Accountability Principles

2019

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Background

THE PUGET SOUND COHORT ON EQUITY, ENVIRONMENT, AND INFRASTRUCTURE is comprised of ten local organizations. Since 2016, the cohort has met regularly with the goals of:

1. supporting the capacity of people of color-led organizations working on environment, infrastructure, and transit-oriented development,

2. building the capacity of mainstream, historically white-led organizations to center racial equity in their work, and

3. building a shared analysis around racial equity in the region.

As the cohort embarked on their second year of work, a fundamental question emerged: how do multiracial coalitions hold each other, and themselves, accountable in a way that advances racial equity? Cohort organizations were eager to dig into this question and to discuss what accountability looks like in practice, specifically between white-led organizations and people of color-led organizations.

The process that we went through to get here included multiple steps:

- Generation of a set of race-explicit principles for being in partnership with one another by the people of color members of the cohort. The principles elevate the historical power differential between people of color-led and historically white-led organizations.

- These principles were then turned into a toolkit to assist organizations in self-identifying their current level of accountability, with concrete next steps to deepen this practice.

Acknowledgements

Why Racial Equity Is Important

RACIAL INEQUITIES ARE DEEP AND PERVASIVE. They exist across all indicators of success—including in education, criminal justice, jobs, housing, public infrastructure, environment, and health—regardless of region. Given our country's historical legacy of racism and the way in which current institutions and systems replicate patterns of oppression and exclusion, it is necessary for organizations to actively interrupt and interrogate the ways in which their policies, practices, and procedures are advancing unequal outcomes.

If your organization is still working toward understanding the importance of racial equity, we encourage you to look at other resources first and return to this assessment once there is a stronger commitment to racial equity across the organization.

The Accountability Principles Tool is one mechanism to support organizations in advancing racial equity. It is by no means an exhaustive tool and we encourage organizations to have deeper discussions about where there might be gaps and how to get additional information to support your racial equity journey. The appendices at the end of this document include further resources, information, and tools to consider.

Pre-Work

BEFORE ASSESSING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S racial justice practices, it is helpful to acknowledge how your organization is situated within a broader context, specifically in relation to the communities most impacted by your work. Answering the following questions will help you identify where and how your organization is situated.

- What are the racial demographics of the community your organization serves?

- What communities are most impacted by the issues that your organization works on? Is there a difference between who your community serves and those most impacted?

- What is the history of the community you serve, and how have the racial demographics in your region changed over time? Why have they changed?

- What are the resources in your community or region? This can include infrastructure (community centers, arts or cultural centers, places of worship, schools, or other convening spaces), skills (language, historical knowledge, artistic skills), relationships, and financial assets.

- Who are some of the prominent leaders in those communities?

- What efforts have been made to assess the needs of the community that your organization serves? Consider city efforts and plans, organizational studies or surveys, or efforts within your own organization.

- Do you know the self-identified needs and assets of communities of color that you serve?

While it's important to understand the history of a region, the movement work, and how communities have been affected by institutional racism, you may not be able to answer all of the questions above. In these cases, it's important to determine which information is missing and why it may be missing. Moving toward racial equity is an ongoing and iterative process. Continue coming back to these questions as you review this document, and don't let not knowing all the answers be a hindrance to doing this work.

How To Use The Accountability Principles

1. **BE CLEAR ABOUT THE PURPOSE AND GOALS of using the accountability principles:**
   These principles are designed to assess your organization's progress in deepening accountability and relationships with people of color-led organizations and communities most impacted by institutional and structural racism. Consider the following questions:

   - Why is it important that your organization take on these principles and work to advance racial equity?

   - How does racial equity align with your mission, vision and values?

   - How would operating with a racial equity framework improve the work of your organization?

   - How will this benefit your community stakeholders, partners, and/or clients?

   While many organizations approach racial inequities out of a sense of morality, understanding how racial equity will strategically improve the mission alignment, effectiveness, and quality of your organization can give these principles more importance and urgency.

2. **Create a racial equity team:** To ensure that the concept of racial justice moves beyond the theoretical and into the real activities and programs of your organization, convene a team of people committed to racial equity and inclusion to direct the assessment,

analysis, and implementation. Strive for a team that reflects the overall composition of your workforce and the communities you serve, inclusive across race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and other identities.

If your organization does not have staff that reflect the community you serve, take time to acknowledge this, and how your team will work to bring in more diverse voices. Remember that it is important for white staff members to be involved in this work; while they must sometimes step back to listen instead of lead, the bulk of the labor should not fall on people of color or others from marginalized communities. It also helps to include people from different departments within your organization, and with different levels of leadership, positional authority and experience.

