looking at underlying structures, cause and effect relationships, and interdependencies among various parts of a whole system with the goal of developing effective, feasible solutions that address underlying causes of problems. By examining the social and historical context, we begin to understand how systems become *racialized*, where opportunities and outcomes within that system start to differ depending on race.

For example, the historical context of our legal system is rooted in the English Common Law System, initially established to protect and enforce the rights and property of the white land-owning class. At that time, women, children, and people who were enslaved were considered chattel property without rights of their own.<sup>2</sup> Not until the early to mid-1900s did rights begin to be established for the protection of individuals. And until the passage of the Marital Property Act of 1967, women were not able to own property in the state of Texas unless jointly owned with their husband, which in practice disproportionately benefited white women and excluded women of color.<sup>3</sup>

### ***WHAT IS RACIALIZATION?***

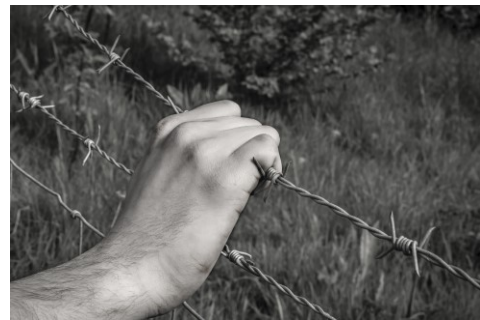
**Racialization is the dynamic process of applying race as a social construct to a group or community that may result in disparities or different outcomes. White people are also racialized, yet this is often invisible in dominant American culture. As a result, white people may not see themselves as part of a race yet still maintain the power to name, racialize, and consequently harm “others” under a racist system. Race is not inherently a problem, racism is. ([Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre](#); [Merriam-Webster](#))**

Looking critically through a systemic analysis, we can see that the struggle for equal protection under the law for all people is an arduous promise. The premise of the law and justice system rests upon two frameworks designed to maintain the status quo: 1) Common Law doctrine is known as “stare decisis,” which means that courts should use precedent (what has happened in the past) in decision making; and 2) the structure of the law as an adversarial “them versus us” system. In other words, those who benefit most by things

staying as they are can count on the law and justice system help perpetuate a status quo that has been historically racialized.

This racialized history reveals patterns perpetuated by those who have held power (e.g., white people, men, non-Indigenous people) to acquire land and resources at the expense of entire communities (e.g., Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color). In US history that [many of us did not learn](#) in our K-12 classrooms, we see:

- Genocidal policies towards Indigenous communities allowing white people to lay claim to their children, land, and natural resources;
- The enslavement of Africans during times of chattel slavery, Jim Crow laws, and “The New Jim Crow” manifested through our modern-day prison system<sup>2</sup>;
- The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Immigration Act of 1924, and other travel bans targeting immigrant communities such as the most recent Muslim Ban in 2018;
- Japanese internment during World War II, forcing Japanese Americans to give up their homes, property, and freedom, and incarcerating them in camps; and
- Racist residential segregation policy, such as the G.I. bill which provided employment, housing, and educational opportunities to (almost exclusively white) veterans returning from World War II and restrictive housing covenants prohibiting non-white residents from living in entire neighborhoods, resulting in patterns of segregation that persist across towns and cities in Washington State today.<sup>4,5</sup>



To overcome the status quo, race equity efforts cannot rely on existing laws and precedents. They can leverage law and justice principles favoring fundamental fairness and disfavor discrimination to embody the energy generated by social justice movements. And they can work outside of the pre-defined box to disrupt the systems and institutions in play. **See the Appendix for Tool C Systems Thinking and The Iceberg Model** with guiding questions to help you think through issues with a systemic analysis and vision for systemic transformation. To learn more about structural racism, see [REJI's ongoing webinar series](#).

## ***The Difference Between Equality and Equity***

Although the spirit of pursuing equality is still alive and well, equality as a concept neglects to fully factor in the racialized history of the United States and the cumulative toll it has taken on communities of color. Equality presumes that society can achieve justice if the same response, treatment, or allocation of resources is provided to each individual and community. It assumes our society inherently operates in objective and neutral ways. “Equity” speaks to the cumulative effects of our racialized history into the envisioning of a more just and humane nation. It acknowledges that BIPOC and other structurally marginalized groups do not operate on a level playing field as white people and other social groups holding privilege. True racial equity asks that each of us abandon a one-size-fits-all approach and instead confront the multi-generational accumulation of wealth, resources, and advantages throughout history that creates the racial injustice we continue to see every day.

## ***Centering Black and Indigenous People***

As part of this work, it is necessary we center the Black and Indigenous people who were most harmed by anti-Black racism and Settler Colonialism because both do not exist solely in the “past.” Yet, both are intertwined, and the foundation of the white supremacy perpetuated today by our institutions and systems. We must highlight Black and Indigenous experiences of racism and colonialism because it will lead to centering those most harmed by racism in the US, which will only open the doors of justice for all communities. Consider ways you can learn directly from those most affected by these systems of harm, including the femme perspective from [Black women](#) and [Indigenous women](#).

## ***Intersectionality***

According to the *Columbia Journalism Review*, the term [Intersectionality](#) was coined by Columbia University law professor Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw to explain the compounding impact of bias and violence in the lives of Black women. As Dr. Crenshaw describes, intersectionality is “the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.” To learn more, read this [Q&A article explores how intersectionality can be used effectively](#) as a tool, and Dr. Crenshaw’s podcast [Intersectionality Matters](#).

By way of example, race and gender intersect in ways that provide access and opportunities to men and cis-masculine people. Other groups—such as women and those of other gender identities—must fight for under systems of oppression intertwined with white supremacy. The following statement provides a clue as to the role the law has played assigning value and worth based on gender: “That God designed the sexes to occupy different spheres of action, and that it belonged to men to make, apply, and execute the laws, was regarded as an almost axiomatic truth.” *Bradwell v. Illinois*, 83 U.S. 130, 132 (1873).

When race intersects with gender, we have a confluence of identities that compound oppression. White women experience oppression and stereotyping because of their gender (yet also [benefit from white supremacy](#)); BIPOC women and female-identified persons experience oppression based on their gender *and* racial/ethnic identity and must navigate both gender and racial/ethnic stereotypes. BIPOC women cannot separate these two identities. The world responds to them both. Although contextually, one identity may be elevated or “seen first,” which often is the case with race, other identities do not disappear or become less important. For relevant articles on this intersection, read more [here](#) and [here](#).

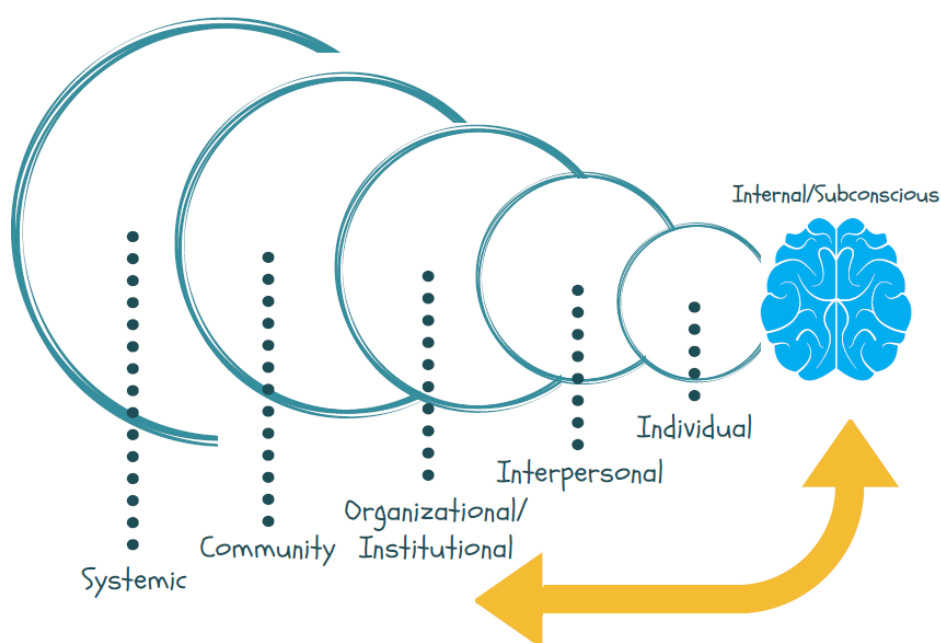
## ***Race Equity and COVID-19***

As the COVID-19 pandemic takes its terrible toll, it reveals tremendous disparities that oppressive structures have created over time. Early data already show [Black](#), [Latinx](#), and [Indigenous](#) communities being devastated by the virus at many times the rate of their white counterparts. Structural racism means a lack of access to health care, which, in turn, leads to underlying conditions like diabetes, asthma, hypertension, underemployment, food insecurity, and inadequate housing and physical safety, creating ample opportunity for COVID-19 to wreak havoc on communities of color. We also know people of color are more

likely to work in jobs defined as essential and are less likely to have the institutional power or flexibility to negotiate conflicts between work and health concerns, or work and child care, placing them at greater risk of harm from the virus. These realities expose the impact of intersectional identities, and the inequitable results anchored in structurally marginalized identities.

## ***Addressing Race Equity at “The Five Levels”***

Race equity work can be especially challenging because conversations about race are not compatible with “race-neutral” and individualistic, predominantly white institutions. One helpful deciphering tool is the “Levels of Equity Work.” There is very different, though related, work to be done at each level:



- 1 **INDIVIDUAL** (conscious and unconscious): Awareness and understanding work we need to do with ourselves to combat implicit and explicit biases we hold.
- 2 **INTERPERSONAL**: Growing our race equity “muscles” - our competence and confidence - to discuss race and bias issues when they arise in our interactions with others.
- 3 **ORGANIZATIONAL**: For organizations with a stated commitment to equity & justice, we analyze if and whether we are “walking our talk,” that is, behaving organizationally in ways that are wholly consistent with our stated race equity values and intent.
- 4 **COMMUNITY**: Centering questions such as how we hold ourselves accountable to those communities most harmed by structural racialization and who are furthest from power to do anything about it, and how we advance racial justice in our work across organizations, coalitions, and networks.



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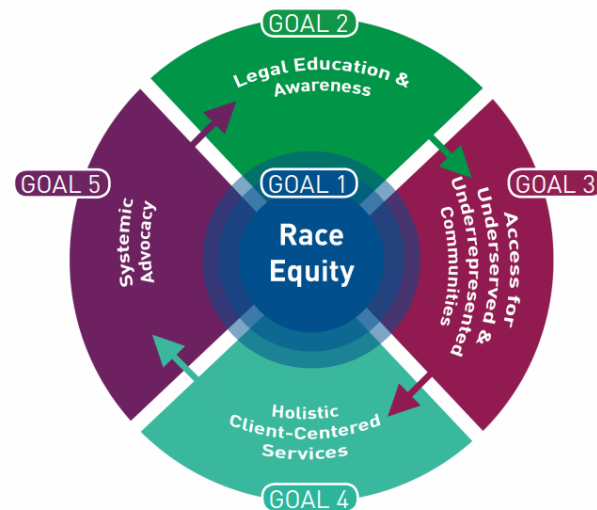
**SYSTEMIC:** Considering how and whether we are aligned and allied with social justice movements that emanate out of communities most harmed by racism, eliminating policies, practices, and structures that perpetuate harm to communities of color, and taking action to make broad changes.

Though we will explore and provide resources for all the levels, which are inextricably connected, the primary goals of the REJI Toolkit are to support those seeking to create change at the *organizational and institutional* levels.

## Connecting Race Equity and Anti-Poverty Work

Many equity & justice advocates and organizations, particularly within the civil legal aid community (those who provide free legal assistance in non-criminal matters to those who cannot otherwise afford legal help), have always engaged in anti-poverty work. Yet, because the racialized history within Washington State has generated cumulative damaging effects on the abilities of communities of color to gain economic prosperity, anti-poverty work necessitates an understanding of the connection between how poverty and racism intersect and fuel one another. For instance, one of the most lasting forms of structural racism in Washington – and so many other communities – operates through housing, where redlining practices and racial covenants on house deeds kept people of color out of “white” communities well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,<sup>4,5</sup> creating communities that continue to be racially segregated and unequally resourced today.

The lasting impact of racially unjust policies and practices can be seen across matters involving housing, consumer law, family relations, education, health care, and even affects whether communities can fairly access the justice system and legal services. For example, Washington’s [State Plan for the Coordinated Delivery of Legal Aid to Low-Income People](#) and the [Washington State Civil Legal Needs Study Update](#) not only tells us that people who are low-income are in need of legal services—but they also tell us that people of color with limited income have greater needs for legal services while also having less access to those services. Relatedly, the study also highlights communities of color having high levels of distrust with the legal system, which is unmistakably due to deliberate and racist actions designed by and carried out by the law and justice system in the past and present-day. Unless we examine our racialized local history and the systems we operate within, we cannot address the underlying – and often racialized – causes of poverty.



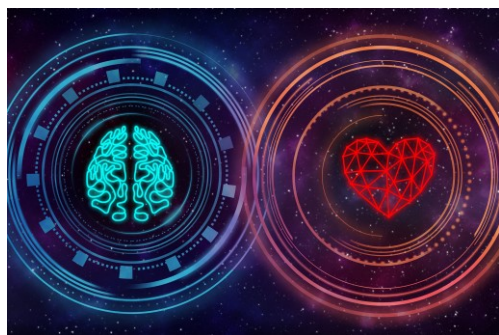
Access to Justice Board 2018-2020 State Plan

## ***Understanding Implicit Bias & Internalized Racial Oppression***

Using our Five Levels tool as a reference, the engine driving all race equity work is who we are and how we operate as individuals. When we unpack the “Individual” level, we are discussing how we both intentionally and unintentionally perpetuate racism through our attitudes and behaviors. The frame and Social Cognition (brain science) of implicit bias suggest that, due to the systems with which we interact every day, we are constantly and unconsciously creating meaning and associations, including associations based on race, which become our implicit racial biases (also described as [Internalized Racial Oppression](#)). As our assumptions, conversations, consumption of culture and media, and interactions with systems reinforce one another, our brains “normalize” what we see and result in the internalization - by white people and by Black, Indigenous, and people of color - of racial stereotypes.

### ***WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?***

***Awareness of  
unconscious attitudes  
and stereotypes that can  
affect our understanding,  
actions and decisions***



Social media and ease of contemporaneous recording of events through a “third eye” – the video camera – have led many to the inescapable realization that disparate treatment based on race is less the result of overt and intentional discrimination than of a structurally racialized society and culture (often though racially coded language and [dog whistles](#)). For example, when in April 2018, a white store manager called the police to have two Black men arrested for

waiting for their friend at Starbucks, and a white student reported a suspicious and “not belonging” Black student at Yale University sleeping in a dorm common room, conversations circulated at the national level about how our implicit biases translate into actions with real-world consequences. While such events are happening all the time, they are now being recorded and shared with white people, leading to greater accountability and less isolation of those regularly subjected to race bias-motivated harm.

For those of us working within the law and justice systems, and truly any profession, understanding our own implicit biases is critical to understand how we may be unintentionally allowing racial bias to enter our daily decision-making and interpersonal interactions. With this increased self-awareness of what racial justice advocates and organizers describe as a person’s Internalized Racial Oppression, we can begin to have more open conversations about race and racism and ensure that our biases are not having a negative effect on our clients, co-workers, colleagues, and partners. Internalized Racial Oppression for white people manifests as Internalized Racial Superiority. Those who are white subconsciously behave under notions of “more than” in their attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs compared to those who are not of European descent, given this is what our racist society consistently asserts. For those of us who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color, Internalized Racial Oppression manifests as Internalized Racial Inferiority. BIPOC subconsciously behave under notions of “less than” given our white supremacist institutions invalidates, dehumanizes, and normalizes harm to communities of color.



***Learn more about Implicit Bias and Internalized Racial Oppression:***

*Implicit Bias*

- [Implicit Association Test \(IAT\)](#): Test your unconscious, subconscious, and hidden biases and learn about implicit bias through Project Implicit, based out of Harvard.
- [Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity](#): Explore the Implicit Bias Module Series that goes further in-depth into what implicit biases are and how to interpret your results of the IAT
- [Implicit Bias in the Courtroom](#): This law review article from 2012 introduces implicit bias, applies the science to two trajectories of bias in the courtroom (criminal and civil), and explores intervention strategies to counter implicit biases in the justice system.

*Internalized Racial Oppression*

- [Internalizations & the 4 Foundations of Racism](#): From the workbook of Dismantling Racism Works, read about Internalized Racial Oppression and its relationship with white supremacy culture.
- [Internalized Racial Superiority](#): Explore further the cognitive-behavioral approach of understanding Internalized Racial Superiority for white people.

***The “ADRESSING” Model for Understanding Social Identities***

The ADRESSING Model, used locally by psychotherapist and anti-oppression trainer Dr. Leticia Nieto and adapted from the work of Pamela Hays, helps us explore our lived experiences of privilege and marginalization. We all carry multiple and intersecting identities – our race, age, language, size, citizenship, able-bodiedness, and religious beliefs, to name a few. Each grouping of identities in the framework below reflects how society is set up to benefit certain privileged groups at the expense of other groups. Though everyone carries their own set of complex identities, the “social rank categories” below are meant to represent how the design of our societal structures inequitably distribute power sanctioned by the state.

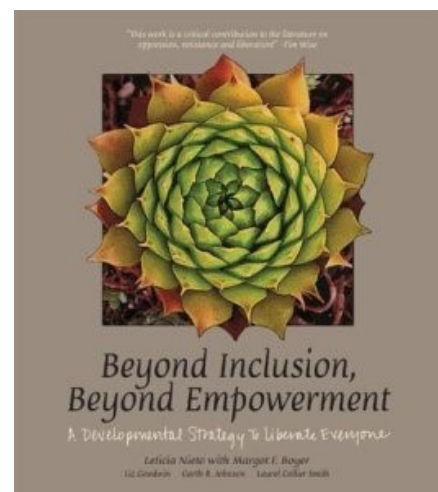
For example, looking at the social rank category of ethnicity (or race) below, we see those who are whitelisted as “agents.” At the same time, Black and people of color are listed as “targets.” This duality of either being “agents” of unearned privilege or “targets” for marginalization does not speak to how we see ourselves or each other and how society sees us in a race-constructed society. A person of Asian descent, for example, may identify as US-born. Yet, given the ways white supremacy operates, may falsely instead be treated as “foreign” and therefore as an immigrant. A person who is mixed race may hold multiple racial identities meaningful to them, yet white supremacy may attempt to categorize them as either white or “not white.”

In the United States, with or without our consent, society treats and socializes us based on our social rank categories. This is not to suggest that those who hold “target” identities do not have power or agency. Systems of oppression, however, were intentionally designed by and for “agent” groups.

<u>Social Rank Category</u>	<u>Agent Rank</u>	<u>Target Rank</u>
Age	Adults (18-64)	Children, Adolescents, Elders
Development and Acquired Disabilities	Able-persons	Persons with Disabilities
Religion	Cultural Christians, Agnostics, and Atheists	Jews, Muslims, and members of all other non-Christian religions
Ethnicity	White Euro-Americans	Black and People of Color
Social Class Structure	Middle and Owning Class Persons (Access to Higher Education)	Poor and Working-Class Persons (No Access to Higher Education)
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexuals	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning, and Two-Spirit
Indigenous Ancestry	Non-Native	Native
National Origin	US-Born	Immigrants and Refugees
Gender	Cisgender Men	Transgender Persons, Intersex Persons, Cisgender Women, Non-Binary Persons, Questioning

For us to practice anti-racism and anti-oppression in our lives, and to manifest the REJI Acknowledgments & Commitments, we must build skills attached to our target or agent identities. White people must explore agent skills, building awareness about what privileges are attached to being white in America and determining how those privileges can be leveraged toward anti-racist behaviors in support of Black, Indigenous, people of color, and those of other agent identities. Agents use and experience a range of skills, from Indifference (i.e., “colorblindness”) to Allyship. To build these skills requires (1) humility in acknowledging that white privilege insulates agents from knowing the real lived experience of Black, Indigenous, and people of color; (2) taking responsibility for one’s own learning; and (3) relentlessly leveraging access, privilege, and existing power to create space, resources, and power for people of color and (4) understanding how agents are more likely to inflict bias (explicit or implicit), microaggressions, and harm against others and infuse oppression - intentionally or unintentionally - into their decision-making.

For Black, Indigenous and people of color - whose identities have been targeted and othered in various compounding and oppressing ways since time immemorial, the work is “Surviving” racism and settler colonialism (i.e., just getting by or conforming to white



Learn even more about the ADRESSING Model from the [book](#).

supremacy culture, consciously or subconsciously), activating Empowerment skills (i.e., gaining a sense of one's own power and the collective power with others), Strategy, and Recentring skillsets. Strategy involves making strategic decisions about whether you have the energy and will to engage every person who says or does something problematic. Given the person, situation, and relationship you have or want to build, Strategic skills help decipher what is best for that moment. Recentring is ultimately discerning "our own optimal, liberating norms and values from oppressive, dehumanizing ones, and support[ing] members of our own and other target groups," including pursuing caucus space as much as possible to find community, solidarity, and build relationships and power.<sup>8</sup> For more on the "skills" for both agents and targets, read these [short articles which go further in-depth](#).

### ***Applying the ADRESSING Model for Institutional Change***

As all semblance of "normal" has been put aside in the face of the enduring pandemics of COVID-19, its economic fallout, and the virulent racism it further exposed, the importance of the civil legal aid community's commitment to equity & justice and the amplification of the experience of targeted communities could not be more evident. (Read more about examples [here](#).) The isolation, separation, and racialized economic impact experienced during COVID-19 exacerbates the target identity experience of being "othered" or not "belonging" within the institutions they've been told are meant to protect them. These are not "access" issues; they are structural racism issues where inequities are caused by deliberate designs of white supremacy and systemic oppression into our society.

Of all of the levels of race equity work, many would argue that the most important work is developing competence at the *individual* level. A stronger analysis of our identities within the context of power and privilege, in turn, develops our abilities to more equitably navigate complex interpersonal, team, and organizational dynamics. ***A leader who understands the work they need to do within themselves is better equipped to lead their teams in being more accountable and successful practicing anti-racist and anti-oppression behaviors.***

#### ***HOW CAN SUPERVISORS USE THE ADRESSING MODEL?***

***For discussion questions related to the ADRESSING model, especially if you are in supervisory or management roles, see Appendix Tool H.***

It is now more important than ever to keep in mind all 9 of the ADRESSING Model's target identities and to observe, critique, and push for systemic wide equitable solutions while we center the experiences of, shift institutional power to, and follow the leadership of those who hold target identities. We each hold several identities, and our work must be applied to each of these identities.

## PART 2: GETTING READY: PREPARING FOR ORGANIZATIONAL RACE EQUITY WORK

Before undertaking race equity work within your organization, it is critical to understand the investment of time and financial and human resources needed for meaningful engagement in this work. This section will describe the elements necessary to lay a durable foundation for undertaking a successful race equity assessment or initiative. This section will inform **Part 3: Common Phase of Organizational Race Equity Work**, which provides a more detailed “phase by phase” approach.



*Know where you are going, and why.*

**“You can’t really know where you are going until you know where you have been.”**

**- Maya Angelou**

As organizations committed to values like equity and justice that at the same time operate within systems where racism and inequities persist, we must identify and articulate race equity as a strategic imperative for our work - a critical component of justice for *all*, not some. By defining how race equity connects to our mission, vision, values, and programs, we begin with the end in mind and start to develop a shared framework and understanding of why we are centering this work.

These conversations can begin at any level at an organization, such as posing a question at a staff or board meeting. Resist the temptation to seek a “silver bullet” to “fix” race equity in an organization or a check-the-box approach, as these are likely to fail. Instead, developing a values-driven, deep answer to “why” to center race equity work can generate more meaningful buy-in and commitment as you start to identify “what” work there is to be done. Vision out and talk about what you hope to accomplish with your equity work: what would you like to see changed?



