



Innovation

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Steven Bosacker

Steven Bosacker advises on finding and furthering promising practices in large city governments to get better results for low-income people. The public-sector portfolio includes projects such as the City Accelerator, Civic Tech & Data Collaborative, network development for innovation directors across the country, and Racial Equity Here, an initiative devoted to operationalizing racial equity in city operations.

Striving to achieve all seven outcomes in the [Equipt to Innovate framework](#) is key to developing innovations that will solve our country's toughest social problems, in 2018 and beyond. Central to the framework is the quest for local governments to be "[race-informed](#)." We believe that applying a racial equity lens to the government's work can help close the substantial opportunity gaps that exist between white residents and people of color, across all opportunity indicators, including education, jobs, criminal justice, housing, public infrastructure, and health.

The first [Equipt to Innovate national survey results](#) confirmed that public practitioners have a fierce commitment to continuous improvement. One can easily imagine that a self-assessment survey would result in places giving themselves high marks across the board. Not so. Cities were brutally honest about their own performance, reflecting both a remarkable willingness to be vulnerable and a commitment to getting better. Nowhere was this clearer than around the element of being "race-informed." In fact, 77 percent of respondents indicated a need for more equitable provision of services—in educational achievement, transit options, and policing practice—across their cities.

Like so much in the innovation space, local governments have the ability to lead the way in undoing the debilitating institutional racism that's keeping us from the equity everyone deserves. The sooner we move beyond rhetoric and make the real changes needed to impact lives, the sooner we also realize our deeply held democratic values of liberty, justice—and equality—for all.

2018 TIP:

To truly achieve breakthrough innovations in local government, public servants have a special responsibility to interrogate our own biases as well as our city's history of institutional racism, and undo what stands in the way of unlocking the full potential of all residents.

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