3. **Discuss responses as a team:** Each member of the team should independently complete the evaluation (see Scoring Guide below). This can be done all at once or section by section, over several meetings. Afterwards, discuss the results as a team, identifying areas where your organization most needs improvement, or areas where specific teams or individuals might need improvement. Also highlight areas where your organization is doing well, to help maintain momentum and commitment to racial justice. When discussing, pay particular attention to divergent opinions and experiences on the team. Varying opinions are natural and should be discussed in a way that is inclusive, collaborative, and respectful.

4. **Identify top priorities based on what needs improvement**: Because each organization is different and will score differently, the team should decide which principles to focus on first. For many, this may be in order or the areas needing the most improvement, but the order of priority should be one that is achievable and will make real, needed change at your organization.

5. **Report findings and next steps to your entire organization:** Once next steps have been generated, report the findings to the entire organization. Depending on the organization and the makeup of the team, it may be useful to share the findings with a management team or other key staff before sharing with the full team, to ensure you are able to answer any questions.

6. **Continue to discuss efforts and progress your organization is making:** Continue to meet regularly as a team, circling back to review progress, identify further next steps, and deepen the learning process. Identify if there are other staff who should be involved in these ongoing evaluations. Whether you have a low or high score, developing a plan and regularly revisiting your efforts and progress ensures continued growth in your work towards deeper accountability.

Scoring Guide

We recommend that each team member completes the assessment individually before engaging in group conversations. Below is a scoring system to use for each readiness indicator.

1= Not a current practice
2= Acknowledged as important, but not a current practice
3= Practicing on occasion, or starting to practice
4= Practicing
5= Exemplary practice
NA= Not Applicable

Teams will be able to use the scores and rankings to engage in conversation around priority areas and next steps for the organization. Organizations are encouraged to continue assessing their practices and culture on a regular basis to ensure movement in their work towards racial justice.

Racial Equity Within Your Individual Practices

GOAL: Along with improving organizational practices, it's important to understand your role and how you personally represent your organization in coalition spaces. This section assesses your individual role and impact in the racial justice movement.

Scoring Guide:

1= Not a current practice

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3= Practicing on occasion, or starting to practice

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5= Exemplary practice

NA= Not Applicable

Equity Readiness Indicator	Score	Avg Score	Explanation
SUPPORT YOUR OWN LEARNING JOURNEY			
Do you proactively seek out opportunities to learn about racial equity, rather than waiting to be taught?			
Are you willing to question your long-held assumptions and beliefs?			
Do you practice active listening?			
Do you see the work of racial equity as a shared collective responsibility?			
USE YOUR PRIVILEGE TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY VALUES			
Do you name harmful patterns and behaviors in the moment? (For example, naming when communities of color are not involved in decision-making process, addressing it if hurtful or harmful things are being said, etc.)			
Do you ensure that racial equity is brought into conversations early and often, without putting that burden on your colleagues of color?			
Do you strike a balance between speaking up, and stepping back and letting others lead?			

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST WITH PEOPLE OF COLOR AND PEOPLE OF COLOR-LED ORGANIZATIONS			
Do you work to build relationships and trust so that authentic conversations can happen?			
Are you proactive about reaching out to people of color, rather than waiting for them to come to you?			
Do you start relationship building early, before there's an immediate need or ask?			
Do you give credit to those around you for the ways in which you've been assisted?			
SHIFT THE NARRATIVE AROUND RACIAL EQUITY			
Do you publicly acknowledge that the systems that are failing communities of color are negatively affecting all of us? (Please see this Ben & Jerry's public statement for an example of how addressing systemic racism benefits us all)			
Do you take an active and engaged role in interrupting dominant/white supremacist cultural[1] patterns and norms that reinforce white supremacy, and preventing their replication? (For example, recognizing either/or thinking, quantity over quality, defensiveness, and perfectionism)			
Do you elevate the assets and strengths of people of color and communities of color?			
APPROACH RACIAL EQUITY AS BOTH A PROCESS AND A RESULT			
Do you take the time to be present and support communities of color, even if you don't see the direct relationship to your work?			
Do you find ways to incorporate racial equity values into planning processes and decision-making? (For example, being clear about how you are advancing racial equity from the beginning of a process, being transparent in decision-making processes, using data to understand the racial equity implications)?			
Do you see racial equity as something to continue working toward rather than something to accomplish?			

(Continued on the following page.)

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1 White Supremacy Culture by Tema Okun

FOCUS ON IMPACT VERSUS INTENT			
Are you open to feedback without getting defensive?			
When you recognize past mistakes, are you quick to apologize and make amends?			
Do you practice vulnerability and honesty about where you're still learning and growing around racial equity?			