### Sample Team Reflection & Discussion Questions

**What does our program/organization stand for? What values do we share?**

**What is the purpose of our program/organization?**

**What would we gain from prioritizing race equity in our work?**

**What changes do we hope to see?**

**What investments are necessary for us to prioritize race equity efforts?**

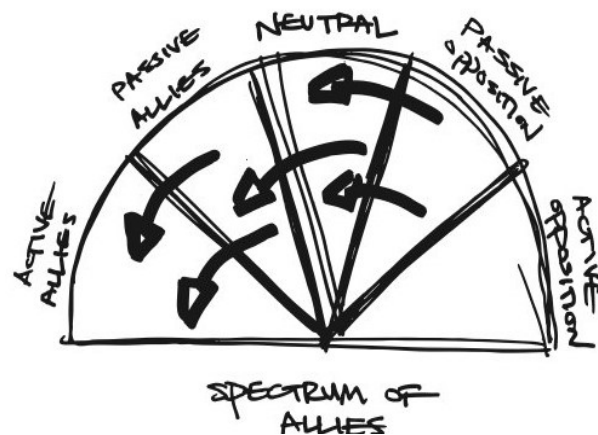


### *Build your team.*

Any new idea, program, or initiative needs a champion to help advance the work. Race equity champions at the board or leadership level can be particularly valuable to help set and communicate priorities, encourage buy-in throughout the organization, invest needed resources, and develop processes for accountability. However, meaningful change can start anywhere within an organization, including from staff or volunteer groups who, for example, shift norms to create space to racially caucus, discuss articles, books on equity and justice, or which form ad hoc or formal equity committees. The team that is formed should necessarily be diverse yet comprised of interested BIPOC, people of other marginalized identities, or otherwise people most impacted by decisions being made. Those with lived experience of oppression; however, should not be viewed as the automatic leaders of this work, an inequitable burden people of marginalized identities already hold in surfacing and addressing harm.

As you build support, it is helpful to specifically identify who you seek to partner with and/or persuade. As described in a [Beautiful Rising article](#),<sup>9</sup> allies fall onto a spectrum of active allies (those who agree with you and are fighting alongside you), passive allies (those who agree but are not doing anything), neutrals (the unengaged or uninformed), passive opposition (those disagree with you but aren't actively trying to stop you), and active opposition (those who disagree with you and are actively organizing against you).

By considering who you hope to specifically reach and bring along with you (or not) during this process of organizational change, you can craft more customized strategies and messages to reach potential allies or prepare for resistance. Too often, groups invest time in either “preaching to the choir” or attempting to strong-arm active opposition. Instead, movements are often most successful by moving stakeholders one stage forward (for example, activating passive allies or neutralizing the reach of active opponents).



Art Developed by Joshua Kahn. Beautiful Rising.<sup>9</sup>  
Creative Commons Share-Alike Non-Commercial



## ***Identify common frameworks and language.***

For an organization to effectively advance its race equity work, stakeholders of the organization (staff, volunteers, board members, partners) must be in sync in understanding the problem and the path forward. This is not possible without first creating a common language and shared frameworks that can ground the work within a unified understanding of race, racism, and other essential, foundational concepts. For instance, what is structural racism, and how is it different than institutional racism? What is a definition of equity and racial equity that fits within the context of your program's unique work? While the Toolkit provides some suggested terms and frameworks as a starting point, the most meaningful conversations will grow from developing a shared understanding of what these concepts mean across your organization.



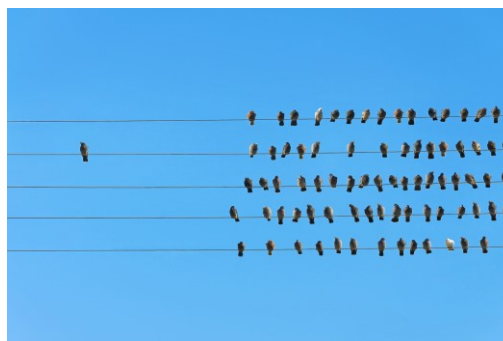
Sometimes one group – such as front-line staff or staff with lived experience as BIPOC – has a deeper understanding of how race and racism intersect with the daily work of the organization. In contrast, other stakeholders may not have the same awareness, potentially slowing or halting equity work altogether. Having a common language lays a foundation for productive conversation and can prevent miscommunication and assumptions. For example, when interpersonal conflicts arise within the workplace, as they inevitably do, already-introduced ground rules adopted by the community can offer constructive ways forward. Sample ground rules can be found in the Appendix in Tool D. An organizational race equity assessment such as the one included below in the REJI Toolkit can also help reveal where additional alignment is needed across levels of the organization.



## ***Understand your organizational culture.***

***“I’m not quite sure why they left. It never really felt like they really fit in.”***

Organizational culture is a set of shared norms, beliefs, values, expectations, and assumptions held by most members of an organization and amplified by behaviors of leaders. It is often subconsciously unspoken, coded, and learned through observing patterns of behavior, organizational practices, and direct and indirect communication. Frequently referred to as the invisible glue that holds an organization together, members of the organization assimilate, adapt, and/or thrive or alternatively may feel left out, unwelcome, undervalued, or otherwise just “not a good fit.”





Organizational culture and norms ultimately determine whether employees throughout the organization feel like they belong. Because organizational culture and norms are not all codified in personnel policies or employee manuals, and many members of an organization are unaware they even exist, changing culture is often incredibly difficult. As is described further in the “Going Deeper” section of the REJI Toolkit, organizations striving to become more equitable are challenged – and have the opportunity – to reprogram mindsets and behaviors as part of an ongoing, lifelong commitment to transformative social change. This necessarily requires examining the ways [white supremacy culture](#) (where behaviors associated with white, European traditions and values come to be seen as the norm and the preferred way of operating) operates within the organization, creating barriers for change (often discreetly and regularly in discernable by BIPOC members of the organization). Many of the characteristics of white supremacy culture also surface in [acute and vicious ways during a crisis](#).

A first step is surfacing and acknowledging the norms and expectations that make up your own organization’s culture. Watch our REJI Webinar on [Creating Equitable Organizational Culture](#) to explore how this process looks in practice.



### ***Get ready to talk about race.***

Every one of us has a personal relationship with race and racism, particularly living in a deeply racialized society like the United States. Because of this, we must both acknowledge and talk about the ways race and racism play a role in our daily lives. It is particularly important to have these conversations within our organizations, as our professional lives do not operate autonomously from our personal lives.

Having conversations about race and racism can be difficult. For some, little to no experience talking about racism in their lives makes it difficult to have an intentional conversation on an “unfamiliar” topic. Often white people are most uncomfortable talking about racism, as they have historically not been on the receiving end of it. Further, racial anxiety inhibits many from engaging in conversation for fear that they may say or do the wrong thing. This discomfort, however, invisibilizes the impact racism has on society and people of color.

For those who identify as people of color, having intentional conversations on race and racism can also be difficult. Yet, we cannot achieve racial justice without understanding the lived experiences of those who are dealing with daily racism. Additionally, racism looks different in other countries, so those who have lived outside of the US are also learning the ways white supremacy has been uniquely entrenched in American systems, [even if they are familiar with and can relate to the global](#)

#### ***WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INTENT & IMPACT?***

***Despite our best intentions, any one of us may still cause a negative impact onto others. Learning from the negative impact we cause and committing to avoid the same harm in the future is part of the process of learning and growing that supports race equity work across the organization.***



[issues of anti-Black racism and colorism](#) (e.g., preferential treatment of people with light skin over people with dark skin, upholding white standards of beauty).

For all racial identities, space to talk about race and racism is an important component of equitable organizational culture, allowing people – particularly people of color – to be their whole selves and fully express themselves. These kinds of conversations need to occur within collective, mixed-race conversations as well as through conversations amongst those who share a racial identity, a strategy called *affinity groups*, or *caucusing*, discussed in “Going Deeper.”

Getting started need not be overwhelming; even a working lunch or initial training can kickstart effective conversations about race. Seek out examples from organizations like yours and consider engaging an external facilitator to help develop and maintain productive conversations. **See the Appendix for Tool D: Community Agreements** to get started.



### ***Expect discomfort.***

When talking about race, to some extent, conflict and resistance are unavoidable. Race equity work is an inherently humanistic process that requires us to share personal experiences and reveal our privileges and pain because of living in a racialized society. Setting and managing expectations for personal development around discomfort with change and conflict can help individuals adjust to the idea that conflict can be embraced through healthy conversation and relationship building. Organizations preparing to undertake race equity work must intentionally create space to hold and address emotions that might come up and prioritize relationship building through direct conversation and conflict to lay a foundation for meaningful, long-term work.



### ***Prepare for change.***

Organizational equity work is fundamentally deep, lasting transformation work. While it can be broken down into discrete priorities and phases, ultimately, the work is about shifting the ways in which our organizations operate internally and externally to reflect, model, and advance our values around equity and racial justice. This means investing ongoing financial and human resources in deep, reflective processes, engaging in difficult conversations; providing space and resources for affinity groups; and creating a new normal for clients, staff, leadership, volunteers, and partners. It also requires preparing for potential disruption, such as a reallocation of resources and even occasional staff or board departures.



Much has been written about change management or the ways in which an organization can successfully adapt. By viewing equity work through the lens of organizational change, we can prepare for the resistance and challenges that commonly arise. For those in positional authority and who hold institutional power, the following is critical: Strong, values-driven leadership, clear and transparent communication, engaging all levels of the organization throughout all phases of the process to generate buy-in, and a willingness to build a culture of adaptation, learning, innovation, humility, and respect can all contribute to successful organizational change.<sup>7,8</sup> To note, these qualities are helpful for any person seeking to affect change within their organization. However, those who don't hold positional authority face greater risk in advocating for organizational change, given the ways white supremacy culture operates. Often, the process of change management is different for those without positional authority, requiring "managing up," staff racial caucusing, and various other strategies to overcome power dynamics. For more best practices, visit the Stanford Social Innovation Review for articles on [When Organizational Change Fails](#) and [Cocreating a Change Making Culture](#).

Regardless of where your organization begins its process, all organizations have an opportunity to reflect and improve. The [Crossroads Anti-Racist Organizational Continuum](#) is one powerful visual tool to quickly understand where an organization's starting point might be and illustrates the developmental stages towards committing to, demonstrating, and delivering on the promise of Race Equity and Justice. This continuum provides insight into where individuals are on their journey toward racial justice competence. Using the discussion questions below, organizations and their stakeholders can engage in effective discussion to explore where the organization falls on this continuum.

While reviewing the anti-racist continuum, reflect on which stage your organization currently sits in:

- What brought you to choose that phase?
- What keeps your organization "stuck" in that phase?
- Do other phases on the continuum align with your organization as well? If so, which ones? Does your organization fall into more than one stage?
- What actions would your organization need to take to move up on the continuum?
- What else stands out to you when you review this continuum with your organization in mind?

Each staff person, board member, and others championing equity work are in their stages of development, which can additionally be explored through tools such as the [Intercultural Development Inventory](#)<sup>6</sup> to further the individual learning and growth around areas of race. See **Appendix Tool C** for more on understanding and using the continuum.



## *Gather data.*

Conducting an equity assessment or audit can further illustrate where your organization might fit developmentally under the continuum and provide useful insights as to what to prioritize in this iterative and transformational journey. The **REJI Organizational Race Equity Assessment** included within this Toolkit is one example of an information-gathering tool, and other assessments are linked in the Resource List section.

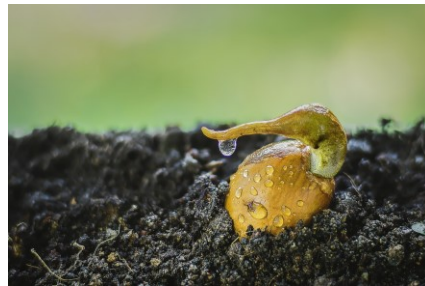
It is also helpful to consider additional methods for gathering data that may already exist within your organization. Ideally, that can be disaggregated by race and other social identity factors, as this can help surface inequities. For example, if you look at a snapshot of who is served by your programs, would it align with statistics about who may need services in your community? Are there trends or patterns around who is promoted within your organization, or who leaves?

Examples of relevant data are included throughout this guide and range from the collection of client and partner feedback to information about your workforces like compensation data, performance reviews, and exit surveys. While this type of information can provide a helpful baseline, be wary of over-reliance on quantitative and formal mechanisms of gathering data. The process of collecting information itself can often be shaped by historical biases and inequities. For more on aligning data gathering and values, check out the Schusterman Family Foundation's [More Than Numbers: A Guide Toward Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion \(DEI\) in Data Collection](#).



## PART 3: COMMON PHASES OF ORGANIZATIONAL EQUITY WORK

Now that you have previewed what to expect, how can this work be operationalized? The following offers a high-level, broad example of what the flow of a holistic approach to an organizational race equity journey might look like. Organizational equity work looks different for every program, team, and organization. There is no correct starting point; organizations are all at different levels of readiness, capacity, and commitment to engage in deep, transformational work. Many programs need to prioritize smaller or shorter-term initiatives or ‘wins.’ However deep the investment, being clear about what is needed and what to expect throughout the process helps organizations be better prepared for the often challenging road ahead.



### ***Phase I: Information Gathering, Often Including an Organization-Wide Assessment, and Alignment***

In this initial phase, organizations examine existing data such as organizational charts, staff/board/volunteer/client/partner demographics, employee engagement and morale, organizational identity statements (e.g., mission, vision, values), and existing relevant policies, practices, structures, and commitments to analyze the composition of their teams and programs; the degree of equity and inclusion competence demonstrated by leaders, managers, employees, and volunteers; to what extent there is alignment between vision, core values, and policies and practices; the overall culture of the organization, including morale, conflict/tension, common patterns of behaviors and feelings across members of privileged and marginalized groups; and the impact of existing practices and policies. Depending on how much information is already available, this phase may include a customized equity assessment or audit.

***Sample Timeframe:***  
2-6 months depending  
organizational size,  
culture, and capacity

***Guiding Questions:***  
*How do current staff, board members, clients, and other stakeholders experience the organization? What is the existing organizational culture? What are the systems, practices, structures and/or values that keep it in place for better or worse?*

See the included **REJI Organizational Race Equity Assessment**, which includes questions exploring five dimensions of racial equity work:

1. Organizational and Leadership Commitment
2. Organizational Culture
3. Workforce (Human Resources)
4. Community Partnership & Accountability
5. Policies, Programs, & Decision-Making

Each dimension outlined in the REJI Assessment is also explored in more depth in **Part 4: Going Deeper**.

In addition, for efforts to succeed, key stakeholders – particularly decision-makers – must be engaged and bought in from the start. Your organization’s early process should include foundational conversations as described in **Part 2: Getting Ready**, allowing leadership and staff to align under shared language and frameworks, build relationships, develop a shared understanding of the urgency and relevance of engaging in equity work, explore what their roles are in championing or supporting efforts, and voice questions and concerns.



## ***Phase II: Design & Development of a Comprehensive Racial Equity Strategic Plan***

During this phase of the project, the organization starts to develop an initial ‘Racial Equity Strategic Action Plan’ based on assessment/Phase I findings. This process can include actions such as:

1. Confirming who will participate in the planning process, considering both internal and external community stakeholders;
2. Engaging in strategic action planning meetings and/or retreats to surface key themes and priorities;
3. Assembling a Racial Equity or Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee as a planning and accountability entity responsible for keeping work moving forward;
4. Convening Committee meetings to facilitate the development of goals, objectives, strategies, timelines, and responsible parties for a Racial Equity Strategic Action Plan and key initiatives; and
5. Drafting a Strategic Action Plan includes recommendations, timelines, and the next steps for moving priority initiatives forward.

***Sample Timeframe:***  
***4-6 months depending***  
***organizational size,***  
***culture, and capacity***

***Guiding Questions: What***  
***themes and priorities***  
***have surfaced from the***  
***data we have gathered?***  
***How do we need to***  
***allocate our time and***  
***resource across learning***  
***and development, culture***  
***shifts, and policy***  
***changes?***

### From Assessment to Plan

With the information in hand from Phase I, stakeholders begin to analyze key findings. Spend time reviewing each dimension of equity work, considering:

- What patterns or trends have emerged?
- What are we already doing well?
- Where are there challenges and opportunities for growth or change?



Once you have surfaced trends and challenges, the planning team will need to engage in priority-setting to identify which goals and priorities to tackle first. Consider both short-term and tangible efforts that can improve services, your working environment, or outcomes within a short timeframe as well as long-term and more audacious goals. As you will not be able to tackle everything at once, think about what sequencing makes sense and which priorities are most important to helping you achieve your broader mission.

One mechanism for organizing objectives are [SMART guidelines](#), i.e., whether they are *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-limited*. The Management Center’s work with SMART goals translated this traditional framework into “SMARTIE,” adding guidelines for goals to be **Inclusive** (Does it bring those who are furthest from traditional sources of institutional power and those most impacted into processes, activities, and decision/policy-making in a way that shares power?) and **Equitable** (Does it include an element of fairness or justice that seeks to address systemic injustice, inequity, or oppression?)

Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Realistic	Timely	Inclusive	Equitable
<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>S</b>		
What do you want to do?	How will you know when you’ve reached it?	Is it in your power to accomplish it?	Can you realistically achieve it?	When exactly do you want to accomplish it?	How will you ensure it will be inclusive?	How will it advance equity and justice?

For more on SMARTIE goals, visit and explore the Management Center’s [worksheet](#).

Also, see the **Appendix for Tool A REJI Organizational Equity Plan Worksheet** for a simple worksheet to help kickstart step-by-step construction of a long-term plan and vision for your organization.



## Phase III: Initial Implementation of the Racial Equity Strategic Plan

The initial implementation phase may include:

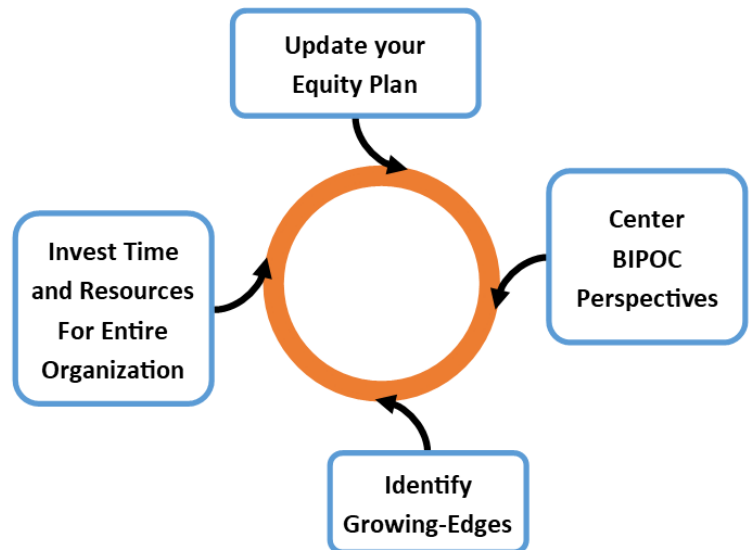
1. Creating teams and accountable parties to coordinate trainings related to equity, inclusion and the shifting of organizational culture;
2. Generating and curating written curricula and resources that can support the organization in effectively stewarding ongoing transformational learning for staff, board, and volunteers;
3. Confirming which individuals and teams will hold responsibility for ‘owning’ and launching priority initiatives;
4. Reviewing and/or developing tools to incorporate a racial justice analysis and practices that are starting to work; and
5. Creating mechanisms and infrastructure for maintaining, evaluating, celebrating, and sharing out progress toward stated goals.

**Sample Timeframe:**  
6-12 months depending  
organizational size,  
culture, and capacity

**Guiding Questions:**  
How do we keep this  
work alive? What  
systems, practices,  
training, and initiatives  
will keep this work  
active in our  
organization?

### Ongoing Work

In addition to a phased approach, **ongoing learning opportunities** are critical to support the development of staff, board, and volunteers. While, as noted above, early organizational learning should center foundational “why” and alignment conversations, later learning and conversation becomes more tailored to the specific needs and challenges identified by the organization. Ideally, ongoing learning touches on all “levels” of equity work as described above, from personal work around social identities and bias to structural conversations that surface the historical and racialized context of the law and justice systems (and other relevant systems).



From experience supporting dozens of organizations through their race equity journeys, we have also come to recognize how easily senior leaders and decision-makers can make or break critical progress toward infusing equity and inclusion into the DNA of an organization. Therefore, **individual or team coaching for managers and senior leadership**, particularly during Phases 1-3, can also generate meaningful momentum. Common topics covered include the role of leaders in championing and advancing equity efforts, how to integrate equity work into other organizational-wide efforts such as strategic planning, responding or



intervening when staff raises concerns, and equitable practices for supervisory functions such as performance reviews.

Racial caucusing is a strategy to create ongoing space for learning and growth. Although they are used for various reasons, including as a conflict-intervention tool, the primary value of caucusing is as a pro-active anti-racism tool. Often organizations create a people of color caucus and a white caucus, although depending on racial demographics, other groups might also be convened. Check out JustLead Washington's in-depth exploration of [Caucuses as a Racial Justice Strategy](#).

Finally, as with any organizational initiative, opportunities for **ongoing reflection, evaluation, and course correction** are necessary to keep racial equity work moving forward effectively. At the outset, do you have metrics or ideas in mind about what successful change might look like? Throughout the process, is there a person, committee, and/or structure in place to ensure efforts across teams and offices are integrated, aligned, and moving forward? Are you able to build in periodic pauses or gatherings to surface progress, challenges, and new ideas and ensure that your work remains relevant and responsive?

Be sure to integrate these discussions into your plans from the start. Race equity work is not an "add-on" or a specialty; it is a core aspect of how your organization delivers on its mission in a racist society. The workload of staff must necessarily shift to make room for race equity to be practiced and implemented, job descriptions must have race equity work written into them, and the organization's budget must have line items devoted to directly compensating staff who agree to take on additional responsibilities.

### ***Engaging Consultants***

As you seek to grow your organization into a more deeply race equity-minded organization, many organizations recruit outside trainers, facilitators, or consultants to support their equity efforts. The below bubble outlines basic factors to be aware of when deciding whether to hire a consultant. At the start, reflect deeply on why you have the desire to use a consultant; if you and others are clear on the 'why,' this will be tremendously helpful for your organizations' race equity work planning.

Even before making the decision to hire a consultant, having a clear picture of why external help is needed will ensure you are not overlooking the race equity work that you can complete right away. Occasionally organizations can use the process of hiring consultants as a way to distract from the hard work that must be done internally or from what their BIPOC staff have expressed and feel can be done without a consultant. Organizations might also have false perceptions of what hiring a consultant can accomplish. If you have conversations with a potential consultant, it is important, to be honest, and transparent about why you need their services. Not being honest and transparent can cause the consultant to provide different services than what your organization actually needs, setting up the consultant to fail.

## Deciding Whether to Use an Equity Consultant

Finding someone who is the right fit can be a challenge, particularly if you aren't sure what the work ahead might look like or you don't quite know yet what you need. Luckily there are many terrific resources to draw from, including:

- **Equity in the Center via Medium.com:** [So You Want to Hire an Equity Consultant](#)
- **Fakequity:** [How to and How Not to Hire a Racial Equity Consultant](#)
- **Denver Foundation Inclusiveness Project:** [Hiring Inclusiveness Consultants](#)

## Tips for Approaching Consultants

1. ***Compensate people fairly for their labor.*** Expect to spend anywhere between \$100 and \$500 per hour for external support. If you are relying on staff, make sure their efforts are not considered an extra or side project. If you don't have funds to spend, consider lower-cost ways to get a conversation started, like a book or article discussions or respectful ways of hearing from community partners or clients (who should still be compensated for their time).
2. ***Expect holistic approaches to take a year or more and include training, coaching, and project work into your scope.*** The excellent guide [Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture](#) and the [Denver Foundation's report](#) includes some examples of costs and scope for organizations of varying sizes.
3. ***Find the right fit.*** There is no one right way to approach the complex work of racial equity. Ask trusted partners for referrals and solicit information from potential consultants about their values, frameworks, and both lived and professional experiences.
4. ***Don't ask for more information than you need.*** Burdensome RFP processes can prevent talented consultants from pursuing work. If you are engaging in extensive interviews and soliciting advice during the interview process, the consultant's time should be compensated.
5. ***Engage a range of perspectives in any initiative design and selection processes.*** The people most affected by the work you are about to undertake should be involved from the start to ensure that the help you get meets a diverse range of goals and needs.

Depending on your 'why' of seeking external help and the potentially high cost of a consultants' services, you might also consider hiring a full-time staff person focusing on race equity and/or diversity, equity, and inclusion work for the organization. Creating a staff position reflects how an organization values its racial equity work. If this is an option you are considering, remember it is critical that this staff member has authority and decision-making power to make change. Not only will this ensure the person who takes the position is supported and is set up for success, but it also ensures your newly created position is not a false promise or simply "optics" to appear progressive without a substantive commitment.

## REJI ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

The REJI Organizational Assessment is designed for any organization interested in gathering information, regardless of how far along it might be on the journey to becoming a more racially equitable organization. The Assessment can be given in person, in written form, or online to key stakeholders of the organization such as individual staff members, board members, and external partners. The Assessment explores five dimensions of organizational race equity work, given these dimensions often operate in tandem within our organizations to perpetuate inequities and a racist environment. An Assessment should collect data meaningful to the staff and particularly BIPOC staff, so questions should be adapted as needed to fit the organization uniquely.

Taken together with other parts of the REJI Toolkit, the Organizational Assessment aims to:

- Establish baseline information across five “dimensions” of organizational race equity work;
- Further, explore each dimension of race equity work through the **Going Deeper** section of the REJI Toolkit; and
- Help organizations identify priorities that can be translated into an Equity Action Plan to solidify the organization’s commitment to race equity and identify tangible goals and steps. **See the Appendix for Tool A: Organizational Equity Plan Worksheet** and Sample Equity Plans from organizations in **Tool E and F. Appendix Tool B: Racial Equity Impact Assessment** can help you further apply an equity analysis to your organization’s operations, practices, priority-setting, and decision-making.

We encourage organizations to engage in the process of ongoing review and evaluation of their race equity goals to help build on what is working while identifying what is impeding meaningful change. Utilizing an external consultant – explored above in Part 3 of this Toolkit – can help ensure the appropriate interpretation of data to advance the organization to the next stage of its organizational race equity work.

Since Assessments are merely a tool of gathering information to inform the equity-related decisions of the organization, there is value in conducting them at any stage. However, as they can often reveal the true starting point for the work, organizations that choose to wait to be ‘further along’ before conducting an assessment (e.g., holding anti-racism trainings for staff first) may needlessly be delaying acquiring valuable information from members of the organization. As Part 2 of this Toolkit indicates, a theme of “Getting Ready” for organizational race equity work is creating space and emotionally prepare for conversations on race equity within your organization. Gathering data can be a useful strategy to begin those conversations and identify areas of growth that likely BIPOC staff can already identify.

# WASHINGTON RACE EQUITY & JUSTICE INITIATIVE

## ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

For each question below, select the number that best reflects the organization you are assessing, according to the following rubric:

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

*Note: While the below sample explicitly centers racial equity, please contact JustLead Washington if you would like additional sample questions for assessing diversity, equity, and inclusion across other social identities.*

	<b>CIRCLE A CHOICE</b>	<b>SECURING ORGANIZATIONAL &amp; LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT TO RACE EQUITY WORK</b>
		<i>GOAL:</i> Racial equity is a core part of the mission, advocated for throughout the organization and communicated broadly.
Unknown	1 2 3 4 5	The organization incorporates race equity into its mission, vision, values, and/or other organizational identity statements.
Unknown	1 2 3 4 5	The organization communicates to its stakeholders and supports its values and work around racial justice.
Unknown	1 2 3 4 5	The organization has allocated financial and human resources toward internal and/or external race equity work. This may include assigning personnel or funding for coordination of work, development and implementation of plans, and/or monitoring and evaluation work.
Unknown	1 2 3 4 5	The organization encourages/makes trainings available on an ongoing basis to staff, board, and volunteers to support equity, anti-racism, and anti-bias work.
Unknown	1 2 3 4 5	The organization has an equity plan in place that articulates the value of prioritizing equity and racial equity, identifies key goals, and suggests measures for ongoing accountability to those goals and opportunities for evaluating progress.
		For each of the following, the group is diverse across demographics and perspectives and reflects the communities the organization seeks to impact with its work:
Unknown	1 2 3 4 5	Board
Unknown	1 2 3 4 5	Staff
Unknown	1 2 3 4 5	Volunteers
Unknown	1 2 3 4 5	Organizational Partners/Allies

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 Community Supporters/Local Donors

For each of the following, there is an understanding of the impact of and need to address cultural, institutional, and structural racism and advance racial equity:

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 Board

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 Staff

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 Volunteers

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 Organizational Partners/Allies

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 Community Supporters/Local Donors

**CREATING MORE EQUITABLE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**  
*Goal:* Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) engaging with the organization, feel included, valued, and respected.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 The organization creates space for discussing issues of race and racism in ways that are relevant to the work.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 Cultural “norms” of the organization, spoken or unspoken, allow for questions, issues, and concerns about racial dynamics internally to be openly discussed and addressed.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 Team members can meaningfully engage and work through tension when conflict arises.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 Staff/leadership/volunteers who identify as people of color or as belonging to other historically marginalized groups can bring their full identities to the workplace, if they choose, and feel recognized and respected.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 Staff who identify as people of color or as belonging to other historically marginalized groups can contribute to shaping our organizational culture.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 Community members feel welcome and comfortable entering into our environment without having to conform to dominant (white) cultural expectations.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 The organization encourages ideas, strategies, initiatives, and feedback from all stakeholders of the organization (including frontline staff, volunteers, clients - not only those with positional authority).

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 When planning internal meetings and gatherings, the organization considers accessibility and inclusion factors like language access/interpretation, accommodations, childcare, food, and location.

**RECRUITING, HIRING, & RETAINING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE**  
*Goal:* Creating and maintaining a strong and diverse team where BIPOC folks are resourced to thrive and lead.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 The organization has benchmarks to work toward leadership and professional development and retention of staff and volunteers of color.

Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	The organization has internal hiring policies to address hiring inequities and promote outreach, recruitment, and retention of marginalized communities, specifically people of color.
Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	The organization acts on suggested equity practices in recruitment and hiring, including but not limited to posting salary ranges, considering “equivalent experience” as comparable to formal education, and/or anonymized reviews of applications.
Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	The organization has explicit policies prohibiting discrimination, microaggressions, and harassment of people of color as well as a mechanism in place to address issues raised regarding racial or other equity-related barriers for opportunity occurring in the workplace.
Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	The organization evaluates staff, volunteers, and leadership, during performance reviews or otherwise, on the development or application of anti-racism and pro-equity skills.
Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	The organization acknowledges that contributions made by staff, volunteers, and leadership toward the creation of an anti-racist and pro-equity environment are inherently valuable to the mission and success of the organization.
Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	The organization has people of color and people of color-led organizations robustly represented within its pipeline of leaders and decision-makers.
Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	Staff and volunteers of color play a meaningful role in identifying and participating in professional and leadership development opportunities.
Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	The organization provides a living wage to all personnel that considers the regional cost of living (e.g., housing, food, transportation, childcare, health care).

**DEVELOPING ACCOUNTABILITY TO AND PARTNERSHIP WITH COMMUNITIES OF COLOR**  
*Goal:* Building trusting, two-way relationships and aligning the organization’s decision-making with community priorities

Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	The organization intentionally identifies and builds two-way relationships with organizations and communities of color as key, relevant stakeholders.
Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	The organization practices community engagement in ways that allow voices, perspectives, and input from communities of color to drive the organization's purpose and overall decision-making.
Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	The organization has evaluated and taken steps to address structural barriers that may be preventing clients and/or communities of color from engaging with its services (i.e., funding, language access, documentation requirements).
Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	The organization has accountable relationships with community partners, allowing them to be aware of and understand organizational decisions as they are made.
Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	The organization has policies and practices in place that allow for responsiveness when community-based partners ask for immediate support and action.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 The organization has policies and/or processes in place that allow organizational practices to be reviewed with community partner input and considered for change or elimination.

**PRACTICING ANTI-RACISM IN PROGRAMS, ADVOCACY, & DECISION-MAKING**

*Goal:* The organization develops and consistently applies a racial justice analysis to inform its decision-making and advocacy efforts.

Circle a Choice

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 The organization has explicit policies and/or practices in place to ensure that communities of color are a part of decision-making on an ongoing basis during the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policy/advocacy initiatives.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 The organization has explicit policies and/or practices in place, ensuring that clients/communities most impacted by the organization's work are a part of decision-making on an ongoing basis during the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policy/advocacy initiatives.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 The organization has policies in place that support collecting, tracking, and analyzing data on racial and other demographics to inform program goals and advance racial equity (e.g., a policy that enables client data to be disaggregated by race).

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 The organization analyzes and addresses racial disparities that surface in the course of service and program delivery (e.g., underrepresentation in programs) as well as outcomes.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 The organization takes racial equity principles into account when deciding how and where to allocate resources to projects, staffing, contracts, and investments.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 The organization advocates for the inclusion of racial justice issues when working with other organizations and coalitions.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 The organization consistently uses inclusive and culturally responsive language in both internal and external communications.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 When planning programs and events, the organization considers accessibility and inclusion factors like language access/interpretation, accommodations for disabilities, childcare, food, and proximity to transportation.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 The organization proactively and intentionally reaches communities of color and understands and addresses the needs of clients of color.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 In making programmatic/advocacy/policy/case decisions, the organization considers how the decision will benefit and/or harm communities of color.

Unknown 1 2 3 4 5 In setting programmatic/advocacy/policy/case priorities, the organization considers whether the decision will strengthen or undermine its goals around racial equity.



## PART 4: GOING DEEPER: STRATEGIES TO CREATE A MORE EQUITY-MINDED ORGANIZATION

Part 4 maps to the sections of REJI Organizational Assessment and takes you further into each with strategies, questions to consider, and best practices. As you further explore what your organizational work looks in terms of race equity, see sample equity plans at Tool F and G within the Appendix.

### *Securing Organizational & Leadership Commitment*

Now more than ever, equity & justice partners need strong, resilient, values-driven leadership and aligned commitment across stakeholders to tackle the disparate treatment and disproportionate harm faced by marginalized and vulnerable groups for whom race, poverty, and other target social identities often intersect, all the more so in the face of COVID-19. This requires intentionality, effort, and both human and financial resources.

The foundational steps listed above are a helpful starting point and cannot be understated: developing and articulating clear goals and the connection to mission work, identifying champions for the work, creating space for authentic relationship-building and difficult conversations, surfacing cultural dynamics and cross-difference-related tensions within the organization, bracing for change. Going further, transforming institutions from exclusionary to equitable and inclusive requires a commitment to an intentional re-envisioning of the present and future, examining internal operations and external strategies, collaborators, partnerships, culture, spoken and unspoken norms, and employee demographics and experience. Employees spend the bulk of their waking hours at work, and the weight of their intersectional identities travels with them.



Transforming this racialized experience within the context of employment is achievable when racial equity is centered as a core value and institutional goal. Our work as equity-minded leaders and partners must be to generate enough commitment so that the values underlying our efforts become so ingrained that new practices and ways of operating become routine and expected. Instead of one-off trainings, a sustained pattern of ongoing professional development and learning around inclusion and equity is encouraged and expected; instead of having a task force or committee, equity work is infused into every process.

While there is not an exhaustive checklist for how to generate or express a commitment to race equity, a few components are critical:

### *“Talking the Talk” of Race Equity:*

- ↳ The organization articulates an express commitment to race equity work.
- ↳ Ambassadors for the organization (e.g. staff, board, volunteers) – and particularly decision-makers for the organization – understand why to prioritize efforts to advance race equity and how that work connects to the organization’s mission, vision, and values.
- ↳ The organization regularly communicates about the work it is doing to reduce inequities and further racial justice.

### *“Walking the Talk” of Race Equity*

- ↳ The organization is actively investing financial and human resource in learning, development, support, and action around race equity.
- ↳ The organization’s stated values are demonstrably seen and incorporated into internal practices, policies, and culture.
- ↳ The organization is willing to shift and potentially disrupt its ways of doing business to achieve better outcomes for staff, volunteers, partners, and clients of color.



When we consider changing how we do business, this encompasses more than just the most visible and easily articulable “wins” on matters of equity and does not mean just serving or engaging more clients or communities of color. Instead, we examine where power is truly held within the organization – where decisions are made, where resources are allocated – and consider how that power can be more equitably distributed and shifted to those who are most affected by our work and decisions.

### ***Creating More Equitable Organizational Culture***

To take an equitable approach, an organization must both surface and recognize its culture – its norms, patterns of behavior, and expectations (as described above) – and examine where and how organizational culture is driven by “[white supremacy culture](#).” The premise of white supremacy culture is the often unspoken and coded notion that the values, behaviors, practices, beliefs, and ways of working associated with white people are seen as superior to those of people of color and other marginalized identities. Hairstyles, fragrances, dresses, jewelry; manners of speaking; how we socialize; attention to timing, deadlines, and

tardiness; what pictures we post in our workspaces; how collaboratively or competitively we work with others; how we approach problems and craft solutions – are all guided by the dominant culture that surrounds us and what we come to view as our ‘normal.’



White Culture is the water we all swim in

Examining white supremacy culture is how we investigate the unofficial rulebook for how we operate and define success in the workplace. For most white people, it is distressing to understand the effects of this “invisible” force; for many Black, Indigenous, and people of color, this force is quite visible and engrained into daily life. For organizations to transform their culture, they need to diagnose, disrupt, and dismantle some common dynamics. Below we examine characteristics of white supremacy culture, some highlighted specifically in Dismantling Racism’s [white supremacy culture](#) article, and others identified by racial justice advocates and anti-racist community organizers as Eurocentric standards that inherently devalues other ways of operating. All these characteristics surface the intrinsic values of workplace culture (and the law and justice system generally).

### **WHITE SUPREMACY CULTURE**

Perfectionism  
 Defensiveness  
 Quantity Over Quality  
 Sense of Urgency  
 Individualism  
 Worship of the Written Word  
 Paternalism  
 Progress is Bigger, More  
 Either/Or Thinking  
 Power Hoarding  
 Right to Comfort  
 Fear of Open Conflict

Built on the work of many anti-racist community organizers and racial justice advocates, this list of white supremacy culture characteristics is a powerful tool to ensure all people, ways of being, knowing, and addressing problems, are valued within your organization.

To learn more about white supremacy culture, antidotes and its harms within organizations, [click here to view the article](#) from the Dismantling Racism workbook.

## **Examples of Dominant Culture & Norms Within Legal Organizations**

**Power Hoarding.** Because we work in justice systems that value prestige, hierarchy, and decisions made by authority figures, our organizations are particularly susceptible to reinforcing less-than-democratic structures that are not accountable to communities most directly impacted by the work and decisions of the organization or even staff lower on the organizational chart. We have inherited traditional governance models with line staff, middle management, senior leadership, and boards of directors. This system is so deeply rooted in our operations and ways of thinking that we can hardly imagine alternate governance systems that may offer more egalitarian and equitable ways of operating and delivering services and social change outcomes. Institutional power must be leveraged to build equity-minded organizations, not hoarded to maintain the status quo and the “way things have always been done.” Inequitable distribution of power is a pillar of how our unjust systems operate.

**Lack of Communication and/or Transparency.** Related to power hoarding, when positional leaders do not take sincere steps to communicate their values and engage all staff on an ongoing basis in meaningful opportunities to contribute to key decisions, it signals to staff, even unintentionally, that leadership does not trust their contributions, insights, feedback, and input. This results in a lack of collaboration and teamwork and generates cynicism and disempowerment, a toxic recipe where organizational equity and inclusion cannot be fully realized.

### **EQUITY MINDSET & ACTIONS**

**Explore egalitarian and other power sharing organizational governance structures. Learn more [here](#).**  
**Build greater trust in your organization. Learn more [here](#).**

**Fear of Open Conflict.** Although the justice system in the United States is built on open and adversarial conflict, many perceive or experience a culture of fear of open conflict in professional interactions and organizations, and that robust dialogue and disagreements are interpreted as hostile and unproductive. In lieu of open conflict, passive-aggressive communications and microaggressions tend to dominate and go unnoticed and unchallenged. Practicing anti-racism in our work *requires* difficult conversations and conflict to bring clarity and liberation.

**Fear of Talking about Race.** Related to fear of conflict, a fear of talking about race and racism prevails in many of our organizations. For many well-intentioned white people, the fear is sometimes rooted in not wanting to say the wrong thing and offend people of color. This fear is also rooted in a concern that some white people will feel alienated and that the process will create unnecessary conflict and distraction from perceived race-neutral “real work.” This work is viewed as less politically charged and perceived to be more appealing to

stakeholders with traditional positional power and authority, such as senior leadership, boards, external partners, and funders.

### **EQUITY MINDSET & ACTIONS**

**Create space for courageous conversations on race in ways that are relevant to the work. This may include making training available on an on-going basis to staff, board, and volunteers; encouraging open discussion; allowing staff time for racial caucusing and book clubs; having a race equity team composed of staff at all levels. Invest in resources supporting skill-building for navigating conflict, team-building, trust, and authentic relationships. Ensure that communication styles including verbal, writing, and body language expressed by BIPOC and people with other marginalized identities are understood, respected, and valued.**

**Perfectionism and Not Owning Mistakes.** For anyone who has participated in legal processes, it is not difficult to see how we might perpetuate a perfectionist mindset and related behaviors in our organizations. There is little room in our justice system for mistakes instead of seeing mistakes intrinsically human instead of an opportunity for learning. Responding to mistakes with perfectionism makes the stakes are too high. This mindset also significantly contributes to the fear of talking about race and racism where the stake can also feel high when BIPOC staff are sharing honestly the harm they are seeing or experiencing, and where they feel they must ‘make their case’ perfectly for racism to be taken seriously and ultimately their humanity to be valued.

### **EQUITY MINDSET & ACTION**

**Encourage and reinforce service-oriented, facilitative and transformative styles of “leadership” and encourage all staff to speak up and propose different ideas and solutions to complex problems without reprisal.**

**Engage in intentional leadership development practices with staff members who are BIPOC and other marginalized identities.**

Racial justice advocates and anti-racist community organizers for years have worked to highlight the values associated with the dominant (and white) culture prominent in our organizations include intrinsic *overvaluing* for **efficiency, quick fixes and high-tech solutions, “professionalism,” expertise** stamped by oppressive institutions rather than lived and grassroots knowledge from the community, **being bound by the “rules”** rather than exploring creative solutions. **Overattachment to reason, logic, statistics** at the expense of human emotion and storytelling, and **single-issue fragmentation** instead of analysis comprised of the whole picture, context, and history.

Any value can become oppressive when it is seen as the “best” or “only” value that is imposed on others by a dominant culture. In this case, where we see our entire society shaped by white supremacy culture, we see valuing of certain norms that invalidates and deems those of other norms or characteristics as ‘other.’ Equitable culture is about putting

relationships first, being human-centered, and ensure all ways of being are accepted, and those harmful are ended. We are human, so consider:

**Professionalism & “Work Ethic.”** Work ethic is deeply rooted in cultural norms and standards of professionalism. White cultural norms tend to value urgency and quantity at the expense of personal, family, and community life. When staff of color and other marginalized communities operate differently even with high-quality outcomes, professional judgment and work ethic is still called into question; behaviors that are necessitated by living in a capitalist society are deemed as character flaws or not being “committed.” Read this relevant piece that poses the questions: [Will COVID-19 end ‘white professional nonprofit culture’?](#)

**No ‘Quick Fixes’ - Seeking Silver Bullet Solutions to Deeply Complex Problems.** Legal advocates are trained and employed to solve problems and generate solutions. Legal and court processes are typically regimented and complex. When entangled in these systems and pressed with tight deadlines and a high-volume of client work, it is reasonable to desire solutions that address symptoms and achieve quick wins. In contrast, equity work is a lifelong process that often involves unexplored and unresolved dynamics. Individuals and organizations seeking a checklist, linear roadmap, or ‘check the box’ training to address cultural and structural challenges can feel frustrated. One useful framework understands that racism, conflict, and transforming systems [are ‘adaptive challenges’ and not ‘technical challenges.’](#) This invites us on a different path to meaningfully make progress.

#### ***EQUITY MINDSET & ACTION***

**Accepting non-closure allows for nuance and growth where there is discomfort and growth. It will feel unfinished, yet the path and solutions are part of an ongoing journey and transformation will arise through commitment to grow and learn.**

**“Be Yourself.”** Applicants are told at an interview, or it is implied in the onboarding process. Still, the reality is that it is easier said than done for Black, Indigenous, people of color, and those of other marginalized identities. From what attire or hairstyle is considered professional to how courtesy and professionalism are defined generally, often there is an additional invisible burden in white-dominant organizational culture to either assimilate or be further alienated from the dominant group. Marginalized groups start to adapt and absorb dominant culture and generate survival skills like “code-switching,” where different language, behavior, and identities are activated or hidden depending on the context. These tools are often invisible to white people. Sometimes, those activating these skills may even be unaware that they have cultivated these skills over time - often at a toll to themselves - to facilitate comfort for white people and minimize perceptions of threat.



**EQUITY MINDSET & ACTION**

**Imagine an organizational culture where a variety of work styles, methodologies and strategies for getting the work done are respected, honored and celebrated. Examine office work hour expectations, needs and various roles. Where is there flexibility? Define clear expectations for outcomes and results within a set timeframe.**

**“Predatory Listening.”** Legal advocates are constantly processing, working on problem-solving, and waiting for opportunities to advocate for their client or cause. These learned skills can manifest problematically in conversations about race, leading to active interrupting and drawing conclusions or formulating a response before someone has even stopped talking, rather than actively listening.

**EQUITY MINDSET & ACTION**

**Listen for understanding and connection. If your mind starts to create judgments instead turn to curiosity and wonder of what is causing the person to respond and feel the way they do. These are moments of deep learning and we cannot let them pass by.**

**Overvaluing Traditional Legal Strategies Such as Litigation.** The foundation of the U.S. law and justice system rests on adversarial court processes and litigation. Legal training typically focuses and prepares advocates for litigation, and in some instances, corporate transactional work. As such, legal and even equity & justice organizations have historically defaulted to and built their practices around these strategies and tend to prioritize and lend resources to individual client advocacy and, where possible, impact litigation. Administrative and informal advocacy and community lawyering work are not viewed as desirable or prestigious. Learn more about community lawyering in “Going Deeper” section *Applying an Anti-Racist Analysis to Programs, Advocacy, & Decision-Making*.

**EQUITY MINDSET & ACTION**

**Develop ongoing learning opportunities to develop greater racial justice competence skills. Encourage leadership to model this behavior by correcting their mistakes openly in front of staff, volunteers, and other community members.**

***The primary goal of transforming organizational is culturally authentic self-expression. Unpacking and understanding the profound power and effects of white supremacy culture and cultural racism is a life-long journey. For organizations committed to practicing anti-racism and advancing justice, this work must be rooted in acknowledging the importance of creating an environment where Black, Indigenous, people of color, and all staff - volunteers, clients, and partners - can bring their full identities and best selves to the workplace.***

### ***Additional White Supremacy Culture Resources***

1. Tema Okun, [Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture](#)
2. JustLead Washington, [White Supremacy Organizational Culture in the Time of COVID-19](#)
3. JustLead Washington, [White Supremacy Culture Part II: Time to Break Our Deadly Habits](#)
4. Columbia Legal Services, [Transforming Culture – An Examination of Workplace Values Through the Frame of White Dominant Culture](#)
5. Center for Community Organizations, [White Supremacy Culture in Organizations](#)
6. Woke @ Work, [White Women Doing White Supremacy Culture in Nonprofit Culture](#)
7. Compass Point, [Pushing Back Against Habits of White Supremacy During a Crisis](#)
8. SSIR, [The Bias of Professionalism Standards](#)
9. Columbia Legal Services, [Restoring Justice: Restorative Conflict Resolution](#)
10. Popatchuk & Associates, [Organizational Culture Assessment Tool](#)

### ***AWARENESS EXERCISE:***

**Take a moment to reflect on the above list that describes White Supremacy Culture. Check off as many you can relate to either because you notice it about yourself or because you see it in your organizational culture. After you check things off, what do you notice about what you're feeling in this moment? What is your impulse? Write it down.**

### **CAUCUSING AS A RACIAL JUSTICE STRATEGY**

A caucus, or an affinity group is an intentionally created space for those who share an identity to meet together for learning, support, and connection. Caucuses based on racial identity are often comprised of people of color, white people, people who hold multi-racial identities, or people who share specific racial or ethnic identities.