Next Steps

Starting with the sections in which you scored the lowest, identify some next steps for your-self. Talk these over with your team and set timelines for follow-up conversations to hold each other accountable and allow for shared learning. Recognize that many of these next steps are applicable across sections.

SUPPORT YOUR OWN LEARNING JOURNEY

- Join a local Showing up for Racial Justice chapter or other white anti-racist spaces

- Read and learn about the history of racism in our country, with an explicit focus on institutional and structural racism. Consider watching Race: The Power of an Illusion

- Deepen your understanding of how racial identity is formed in our country, including the ways in which internalized superiority and oppression manifest. Review the Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development

- Visit https://www.whiteaccomplices.org/

- Learn about characteristics of white supremacy culture. See the White Supremacy Culture workbook for guidance

USE YOUR PRIVILEGE TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY VALUES

- Read White Supremacy Culture by Tema Okun and discuss with a colleague

- Continue to caucus with other white people who are working towards racial equity. Discuss questions, concerns, ways you can become better allies, and steps you are taking to support people of color

    - Take feedback constructively (instead of defensively) and identify how you can shift your practice to incorporate it

    - Be willing to admit mistakes and learn from them

- Support the learning of other white allies

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST WITH PEOPLE OF COLOR AND PEOPLE OF COLOR-LED ORGANIZATIONS

- Review "What it Means to be a white Ally" in Appendix C

- Within your organization and in coalition spaces, acknowledge racial dynamics as they occur

SHIFT THE NARRATIVE AROUND RACIAL EQUITY

- Identify the harmful narratives that frame people of color as "takers" and "less than" as it relates to the issue you're working on. Please see the Center for Media Justice for resources.

- Pay attention to whose stories you're highlighting and identify if there are opportunities to broaden who is represented

- Review Talking About Race Toolkit and the Social Justice Phrase Guide

- Continue to practice anti-racist language and to talk about race

- Please see this speech by Ben & Jerry for an example of how to shift the narrative around racial equity

APPROACH RACIAL EQUITY AS BOTH A PROCESS AND A RESULT

- Spend some time outlining what behaviors are associated with your values and the above principles. Find ways to hold yourself accountable to those behaviors and work with others to operationalize them in your organization

- Identify an accountability partner to share the principles and values outlined above and someone who has permission to provide feedback to you if you are acting defensive

FOCUS ON IMPACT VERSUS INTENT

- Learn about the unconscious patterns people have developed in their brains so that you have a stronger understanding of your blind spots. Watch the Kirwan Institute's Implicit Bias Module Series

- Operate with transparency and honesty when it comes to your racial equity work

- Model vulnerability; it's okay to say you don't know

Racial Equity Within Your Organizational Practices

GOAL: Internal organizational practices influence the way an organization is able to advance racial justice. This section assesses the mission that drives the organization, the values that determine how an organization does its work, internal staff policies, and the practices that affect community at large. To have a true and lasting impact on racial equity, it is important for an organization's stated commitment to racial equity to be in alignment with internal organizational practices.

Scoring Guide:

1= Not a current practice

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Equity Readiness Indicator[2]	Score	Avg Score	Explanation
BE RACE EXPLICIT			
Does your organization understand why it's important to prioritize racial equity?			
Does your organization explicitly name your commitment to advancing racial equity, both in internal policies and external messaging? (Example of an explicit racial equity statement by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition)			
Does your organization understand the intersections of racial equity in every department, issue, project, and program?			
Do staff feel a sense of urgency in addressing racial disparities in your work?			

(Continued on the following page.)

2 Many indicators have been adapted from the
Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative

ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND PROCEDURES REFLECT A RACIAL EQUITY COMMITMENT			
Does your organization's staff, from leadership to frontline staff, represent the communities you serve?			
Does your organization utilize a racial equity toolkit or analysis to review policies, practices, and procedures on a regular basis (including, but not limited to: budgeting, programmatic efforts, communications, recruitment and hiring, human resources, development, etc.)?			
Does your organization have goals and metrics to track your progress towards racial equity? See Racial Equity Action Plan excerpt from Race Forward's work in the Puget Sound as an example			
FOSTER AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE			
Do staff in every department and at every level of your organizational hierarchy feel valued and respected?			
Does your organization capture information about staff satisfaction (disaggregated by race) on a regular basis?			
Are staff able to embrace the full range of their identities when they come to work? (For example, does your organization give your employees the opportunity to observe holidays from all religions? Does your organization allow employees to flex their schedules for reasons they do not need to disclose?)			
Is there an opportunity for feedback from staff at all levels regarding programmatic direction and approach?			
What norms and ways of being does your organization prioritize, and do they actively interrupt white dominant culture? Use the Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization to assess where your organization sits on the continuum and to create goals for where you want to be within the next year			