#### ***Why Caucus?***

People of color and white people experience race and racism differently. While our racial justice work to transform interactions, institutions, and systems requires collective efforts, we have both shared and separate work to do. For example, for People of Color, an affinity group can be a place to work with peers through experiences of overt, unintentional, and [Internalized Racial Oppression](#), to engage in



healing work, and to create strategies for liberation. Affinity space allows this work to be done without the traditional scrutiny of white people and offers space for building power within or as an alternative to white-dominated space.

For white people, an affinity group provides time and space to work intentionally on understanding and critically analyzing whiteness – this includes understanding dominant culture, the ways in which white people have benefitted from systems that privilege whiteness, and the ways white people might be intentionally or unintentionally perpetuating harm to People of Color. Affinity space puts the responsibility on white people to teach and learn from each other, rather than relying on People of Color to teach them, and it allows for inquiry and processing without causing harm to People of Color.<sup>46</sup>

### *“But This Feels Weird...”*

At first, separating feels uncomfortable and opposite to the notion of unifying with a shared goal of racial justice. Admittedly, this work is difficult, and initial resistance is common. For People of Color, lived and historical experience reasonably creates mistrust around the idea of separation and white colleagues meeting together. And white people are not accustomed to thinking of themselves as racialized. Further, white people practicing anti-racism strategies experience discomfort processing how they may have benefitted from racialized systems.

Yet whether in a board room or in a segregated neighborhood, separation occurs constantly in real life; affinity groups are a mechanism for understanding and interrogating that reality. It is helpful to emphasize that caucusing is merely a means to an end – the goal is to unify underneath a collective, shared vision of an anti-racist community.

### **Best Practices for Starting Caucuses**

- Like with all equity work, have a **goal** in mind and connect the process to your organization’s **mission**.
- **Generate buy-in** in advance by promoting the idea, explaining what it is and the value, and starting with shared frameworks, language, and resources.
- Think carefully about **logistics**, such as investing enough time for big conversations and where to meet.
- Choose the right **facilitation support** – external facilitation can be very helpful, though some organizations might want to build their internal capacity.

- Expect and **prepare for resistance**. Have resources available and be ready to answer questions.
- Create **ground rules** for conversations and **mechanisms for accountability**, particularly so that the group that has been traditionally marginalized knows what is happening in dominant spaces.
- Make an **ongoing commitment** and **invest** in this work. There is value even in simple processes like a working lunch or book discussion group, but a regular practice can help transform organizational culture and morale.
- Be **flexible** in your approach - different groups need different things. Marginalized groups often need support and space to process painful lived experiences and dominant groups often want curriculum and strategies. Base the work on what people need in the moment.

## ***Recruiting, Hiring, & Retaining a Diverse Workforce***

We know that diverse teams perform better and are more innovative and adaptive across numerous measures.<sup>10</sup> And according to the [2017 Non-Profit Employment Practices Survey](#), nonprofit leaders ranked diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as their top talent management priority.

Nonetheless, over half reported they do not have a DEI strategy. Many of us have good intentions, but for a variety of reasons, we often fail to execute on our top priorities, especially in terms of specific anti-racist human resources (HR) goals. The challenge is complex and nuanced, but there are concrete steps and actions organizations can take to make good on their priorities.

The following offers suggested practices for anyone who seeks to approach their human resource functions with an equity mindset. Though designed with Washington state-funded civil legal service organizations in mind, our goal is to offer curricula that any legal service organization

### ***WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, & EQUITY?***

***Diversity*** is focused on having people represent or reflect a range of perspectives and lived experiences. Having a representative number of BIPOC in your workforce is critical, yet alone is not enough. ***Inclusion*** is focused on voice and power. It welcomes in and integrates the diverse perspective, potentially centering BIPOC as leaders and true decision-makers. However, ***inclusive environments*** are not necessarily equitable - often marginalized individuals are provided access to decision-making spaces but only if adhering to the terms and norms of the dominant group. ***Equity*** is our goal. It focuses on process as well as results, demanding the employment of different strategies and tactics to achieve fairer outcomes.

can employ to enhance their supervisory practices and create a more equitable working environment.

To successfully hire a diverse team of individuals, it is important to develop an equitable hiring process with measures that help mitigate bias. But our job does not stop there. If we are successful in recruiting and hiring a diverse team into a culture that does not support all its members, we are setting ourselves up for attrition and rendering our hiring efforts moot.

## **Recruitment, Outreach, & Hiring**

What might seem on its face as straightforward and objective criteria for developing a job description may turn out to create barriers for Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and those of other structurally marginalized identities. The following practices are key to both developing the appropriate job description and recruiting a diverse candidate pool:

### **Goal**

*The organization acts on suggested equity practices in recruitment and hiring, including but not limited to posting salary ranges, considering “equivalent experience” as comparable to formal education, and/or anonymized reviews of applications.*

### **Recruiting a Diverse Candidate Pool**

- ✓ Draft job descriptions together with your team. Test out the job description to make sure it does not only appeal to those of privileged identities and white supremacy culture norms. Think about the words you use and be mindful of using inclusive language that can invite those with multi-cultural experiences.
- ✓ Branch out, and partner with community-based organizations community groups closely connected to or led by people of color and other marginalized identities to develop a targeted recruitment plan as overreliance on our usual networks prevents branching out to create a diverse applicant pool.
- ✓ Attend diversity, equity, and inclusive job fairs and other job fairs organized by law schools, colleges/universities, and community colleges that traditionally have more students and graduates of color and other marginalized identities.
- ✓ Personalize recruitment; call applicants and follow up.
- ✓ Reach out and find candidates. Use the internet and social media tools like LinkedIn to find competitive candidates but do not use this method exclusively.
- ✓ Maintain professional networks and make a note of potential candidates from marginalized identities. If you can, collect resumes and contact information.
- ✓ Recruit continuously—not only when there are openings.
- ✓ Go out for coffee. Build and develop relationships with potential candidates, keeping them in mind for future openings and/or asking them to assist in recruiting from their networks.

- ✓ Be open and honest. Transparency about your organization's race equity goals, commitment, journey, and continued opportunities for change is critical if you do not want candidates to feel "bait and switched."

### Highlight Your Equity Commitment and Be Transparent

- ✓ Model transparency and highlight the existing racial and ethnic diversity (or lack thereof) present at your organization to underscore your commitment to race equity and justice.
- ✓ Provide examples as to how your organization values race equity.
- ✓ Emphasize experience and skills over simply academic or professional degrees. Demonstrate a commitment to equity by offering incentives (financial or other) for specialized skills (such as language ability) or other lived experiences of value from candidates.
- ✓ Include experience with and commitment to race equity as a required qualification. Ask for a diversity, equity, and inclusion statement from candidates.
- ✓ Post the salary range.
- ✓ Make salaries public. Learn more about why this matters [here](#).
- ✓ Post the organizational commitment to race equity and justice within its hiring and retention practices.



Additionally, question the value and rationale and consider the race equity impacts of:

- ⊘ Using credit checks, criminal background checks, and e-verify
- ⊘ Asking candidates for salary history
- ⊘ Not including the salary range
- ⊘ Not making salaries publicly available

*Learn more and read about:* [inequitable hiring practices](#), [pay transparency](#), [posting salary ranges](#), using [salary history](#), and [credit checks](#).

### Ensuring a Diverse Hiring Committee and Equitable Selection

Building your hiring committee is a key initial step in the hiring process, as the committee should be involved in every stage of your search. Form a racially diverse recruiting and/or hiring a team that includes a mix of leaders, managers, supervisors, staff from other units, and staff that would report to the position to avoid similarity bias where inadvertent advantaging to candidates who are similar occurs while disadvantaging other candidates. Along with similarity bias, explore [all manifestations of bias](#) and/or ensure your hiring committee has training on race equity-related topics.



### **EQUITY MINDSET & ACTION**

**Looking for standard race equity interview questions? While you should adapt your questions to the position, having questions focused on race equity to assess racial competency is critical to ensure equity values are clearly communicated to the candidate and explore their comfortability and willingness to learn new skills related to practicing anti-racism.**

Removing bias from candidate evaluation requires a consistent process across all candidate interviews. Here are a few factors to consider:

1. Be aware of bias in application review. Consider [anonymized reviews of applications](#).
2. Develop a consistent set of interview questions.
3. Utilize behavior-based interviewing techniques.
4. Use inclusive language.
5. Ensure that you are meeting candidates' accessibility needs.

As with other stages in the hiring process, when it is time to review and consider candidates, established policies and practices can reduce subjectivity – and, therefore, potential bias – from your hiring committee and selection process. Not solely one but a combination of complementary strategies will advance equitable hiring.

1. Break down and clearly define the language used in your hiring discussions.
2. Utilize an assessment rubric.
3. Maintain awareness of bias in decision making.
4. Check references mindfully.
5. Offer fair compensation.

### ***HR Policies & Practices***

Recruitment and outreach tactics that are aimed at bringing greater diversity to an organization can often result in tokenism. To ensure organization-wide alignment and commitment to race equity and justice goals, the organization's policies must intentionally incorporate race equity practices. A phased-in race equity strategic plan and benchmarks for retention and leadership development informed by staff insights from all levels increases organizations' likelihood of delivering on its race equity goals.

#### ***Goal***

*The organization has internal hiring policies to address hiring inequities and promote outreach, recruitment and retention of marginalized communities, specifically Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.*

Even the process for engaging people in creating and drafting human resource policies must align with race equity goals. As you explore the below strategies, also review these two documents exploring 1) [debiasing techniques in HR and case-handling](#) and 2) [HR debiasing intervention examples](#).

## Use a Race Equity Analysis to Develop and Review Management Policies

- ✓ Build a Race Equity Team representing a diagonal slice of the organization including staff and volunteers at all levels to examine current hiring, recruitment, retention, and leadership development policies and practices.
- ✓ Formally empower the Race Equity Team with influence and decision-making authority to make changes to HR policies and practices.
- ✓ Engage and empower all staff in redesigning policies, practices, services, and programs.
- ✓ Adjust team members' workload to allow their full participation and accelerate their effectiveness through retreats, training, and authentic relationship building.
- ✓ Prioritize an adequately funded budget dedicated to supporting the race equity goals of the organization.
- ✓ Codify recruitment, outreach, retention, and leadership development practices. Each intentional step towards greater race equity practice should be drafted into a written policy. This iterative policy-making process should be made accessible to reflect race equity practices and ensure greater organizational commitment.
- ✓ Develop and widely communicate new race equity norms.
- ✓ Revise performance systems, onboarding, and development and training programs that support and highlight skills and competencies that reinforce new norms.

## Retention & Evaluation

One of the greatest challenges for organizations that have made progress in increasing diversity in their hiring process is retaining People of Color and other marginalized identities. Transforming our workplaces from white dominant culture spaces into welcoming and learning environments where all staff feel valued, empowered, heard, and probably most importantly, where they can present their authentic selves, is key to getting closer to achieving many organizational race equity goals.

Our daily habits and practices can either support or undermine our race equity efforts. As you reflect on your organization, consider the below-suggested practices:

### **Goals**

*The organization has policies explicitly prohibiting discrimination and harassment of People of Color as well as a mechanism in place to address issues raised regarding racial or other equity-related barriers for opportunity occurring in the workplace.*

*The organization evaluates staff, volunteers, and leadership, during performance reviews or otherwise, on the development or application of anti-racism and pro-equity skills.*

## Onboarding

Onboarding over the first 90 days of a team member's employment will set them up for a successful experience throughout their time with your organization. The following are high-level suggestions to incorporate within this initial time period:

- ✓ Create an onboarding checklist prior to the new hire start date.
- ✓ Location: Situate the new hire for success.
- ✓ Allow time for relationship building.
- ✓ Provide mentorship.
- ✓ Connect the new hire to technical support.
- ✓ Set expectations about workflow, communication, and feedback.

### One on One Staff & Supervisor Meetings

- ✓ All supervisors should create and verbalize an open-door policy.
- ✓ Supervisors should make time for regularly scheduled meetings with direct reports: *talk less, ask more, and actively listen often.*
- ✓ Be direct. Have open and honest conversations about how the organization is doing on meeting its race equity goals.
- ✓ Be proactive with developing and updating personalized retention plans.
- ✓ Make expectations explicit. Do not rely on supervisory norms that your staff member might not be aware of. Relatedly, train supervisors and staff to identify unspoken intangible organizational "norms collectively."

### Ongoing Performance Reviews & Giving Feedback

Much of what allows for a supportive and equitable workplace environment is to notice and address any fear of conflict, difficult conversations, or other factors that may interfere with planned, timely, objective performance feedback. For those in supervisory positions, this is made more challenging given the imperative of applying an equity analysis to a supervisee's performance as well as the supervisor's effectiveness in fulfilling supervisory responsibilities. Thus, there is a mutuality to creating an equitable workplace environment and supporting staff, and particularly BIPOC, once you've hired them.

#### Additional Performance Management Resources

- **Legal Services Corporation:** [Performance Criteria](#)
- **Legal Services Corporation:** [Sample Standards and Guidelines for Management of & Supervision of Legal Work](#)
- **The Management Center:** [Performance Problems Tools & Resources](#)
- **MIE (Management/Innovation/Excellence for Legal Aid):** [Performance Appraisal Sample Processes and Policies](#)
- **SHRM:** [Reduce the Leal Risks of Performance Reviews](#)

## Solidifying Equitable Culture through HR Practices

- ✓ Offer flexible work arrangements when possible.
- ✓ Similar to educational loan repayment assistance programs, consider other forms of compensation such as dependent care (including children and elderly family members) and transportation reimbursements/subsidies.
- ✓ Analyze and evaluate performance standards and compensation with a race equity analysis.
- ✓ Schedule “[stay interviews](#)” as well as planned opportunities for more freedom, challenge, growth, and recognition.
- ✓ Use post-exit interviews to identify the causes of turnover accurately.
- ✓ Conduct race equity audits. Regularly assess daily practices, race equity benchmarks, and goals through feedback from staff, volunteers, open community events such as town halls, community surveys, supervisor and team meetings and retreats, etc. The REJI Organizational Assessment Tool provides the kinds of questions to ask.
- ✓ Implement initiatives to increase race equity awareness and practices for all leaders and staff and create an organizational culture of ongoing learning.
- ✓ As emphasized above, create space for cultivating an organizational understanding of race and structural racism that invites and fully honors Black, Indigenous, people of color and those of other marginalized identities to share their personal experience of oppression. Creating this space does not always mean all people understand the patterns and harms of white supremacy, power, and privilege. Yet, we must allow for the necessary and difficult conversations that often white supremacy culture obscures. For example, BIPOC, and particularly women of color, face constant and overt racism in courtrooms and other legal, institutional spaces as part of their job. Connecting these overt experiences of racism to both the patterns of white supremacy in the legal profession and within the organization itself will sharpen the analysis and ability of all staff to interrupt, disrupt, and counter the daily racial attacks aimed at BIPOC.
- ✓ Work with supervisors and team leaders to create a supportive culture. Managers have an outsized influence on what team and organizational culture looks like. Is there a culture of growth and learning, or a climate of punishment and retaliation? Are authentic conversations encouraged, or is there a fear of speaking up? Can conversations about race, racism occur without those in positional authority getting defensive? Do your teams and employees share a common purpose? No organization is wholly positive or negative, and culture is hard to change, but supervisors have many tools available to them. In addition to co-creating, an overall human-centered, pro-equity, values-driven environment that supports learning and adaptation, concrete support like the following can boost morale and retain staff: networking activities, [affinity groups/caucusing](#), flexible work schedules, and exit interviews. See the [Creating More Equitable Organizational Culture](#) section of this toolkit and explore the role of supervisors in creating a supportive culture in [JustLead’s Supervision & Management Training Curriculum](#).



## Promotion/Advancement and Professional Development

The talent pipeline in the social sector is healthier at the “front door.” Mindsets, behaviors, and practices within our organizations need to significantly change to develop pipeline opportunities for advancement, promotion, and leadership roles for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. For example, you may achieve success in diversifying entry-level positions yet notice that your leadership is still overwhelmingly white and/or otherwise not reflective of the diversity of the communities you work with.

As you reflect on your organization, consider the below-suggested practices:

- ✓ Openly discuss professional development goals with all staff as well as opportunities, possible timelines, and strategies for advancement and promotion.
- ✓ Increase and publicize opportunities for advancement.
- ✓ In supervisory meetings, include a set agenda item on professional development and organizational race equity benchmarks.
- ✓ Audit promotion processes with equity in mind.
- ✓ Advertise and promote opportunities for training, mentoring, and coaching.
- ✓ Assess leadership and management skills, interests, and needs of the staff of color and offer regular trainings.
- ✓ Create on-the-job coaching and mentoring. Prioritize providing mentors/coaches for staff who are BIPOC and other marginalized identities. The reality of the everyday experience of living in a racist and oppressive society and working within the legal system, on top of unsustainable workloads and expectations, require additional support on burnout and secondary trauma. Providing this support is a key strategy to retain and support BIPOC staff.
- ✓ Allow time and funding for leadership and professional development programs.
- ✓ Create benchmarks for leadership development and retention of staff and volunteers of color.

### Goals

*The organization has people of color and people of color-led organizations robustly represented within its pipeline of leaders and decision-makers*

•  
*Staff and volunteers of color play a meaningful role identifying and participating in professional and leadership development opportunities.*

## Compensate & Reward Staff for Active Race Equity Activities

It is not an equitable expectation for those involved in these activities to take race equity committee work on top of their regular workload without adjustments and/or compensation. Not doing so disproportionately burdens BIPOC staff, who often are those identifying issues and who already bring invaluable experiences as a person with direct experience of racism and oppression.

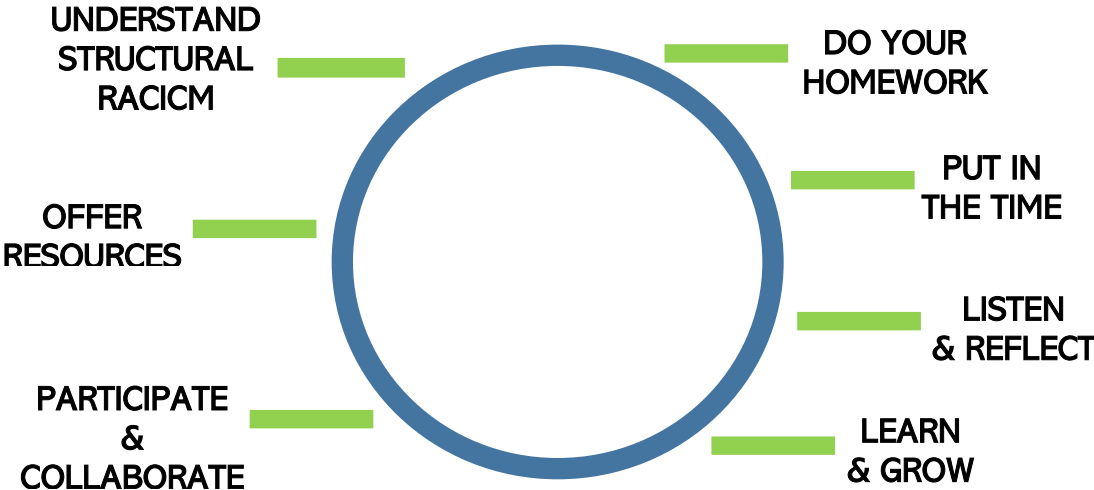
- ✓ Offer compensation (or other benefits) and ensure adjustments to workloads for participation in race equity and community outreach activities, including participation in conferences, committees, or coalitions related to diversity and race equity.
- ✓ Shift workloads so that staff have time to take part in race equity work, keeping in mind race equity work for Black, Indigenous, people of color can require a deeper emotional investment compared to those who are white given different lived experiences of daily exposure to racism, microaggressions, etc.

**For more on equitable retention and supervision practices, request a copy of [JustLead’s Equitable Practices for Supervisors Curriculum](#).**

***Developing Accountability to and Partnership with Communities of Color***

A constant and tireless truth is that those with the experience of oppression will most acutely know what needs to change to address that oppression. This is especially relevant as we work towards equity and fight for justice within the law and justice systems. When we do not have an accountable relationship with individuals and communities who are most harmed by racism, poverty, and other forms of structural oppression, we leave some communities behind and maintain a status quo that perpetuates harm.

As part of ongoing learning and circular practice of building trust and accountability (see diagram below), it is critical to explore how all members of your organization can engage in accountable relationship building. For more on the relationship-building process specifically, explore the JustLead guide on [Building Legal-Community Partnerships](#), which focuses specifically on building trust and meaningful relationships.



Circular Practice of Building Trust and Accountability, from [Building Legal-Community Partnerships](#)



## Where Do I Begin?

Often conversations revolving around community partnership can feel abstract, especially for those who may not have existing, accountable relationships. First, community partnerships, regardless of the goal, scope, or context, must be *relational*. Just as you approach relationships with friends and family members, when we undertake community engagement, outreach, and partnership, we are also practicing relationship-building. If you do not share the lived experiences of those you might meet (and even when you do), potential partners and community members are our neighbors – both geographically and within the [Circle of Human Concern](#) – and have invaluable experiences that can inform, guide, and direct our collective work towards equity & justice.

### ***EQUITY MINDSET & ACTION: RACE-CONSCIOUS COMMUNITY LAWYERING***

**We are not always members of the community with which we are attempting to build partnerships. In those cases, we must maintain a heightened awareness of our own implicit biases and those that our partners or clients may hold. We must also acknowledge legal advocates' default tendencies to take the lead and problem-solve and work to actively listen without judgment and understand the experiences of communities that have been harmed by racism. Read more [here](#).**

## Guiding Questions Before Engaging Community

As part of our work within the law and justice system, we may find ourselves faced with an injustice that we know is having a negative impact yet are not clear on how to address the injustice. With accountability to impacted communities in mind, our approach to these types of situations must still center on those groups who are most affected by the injustice.

The traditional model of lawyering asks that the client seek out the attorney. Yet, for effective community partnerships, we must seek out clients outside of our organizations and integrate ourselves into ongoing, authentic relationships with the community. This is especially true when we have identified an issue of interest from within our own organization before engaging community.<sup>14</sup>



If you have identified an issue that your organization would like to learn more about, use the following questions to navigate the types of consideration to be made when engaging a community on a specific issue (adapted from the Columbia Legal Services Race Equity Tool; see Tool J in the Toolkit):

1. Is this issue important to communities of color? How do you know? You may need to identify the community or group that already has begun work on the identified issue to begin building an accountable community partnership.

2. How was this issue identified? If it was not identified by the community, why not? What steps will you take to engage the community at each stage of the process, including implementation and monitoring?
3. What challenges exist to centering this work in the community and having it be community-led? How can you leverage your legal knowledge and shift power to address those challenges?
4. How will the community or group direct your work and make decisions? How will you communicate with the community or group? How often? How will you demonstrate accountability?
5. Who will do the lobbying, policy, and/or other legal work from your organization? Who has the final say on decision-making? On the materials or reports developed? Will the community or group have an opportunity to review those materials and be a part of the decision making?
6. If a coalition will be part of this work, how will it be formed, and how will the community or group make decisions? What will your organization's role be within the coalition?

## Accountability

In its most basic form, **accountability** is defined as being subject to the obligation to report, explain, or justify something; responsible; answerable.<sup>11</sup>

### Four Basic Principles of Accountability

- ✓ **Transparency**: Being clear about your goals, desires, intentions, organizational structure, rationale for decision-making, and weaknesses. The goal is to be as open as possible to build a meaningful relationship.
- ✓ **Participation**: Actively engaging with people about the decisions that affect them. The goal is to incorporate community voice and priorities into decision-making on an ongoing basis at all stages of planning - notably before strategies and solutions are developed and implemented.
- ✓ **Reflection and Deliberation**: Intentionally revisiting conversations to re-evaluate what the work has looked like and where it is headed. Although reflection and deliberation occur after participation, once it has begun the goal is to maintain continuous dialogue throughout the process.
- ✓ **Responsiveness**: The ability to make amendments and adjustments to issues raised by *reflection and deliberation* from community leaders. The goal is to ensure the community partnership is not forgotten when the going gets difficult and community leaders expresses issues, but instead to demonstrate active allyship.

Developed by Joshua Kahn. Beautiful Rising.<sup>47</sup>  
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When applied to community partnerships, we ensure that organizational decisions are guided by, understood, and accountable to the communities that would be most affected. Those working within the law and justice community have a unique responsibility to ensure that the potential impact of strategies and decisions are understood. With our power to do good, we must also stay vigilant of our power to commit harm unintentionally. With race equity as our goal, accountable partnerships provide invaluable insight into what needs to change and how our organizations can become advocates for addressing racial inequities.

### **EQUITY MINDSET & ACTION**

**Reflect on your organizational culture. Are the Four Basic Principles of Accountability of Transparency, Participation, Reflection/Deliberation, and Responsiveness reflected within the culture of your organization and demonstrated by staff and leadership? If not, consider how a fundamental understanding of accountability can benefit both your organizational culture and prepare you for accountable community partnerships.**

## ***Strategies for Identifying & Engaging Stakeholders***

When stakeholders are appropriately involved in all stages of a problem-solving or decision-making process, decisions are more richly informed, those affected are more likely to buy into the process and outcome, we establish authentic relationships and trust, and we generate opportunities for broader collaboration and impact.

A wide range of organizing and project management resources exist to help individuals, teams, organizations identify, and productively involve stakeholders. General considerations include:

- (1) Who needs to be involved in this decision?
- (2) How and to what extent should this stakeholder be involved?
- (3) How do we approach outreach, engagement, and processes through analysis of equity and accountability?

### **WHAT IS A STAKEHOLDER?**

**Any individual, group, or community who has a vested interest in the outcome of a decision being made or who may influence that decision.**

## Framework for Collaborative Decision-Making

When approaching a collaborative decision-making process such as making an advocacy decision, deciding about a funding opportunity, or engaging in strategic planning, a roadmap or plan of action can help group members move through steps in the process collectively, rather than everyone operating according to their own unique agenda. This plan of action involves several stages: Planning, Problem, Vision, Solution, and Execution. The **Planning** stage allows for time to considering goals, who needs to



participate and how, and what the overall process will look like. At the **Problem** stage, participants have an opportunity to explore various perspectives about what issues must be addressed, and the problem is analyzed carefully, with attention to root causes and systemic challenges. The **Vision** stage invites conversation and brainstorming about what the ideal future state looks like to encourage clarity and agreement around shared goals. After these stages, the group can move toward evaluating and selecting **Solutions** to be implemented and consider what steps are needed to **Execute** on the chosen solution(s).

Too often, those who are most affected by a problem are engaged late in the process, perhaps only to share feedback on a selected solution or provide limited input on what problems or challenges need to be addressed. Instead, an equitable approach to decision-making necessitates involvement at *all* phases, particularly within the planning and design phases.

### Identifying Stakeholders

Determining who should be involved in a policy or decision first necessitates that you have a clear idea in mind of what you are seeking to accomplish. Too many committees and ideas fail to recruit those who are most invested because we do not clearly articulate goals and why participation from diverse stakeholders is critical and valuable. We can then consider more specifically who should be involved and to what extent by conducting a formal or informal “Stakeholder Analysis.”

#### Stakeholder Analysis Questions:

- ↳ **Who should be involved?** Think about a mix of internal (e.g., board, staff, volunteers) and external (clients, community partners) individuals and groups. Prioritize those who are closest to the issue and who will be most impacted by the decision and those who have traditionally not held power in the process. You will likely also need a mix of those who have influence or authority over decisions and resources and those who may have the technical expertise needed to achieve the results you are seeking.

### **EQUITY MINDSET & ACTION**

**Be sure to include stakeholders who represent a wide range of perspectives, including demographic, cultural, status, and role diversity. Value personal and lived experience at least as much as professional and technical expertise and be sure to include hard-to-reach constituencies, even if additional effort or resource may be needed to engage those who have not participated previously.**

- ↳ ***How should various stakeholders participate?*** Interested individuals and groups can participate in a variety of ways, depending on their level of interest and investment. Many frameworks center on four or five levels of engagement: Informed, Consulted, Represented, Active/Involved, or Empowered. To determine what level of engagement makes sense for each individual or group, consider:
- What interests are at “stake”? What/how much might they stand to gain or lose?
  - To what extent do they want to be involved?
  - How important is their involvement in both understanding the problem and identifying solutions?
  - How much influence do they have to help carry out or block solutions and strategies?

### **Levels of Stakeholder Engagement**

<b><i>Informed</i></b>	Sometimes it is enough to let selected stakeholders know that you are working on a particular issue through, e.g. updates or newsletters.
<b><i>Consulted</i></b>	Consulted stakeholders are asked for their input and concerns and their views are considered by decision-makers when making their decisions.
<b><i>Represented</i></b>	Representatives of an invested group participate in planning and ongoing discussion with the assumption they can effectively speak for/act in the interests of the
<b><i>Active/Involved</i></b>	Individual stakeholders/groups play an active role at all stages of the process, framing and describing issues and
<b><i>Empowered</i></b>	Stakeholders take on decision-making and implementation

Adapted from the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law<sup>1</sup>

### **EQUITY MINDSET & ACTION**

**Equitable processes require time and intentionality. Create an environment that allows everyone to fully participate in conversation, planning, and decision-making. This means considering everything from time and location to how conversations are facilitated. Prioritize clear and transparent communication, follow-up and accountability, and the co-creation of a culture of mutual learning and respect.**

To learn more about Stakeholder Engagement/Analysis:

- [\*Stakeholder Engagement Tools for Action\*](#), Western and Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center & the Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services
- [\*Community Toolbox, Section 7: Involving People Most Affected by the Problem\*](#), Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas
- [\*Strategic Planning in Nonprofits \(SPiN\) Toolkit, Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit\*](#), Washington Nonprofit Institute
- [\*Community Engagement Guide\*](#), King County
- [\*Power Mapping\*](#), Andrew Boyd, Beautiful Rising

### ***Engaging Communities with an Asset-Based Mindset***

When a legal organization engages a community group, they bring the entire history of the law and justice system with them. Even before a partnership begins, the community already has perceptions of – and often experiences interacting with – the system a legal advocate or organization represents. Considering the ways we have seen *laws*, in fact, undermine *justice* in our society both in the past and in the present, it then becomes important when engaging and building a personal relationship with community stakeholders that we first seek to understand the priorities and unique strengths as defined by the community.

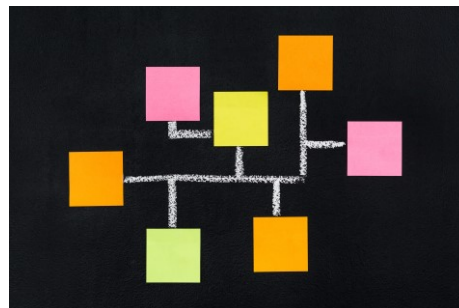
**The Foundational Principle:** When operating within communities and community groups, we must first remember that no two communities are exactly alike, just as no two people are exactly alike; thus, no cookie-cutter approach can be applied in maintaining and building an effective community partnership. A critical aspect of this is applying an “asset-based” approach that allows for the unique qualities, strengths, resources, and capacities of a community to be understood and centered as a foundation for relationships and strategies to be built upon.

This contrasts with a “deficit-based” model that sees only problems to be fixed – what a community is lacking and struggling with – and often leads to attempted solutions that are overly simplistic and not necessarily responsive or adapted to the particular situation. Worse, it withholds institutional power, resource, and mechanisms for accountability from the community closest to the problem and solution.



**Asset Mapping:** To use an asset-based approach requires a process of focusing on the capacities and skills of a community. What is the community already undertaking, organizing for, building towards? What do they value and utilize for themselves?

An approach to analyzing this is to identify the people, local associations/organizations, local institutions, physical assets, and the trusted “connectors” of the community through “asset mapping.” The goal of asset mapping ultimately is to build on what is already there. As an “outsider” organization engaging community, the pursuit must be to support the community with their own goals in mind ensuring that the wants and needs of the outsider do not drive the decision-making.



Five general categories can be used alongside community members to begin asset mapping:

- (1) *People* (e.g., community members various skills, gifts, experiences)
- (2) *Local Groups* (e.g., community-based groups with leadership centered within the community);
- (3) *Local Institutions*: (e.g., schools, libraries, private business, non-profits;
- (4) *Physical Resources* (e.g., land, buildings, community spaces); and
- (5) *Connectors* (e.g., those trusted and apart of the community making connections between individuals, association/organizations, and local institutions).<sup>12</sup>

### **EQUITY MINDSET & ACTION**

**As part of any legal and community partnership, all partners involved must decide what it means to be accountable to one another. Community leaders may re-define what an accountable relationship may look like to them beyond what is described here, but foundational building blocks for accountability include centering community voices, building trust, and shifting power.**

## ***Best Practices for Legal Organizations to Further Accountability & Relationship-Building in Community Engagement***

When engaging communities, regardless of how long the partnership has been in place, legal and other service organizations must remain vigilant to maintain our accountability to community partners. Structural racism operates across every facet of our society, and since service and advocacy organizations hold institutional power, they must strive to be intentional and regularly invest in community partnerships. Here are some best practices:



- ↳ ***Constantly seek out ways to build new relationships.*** One member of an organization developing a relationship with one community member may help in the short-term yet is not sustainable for a long-term community partnership.
- ↳ ***Providers and advocates must go out into the community to build relationships, not expect community members to walk through their doors.*** Depending on the community, engagement should look different to ensure barriers do not exist for community members to become involved. Learn what works best for the communities you seek to engage in.
- ↳ ***Regularly question assumptions and interrogate implicit racial biases*** to avoid miscommunications and unintentional harm.
- ↳ ***Be quick to own mistakes and missteps.*** Relationship-building requires honesty. Trust can be better established when we are willing to admit what went wrong and demonstrate our willingness to learn from it.
- ↳ ***Be willing to spend extended time and energy with members of the community to establish trust.*** Relationship and trust-building take time.
- ↳ ***Allow community members to voice their experiences fully.*** Resist the temptation to re-direct conversations. Those within a community being impacted by harmful policies and decisions are both closest to the problem, and possible solutions and best understand what perspectives and information are relevant to their own experiences.
- ↳ ***For more, explore JustLead's community guide to [Building Legal-Community Partnerships](#).***

**HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE DEMONSTRATING OUR  
ACCOUNTABILITY TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND THOSE  
MOST IMPACTED BY STRUCTURAL RACISM?**

**The answer will not come from within our organizations but  
from within the community.**

## ***Applying an Anti-Racist Analysis to Programs, Advocacy, & Decision-Making***

Equity & justice workers are increasingly seeking ways to incorporate structural and historical context, data, and, most importantly, the priorities and perspectives of communities affected by racism and poverty into their policies, advocacy, and decision-making. There are countless ways to do this, often depending on the type of work you are engaging in and the time and resources available to engage diverse stakeholders in your process. The following is a sampling of strategies to



consider for more inclusive processes that ensure relevancy and responsiveness to those most impacted by our work.

### ***Movement & Community Lawyering***

A movement or community lawyering mindset is based on two concepts: 1) building community power, and 2) centering community perspectives. As articulated by the [Shriver Center on Poverty Law](#), *community* lawyering can be described as a “process through which advocates contribute their legal knowledge and skills to support initiatives identified by the community and enhance the community’s power.” Relatedly, the organization [Law For Black Lives](#) defines *movement* lawyering as “taking direction from directly impacted communities and organizers, as opposed to imposing our leadership or expertise as legal advocates.” These concepts are intricately connected, and both aim to build community power. Further similarities and distinctions between movement and community lawyering, including the difference between accountability to the community and accountability to the client, can be found in JustLead’s guide to [Building Legal-Community Partnerships](#).

### **Leveraging Our Legal Knowledge & Shifting Power**

When lawyering takes the lead of community, particularly BIPOC-led communities, strategies are grounded in accountable relationships, thereby advancing race equity work. This approach is relevant for direct client representation as well, where lawyers have the technical knowledge, yet the client is the storyteller and the most critical resource in the case. The Immigrant Legal Resources Center explores this distinction in [Beyond Traditional Lawyering](#).

Adopting a community or movement lawyering mindset requires a paradigm shift compared to traditional legal approaches. Even with technical knowledge, lawyers must position themselves in ways where the client’s knowledge, experience, and story are not displaced. Instead, clients should be engaged as problem-solving partners in their legal cases. Additionally, we must ensure “the client [or impacted group], rather than the lawyer, defines the problem and solution, drives the advocacy, and serves as a spokesperson for negotiations and public testimony and appearances.”<sup>13</sup> This centers the lived experience of the client and the community, shifting power away from the lawyer or legal advocate.

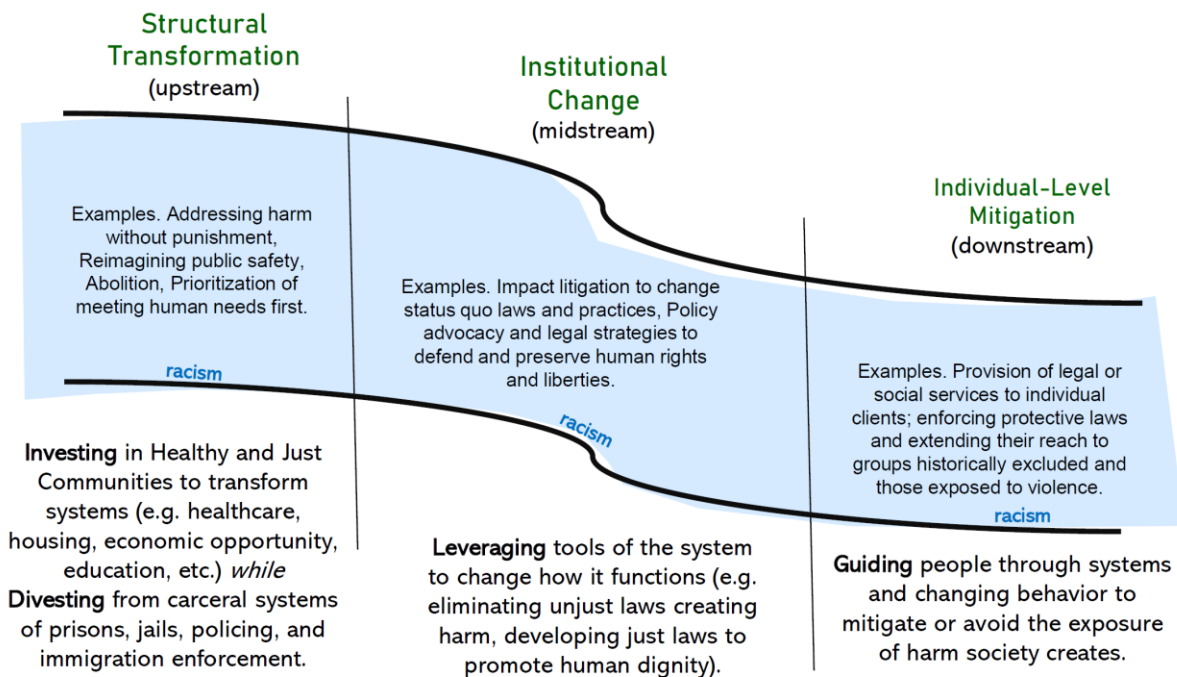
Within a community and movement lawyering approach, the attorney or legal advocate operates behind the scenes providing technical assistance and support, leaving the decisions about goals, approach, and timing, to the client whenever possible. On a community level, this process can be broken down into two notable components: (1) contributing legal knowledge and skills to support initiatives that are identified by communities of color (i.e., those most harmed by structural racism), and (2) proactively seeking ways to shift power to communities of color by centering their leadership and perspectives. The knowledge attorneys and legal advocates possess a resource that, if coupled with the perspectives and lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, can ultimately lead to meaningful positive change directed by those who know most what needs to change.

Movement/community lawyering is different than prescribing to community leaders and members what they need. Instead, legal advocates can build trust with community leaders to understand what is needed and provide legal strategies as a tool for achieving community-identified outcomes. In some cases, a legal strategy may not be the solution identified or chosen by community leaders. Lawyers and legal advocates must also be actively conscious of the real and perceived power they hold and de-center themselves in favor of centering the voice of community leaders, intentionally shifting power to the collective community body and ensuring the community's self-determination.

## How Can We Move Towards a Vision of Racial Justice? Build Our Analysis of “Working Ourselves Out of a Job”

Regardless of the type legal work you are engaging in, whether it is individual-level mitigation through direct client service and representation, institutional change (e.g., impact litigation), or structural transformation (dismantling and building new systems), without the knowledge and experiences of BIPOC-led groups and movements, we run the risk of perpetuating the status quo rather than progressing toward racial and economic justice.

Take a moment and explore the visual below to contextualize your work within the ‘stream’:



Concept adapted by Tara Bostock, Omid Bagheri Garakani

Consider for yourself, your organization, and the law and justice system as a whole: How often do we go upstream to address the root causes of the legal problems we see every day? Remember, all our societal systems are so deeply racialized that they will consistently output racial inequities wherever we look. This we must apply an anti-racism analysis to all of our work - whether it is upstream, midstream, or downstream - because structural racism flows through the 'stream' itself - it is the water that we are all swimming in. This

underscores the fact that practicing anti-racism is not a specialty or a side project; it is the central core of what we must do to advance the justice we seek. See **Tool G** within the Appendix for a tool on system thinking and 'the iceberg model' to guide you through envisioning what transformation looks like for your work.

### ***Decision-Making Criteria***

To apply a racial justice analysis to our decision-making, the central question to consider is: will this advance race equity, or will it undermine it? Building our muscles to answer this question consistently, with our team, departments, across the organization, and with community partners, will help this become a more automatic part of our work.

Many tools exist to aid in race equity-related decision-making. Explore the **Appendix** of this Toolkit for several examples of tools to understand the racial equity impact of a decision *before* the decision is made. For an extensive analysis, consider resources from [the Seattle Office for Civil Rights](#), including their [new tool on assessing the potential for racial inequity in time of COVID-19](#). These tools aim to weigh how inequities can be minimized. For a simple tool to this end that offers these key fundamental questions to consider, print out the [Racial Equity Impact Assessment Pocket Guide](#) from Voices for Racial Justice, based in Minneapolis. **A REJI Racial Equity Impact Assessment tool is also included in the Appendix as Tool B.**

Before you use any of these tools, however, it is important to understand that the outcome of a decision using any racial equity analysis necessarily will lead to an outcome that will go against the grain of what has been done previously. Because we know the systems we operate in are inequitable and create harm for communities of color, our efforts go against the systems of power that drive the status quo. It may be uncomfortable or require agility to move in a different direction at any given moment. Your facilitation or resistance in these moments will decide the racial impact of the decision.

Relatedly, when using a racial equity tool, it is critical to ensure those using the tool 1) know how to use the tool and 2) and have enough of a race equity analysis for the tool to be used correctly. Whenever possible, include stakeholders or members of the impacted community (notably BIPOC) in the decision-making process to ensure varied and necessary perspectives. Lastly, keep in mind that if you, your board, or other members of your organization, do not truly hold values of equity, justice, anti-racism, including the centering of community perspectives, no decision-making tool or set of questions will guide you towards race equity.

### ***Developing & Supporting Advocacy and Priorities Identified by Communities of Color***

Priority-setting within legal services has historically been part of periodic strategic planning processes, sometimes using a "zero-sum" approach to allocate limited resources. Various factors are identified and weighted to determine their relative importance, such as considering the substantive law area (e.g., housing, health, family law, consumer issues, discrimination), which communities to serve, and which forums hold the most promise for



advocacy success (such as judicial, executive, legislative, community action, or public opinion).

In the past, priority-setting processes have not universally applied a critical race analysis except on an *ad hoc*, sporadic basis. Moving ahead, we must ensure that those communities most harmed by structural racialization and the systems we are working within drive priority-setting processes and that a critical race analysis is applied to our equity & justice system work. See **Tool I** - a race equity tool from Columbia Legal services focused on evaluating strategies supporting community-identified priorities.

## Using Data

Data is a critical strategy to advance and practice anti-racist work. Yet, data and research have a racist history advancing white supremacist norms and ideas in and ignoring the people who are being “studied.” Alongside academia, research methods, and other institutional practices related to data collection and analysis, we must be intentional not to perpetuate ways of knowing and being that solely value Western ideas and norms.

In other words, data is not neutral. What are other valuable forms of information and research methodologies that we can engage in evaluating impact and progress toward our goals? Depending on how the data is collected, who is designing the questions, what is defined as adequate data, and the ways the data is interpreted, this can mean many different things for your work and any efforts to ensure your use of data promotes race equity and doesn’t undermine it. Indigenous scholars, in particular, are leaders in what anti-racist and decolonizing data & research methods look like. Linda Tuhiwai Smith explores this in detail with their book [Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples](#). The Urban Indian Health Institute explores what ‘[decolonizing data](#)’ means in its work to advance the health of Native people and address the [missing and murdered indigenous women and girls \(MMIWG\) crisis in Washington State](#). The Black women-led [Black Mamma Matter Alliance](#) also explores the importance of [decolonizing research in Black maternal health](#).

When those directly harmed can shape the design of the question being asked, engage with researchers in culturally inclusive ways, and be a part of the interoperation of data collected, we see how data can be an effective tool for advocacy, examining racial inequities, and centering those most harmed by unjust systems. These tools examine data and information that track patterns of disparate impact on low-income Black, Indigenous, communities of color and those of other structurally marginalized communities.

Other examples include GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping,<sup>15</sup> decennial and updated census and demographic data, and broad data on related issues like health outcomes, income, housing, etc. Advocates have generated powerful partnerships with community-based and academic research institutions to carry out these strategies effectively. For more information on resource mapping and GIS, visit additional resources from [Justice Mapping](#) and [Kirwan Institute](#).

When confronted with data and information that shine the light on racial disparities, governmental entities and policymakers are placed in the difficult position of either having to deny the validity of their data or acknowledge the disparities and justifying or committing



to change. The Urban Institute explores similar challenges for policy research institutions in their report [Confronting Structural Racism in Research and Policy Analysis](#). They also own their organization's journey to shift its data and research practices.

In terms of data collecting for your organization, how will you know if you have reached your racial equity goals? As you design your goal and work, allow for various methods of data collection with your organization. Perhaps members of your organization have no problems with an online survey, yet also include reflective and open-ended questions to allow for rich responses. Ensure data you collect as part of programming and working with community is shaped by them, is disaggregated by race not to erase entire communities who may get lost in racial categories, and ensure you bring data collected and any reports back to those who were surveyed. These practices are relevant whether you consider an internal policy or process, such as determining your rate of staff turnover, or an external policy or program.

### ***Shifting from “Intent” to “Impact” within the Legal System***

Terms and concepts such as “race neutrality” or “color-blindness” rely on the presumption that our society’s present-day status quo is neutral. This requires us to ignore foundational historical context and the cumulative, multi-generational toxic effects of structural racialization and other forms of structural bias on individuals, communities, and society.

By imposing the burden on those seeking racial justice to show discriminatory intent or disparate treatment as opposed to a disparate impact on communities of color, the law, and justice systems have historically placed an often-insurmountable obstacle in the way of those seeking to change a racialized status quo. In the 2015 case *Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs v. Inclusive Communities Project, Inc.*, 135 S.Ct. 2507 (2015), the U.S. Supreme Court acknowledged disparate impact claims to be allowable under the Fair Housing Act. Citing the 1988 Fair Housing Act Amendments, the decision acknowledges that disparate impact plays a role in uncovering discriminatory intent; it permits plaintiffs to counteract unconscious prejudices and disguised attitudes.

The Washington Supreme Court has already developed a strong track record of acknowledging the existence and damaging effects of structural racialization within the law and justice system. For instance, in considering the process of jury selection, the Court has noted that “Racism now lives not in the open but beneath the surface—in our institutions and our subconscious thought processes—because we suppress it and because we create it anew through cognitive processes that have nothing to do with racial animus.... A requirement of conscious discrimination is especially disconcerting because it seemingly requires judges to accuse attorneys of deceit and racism to sustain a *Batson* (striking a juror) challenge.” *State v. Saint Calle*, 178 Wash. 2d 34 (2013).

In response, the Court created a new General Rule (GR 37) governing jury selection, directly addressing the impact that both conscious and “implicit, institutional, and unconscious biases” play in the exclusion of potential jurors.<sup>16</sup> These judicial efforts parallel the race equity workload to be carried not only by equity & justice workers within their own organizational and advocacy efforts but by the executive and legislative branches of state and local governments in communities committed to advancing racial equity.