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PRIORITIZE PEOPLE OF COLOR-OWNED BUSINESSES FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CONTRACTING AND PURCHASING			
Does your organization prioritize contracting with vendors and partners led by people of color or with a mission related to racial equity?			
Do you routinely capture data (disaggregated by race) on who your organization contracts with?			
Is all contract language or RFP language explicit about your organization's commitment to racial equity?			
ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION-MAKING			
Are organizational decision-making processes transparent and clear?			
Before an organizational decision has been made, is there space for conversation and questions from staff at all levels of the organization?			
Does the decision-making team ask the following questions on a routine basis: • What assumptions might we be making? • What power dynamics are at play? • How can we gain a more nuanced understanding of the issue at hand? • Whose perspectives are missing? • Who benefits and who is most burdened from this decision?			
When decisions are made, is there transparency regarding how and why the decision-maker(s) reached that outcome?			

Next Steps

Starting with the sections in which you scored the lowest, identify some next steps for yourself. Talk these over with your team and set timelines for follow-up conversations to hold each other accountable and allow for shared learning. Recognize that many of these next steps are applicable across sections.

BE RACE EXPLICIT
- Include racial equity conversations in all team and organization meetings

- Commit to working in solidarity with communities of color by having all employees discuss and agree to a statement of solidarity around dismantling institutional and structural racism
    - For example, the Seattle South Asians for Black Lives demonstrated their solidarity by stating, "We as South Asians and West Asians must understand that our own liberation is tied to embracing the nuances of our positions as both oppressed and privileged, actively working to reject the model minority myth, war tactics against our communities and black communities here in the U.S."

ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND PROCEDURES REFLECT A RACIAL EQUITY COMMITMENT
- Use the Continuum on [Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization](#) to assess where your organization sits on the continuum and to create goals for where you want to be within the next year

- Use a Racial Equity Toolkit (See appendix D) to assess:
    - Policies and practices around promotion and professional development
    - All programmatic, policy, and budget decisions
    - Recruitment and hiring practices

- Identify the ways in which racial equity intersects with your organization's internal and external work

- Create a racial equity action plan (see Appendix D)

- Please see Appendix D for additional examples of assessing internal policies

FOSTER AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE
- Ensure all managers have training in receiving input across lines of identity and power and how to incorporate racial justice into their management strategies

- Develop and implement regular opportunities for feedback from employees at all levels of the organization. Consider distributing an all staff survey to identify both the strengths and areas of improvement within the organization

- Create space for "both/and" thinking and diverse perspectives. Racial equity work is complex and there's often not one singular answer or best way of doing things. By encouraging staff to gain comfort with the idea that there might be multiple strategies, or ways to achieve a single goal, you can help expand people's thinking and generate space for the nuance and trade-offs that are inherent in this work

- Provide staff and leaders from the community with skills and trainings to support them in their own personal development

- Set racial equity goals in relation to all of your projects and internal tools/policies.

- Create a staff team to review policies and procedures with a racial equity lens, and to provide input into key organizational decisions

PRIORITIZE PEOPLE OF COLOR OWNED BUSINESSES FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CONTRACTING AND PURCHASING

- Evaluate which businesses, contractors, and facilitators (in the case of trainings) your organization supports. What percentage of your expenses support white-owned businesses and what percentage supports people of color-owned businesses?

- When purchasing food, supplies, and finding meeting spaces, prioritize people of color-owned businesses

ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

- Ensure that all staff are utilizing the Racial Equity Toolkit in decision-making

- If not doing so already, share budget and financials with staff at all levels of the organization; depending on timing, ask for staff input into next year's budget

Organizational Practices in Working with Others and Building Authentic Relationships with Communities Most Impacted

GOAL: This section assesses the way that your organization builds and deepens relationships with the communities that are most impacted by the issues your organization works on. By developing deeper, more authentic relationships, you can improve your organization's work, while also meeting the needs and priorities of local communities.

Scoring Guide:

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NA= Not Applicable

Equity Readiness Indicator	Score	Avg Score	Explanation
LEARN THE HISTORY OF COMMUNITIES THAT ARE MOST IMPACTED BY THE ISSUES YOUR ORGANIZATION WORKS ON			
Does your organization have institutional knowledge about which communities are most impacted by the issues you're working on?			
Has your organization learned the local history of local communities of color (both holistically and related to your organization's work) to know how you could best leverage your expertise to benefit that community?			
Does your organization communicate the ways that institutional and structural racism impact your work in an accessible and meaningful way?			