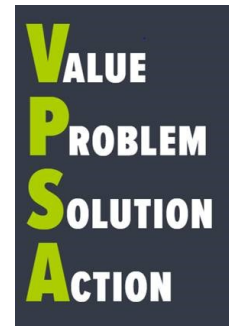
## ***Communications & Framing***

The power of storytelling, messaging, and a communications framework in today's age is undeniable. Whether it is the media, policymakers, our community, neighbors, colleagues, friends, or family, how we communicate and who controls the message is critical to helping us change hearts and minds to advance race equity. This is, of course, easier said than done. For most of us, addressing race equity brings up strong emotions and sometimes physical reactions, affecting our ability to understand our audience, calibrate, and communicate our message effectively. The following is an introduction to some of the framing and communication tools that can help advocates develop persuasive stories and messages to advance race equity and justice.

### **Framing**

Framing draws on the science of social cognition to develop and shape a message that is perceived as persuasive by the audience you are trying to reach. The Opportunity Agenda has developed an extensive framework for social justice messaging that relies on a tool called VPSA, or Value, Problem, Solution, Action.<sup>17</sup> Make your own VPSA and view Opportunity Agenda's full Social Justice Communication Toolkit [here](#).

As you are considering equity in your communications strategies, also consider: how can you talk about and frame race in your messaging? Who is the right messenger for what you are trying to communicate - you or the community or group you are working with?<sup>18</sup>



### **The Power of Narrative Storytelling**

Community organizers have long used personal stories and transformed them into public narrative. It is at the heart of community-based leadership that shapes and connects personal and community values into action. It is most widely used as a call to action but is also essential for community and team building, strategy development, and the establishment of trust. Learn more from Beautiful Rising about the public narrative framework developed by Professor Marshall Ganz and the art of translating values into action through stories [here](#).

### **Who Controls the Narrative? What's the Counter Narrative?**

In our highly complex world of communications where the media is owned and often tightly controlled by corporate interests and where questions of "fake news" dominate the airwaves, we must be vigilant in our power analysis and power mapping to help us identify the people and institutions who create barriers to or who can help advance race equity. Once you have completed your power analysis or map on a specific issue or event, you can begin developing effective counter narratives. Learn more from Beautiful Rising about how to analyze and map sources of power to help you better identify people and institutions who can advance your race equity initiative [here](#).

## More About Values-Based Messaging and Communications Framing

- [Framing in Race-Conscious, Antipoverty Advocacy A Science-Based Guide to Delivering Your Most Persuasive Message.](#) This article from 2010 explore how race-consciousness can be utilized in your communications and advocacy work.
- [Vision, Values, and Voice: A Social Justice Communication Toolkit.](#) This toolkit explores messaging for social justice in ways that identify universal themes and values.

Explore the Appendix of this Toolkit for more on how to take this section and preceding sections take further with tools on equity plans, impact assessment, organizational change continuum, and more.

## THANK YOU

The struggle to turn our collective equity and justice vision into a reality is most certainly a marathon and not a sprint.

JustLead Washington is grateful for the many partners, funders, and contributors who have aided our critical work building capacity for equity & justice behaviors, informing the development of this 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the REJI Toolkit. The REJI Toolkit has been underwritten and is offered as a resource to the community by the Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid, with additional support from the Washington State Access to Justice Board. We also thank our partners at the Legal Foundation of Washington for their support advancing race equity & justice work through funding of unrestricted work, specifically supporting people who are undocumented and those confined to carceral institutions. And, we thank our REJI Partners and many others from the Race Equity & Justice Initiative who volunteered their time to develop this toolkit and for all the work they do in the community. To view a full list of our REJI Partners, please visit [www.wareji.org/partners](http://www.wareji.org/partners).

**OCLA**  
Office of Civil Legal Aid



Lastly, we are indebted to the many equity & justice workers that came before us. This Toolkit could not have been written without the collective contribution of the many individuals and collectives, past and present, who have been committed to anti-racism, racial justice, and the forging of belongingness and community. While JustLead is pleased to serve as a curator, synthesizer, and conduit to communicate this work to our law and justice community partners, readers are highly encouraged to explore the resources and links cited within this document to become directly familiar and connected with people and organizations who have created the path JustLead Washington walks on towards its vision of growing a sustainable network of legal and community leaders who can effectively and collaboratively work toward equity and justice in Washington State.

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This REJI Toolkit 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition was last updated in September 2020 and will be maintained and updated as a living document. The most updated version can be located on the [JustLead WA](http://JustLeadWA) and [REJI](http://REJI) websites. If we have omitted or incorrectly articulated any attributions or licensing information, or for inquiries on using the REJI Toolkit for commercial purposes, please contact [info@justleadwa.org](mailto:info@justleadwa.org). Photos not otherwise attributed licensed from istockphoto.com. To view a copy of the license, please visit [Creative Commons](http://Creative Commons).

## **APPENDIX: TOOLS FOR APPLYING AN EQUITY ANALYSIS**

The Appendix includes various resources developed by REJI and JustLead Washington as well as critical resources from our partners to supplement the race equity work laid out within this Toolkit.

## *Tool A: REJI Organizational Equity Plan Worksheet*

# WASHINGTON RACE EQUITY & JUSTICE INITIATIVE

The following provides guidance for identifying and starting to implement race equity work within your organization. This simple tool can help organize priorities after you have conducted an Organizational Equity Assessment or gathered other data and are ready to develop an Organizational Equity Plan.

1. How would you describe the ultimate impact are you seeking to achieve through your organizational equity work? What is your “why”?

2. Review REJI’s “Dimensions” of Equity Work based on the REJI Organizational Assessment on page 25 of the Toolkit:
  - a. What inequities or challenges do you seek to address?
  - b. What goals or outcomes do you most hope to achieve within 1-2 years?

DIMENSION	CHALLENGES	GOALS
Organizational/Leadership Commitment to Equity		
Creating Equitable Organizational Culture		
Recruiting, Hiring, & Retaining a Diverse Workforce		



DIMENSION	CHALLENGES	GOALS
Developing Accountable Relationships with Impacted Communities		
Applying an Anti-Racism Lens to Programs, Advocacy, & Decision-Making		

3. For each goal, identify 2-3 activities that you could carry out within the next 1-2 years to help move you toward this goal:

**GOAL #1:**

<p><b>ACTIVITY 1:</b></p> <p><b>ACTIVITY 2:</b></p> <p><b>ACTIVITY 3:</b></p>
---

**GOAL #2:**

<p><b>ACTIVITY 1:</b></p> <p><b>ACTIVITY 2:</b></p> <p><b>ACTIVITY 3:</b></p>
---

**GOAL #3:****ACTIVITY 1:****ACTIVITY 2:****ACTIVITY 3:**

4. Which individuals, groups, organizations, or other partners should participate in the planning and execution of this work? Consider who is most impacted by the problem(s) you have identified. How will you invite them into this process?
  
5. Who else do you need to buy-in or invest for these strategies to be successful?
  
6. What resistance might you need to address to ultimately be successful in your work?
  
7. What human, financial, or other resources will you need to accomplish these activities? Include a line-item budget if possible.
  
8. What is your anticipated timeline for key activities?
  
9. Who should be responsible for making key decisions for this project?
  
10. Who can be responsible for implementing key activities?

11. How will you know if you have been successful in moving toward your identified goals?
  
12. How will participants in this work stay in communication with and accountable to one another and with those most impacted by this work?
  
13. How will you reflect on, learn from, and celebrate your accomplishments?

### Equity Action Plan Samples & Templates

1. *City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative 2019-2021 Strategy*. See Appendix Tool E
2. *Legal Services NYC Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Plan*: See Appendix Tool F.
3. [National Legal Aid & Defender Association \(NLADA\) Racial Justice Action Plan](#)
4. [King County Equity & Social Justice Strategic Plan, 2016-2022](#):
5. [Government Alliance on Race & Equity \(GARE\) Racial Equity Plans: A How-To Manual](#)
6. [Demos Racial Equity Transformation](#)
7. [City of Ontario Anti-Racism Strategic Plan](#)
8. [The Heinz Endowments Racial Equity Outcome Toolkit](#)

# WASHINGTON RACE EQUITY & JUSTICE INITIATIVE

## ***Tool B: REJI Racial Equity Impact Assessment***

A Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA), also known as a Racial Impact Statement, can help a program or organization apply an equity analysis to its current operations, practices, priority-setting, and decision-making and in the development of new programs, policies, and initiatives. Generally, an equity impact assessment encourages examination of how already underrepresented or marginalized groups may be affected by practices, proposed actions, decisions, or organizational culture; a Racial Equity Impact Assessment more specifically considers how different racial and ethnic groups may be impacted. Organizational decision-making often happens out of routine or without intentionality, sometimes leading to unintended and inequitable consequences. An REIA can encourage explicit intentionality around equity. The following provides a sample set of questions to consider, which can be customized to fit your circumstances. To be meaningful, the process of developing an REIA should include people with a broad range of perspectives, including those most affected by the issue.

### **GOAL SETTING**

**What is the concern you are trying to address? What are you hoping to achieve through this program/policy/decision/change?**

*Equity & Justice Examples: Challenges in recruiting, hiring and retaining people of color; whether to apply for a new grant; revising a case acceptance policy*

**What are your *racial equity* goals for this decision or process? For example, are you trying to address an existing inequity?**

*Equity & Justice Examples: Retaining and promoting staff of color and white staff at equal rates; ensuring that hard-to-reach client populations do not experience barriers in accessing services*

## **CONSIDERING STAKEHOLDERS**

**Who will be most affected by this decision? In particular, consider which racial or ethnic group(s) might be most impacted by this decision. *Consider both internal groups, such as board, staff, and volunteers, as well as external stakeholders like current and potential clients, partners, funders, and communities.***

**How will you meaningfully involve individuals and communities of color (and other impacted communities) in your process and decision?**

## **UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE & POSSIBLE IMPACTS**

*You will need to gather data from a range of stakeholders and sources to surface a deep understanding of the issues on hand and to consider how your decision or plan might impact various communities.*

**What factors (institutions, existing policies, social conditions, etc.) associated with this issue might be affecting individuals or communities of color differently?**

**What are some of the root causes of these inequities?**

**Are there any compounding or intersecting dynamics that are relevant (e.g., gender inequities) or other marginalized or underrepresented groups who might be affected?**

Based on the data you have, how might this decision or action benefit or harm individuals or communities of color? What information is missing that needs to be gathered?

### **TAKING ACTION**

How will your decision or change increase or decrease racial equity? Are there any potential unintended consequences?

What strategies or ideas might make your process and outcome more equitable and minimize harm to individuals and communities of color?

How will you implement your plan in a sustainable way, with ongoing accountability to communities most impacted? How will you know if you have been successful?

**Additional Notes:**

#### ***Other Equity Impact Assessment Tools:***

1. [https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/RacialJusticeImpactAssessment\\_v5.pdf](https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/RacialJusticeImpactAssessment_v5.pdf)
2. [https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/RacialEquityToolkit\\_FINAL\\_August2012.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/RacialEquityToolkit_FINAL_August2012.pdf)
3. <https://www.cssp.org/policy/2015/Race-Equity-Impact-Assessment-Tool.pdf>
4. <https://kingcounty.gov/~media/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/documents/KingCountyEIRToolExamples.ashx?la=en>
5. <http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/praxisproject1.pdf>
6. [https://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/documents/RESJ\\_Tool\\_BrittinghamPark.pdf](https://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/documents/RESJ_Tool_BrittinghamPark.pdf)

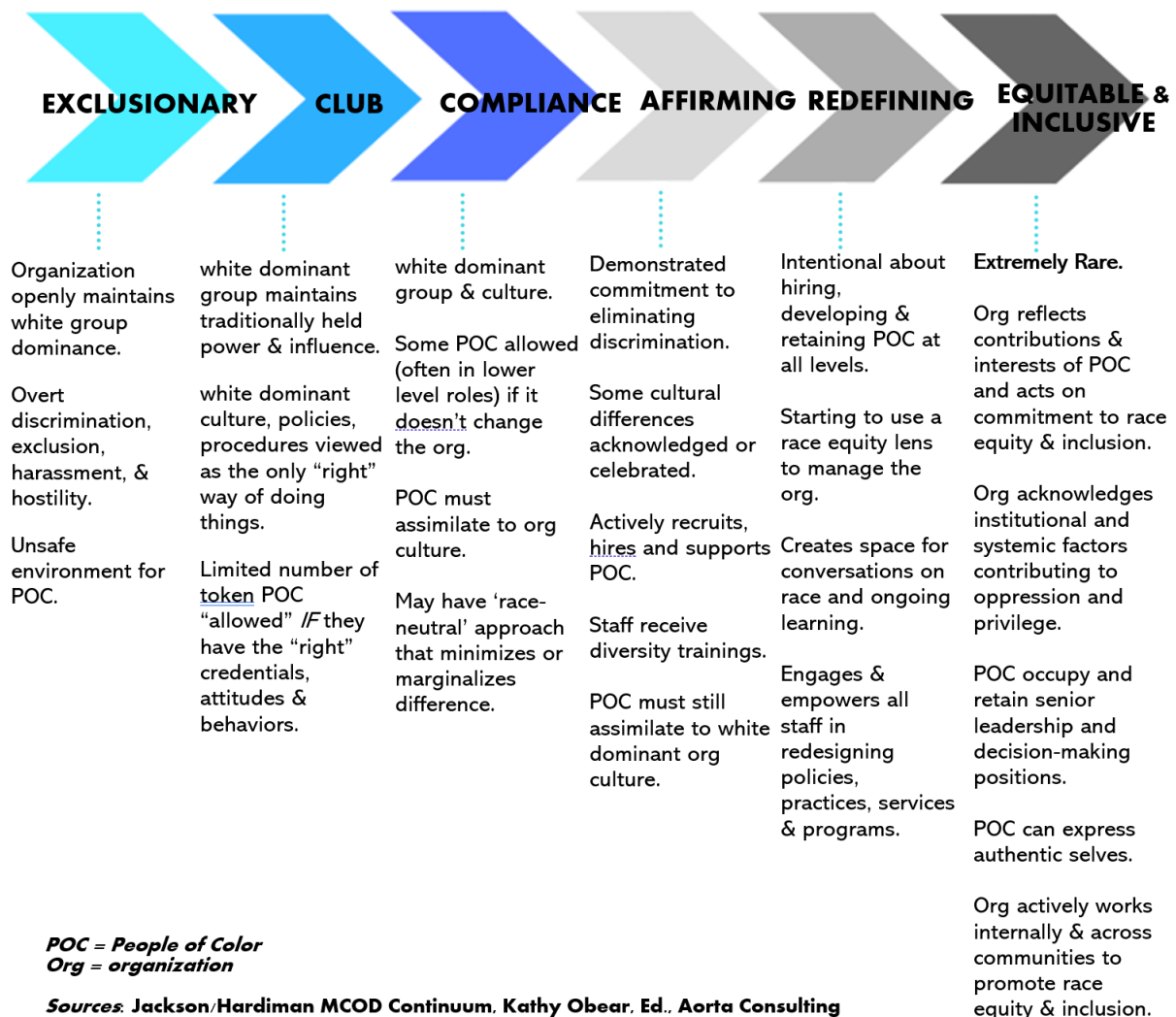


## Tool C: Race Equity Culture Continuum for Organizations

The [Crossroads Anti-Racist Organizational Continuum](#) is one powerful visual tool to quickly understand where an organization's starting point might be and illustrates the developmental stages towards committing to, demonstrating and delivering on the promise of Race Equity and Justice. The continuum below, adapted from Crossroads and EYC Associates, is drawn from a "Multicultural Organizational Development Continuum" by Bailey Jackson and Rita Hardiman and further developed by Andrea Avazian and Ronice Branding. It provides insight into where individuals are on their journey toward racial justice competence.

While reviewing the anti-racist continuum, engage stakeholders in discussion and reflection on which stage your organization currently sits in and the following questions:

- What brought you to choose that phase?
- What keeps your organization "stuck" in that phase?
- Do other phases on the continuum align with your organization as well? If so, which ones? Does your organization fall into more than one stage?
- What actions would your organization need to take to move up on the continuum?
- What else stands out you when you review this continuum with your organization in mind?



For strategies of action on each of the stages, explore the diagram below:



**EXCLUSIONARY** →

- ..... Build a shared understanding of the current exclusionary practices.
- ..... Gather data about the impact of status quo on members and reputation of the org.
- ..... Identify any “levers for change” to shift the status quo (i.e., bias incidents, potential law suits, drop in retention).
- ..... Increase visibility of leaders reinforcing their commitment to create a safe, inclusive workplace environment and policies.

**CLUB** →

- ..... Create a race equity team/committee with diverse representation. Adjust members’ work load to allow full participation.
- ..... Create space for conversation about race through retreats, trainings, and dialogue.
- ..... Conduct an audit with internal and external stakeholders to gather data about org culture such as recruitment and retention of staff of color, grievances, client data, etc. to inform new equitable policies.



**COMPLIANCE** →

- ..... Continue to collect and analyze data.
- ..... Develop long-term equity & inclusion plan.
- ..... Continue training of leadership and staff.
- ..... Clarify and communicate clear expectations for quality of experience for all clients and staff across race.
- ..... Revise performance system to measure race equity practices.
- ..... Implement an initiative to increase race equity of all leaders and staff.

**AFFIRMING** →

- ..... Leaders review org-wide data on recruitment, retention, development and promotions regularly.
- ..... Conduct feedback sessions with board and staff to diagnose data from the audits.
- ..... Empower a race equity team to work with leadership to address priority issues identified in audit.
- ..... Create space for affinity group learning and connection.
- ..... Train all staff on how to integrate equity and inclusion into their day-to-day activities.


**REDEFINING** **EQUITABLE & INCLUSIVE**
**GOAL**

**Infuse Equity & Inclusion in Everything We Do**

**REDEFINING**

- ..... New race equity norms are communicated widely.
- ..... Revise performance systems, onboarding, and training to highlight key skills and competencies that support the new norms.
- ..... Regular analysis and revision of policies, practices and procedures to ensure that a “race equity analysis” is actively engaged in all planning and decision-making processes, including recruiting and hiring.
- ..... Enhance community outreach efforts and partnership initiatives to build accountability to communities most affected by the work of the organization.

**EQUITABLE & INCLUSIVE**

- ..... Implement continuous improvement strategies and conduct regular audits.
- ..... Revise policies, practices and norms as needed.
- ..... Initiate regional efforts to share good practices, increase inclusion in other orgs and community partners.
- ..... Stay current on efforts of peer organizations.
- ..... Continue to influence all recruiting efforts of leaders, managers, and staff to ensure they demonstrate commitment and success in creating and maintaining inclusive workplace.

## Tool D: Community Agreements



### **Establish Brave Space**

In difficult conversations our learning often comes through our own discomfort and risk taking. By avoiding conflict or keeping others “comfortable” you may miss the opportunity to authentically engage with others or further your own understanding. However, we also recognize that sometimes our words create harm despite our best intentions. We acknowledge we are here to learn in community with one another. Our discussions will be more fruitful when we can embrace discomfort, take responsibility for our impact, and extend grace whenever possible.

**Take Space/Make Space** If you are someone who tends to not speak a lot, challenge yourself to contribute by speaking more. If you tend to speak a lot, make space for others to participate and focus on listening. As a group, notice and acknowledge power dynamics in the room – who is talking first? Who is holding power because of their role (like the facilitator), status, or identity? Who is disengaging or observing instead of actively participating?

***Honor Confidentiality***

Share themes and learning outside of the space, but not individual stories.

***Be Present***

Engage in active listening and be aware of your thoughts and feelings in the moment. What do you need to stay present and engaged? Limit technology and distractions to only that which furthers your learning.

***Speak Your Truth and Let Others Speak Theirs***

Different perspectives are welcome and encouraged. Speak from your own lived experience and not from experience that you do not personally have. Your normal may not be my normal.

***Together We Know a Lot***

Each of us brings knowledge to our discussions. But together, we know more than anyone of us alone. Shared learning is a practice in humility because we have something to learn from everyone in the room. It also means we all have a responsibility to share what we know and our questions, so that others may learn from us.

***No Fixing, No Saving***

We are here to do our own work and to be in community with one another. Listen deeply and allow others to experience their own discomfort, which may further their learning. If you find yourself wanting to “fix” a situation or alleviate someone else’s (or your own) discomfort, take a moment to reflect on what is coming up for you.

***When Your Mind Starts to Judge, Instead Turn to Wonder***

Approach problems and challenges from a place of curiosity and creative thinking rather than a point of frustration or judgment. When you are feeling heated, challenge yourself to form questions instead of statements. Try to remain open to feedback and inquiry that others may offer you.

***Embrace Imperfection (We Cannot Be Articulate All of the Time)***

As much as we would like to be, we are human and, therefore, imperfect. We cannot always be articulate. Often people feel hesitant to participate for fear of “messing up” or stumbling over their words. We encourage everyone to participate, even if you cannot get it right all the time. Messing up is an important part of learning and growing. In addition, creating gracious space for ourselves can help us do the same for others.

***Expect and Accept Non-Closure***

We want to solve problems and resolve conflict, but this is lifelong work. These are processes and awareness-raising conversations intended to further individual transformation, not the transformation of others. Sometimes you may have to revisit conversations to reconcile differences, and in other cases, things will go left unsaid, unfinished.

## Acknowledgments

Aorta Consulting: [http://aorta.coop/portfolio\\_page/tips-and-tools-for-addressing-systemic-power/](http://aorta.coop/portfolio_page/tips-and-tools-for-addressing-systemic-power/)  
 Cultures Connecting: <http://culturesconnecting.com/products/>  
 Fleur Larsen Facilitation: <http://www.fleurlarsenfacilitation.com>  
 Reverb DEI: <https://www.reverbdei.com/>

## Activity: Breathing Life into Community Agreements

Community Agreements often play a bit part at the beginning of our meetings and are never spoken of again. They can easily become a rote part of our work, resulting in a missed opportunity for impactful change in how we come to racial equity discussions. Integrating them into our work can help illuminate unhelpful dynamics and lead us to more helpful ways of showing up.

### Community Agreements and White Supremacy Norms

There is a reason we need to solidify different ways of being together when we gather to talk about race. Many of the unhelpful ways of gathering called out in community agreements are directly connected to the norms that Tema Okun and Kenneth Jones outline in their seminal article about [White Supremacy characteristics](#), such as:

The **individualism** that distracts us from the fact that **together we know a lot**.

The **perfectionism** that causes us to clam up, for fear that we will say the wrong thing or **be inarticulate**.

The **defensiveness** and **right to comfort** that pulls us **away from wonder and into judgment**.

The **fear of open conflict** that makes us crave “safe space” instead of **brave space**.

A conversation of how these two groups of ideas are connected can help participants understand the ways in which white supremacy culture erodes our ability to engage authentically in conversations about race. Breaking down these patterns in long-form helps us understand the dynamics of white supremacy that are woven throughout everything we do; community agreements can give us a shorthand to remind us daily that we can intentionally be different together.

### Community Agreement Spotlight

Explore community agreements as a way to create self-reflective spaces and shed light on group dynamics. Choose one community agreement per meeting and ask participants to reflect on questions about it in small groups or pairs.

For example, while exploring the community agreement, “**Take Space, Make Space**,” you might ask participants to consider:

“What barriers are you experience to speaking up in the group?”

“What emotional needs are satisfied when you speak in a group setting?”

When considering the community agreement, “**Embrace Imperfection**,” you might ask:

“What stories do you tell yourself about what will happen if you don’t do things perfectly?”

You might ask participants who are experiencing a lot of conflicts to engage with the community agreement “**Turn Judgement into Wonder**” by asking them to think of something they have heard that made them angry and considering:

“Is there a question you could ask that would help you move beyond your anger and create deeper understanding?”

Move all the way through the agreements and then ask participants to consider how multiple agreements might interact. For example, does an inability to embrace perfection lead to an unwillingness to take space in the group? How might turning to judgment erode the production of group knowledge? Post the community agreements in a prominent place so that participants can be reminded of all they have learned through this process about themselves and the group.