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SUPPORT THE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITIES OF COLOR			
Does your organization honor communities as the experts of their own experiences and respect the opportunity to learn from their knowledge and analysis?			
Does your organization use its resources to support the priorities identified by people of color? Is your organization being mindful that people of color do not do this racial equity work alone?			
Does your organization hold off on creating policy or making decisions until you have the full and direct participation of those most impacted? Identify where your organization lands on the spectrum/continuum on page 4 of the From Community Engagement to Ownership report			
CENTER THE LEADERSHIP AND EXPERTISE OF PEOPLE OF COLOR			
Does your organization invest resources and capacity to develop leadership in communities of color (including, but not limited to inviting leaders to training opportunities, allowing them to facilitate or lead meetings, etc.)?			
Does your organization celebrate and lift up the resiliency, strength, and assets of communities of color?			
Is your organization working to avoid altruistic language that gives credit for positive change to you rather than to communities? For example, are you recognizing the role that communities play in the work that you do)?			

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CO-DESIGN OF PROGRAMS, STRATEGIES, AND EVENTS WITH COMMUNITIES			
Is there a mechanism for communities to provide meaningful input on organizational direction and strategy?			
Is your organization receptive to changing strategies based on the needs of communities of color?			
Are community members—in particular communities of color—engaged early and often to help define problems and identify solutions?			
Is your organization actively talking with communities of color to determine potential barriers to participation and engagement (including, but not limited to: event times, offering food, transportation, and childcare, interpretation, marketing, etc.)?			

Next Steps

Starting with the sections in which you scored the lowest, identify some next steps for yourself. Talk these over with your team and set timelines for follow-up conversations to hold each other accountable and allow for shared learning. Recognize that many of these next steps are applicable across sections.

LEARN THE HISTORY OF COMMUNITIES THAT ARE MOST IMPACTED BY THE ISSUES YOUR ORGANIZATION WORKS ON

- When working with communities, take time to understand the history of the region, community assets and challenges, the relationships between organizations and government, and any key events that have shaped the culture and priorities of the region. It is best to gain this knowledge before beginning work in a community, however it is important to always continue deepening your learning

- Identify which communities are most impacted by the issues you work on and develop a plan to begin building relationships and trust with local leaders

- Link to institutional and structural causes as often as you can (refrain from using narratives that focus primarily on individual behaviors)

SUPPORT THE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

- Build deep and authentic relationships with the communities you serve. Before jumping into "the work," designate time and funding to get to know your members/constituency. Use needs assessments, community meeting spaces, and one-on-one home visits to learn about your members/constituency/community's story, history, goals, and vision. Ensure that the community you work with is driving the focus of your organization and not vice versa

- When engaging with communities of color, be self-aware of your assumptions so that you can interact and build relationships intentionally without tokenizing people. Ask yourself why you are engaging them and reflect on any unconscious reasons for their inclusion

- Increase the accessibility of community engagement by offering childcare, transportation, food, interpretation, stipends, etc.

- When promoting organizational events, consider diversifying outreach strategies. If you default to sending out mass emails, consider sending text messages, making phone calls, using social media, and posting fliers in diverse settings. In addition, ask your community members their desired methods of communication

CENTER THE LEADERSHIP AND EXPERTISE OF PEOPLE OF COLOR

- As community members become more engaged in your organization, provide leadership opportunities, host training events, and provide them with the skills to be successful partners

- Invite community members to serve on your board (determine a goal of the percentage of your board that is composed of community members most impacted) When creating your organization's strategic plan, invite communities to engage in the process

CO-DESIGN OF PROGRAMS, STRATEGIES, AND EVENTS WITH COMMUNITIES

- When community priorities shift, ensure that you are applying for grants and creating programs that address the new goals and agendas

- When creating policies and making decisions, ensure that community members have been a part of the process from the beginning to the end

- Before engaging communities and beginning a new project, ensure that your organization has the staff, time, and funding to build accountable relationships. Are you able to stay in a community for the next three years? Can you provide resources such as childcare, food, and transportation to remove barriers to participation? Are you holding meetings in inclusive spaces?

Building Solidarity with People of Color-Led Organizations[3]

GOAL: In order to achieve long-term structural change, it is critical for organizations to build solidarity with each other. Solidarity is a practice that is shown via continued action and ongoing trust building. This section assesses white-led organizations' allyship with people of color-led organizations.

Scoring Guide:

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5= Exemplary practice

NA= Not Applicable

Equity Readiness Indicator	Score	Avg Score	Explanation
BUILD AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST WITH PEOPLE OF COLOR-LED ORGANIZATIONS			
Does your organization build relationships with people of color-led organizations with the goal of growing connections and commonalities rather than furthering a specific project or program deliverable?			
Does your organization acknowledge and take ownership if the relationship has been one-sided in the past, or if there's a history of mistrust? (For example, has your organization had a genuine conversation with people of color led organizations to surface potential past tensions? And has your organization apologized for any missteps whether unintentional or not?)			
Does your organization regularly show up when other people of color-led organizations ask or need support?			

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3 Many principles were inspired by Deepa Iyer

ENSURE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PEOPLE OF COLOR-LED ORGANIZATIONS			
In your working relationships with people of color-led organizations, are you transparent and honest in communications, expectations, and goals?			
Does your organization ask people of color-led organizations what support they need, and listen to the reply?			
Does your organization have a mechanism to hold ourselves accountable to stated racial equity values and to incorporate feedback from partners (For example, creating racial equity goals, metrics, and evaluations)?			
SHARE LEADERSHIP, POWER, AND RESOURCES WITH PEOPLE OF COLOR-LED GROUPS			
Do the people in your organization use white privilege responsibly (sharing power, influence, access, connections, credibility, information, status, etc.) in ways that support people of color and racial justice?			
Do you resource and collaborate with people of color-led organizations on an ongoing basis? (For example, does your organization write letters of support for organizations led by communities of color?)			
Do the coalitions that your organization is a part of include representation from people of color-led organizations and focus on racial equity?			

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ESTABLISH ACCOUNTABILITY WITH WHITE-LED ORGANIZATIONS			
Does your organization hold other white-led organizations accountable for harmful actions or inaction, and give honest, timely and skillful feedback by "calling in" rather than "calling out"?			
Does your organization let go of comfort and perfectionism to take risks, knowing that if mistakes are made they're opportunities for growth?			
Is your organization willing to course correct when you misstep or when your organizational partners ask you to?			
Does your organization use your power and authority to push institutions or philanthropy towards greater racial equity?			

Next Steps

Starting with the sections in which you scored the lowest, identify some next steps for your-self. Talk these over with your team and set timelines for follow-up conversations to hold each other accountable and allow for shared learning. Recognize that many of these next steps are applicable across sections.

BUILD AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST WITH PEOPLE OF COLOR-LED ORGANIZATIONS

- Build deep and authentic relationships with people of color-led organizations. Arrange bi-monthly coffee dates to build relationships (ensure this space does not become a working session)

- Create and agree on a shared definition of what solidarity and partnership mean in each of your relationships

ENSURE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PEOPLE OF COLOR-LED ORGANIZATIONS

- Consistently show up for people of color-led organizations, even if it doesn't directly tie to your mission (e.g. attend events, support fundraisers, get to know their work, etc.)

- Be a reliable partner to people of color-led organizations by:
    - Lifting-up and endorsing the work of people of color organizations

    - Attend planning and strategy meetings and provide input when asked

- Know the landscape: determine if there are people of color-led or community-based organizations that are already doing the work that you could lift up or partner with

- Fulfill your organizational commitments and maintain open and consistent communication.

- Check-in with people of color-led organizations before launching a policy or campaign that will impact their constituents. Be willing to strategize or course correct if necessary, based on feedback

- When applying for grants to do racial equity work, ask yourself if you're the best organization to do that work or if there's another people of color-led organization that's already doing it

SHARE LEADERSHIP, POWER, AND RESOURCES WITH PEOPLE OF COLOR-LED GROUPS

- If people of color-led organizations are not in coalition spaces that you are attending, discuss with the coalition chair the necessity of having people of color-led organizations leading the conversation, and open the coalition to include people of color-led organizations

- Invite people of color organizations to be part of coalitions and support them in their integration into the space (NOTE: be cognizant of tokenization, communities of color are not a monolith and one organization/individual can't speak on behalf of all people of color)

- Commit to giving seats at the table to people of color-led organizations to help shape the agenda at the beginning of the process, before any decisions have been made

- Share materials, skills, and expertise with people of color-led groups

- Determine the areas where you and your organization hold power (with funders, partner organizations, coalitions, legislators, etc.) and how you may be able to use that power to promote racial equity

- Name people of color-led organizations as partners and resource them in a way that's meaningful

ESTABLISH ACCOUNTABILITY WITH WHITE-LED ORGANIZATIONS

- Collaboratively draft a statement of solidarity that will be signed by all mainstream organizations and communities of color-led organizations