## ***Tool E: Sample Equity Plan – Race and Social Justice Initiative, City of Seattle***

### **RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE 2019 – 2021 STRATEGY**

#### WHO WE ARE:

We are advocates and organizers who act accountably, creatively, and strategically for racial justice. We harness our multi-racial and interconnected experiences to embody the change we want to see in the world. A transparent and supportive team, we honor the best in one another, practice radical self-acceptance, and see each other as mirrors and gifts. As we grow, we grow collectively, learning from and challenging each other while centering community leadership in order to move racial justice forward.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES:** *(Adopted from the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond)*

- Undoing racism
- Sharing culture
- Learning from history
- Maintaining accountability
- Analyzing power
- Undoing Internalized Racial Oppression
- Identifying and analyzing manifestations of racism
- Developing leadership
- Networking
- Gatekeeping

#### Applying these principles to Seattle City government

- **Power of history:** Honor the history of racial justice organizing that birthed the Race and Social Justice Initiative.
- **City role and impact:** Understand the City of Seattle’s institutional power and footprint in local communities most impacted by structural racism.
- **Accountability:** Accept responsibility for institutional actions and harm, and work to restore relationships, share information and follow-through with commitments.
- **Value community:** Value the wisdom, expertise and leadership of communities most impacted; and compensate community members for their contributions to the institution.
- **Show up for community:** Respect, support and show up for communities organizing for racial justice and systems-change.
- **Learn from community:** Center and learn from those who are burdened by the multiplicity of institutional harm.

# RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

## 2019 – 2021 STRATEGY

### STRATEGY # 1

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Build an anti-racist network within City government. Shift internal practices and develop decision-making skills that eliminate institutional and structural racism. *Organize within and across departments to ensure that racial equity drives behaviors, processes and decisions at all levels, from staff relationships to policies and practices that impact communities most affected by racism.*

### TACTICS

1. **Complete RSJI Workplans:** Coordinate City departments' drafting of annual RSJI workplans that outline individual departments' RSJI commitments and actions, including alignment with RSJI's nine Equity Areas (equitable development; housing; education; environmental justice service equity; criminal justice; transportation; jobs/economic justice; health; arts & culture).
2. **Design and facilitate Citywide training:** Redesign Citywide RSJI training curricula and deliver high quality RSJI training to City employees through the Cornerstone system and department-specific requests. RSJI trainings build racial justice knowledge, awareness, network and organizing skills, and deepen analysis of racism and its intersections with other forms of oppression.
3. **Develop and facilitate a Citywide training cohort:** In partnership with Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR), implement a Train-the-Trainer program to develop racial justice trainers across City departments to provide facilitation capacity for Citywide RSJI and SDHR trainings.
4. **Support departmental Change Teams:** Support 28-30 Executive and non-Executive City Departments' racial equity teams to advance racial equity within their own departments' business lines.
5. **Convene RSJI Sub-Cabinet:** Convene monthly meetings with Department Directors or their designees to address RSJI projects, prioritization, Citywide trends and needs.
6. **Convene Directors' Forums:** Facilitate quarterly RSJI training for Department Directors.
7. **Strengthen Citywide use of the Racial Equity Toolkit (RET):** Build a practice of racial equity across City departments through regular training and use of the RET, including implementing racially equitable community engagement tactics.
8. **Support CORE Team:** Convene and support cohorts of City employees focused on racial justice organizing, movement building and leadership development.
9. **Host gatherings and special events:** Engage city employees and community members through speakers events, summits and other events designed to build community, deepen understanding and develop solutions to pressing social ills.

## RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE 2019 – 2021 STRATEGY

### STRATEGY #2

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Transform the internal government culture of the City toward one rooted in racial justice, humanistic relationships, belonging and wellbeing. *Replace the norms and patterns of white supremacy culture with those that promote healthy relationships, collaboration, transparency, “both/and” thinking, deliberative decision-making, and an understanding of our shared history. This requires reckoning with the impacts of internalized racism and implicit bias and using arts-integration and mindfulness to inform the ways we envision and do our work.*

#### TACTICS

1. **Expand definition of racism to include four types:** In all aspects of our work, use the expanded definition of racism to include its four interconnected manifestations – interpersonal, institutional, structural, and internalized. To achieve racial equity, we must approach our work holistically, with the understanding that we must transform ourselves in order to transform the institution.
2. **Address Internalized Racial Oppression:** Use caucusing, training, and facilitated dialogue to bring City employees together to explore how internalized racism affects the way we see ourselves and each other.
3. **Navigate racialized conflicts within City Departments:** Build a practice of relational culture by designing and facilitating healing circles, dialogues, restorative practices, and other customized experiences for departments and teams to address racialized patterns of behavior and institutional power dynamics that get in the way of healthy, productive relationships within our workforce.
4. **Co-facilitate Workforce Equity Planning and Advisory Committee (WEPAC):** As part of a long-time partnership between SOCR and SDHR, support interdepartmental teams to develop workforce equity strategies, policies, trainings and investments that address historical and current harm to employees of color, and create systems that support a racially just workplace environment.
5. **Implement the Creative Strategies Initiative (CSI):** Use arts, culture, embodiment and mindfulness practices within City policy processes, trainings and community engagement efforts to cultivate racial justice in areas such as workforce equity, use of the RET and environmental justice. This work is supported through a long-time partnership with Office of Arts & Culture.

### STRATEGY #3

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## RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE 2019 – 2021 STRATEGY

Align our racial justice efforts with local community organizing and strengthen relationships with communities most impacted by structural racism. *Be accountable to communities of color and be mindful of Seattle's ongoing history of racism in housing, employment and development.*

### TACTICS

1. **Support community-led racial justice campaigns:** Assist community-led racial justice efforts that center those most directly affected by structural racism.
2. **Redirect funding to communities most impacted by structural racism:** Restructure City funding processes (grants, commissions, contracts) to directly benefit communities most impacted by structural racism.
3. **Conduct racially equitable community engagement:** Use the RET and other Departmental systems and processes, support racially equitable community engagement strategies and tactics that restore past and current harms, and create opportunities for healthy, sustained relationships.

### STRATEGY #4

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Work in relationship with national and regional racial justice leaders from all communities and sectors to advance racial justice. *This will be realized by building sustainable, mutually beneficial partnerships, sharing strategies and tactics, being transparent about our missteps and shortcomings, and recognizing our roles as racial justice-driven government institutions.*

### TACTICS

1. **Contribute to regional events and conferences:** Develop shared analysis, learning and planning with governments within the Northwest region, including King County and members of the Regional Equity & Inclusion Group.
2. **Support national racial justice initiatives within government:** Participate in events, peer exchanges and best practice resource-sharing organized by the Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE), Race Forward, PolicyLink, National League of Cities and other groups.

## ***Tool F: Sample Equity Plan – Legal Services NYC***

This equity plan provided by Legal Services NYC  
was developed with the support of MPG Consulting

### **Legal Services NYC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan**

May 2017

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are core values of Legal Services NYC and fundamental to our work. Our goal is to ensure that Legal Services NYC is:**

- an accepting, responsive, safe and fair workplace with a diverse staff<sup>1</sup> at every level
- an organization that embraces equity and challenges structures of oppression and other forms of bias, internally and externally, and in partnership with clients, low-income communities, and other allies
- an inclusive environment in which all employees are able to perform at our best; feel valued, respected, and motivated; contribute views and ideas for improvement; have professional development, leadership and learning opportunities; and challenge each other to continually build this environment and culture

**To achieve this goal, we will focus on achieving the following objectives:**

- I. Creating permanent systems, structures, policies, tools, venues, resources and culture that implement LSNYC's diversity, equity and inclusion commitment
- II. Ensuring that ongoing cross-racial, cross-cultural dialogue becomes an integral part of our organizational culture
- III. Building skills, knowledge, and capacities that encourage, lead, manage and sustain diversity, equity and inclusion, including: leadership at all levels that actively supports, promotes the goal and work of, and feels accountable for LSNYC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative; Union understanding, support of and participation in the Initiative; and the organization-wide ability to respond and change as diversity, equity and inclusion needs evolve
- IV. Developing a culture of self-care that supports diversity, equity and inclusion
- V. Establishing and using effective, culturally competent internal and external communication strategies to promote diversity, equity and inclusion
- VI. Ensuring that LSNYC engages with, and supports, NYC's diverse low-income communities and is responsive and accessible to them
- VII. Monitoring and evaluating the progress on and effectiveness of diversity, equity and inclusion work throughout the organization

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<sup>1</sup> Several years ago, LSNYC adopted the *Principles Of Leadership And Diversity For New York's Legal Services Community*, <http://www.legalservicesnyc.org/about-us/diversity-at-lsnyc/principles-of-leadership-and-diversity> which say: We define diversity and inclusion broadly to mean the goals of accepting, respecting and valuing differences that may include attributes such as age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, sexual identity, disabilities, language, family circumstances and cultural backgrounds. At the time of this Plan's promulgation, LSNYC is working on a refined definition for our organization.



**Action Plan:****I. Create permanent systems, structures, policies, tools, venues, resources and culture that implement LSNYC's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) commitment**

## Strategies:

- a. Establish and maintain a permanent citywide DEI Group (formerly called DIIIG), and DEI Groups in each borough, with clear mission and purpose; composition; authority; operating guidelines; communication responsibilities; and relationship with senior management
- b. Continue to dedicate senior and other staff to DEI work
- c. Communicate on an ongoing basis with all staff about DEI systems, structures, policies, tools, venues, resources and culture
- d. Incorporate a DEI analysis and lens into all aspects of LSNYC's work
- e. Ensure that LSNYC's facilities, communications, technology and resources are accessible and welcoming
- f. Create and implement a robust hiring, promotion and retention approach that is designed to promote and support diversity at all levels of the organization and includes:
  - an organization-wide leadership development approach
  - a recruiting plan (lawyers of color professional groups, HBCUs, pipeline programs, etc)
  - uniform citywide Hiring Guidelines
  - a trained de-biased team for each borough's hiring committee
  - evaluation and promotion guidelines and tools
  - an exit interview process
- g. Incorporate DEI strategies throughout LSNYC's periodic strategic planning efforts

**II. Ensure that productive and ongoing cross-racial, cross-cultural dialogue becomes an integral part of our organizational culture**

## Strategies:

- a. Employ training strategies identified throughout this plan, including those in III., below
- b. Develop and convene affinity groups
- c. Create other cross-racial, cross-cultural discussion and learning opportunities throughout LSNYC
- d. Provide tools and resources that promote the development of formal and informal safe spaces as places where challenging cross-racial, cross-cultural conversations can take place without fear of retribution

**III. Build skills, knowledge, and capacities that encourage, lead, manage and sustain DEI, including: leadership at all levels that actively supports, promotes the goal and work of, and feels accountable for, LSNYC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative; Union understanding, support of and participation in the Initiative; and the organization-wide ability to respond and change as DEI needs evolve.**

## Strategies:

- a. Provide support, resources and funding for ongoing DEI work throughout LSNYC
- b. Create an Orientation to DEI for new and current employees at LSNYC, and communicate about expectations for and accountability of all staff for DEI progress, including leadership.

- c. Plan and implement an ongoing citywide training curriculum to foster anti-oppressive, anti-racist equity perspectives, which includes content such as: Undoing Racism; overcoming implicit bias; leading and managing DEI; de-biasing hiring; supporting cross-cultural/cross-racial dialogue; conducting difficult conversations; understanding and tackling microaggressions; cross-racial and cross-cultural supervision; self-care; and effective affinity groups.
- d. Maintain citywide Training Cabinet with a mission that includes promotion of DEI work
- e. Identify and address borough-specific DEI training needs and present trainings
- f. Institute an orientation and training for DEI Group members

#### **IV. Develop a culture of self-care that supports DEI**

Strategies:

- a. Constitute a committee to develop a plan to build a culture of self-care at LSNYC

#### **V. Establish and use effective, culturally competent internal and external communication strategies to promote DEI**

Strategies:

- a. Create standing DEI sub-committee focused on ongoing DEI communications
- b. Develop resources for, launch and maintain intranet DEI site
- c. Continually communicate LSNYC's DEI Plan to all staff
- d. Communicate DEI work and commitment externally, including through social media

#### **VI. Ensure that LSNYC engages with, and supports, NYC's diverse low-income communities and is responsive and accessible to them**

Strategies:

- a. Review community needs assessments; develop and take action to address issues and concerns raised by the community
- b. Meet with community-based organizations, community advocates and partners to create collaborations to identify and address needs of people who are low income
- c. Train staff to effectively engage with diverse communities
- d. Cultivate Community Lawyering, which is a process through which advocates engage with the community and contribute their legal knowledge and skills to support initiatives that are identified by the community and that enhance the community's power

#### **VII. Monitor and evaluate the progress on and effectiveness of DEI work throughout the organization**

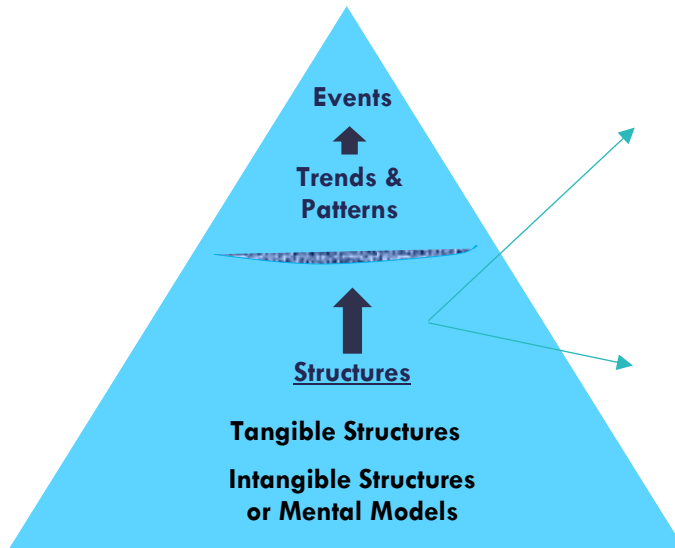
Strategies:

- a. Develop tools, record-keeping and a tracking system with identified benchmarks to evaluate the progress and effectiveness on DEI work
- b. Develop process by which all staff are asked to self-identify to monitor DEI progress, including for EEOC reporting
- c. Develop self-reporting/benchmarking evaluations for borough DEI Groups
- d. When MPG contract ends, obtain and review exit analysis
- e. Identify and acknowledge progress on DEI
- f. Hold leadership accountable for progress with specific metrics



## ***Tool G: Systems Thinking and The Iceberg Model***

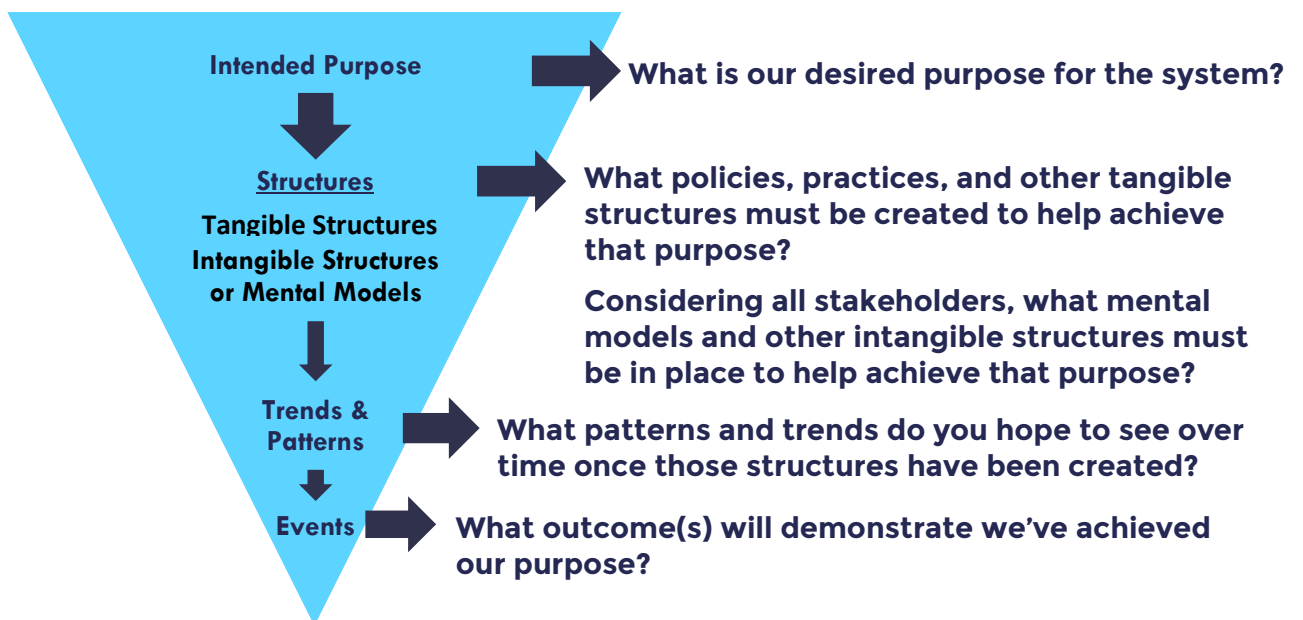
The Iceberg Model is useful to unpack the underlying causes that lead to an acute event or issue. Events, trends, and patterns are above the waterline; what we see the most and are most familiar with. Structures are below the surface - they give shape to how everything is arranged, situated, and connected, often invisible without system analysis. Structures include systems with dynamic interactions between all of the system components, each affecting the others, and contributing to inequitable outcomes.



- **Where is there inequity?**
- **Who are the stakeholders?**
- **What tangible structures help explain the patterns and trends?**
- **What intangible structures help explain the patterns and trends?**
- **What are the mental models (beliefs, perceptions) of stakeholders?**
- **What cultural norms and stereotypes are held?**

### ***Flipping the Iceberg***

When we flip the iceberg, we begin envisioning a different purpose for the structures we identified and began planning to address inequities.



**What is our desired purpose for the system?**

**What policies, practices, and other tangible structures must be created to help achieve that purpose?**

**Considering all stakeholders, what mental models and other intangible structures must be in place to help achieve that purpose?**

**What patterns and trends do you hope to see over time once those structures have been created?**

**What outcome(s) will demonstrate we've achieved our purpose?**

1. Use the Iceberg Model to *deepen your understanding* of the problem and the system at work. Identify some of the relevant patterns/trends, tangible and intangible structures, and the observed purpose of the system. Consider using these prompting questions to help guide your discussion. *Tip: Start by choosing an “event.”*

What are the events that we are concerned about?

What are the trends or patterns impacting or underlying these events?



What tangible structures help explain the patterns and trends? *Tip: What policies and procedures exist? What factors or conditions contribute to the problem (e.g., physical/environmental, income/wealth, housing segregation, health, education)?*

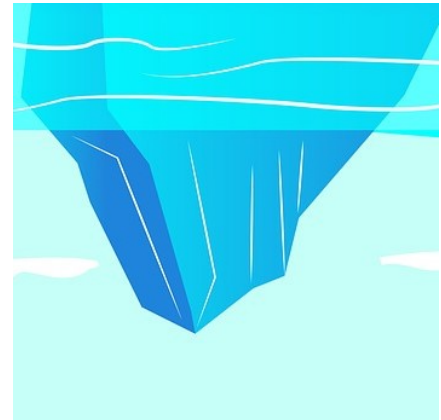
Where is there inequity in those structures? *Tip: Who is burdened most and who benefits most?*

Who are the stakeholders?

Considering each stakeholder group, what intangible structures or mental models (norms, beliefs, attitudes, stereotypes) help explain the patterns and trends?

2. Flip the Iceberg and start *problem-solving* from your intended purpose. Develop at least one specific intervention or solution that could shift a tangible or intangible structure toward the desired purpose for the system. Consider using these prompting questions to help guide your discussion:

What is our desired purpose for the system?



What policies, practices, and other tangible structures must be created to help achieve that purpose?

Considering all stakeholders, what mental models and other intangible structures must be in place to help achieve that purpose?

What patterns and trends do you hope to see over time once those structures have been created?

What outcome(s) will demonstrate we have achieved our purpose?

## ***Tool H: ADDRESSING Model Guide for Supervisors***

If you are in a supervisory or management role, reflect on your experience, familial beliefs, known cultural norms, stereotypes, and media narratives associated with each of the identities listed below. To explore the equity work of supervisors and management even further, [request a copy of JustLead Washington's Equitable Practices for Supervision Curriculum](#).

### **Consider these social rank categories from the ADDRESSING Model discussed in Part 1 of this Toolkit:**

- Age
- Disability
- Religious Culture
- Ethnicity
- Sexual Orientation
- Social Class Culture
- Indigenous Heritage
- National Origin
- Gender

### **Reflect on the following points to challenge your current paradigm as a supervisor:**

1. Consider the beliefs you grew up with and identify how they show up in your professional relationships.
2. What negative stereotypes play out most often in your mind? Although unspoken, recognize the unconscious bias associated with those identities can play out in a myriad of ways unknown to you but impacting employees.
3. Pinpoint which identity(s) are the furthest away from your lived experience and/or knowledge. Reflect on how this separation and disconnect is an opportunity for growth, learning and inclusion or exclusion, stagnation, and loss. Have you taken steps to educate yourself and create opportunities for belongingness?

### **Consider your organization, department, or team:**

1. How is the institution I am a part of supporting targeted staff and communities with actual resources at this moment?
2. How will our organization continue to support these same staff and communities?
3. With the privileges I have (i.e., the Agent rank I play in how society views me), what am I doing to ensure the voices of those mobilized and organized for the health and wellness of marginalized communities are being centered? How am I supporting others with my resources and time?
4. With the barriers I face (i.e., the target rank I play in how society views me), what am I doing to ensure my own mental and physical wellbeing? What support system do I need to create for myself?

**Consider the following points and ask yourself these questions to deepen your understanding of the moment we are in and to support the work going forward:**

1. Encourage all staff to take the Harvard Implicit Association Test to learn more about their own personal unconscious biases, how they play out, and strategies for mitigation. This is foundational to reducing biased behavior against those target identities discussed above.
2. Provide training for all staff on the Target/Agent Model to understand their own privileged and marginalized identities and how they influence decision making and interpersonal engagement.
3. Move more slowly in your decision-making process to reflect on how and if bias is playing out and skewing your point of view. This will also inherently slow down the systems of which we are all a part and help ensure we are making equity-centered decisions.
5. How are target communities being further marginalized in this COVID-19 pandemic response? Are your media sources talking about this? How can you ensure they are?

Questions developed by JustLead Washington. The ADRESSING Model is used locally by anti-oppression trainer Dr. Leticia Nieto and adapted from the work of Dr. Pamela Hays. (Hays, P. A. (2001). *Addressing Cultural Complexities in Practice: A Framework for Clinicians and Counselors*. Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association.)