- During your conversations with other mainstream organizations and/or in coalition spaces, utilize the Racial Equity Toolkit to ensure that priorities and the direction of the work is carried out using a racial equity lens

- Identify the power you have and the places you hold it, determine actionable steps to bring people of color-led organizations into those spaces. Support leaders who are new to these spaces by sharing connections and providing knowledge to help them succeed

- Work with government to craft equitable legislation. Introduce the Racial Equity Toolkit to policy makers to ensure that policies include a racial equity lens and that communities are engaged in the beginning stages of drafting legislation

- In collaboration with people of color-led organizations, meet with institutions to advise on how they can better support communities on the ground. This could be through one-on-one exchanges or agency wide trainings

- Recommend that philanthropy implement trainings around racial equity and relationship building with first nations

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to complete this assessment. As was mentioned at the beginning, being an accountable partner is an ongoing process. We hope the principles, readiness indicators and scoring helped you identify where to prioritize your efforts. As you begin to work on your next steps, we recommend that you also identify when to revisit the assessment so that you can gauge your progress and measure the impact you're having over time.

APPENDIX A

Racial Equity Framework for the Puget Sound

Created by the Puget Sound Cohort on Equity, Environment and Infrastructure[4]

Vision (what we're trying to achieve in the community):

We are committed to working **collectively** to ensure that we are shifting **power, resources, and decision-making** to communities of color and those most impacted[5] by issues related to the environment and infrastructure.[6] We will work to **preserve the culture and identity** of diverse communities in the Puget Sound as we strive to create more **integrated and inclusive communities**. Fundamental to this vision is the fact that when racial equity is prioritized and normalized, we all advance.

Principles (values that guide the work):

NOTE: Each coalition or network that is using this document should spend time discussing the section below to allow for greater specificity, clarity, and ultimately agreement about what these principles mean in the context of your work.

SHARED UNDERSTANDING:
- Emphasize the leadership of people of color
  - Those most impacted by institutional and structural racism are best situated to develop solutions that interrupt current power structures and norms
- Do no harm to people, communities, and the environment
- Our work builds towards long-term transformative approaches that shift systems
- Multiracial solidarity is necessary to advance our collective vision

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4   Please see the acknowledgements section at the end of this document for a list of organizations participating in the cohort

5   Identifying which communities are most impacted should be a robust and holistic process. Pay particular attention to how the environment intersects with people's health and well-being (for example: proximity to environmental hazards, exposure to pollutants, flood risk, heat risk, etc.) By analyzing which communities are going to be hit first and worst because of climate change (due to race, geography, income, or other factors), you can begin to map which communities make sense to incorporate more fully in your work. As it relates to infrastructure, we encourage you to think about transportation and housing, as well as access to resources, services, opportunities, and other areas that might intersect with the built environment. What are the components necessary for communities to thrive; which communities have access to those and which don't?

6   The Puget Sound Cohort was focused on combating gentrification and displacement, but this framework is applicable to any set of issues related to the built environment.

COLLECTIVE APPROACH:
- Process and outcome are equally important
- Focus on community impact
- Shift power and decision-making to communities of color
- Highlight intersectionality by drawing connections between different issues and encouraging shared learning

ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY:
- Relationships are critical to our success
- We are stronger when working in partnership and collaboration
- Transparency, honesty, and mutual respect are cultivated
- Create new patterns that disrupt the status quo

Robust discussions about accountability[7] are a necessary component of racial equity work. We encourage organizations to review our Accountability Principles document and identify some guiding principles that the group can commit to.

Toolkit (process to insert racial equity into decision-making)[8]:

STEP #1:
- What is your racial equity goal?

- How does your proposal align with the vision and principles outlined in this framework? (NOTE: pay particular attention to how this helps build community ownership/power)

STEP #2:
- What data do you currently have that can give you a deeper understanding of the issue you're working on as it relates to race, class, and geography?

- What data gaps exist?

STEP #3:
- Are there opportunities for those most impacted (paying particular attention to communities of color) to be involved in developing, refining, and finalizing the proposal?

- What is your plan for community engagement?

- Is there an opportunity for co-creation with people of color-led organizations?

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7 Accountability to other organizations in the coalition/network, between white-led organizations and people of color-led organizations, and between the coalition/network and the communities most impacted

8 Adapted from the Racial Equity Toolkit

STEP #4:

- Based on your data collection and community engagement, what are your strategies for advancing racial equity?

- How is the proposal designed to respond to root causes (including the disproportionate amounts of environmental pollution, adverse health impacts, displacement, and more, for communities of color)?

- What are potential unintended consequences and what are parallel strategies for mitigating them?

STEP #5:

- What is your implementation plan (focus on activities, timeline, and who's responsible for which pieces of the plan)?

STEP #6:

- How will you ensure accountability (both to the network/coalition and to those most impacted)?

- What are your messages and communication strategies that will help advance racial equity?

Acknowledgements

APPENDIX B

What it Means to Be a White Ally

Below is a list of practices brainstormed during a Puget Sound Cohort meeting by white members and revised by people of color members.

Created and revised by: Cascade Bicycle Club, Futurewise, Nakani Native Program, Race Forward, Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness, Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, Scott Winn (consultant), Transportation Choices Coalition, and the Washington Environmental Council

1. Operationalizing the practices in organizations and institutions

2. Listen to learn not just to speak (not to react)

3. When partnering (internally in organizations too), share resources (time, tasks, capacity) and offer, don't wait to get asked

4. Name racial dynamics as they occur

5. Believe the experiences of POC
   - What do we do to minimize harm

6. Go out of your way to meet POC where they are at - scheduling, locations, etc.

7. Leveraging privilege: funders etc. to add capacity in a supportive way

8. Recognize power dynamics and impacts (for worse and for better)
   - Put white people in a strong position of power to pull other white people into this work

9. Build relationships and trust so authentic conversations can happen
   - Acknowledge disagreements
   - Acknowledge what's at stake

10. Support (talk to each other) other white folks in your education, educate each other
    - Work with directors

11. "Lean out" to support space / opportunities for POC's in their organization/create space
    - Taking credit versus sharing credit
    - Be a voice for racial equity
    - See the value—and spread the word

12. Center perspectives and strategies of POC

13. Be present, take the time, show up

APPENDIX C
Resource List

Find a hyperlinked online copy of this report at www.raceforward.org/research

General Resources

- Racial Equity Tools

- Dismantling Racism 2016 Workbook

- Colorlines

Racial Equity Within Your Individual Practices

- Showing Up for Racial Justice chapters

- White Accomplices

CULTURE AND IDENTITY

- Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development

- White Supremacy Culture article

- White Culture worksheet

- Resources on whiteness and white privilege

IMPLICIT BIAS

- Kirwan Institute's Implicit Bias Module Series

- Resources on implicit bias

COMMUNICATING ABOUT RACE

- Talking About Race Toolkit

- The Social Justice Phrase Guide

INSTITUTIONAL AND STRUCTURAL RACISM

- Race: The Power of an Illusion

Racial Equity Within Your Organizational Practices

RACIAL EQUITY TOOLS:

- Racial Equity Toolkit

- Racial Equity Action Plans

- Racial Equity Core Teams

- Racial Equity Toolkit to Assess, Policies, Initiatives, Programs, and Budget Issues [9]

- The Management Center Tools

RACIAL EQUITY IN WORK CULTURE

- Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Institution

- White Supremacy Culture by Tema Okun

INFORMATION/EXAMPLES OF ASSESSING INTERNAL POLICIES

ORGANIZATIONAL VISION

- Does your organization believes that racial equality is achievable in our lifetime

- Does your organization's goals, strategies, and plans support the concept of racial equity as a goal of racial equity practice and a basic social right?

- Does your organizational leadership prioritize racial equity and communicate the importance of addressing racial equity in your work?

WORKPLACE CULTURE

- Is an ongoing racial equity training program established and promoted for the workforce of all levels to enhance self-awareness, racial equity awareness, knowledge, and skills?

- Are staff (and especially managers) trained around receiving input across lines of identity and power?

- Do internal communications increase transparency and encourage and enable continued transparency and communication?

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Does my organization challenges ourselves to look beyond interpersonal racism, but to instead work towards policies and systems change?

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9 While these documents are written for government audience, they can be adapted and have applicability for nonprofit organizations

- Are there interview questions designed to test for an understanding in racial equity and working with people from cultures different from the applicant's?

RETENTION

- Does your organization provide the materials and support to ensure staff success and gain the experience needed for promotional opportunities, including funding for professional development activities? Does your organization solicit feedback from staff regarding paths to promotion or position development?

- Does your organization ensure that all staff members are compensated in a fair and equitable fashion based on experience and responsibility, and that all staff earn a living wage?

- Are there policies and systems to protect diverse staff members?

- Are there regular opportunities (through check-ins, team meetings, or other activities) for expressing and receiving input across lines of identity and power?

Organizational Practices in Working with Others Building Authentic Relationships with Communities Most Impacted

- Resources on accountability

- Center for Media Justice resources

Building Solidarity with People of Color-led Organizations

- Solidarity Is This

- Nonprofit AF