## ***Tool I: Race Equity Tool – Columbia Legal Services***

<b>Community Engagement</b>	<b>Notes, Thoughts, Answers, Plans</b>
<p>This is a process through which advocates contribute their legal knowledge and skills to support initiatives identified by communities of color. This approach fundamentally changes some of the ways in which we approach our work. Under this model, the community directs the focus of this work, and we have ongoing engagement with community.</p>	<p><i>State the community or group that identified this issue.</i></p>
<p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this issue important to communities of color? How do you know?</li> <li>• How was this issue identified? If it was not identified by the community, why not? What steps will you take to engage the community at each stage of the process, including implementation and monitoring?</li> <li>• What challenges exist to centering this work in the community and having it be community-led? How can you address them?</li> <li>• How will the group direct your work and make decisions? How will you communicate with the group? How often?</li> <li>• Who will do the lobbying or other policy work? Who has the final say on the content of legislation? Reports? Other work? Does the group have an opportunity to review any litigation materials?</li> <li>• If a coalition will be part of this work, how will it be formed, and how will the group make decisions? What will CLS's role be within the coalition?</li> </ul>	<p>Notes:</p>
<b>Systems Analysis</b>	<b>Notes, Thoughts, Answers</b>
<p><b>Systems Thinking</b> emphasizes the role of the system as a whole in shaping behavior and producing outcomes. In Systems Thinking, the individual intentions/behavior of actors is not as important. Racial advantages and disadvantages are primarily a product of <b>opportunity structures</b> within our racialized society. Race equity work can be most effective when it addresses the system as a whole.</p>	<p><i>Identify places in the system that can change outcomes. Discuss any opportunity mapping or systems analysis you may undertake.</i></p>

<p><i>Questions to Consider</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are racialized systems at issue? (examples: prisons, court systems, economic systems, foster care, health care, education, banking/credit, wage, etc.)</li> <li>• What are all the parts of the system that are involved in the work?</li> <li>• What groups have power within the system? In what ways do they have power? Can you use “power mapping” to understand these dynamics?</li> <li>• How will you work within that system and not perpetuate structural or institutional racism?</li> <li>• How will you navigate the complexity of the system through this work?</li> <li>• How will the system be changed at the end of the advocacy? How will it be the same? How might it adopt after the change is made to perpetuate racism?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Goals and Objectives for Advocacy</b></p>	
<p>State the race equity goal of the community or client(s) would like to achieve. This objective could be long term, short term, or both. The goal is to identify the most effective ways to change or interrupt processes that create racial inequity.</p>	<p><i>List the race equity objective(s) the community or group hopes to achieve.</i></p>
<p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What racial disparities does the group or community want to eliminate, reduce, or prevent?</li> <li>• How will the community’s or group’s position be changed or be the same in the system as a result of this advocacy? Will they have more positional power?</li> <li>• If the advocacy you want to undertake is successful, what is the best possible outcome you can envision?</li> <li>• Does this work change the status of the group or community you seek to represent (i.e., the group will gain civic power, many in the community or group will no longer live below the poverty level – ex. local hire ordinance)</li> <li>• Can this goal be achieved through policy advocacy, litigation, media, social movement, a combination of approaches, or other means? What means do you propose? Why?</li> <li>• How will the community or group measure success in the long or short term? How will you?</li> </ul>	



Racism - Explicit and Implicit	
<p>Identify the type(s) of racism the work seeks to address. There are different types of racism at work that interact with each other on different levels. Think about what type or types is at issue in this race equity work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Personal</b> - Individual attitudes about inferiority and superiority that are learned or internalized either directly or indirectly and can be conscious or unconscious.</li> <li>• <b>Internalized</b> - Affects victims of systemic oppression. Includes conscious or unconscious attitudes regarding inferiority or differences based upon race. [Note: the REJI Toolkit uses the expanded term Internalized Racial Oppression defined further in the glossary]</li> <li>• <b>Interpersonal</b> (interactions among people) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Actions that perpetuate race-based inequities</li> <li>○ Intentional or unintentional</li> <li>○ Microaggressions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Institutional</b> - Institutional racism occurs <i>within and between institutions</i>. Institutional racism is discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and inequitable opportunities, impacts, and outcomes, based on race, produced and perpetuated by institutions (schools, mass media, the criminal justice system, courts, etc.).</li> <li>• <b>Structural</b> - Structural Racism encompasses the entire system of white supremacy, in all aspects of society, including our history, culture, politics, economics, and our entire social fabric. Structural Racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism - all other forms of racism (e.g., institutional, interpersonal, internalized, etc.) emerge from structural racism.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Type(s) racism at issue and how each manifest or might manifest in the advocacy you seek to undertake. List specific examples, if possible.</i></p>
<p><b>Questions to Consider</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What types of racism are at work on this issue?</li> <li>• What steps will you take throughout this work to prevent against unconscious racial bias, internalized racial bias, and review decisions to prevent unintended racial bias?</li> <li>• If your clients are People of Color and you are white, how will you interact with them in a fair, culturally competent, and equitable way?</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are a Person of Color, how will you address your needs in this process? What tools will you use? What tools will you need?</li> <li>• How will you address your own power and privilege? As a lawyer?</li> <li>• What aspects of viewing this work as racialized are challenging? How will you address those challenges?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Data</b></p>	
<p>Research and analyze the quantitative and qualitative evidence of inequities for this advocacy. Consider what information is missing that you might need.</p>	<p>Data Analysis/Data Needs</p>
<p>Questions to Consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What factors may be producing and perpetuating racial inequities associated with this issue?</li> <li>• How did the inequities arise?</li> <li>• What data resources do you need? How will you obtain them?</li> <li>• Can you use mapping for this process? Other visual imagery?</li> <li>• What supports will you need to collect and analyze data?</li> <li>• How will you measure your work?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Messaging</b></p>	
<p>History shows that to be effective in moving hearts, minds, and policy over the long term, we need more integrated and strategic messaging that mobilizes our base, while also working on expanding our constituencies by bringing those in the middle toward our cause. We can do this with a strong, values-based narrative like Opportunity for All, which can change the larger national conversation, shift the culture, and result in lasting change. (p. 3, Opportunity Agenda Tool Kit)</p>	<p><i>Messaging Plan (Create a Values, Problem, Solution, Action statement)</i></p>
<p>Questions to Consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the <b>value</b> behind your advocacy goals?</li> <li>• What is the <b>problem</b> you are addressing?</li> <li>• What is the <b>solution</b> you propose?</li> <li>• What <b>action</b> should people take?</li> <li>• How can you talk about race in your messaging?</li> <li>• Will you or the community or group you are working with lead the messaging?</li> </ul>	

## GLOSSARY

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Ensuring that organizational decisions are understood and feel justified by the communities that may benefit or be harmed most. Most notably used when applied to community partnerships, accountability depends on those relationships which stand to gain or be harmed the most by organizational decisions. Accountability within those partnerships is demonstrated through transparency, responsiveness, participatory processes, and ongoing reflection for improvement. Accountability is also demonstrated by acknowledging and naming the harm that may have been caused and identifying how harm will be mitigated in the future.

### **CAUCUSING (or AFFINITY GROUPS)**

Caucuses, also known as affinity groups, are opportunities for those who share a common identity to meet separately to gather, connect, and learn. The word “caucus” originates from the Indigenous Algonquian word meaning “to meet together.” Caucusing based on racial identity are often comprised of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; white people; people who hold multiracial identities; or people who otherwise share specific racial/ethnic identities.<sup>19,20</sup>

### **AGENT VERSUS TARGET SOCIAL RANK**

From Dr. Leticia Nieto’s ADDRESSING MODEL, adapted from Pamela Hayes, agents and targets are social ranks that can be ascribed to different social group categories such as Age, Disability, Religion, Ethnicity, Social Class, Sexual Orientation, Indigenous Heritage, National Origin, Gender. Within each category, you are either an agent of privilege or a target of marginalization.<sup>21</sup>

### **ANTI-BLACKNESS or ANTI-BLACK RACISM**

From The Movement for Black Lives website, Anti-Black racism is a term used to describe the “unique discrimination, violence and harms imposed on and impacting Black people specifically...The first form of anti-Blackness is overt racism. Society also associates un-politically correct comments with the overt nature of anti-Black racism. Beneath this anti-Black racism is the covert structural and systemic racism that categorically predetermines the socioeconomic status of Blacks in this country. The structure is held in place by anti-Black policies, institutions, and ideologies. The second form of anti-Blackness is the unethical disregard for anti-Black institutions and policies. This disregard is the product of class, race, and/or gender privilege certain individuals experience due to anti-Black institutions and policies. This form of anti-Blackness is protected by the first form of overt racism.”<sup>22</sup>

Anti-Blackness exists in all communities regardless of race. Particularly, anti-Black racism often manifests as ‘colorism’ within Black, Indigenous, and other communities (e.g., prejudice of darker skin tone in lieu of favoring lighter skin tone)

### **ANTI-INDIGENEITY**

Much like anti-blackness, anti-indigeneity is the systemic and often socially acceptable erasure, disgust, and hostility towards Indigenous ways of being. This is often paired with non-Indigenous people benefiting from Indigenous labor, artwork, and ways of being.

## **ANTI-RACISM**

A concept is described as “the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organization structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.” [Learn more information on anti-racism at NAC International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity](#). This is more a pro-active stance than being simply “non-racist.”

## **ANTI-RACIST VS. NON-RACIST**

Ibram X. Kendi, in his book ‘How to Be an Anti-Racist’ simply defines anti-racist as One who is supporting an anti-racist policy through their actions or expressing an anti-racist idea. Being an anti-racist requires practicing anti-racism in all aspects of your life. It includes but is not limited to making a conscious choice to act and challenge white supremacist systems and consequent oppression against Black, Indigenous People of Color. For those who are white, this means challenging notions of their racial superiority and leveraging their white privilege to advance racial justice.

The REJI Toolkit emphasizes the more proactive term anti-racist rather than simply being “not racist” as the latter denies responsibility for systemic racism, assuming our systems are neutral and just. Being ‘nonracist’ shifts responsibility for racism and oppression onto others, often seen from white people to Black, Indigenous, and People of color. Responsibility for perpetuating and legitimizing a racist system rests both on those who actively maintain it, who benefit from it, and those who refuse to challenge it. Angela Davis once said, “In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist.”

## **CIRCLE OF HUMAN CONCERN**

A term used by Professor John A. Powell from the Haas Institute, the Circle of Human Concern, represents those who are considered full members of society. If you are outside of the circle, the exclusion of people is created, whereas if you are inside the circle, belonging is created. Our pursuit towards equity & justice demand we expand the circle of human concern and ensure we do not allow decisions for exclusions are made by anyone person, group, or all of society. [Watch a video further explaining the circle of human concern here.](#)

## **MOVEMENT LAWYERING (or COMMUNITY LAWYERING)**

Process where legal advocacy and tools can support and address community-identified issues and priorities. In the community lawyering model, lawyers and legal advocates provide technical expertise and support. Still, power and decision-making lie with or are transferred to those community members and community-based organizations who are most affected by the issue. This is a shift in the paradigm that the attorney is best situated to identify the best solutions and instead moves power to those most closely impacted by the problem.

## **COLORISM**

Intricately tied with anti-Black racism in the US and globally, colorism is the preferential treatment of people with light skin over people with dark skin, upholding white standards of beauty, and benefiting those who are white and otherwise lighter-skinned within society and institutions.

## **CULTURE**

Spoken and often unspoken shared set of attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or an organization and amplified by those in positional authority or leadership positions.<sup>23</sup>

## **CULTURAL COMPETENCY**

As defined by the Seattle-King County Department of Health, cultural competency is “the ability of individuals and systems to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds and religions in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the cultural differences and similarities and the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each.” As pro bono attorneys, we should not just be providing good legal advice; our work must be rooted in taking the client’s needs and values into account.

Recently, professional communities have shifted away from the “cultural competency” framework to instead talk about “cultural humility,” which is considered the “ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) concerning aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the person.” Cultural humility also suggests that our work is ongoing, rather than a setting a benchmark level of “competency” that can be reached. The below concepts and practices encourage both cultural competency and humility yet reach even further to also offer frameworks for proactively eliminating bias and oppression within our client relationships and law & justice efforts.<sup>24,25</sup>

## **DIVERSITY**

The state of being diverse or showing variety in something. Within race equity work, diversity means representation within a group or set by people who carry a range of different social identities, perspectives, and lived experiences

## **DEBIASING**

The reduction of bias, particularly from judgments and decision-making. Debiasing includes self, situational, or broader cultural interventions [that can] correct systematic and consensually shared implicit bias...recent discoveries regarding malleability of bias provide the basis to imagine both individual and institutional change.”<sup>26</sup>

## **EQUITY**

To be fair and just. In a societal context, equity is ensuring all peoples have opportunities to reach their full potential. It recognizes the history of systemic oppression and necessitates the creation and strengthening of policies, practices, and organizational structures that produce fair outcomes and eliminate disparities based on social factors such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, place of origin, religion, and Indigenous heritage. Racial equity means that race no longer determines one’s outcomes.

## **GENDER VERSUS GENDER IDENTITY**

Gender denotes societally ascribed gender roles projecting expectations on behavior, standards, and characteristics associated with a person’s assigned sex at birth. Gender identity is how you personally feel and how you may choose to express yourself through behavior and appearance.<sup>27</sup>

**HETEROPATRIARCHY**

A construct and concept that defines both masculinity and femininity in narrow and limiting ways in order to maintain a binary distinction between male and female, dominant and subordinate, at the benefit of heterosexual and cisgender men and at the expense of other sexual orientations and sexual identities (adapted from the Anti-Violence Project).

**IMPLICIT BIAS**

“The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Activated involuntarily, without awareness or intentional control. Can be either positive or negative. Everyone is susceptible.”<sup>28</sup>

**INCLUSION**

Integration of diverse perspectives that provides a sense of belongingness. Where diversity is an invitation to the table, inclusion actively asks and welcomes input from everyone as part of critical decision-making. Note, however, that inclusive environments are not necessarily equitable - often marginalized individuals and communities are provided access to decision-making spaces but only within terms and norms of the dominant group with limited power, thus only perpetuating harmful dynamics.

**INDIGENOUS**

To be fully inclusive of all tribes and communities in North America, we describe the original people of this land as Indigenous. Using the word Native is acceptable, yet Native American or Indian have essentially become antiquated and should only be used by Indigenous people or unless specifically requested.

**INSTITUTIONALIZED RACISM**

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as Black, Indigenous, People of Color.<sup>29</sup>

**INTENT VERSUS IMPACT**

Despite our best intentions, any one of us may still have a negative impact on others. Learning from the negative impact we cause and committing to consistently avoid the same harm in the future is part of the process of learning and growing that supports race equity work across the organization.

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

A feature of how racism works in the U.S. is invisibilizing the genocide, stolen lifeways, and stolen land that was the result of Manifest Destiny. As a result, it is important for systems, organizations, and non-Indigenous people to acknowledge the original people for which land they stand on. Relatedly, it is also critical to stand up for and with Indigenous people as they continue to face continued occupation and erasure.

**LATINX**

Latina/o (a person whose background is from a country in Latin America) often gets used interchangeably with the term Hispanic (from a Spanish-speaking country).

However, there are very important and real historical, linguistic, geographical, and cultural nuances that have influenced those terms and their usage. The “x” in Latinx, as opposed to Latino or Latina, shifts the language away from the male/female gender binary and is intended to be more inclusive of all gender identities.<sup>30</sup>

### **MICROAGRESSIONS**

Everyday verbal and nonverbal slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.<sup>31,32</sup>

### **OPPRESSION**

Systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm; when some people are denied something of value, while others have ready access.<sup>33</sup>

### **PERSON/PEOPLE OF COLOR**

A Person of Color, sometimes abbreviated as “POC,” is a person that does not identify as white or does not have White/Caucasian/European ancestry. This term gets complicated when you consider mixed-race or biracial persons (particularly people who have both European and non-European ancestry), but mixed-race people may identify as POC. As race is socially constructed in the United States, who is considered “white” or a Person of Color also shifts over time.

There is also the abbreviation BIPOC, an abbreviation of Black, Indigenous, People of Color, to specifically bring attention to the complex and racist histories faced by both Black and Indigenous communities in the United States. It also acknowledges that even within “non-white” spaces or spaces led non-Black and non-Indigenous people of color, anti-Black racism and anti-Indigeneity can still be perpetuated, especially in ways harming Black and Indigenous women.<sup>34</sup>

### **POSITIONALITY**

A concept that recognizes where an individual is positioned in relation to others within society given social group memberships (i.e., race, gender, disability), thereby impacting how the person experiences and influences the world. Positionality can also apply to hierarchical positions within organizations that yield status and “power-over” dynamics over staff with less positional authority. Positionality essentially modifies institutional power. Those with privileged social identities or positional authority within their organizations must recognize and shift these power differentials as this responsibility often falls on those with marginalized identities and less institutional power within an organization, which is a silence and inequitable burden that only perpetuates oppression and harm.

### **POWER**

Power is unequally distributed globally, and in U.S. society, some individuals or groups wield greater power than others, thereby allowing them greater access and control over resources. Wealth, whiteness, citizenship, patriarchy, heterosexism, and education are a few key social mechanisms through which power operates. Although power is often conceptualized as power over other individuals or groups, other variations are power with (used in the context of building collective strength) and power within (which references an individual’s internal strength). Learning to



“see” and understand relations of power is vital to organizing for progressive social change.<sup>35</sup>

### **PREJUDICE**

The beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes a person may hold about a person or situation. It is a prejudgment, informing an experience before it happens and can be either positive or negative. In the context of equity, prejudice can be expressed by any person yet leads to harm at a structural level when coupled with institutional power.

### **PRIVILEGE**

Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g., white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it and societally ascribed onto a person without consent. Privilege is taught to not be seen yet nevertheless puts people at a societal advantage over those who do not have it.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, a person with privilege from one social group may simultaneously experience marginalization in other social groups (i.e., men of color who experience male privilege yet experience marginalization due to their race).

### **RACIAL ANXIETY**

Heightened levels of stress and emotion when interacting with people of other races and ethnicities and/or discussing race and racism.

### **RACIAL EQUITY**

The condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address the root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.<sup>37,38</sup>

### **RACIAL JUSTICE**

Proactive creation and reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes, and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts, and outcomes for all. Racial justice work is not only about being “not racist” and instead requires the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures and sustained action.<sup>37,39</sup>

- Racial Justice ≠ Diversity (Diversity = Variety)
- Racial Justice ≠ Equality (Equality = Sameness)
- Racial Justice = Equity (Equity = Fairness, Justice)

### **STRUCTURAL RACISM & RACIALIZATION**

While “racism” is often thought of as instances where someone intentionally or unintentionally targets others as a “bigot” with negative intent, structural racism encompasses the ways in which a complex system of organizations, institutions, cultural forces, individuals, processes, and policies interact – maintained by white supremacist power arrangements – to create and perpetuate social, economic, political injustice harming Black, Indigenous, and people of color while benefiting

white people. White people with “good” intent still can perpetuate structural racism due to an arrangement of power infused into the arrangement of U.S. society.<sup>40</sup>

Racialization is the act or process of manufacturing and utilizing the notion of race in any capacity, typically applying the construct of race to individuals and groups. White people are also racialized, yet this is often invisible in dominant American culture. As a result, white people may not see themselves as part of a race yet still maintain the power to name, racialize, and consequently harm “others” under a racist system. This dynamic is described with [Jewish](#) and [Irish](#) communities. This underscores that Race is not inherently a problem; racism is. Racialization is harmful because its application exists within a racist environment. (Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre; Webster)

### **STEREOTYPE THREAT**

Stereotype threat occurs when a person is concerned they will confirm a negative stereotype about their group and affects everyone. People of color are concerned they will be discriminated against due to their race, and white people suffer stereotype threat when concerned they will be perceived as racist.<sup>41</sup>

### **STAKEHOLDER**

Any individual, group, or community who has a vested interest in the outcome of a decision being made or who is impacted by that decision.

### **TOKENISM**

The practice of only doing something for symbolic reasons to be perceived as inclusive of People of Color. Tokenism is often used by organizations to give the appearance of fairness, and the organization is racially diverse. The perspectives and insights of workers of color who are tokenized are not ultimately apart of the organization’s meaningful decision-making and may not be hired or promoted to senior positions within the organization. Tokenism also presupposes that an individual is the “spokesperson” for a marginalized group by virtue of their identity, rather than acknowledging that a person’s lived experiences cannot encapsulate the experiences of an entire group or community. This expectation can often cause harm to the tokenized individual due to the amount of pressure placed on the person.

### **WHITE FRAGILITY**

“A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves for those who racially identify as white. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.”<sup>42,43</sup>

### **WHITE PERSON**

A person who identifies as white/Caucasian/of European descent.

### **WHITE SUPREMACY**

White supremacy is perpetuated through white supremacy culture in the United States. It is a historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent. The consequences of this have now stretched to

every continent through imperialism and colonialism – all or the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege for those of European descent. [Learn more information on white supremacy here.](#)<sup>44</sup>

### **WHITE/WHITENESS**

The term white, referring to people, was created by Virginia slave owners and colonial rulers in the 17th century. It replaced terms like Christian and “Englishman” to distinguish European colonists from Africans and Indigenous peoples. European colonial powers established white as a legal concept after Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676, during which indentured servants of European and African descent had united against the colonial elite. The legal distinction of white separated the servant class on the basis of skin color and continental origin. “The creation of ‘white’ meant giving privileges to some while denying them to others with the justification of biological and social inferiority.”<sup>45</sup>

## RESOURCE LIST

### **Articles & Reports**

#### ***COVID-19 and Racism***

[COVID-19 deaths analyzed by race and ethnicity in the U.S.](#)  
[Tools for addressing COVID-19 through a race equity lens by Race Equity Tools](#)  
[COVID Tracking Report: Racial Data Dashboard](#)  
[Model Minority Myth is Harmful to Asian American Health](#)  
[The Deadly Mix of COVID-19, air pollution, and inequality, explained](#)  
[America Will Struggle After Coronavirus. These Charts Show Why.](#)  
[The U.S. Approach to Public Health: Neglect, Panic, Repeat.](#)

#### ***Social Justice and Movement-Building***

["I can't breathe" by Jesse Jackson](#)  
[George Floyd's death reflects the racist roots of American policing](#)  
[TransformHarm.org - a resource hub about ending violence](#)  
[Is Prison Necessary? Ruth Wilson Gilmore Might Change Your Mind](#)  
[You Can't Police Your Way to Public Health](#)

#### ***Foundational***

[Scaffolded Anti-Racist Resources](#)  
[11-Step Guide to Understanding Race, Racism, and White Privilege](#) (Jon Greenberg)  
[Intersectionality - a Definition, History, and Guide](#) (Sister Outrider)  
[Surviving Oppression: Healing Oppression](#) (Vanissar Tarakali)  
[Circle of Human Concern](#) (Haas Institute)  
[Power Analysis](#) (Cracking the Codes)  
[Project Implicit: Take an Implicit Association Test](#)  
[Webinar: Understanding and Addressing Implicit Bias to Advance Equity and Social Justice](#) (REJI)  
[Strategies in Addressing Power & Privilege for Targets and Agents](#) (Dr. Leticia Nieto)

#### ***For White People***

[From White Racist to White Anti-Racist](#) (Tema Okun)  
[Detour-Spotting for White Anti-Racists](#) (joan olsson)  
[Internalized Racism Inventory](#) (Cultural Bridges to Justice)  
[White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#) (Peggy McIntosh)

#### ***Organizational Culture***

[Transforming Culture – An Examination of Workplace Values Through the Frame of White Dominant Culture](#) (Merf Ehman)  
[AWAKE to WOKE to WORK: Building a Race Equity Culture](#) (Equity in the Center)  
[Social Justice Communication Toolkit](#) (Opportunity Agenda)  
[White Supremacy Culture](#) (Tema Okun)

#### ***Legal Services & Community Lawyering***

[What is Movement Lawyering? \(Movement Law Lab\)](#)  
[20 Tools for Movement Lawyering](#) (Law at the Margins)  
[Movement Lawyering for Social Change](#) (Alexi and Jim Freeman)  
[Anti-Racist Organizing in White Working-Class Rural Communities](#) (Catalyst Project)  
[Advancing Racial Equity: A Legal Services Imperative](#) (Clearinghouse Review)  
[Asset-Based Community Development](#) (Asset-Based Community Development Institute)  
[Considering Evaluation: Thoughts for Social Change and Movement-Building Groups](#) (Act Knowledge)  
[Webinar: Teach In: So You Want to Be a Movement Lawyer, Now What?](#) (Law at the Margins)

***Learning from History***

[BlackPast.org](#)

[Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project](#) (University of Washington)

[Atrocities Against Native Americans](#) (United to End Genocide)

[Native American Activism: 1960s to Present](#) (Zinned Project)

[Race: The Power of an Illusion](#) (PBS Documentary)

***Hiring and Retention***

[The “Diversity Bonus”: What Public Interest Law Firms Have Missed Regarding Diversity](#) (William Kennedy)

[Building Organizational Capacity for Social Justice: Framework, Approach & Tools](#) (National Gender & Equity Campaign)

**Toolkits & Assessments**

[Racial Equity Toolkit: Applying a Racial Equity Lens to Your Organization](#) (Housing Development Consortium)

[Moving a Racial Justice Agenda: Organizational Assessment](#) (Western States Center)

[Tool for Organizational Self-Assessment Related to Race Equity](#) (Communities of Color Coalition)

[Equity and Empowerment Lens](#) (Multnomah County)

**Websites & Organizations**

[Fakeequity.com](#) (Equity Matters)

[Dismantling Racism Works Web Work Book](#) (dRworks)

[Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity](#) Research institute at Ohio State University supporting equity and inclusion

[Racial Equity Tools](#) Extensive tools, research, tips, curricula and ideas

[Race Forward](#) Publishes the daily news site Colorlines and presents Facing Race, the country’s largest multiracial conference on racial justice.

[People’s Institute Northwest for Survival and Beyond](#) a collective of anti-racist community organizers and educators committed to building an anti-racist movement

[Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative](#) a city-wide effort to end institutionalized racism and race-based disparities within government.

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