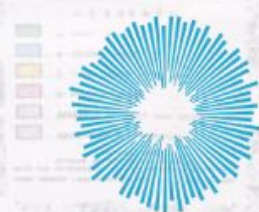


Racial Equity Here

LESSONS LEARNED FROM
FIVE CITIES
OPERATIONALIZING
RACIAL EQUITY

RESIDENTIAL SECURITY MAP



LIVING CITIES

INNOVATE ▶ INVEST ▶ LEAD

CAMDEN, N. J.

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Introduction

Living Cities is working to close racial income and wealth gaps in America's cities. Over the last five years, we have been on a journey to center and operationalize racial equity throughout our policies, practices, and programs. One of the first new programs launched by Living Cities since embarking on this journey was Racial Equity Here (REH) in 2016.

Racial Equity Here resulted from a Living Cities task force, convened in response to Freddie Gray's death, which brought together cross-sector leaders from our member institutions to create a new vehicle for action against the still-present effects of structural racism in U.S. cities.

The program was a partnership with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), a project of Race Forward, and it built on their frameworks, network, and experience working with local governments on racial equity.

Through Racial Equity Here, GARE provided technical support and coaching to the cities of Albuquerque, Austin, Grand Rapids, Louisville and Philadelphia as they normalized conversations about race, operationalized new behaviors and policies, and organized to achieve racial equity. We also partnered with PROVOC for communications support to the cities as well as Community Science for evaluation support.

This report was produced as a capstone of Racial Equity Here. It includes:

- An overview of the program
- Reflections and insights from Living Cities staff; our partners at GARE; technical assistance providers Community Science, Insight, and Provoc; and staff from the participating cities
- Case studies
- Tools and resources used in the program

We hope that this content can help other city governments in their racial equity work.

As Living Cities is an organization committed to turning the mirror on ourselves, we have also included a section that reflects on our role as funders and partners to local governments. We hope that other funders find food for thought here.

We are grateful for Living Cities member institutions that funded this effort: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Prudential Financial Inc., Deutsche Bank, Wells Fargo, MetLife Inc., Annie E Casey Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Bank of America

RACIAL EQUITY HERE was a cohort of five U.S. cities committed to improving racial equity and advancing opportunity for all. Living Cities worked with the [Government Alliance on Race and Equity \(GARE\)](#), a project of the [Race Forward](#) and the [Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society](#), to provide technical support and coaching to a cohort of city governments— **Albuquerque, Austin, Grand Rapids, Louisville, and Philadelphia** — as they analyze how their operations impact people of color and devise actionable solutions.

We believe that GARE's model of organizing local government is important in changing structural inequities. Working with leaders in local government (a mix of elected and non-elected government staff) gave us an opportunity to explore what it takes to operationalize racial equity.

Racial Equity Here (REH) resulted from a Living Cities member task force, convened in response to Freddie Gray's death, which brought together cross-sector leaders from our member institutions to create a new vehicle for action against the still-present effects of structural racism in U.S. cities. Through Racial Equity Here, the cities have completed a racial equity assessment of their core government operations. Cities also developed Racial Equity Action Plans with short-, medium- and long-term implementation strategies.

WHY RACIAL EQUITY HERE?

Racial inequities are not natural; they have been created and maintained by people in governments and other institutions. Our systems and structures were designed to create the current outcomes—racial inequities across all indicators of success. These costly, deeply racialized systems that are failing communities of color are actually failing all of us. For us to eliminate racial inequities and expand opportunities for all, we must take on institutional and structural racism.

So many of the root causes of racial inequity—segregation, exclusion, concentrated poverty, and limited opportunities—are within the power of city government to change. Cities have always been laboratories for meaningful social and economic change. By understanding how municipal operations affect race and equity, city government can begin to transform systems to drive better outcomes.





Beyond Counting Policies: Measuring Racial Equity Progress

By: Ben Hecht and Nadia Owusu

People of color in U.S. cities disproportionately and historically lack access to opportunities – from education to employment – and many of the issues tied to racial inequity are within the power of city government to change. This fact represents a tremendous opportunity that Living Cities seeks to harness through our work, given our long-term and deep relationships with local governments and our mission of closing racial income and wealth gaps.

Racial Equity Here was designed so we could **work deeply with five local governments to understand the full potential of this opportunity**. Teams from each of the local governments completed an analysis of the history of racism in their cities with a focus on how government contributed to and created inequities. They developed racial equity vision statements as a way to help the cities' leadership arrive at a common understanding about their racial equity efforts and to sharpen their language in communicating their commitment to racial equity to the public. They assessed their core government operations through a racial equity lens. They trained thousands of local government staff to approach their work in an anti-racist way, mindful of their roles as gatekeepers. And, they created and began to implement racial equity action plans that engaged departments across the city as well as non-profit, philanthropic, corporate, and very importantly, community partners.

Racial Equity Here focused on changing systems and shifting the national dialogue around racial equity. We are thrilled and inspired by the work the cities did over two years. Some very tangible examples of shifts in policy and practice that resulted from these efforts include:

1.

ALBUQUERQUE

implemented a policy to no longer ask about criminal convictions on the initial application for employment and modified its W-9 form (which individuals have to complete when they register a business), asking if a business is local, minority owned, or woman owned, to collect information about the types of businesses with which the city government contracts.

2.

GRAND RAPIDS earmarked \$1 million annually for the next five years to strengthen community and police relations.

3.

LOUISVILLE integrated racial equity indicators into the LouieStat measurement and performance system and changed the bidding practices for small contracts by requiring that a bid be received from at least one certified vendor owned by a racial or ethnic minority, a female, or a person with a disability.

4.

AUSTIN co-created a racial equity assessment tool with community leaders. The tool has been applied by 12 departments in their decision-making processes, which represented more than half of the city's departments, to date. Austin's Office of Equity successfully encouraged the Austin Police Department to work with a panel of residents to complete the racial equity assessment tool. This approach, different from that taken by other departments, not only embodied the office's value of community engagement, but it was also fitting for confronting tensions between law enforcement and residents.

5.

PHILADELPHIA partnered with the Department of Licenses & Inspections (L&I) to address equity in accessing high-quality service regardless of what community residents reside in. The department of L&I disaggregated data to examine whether response time to addressing complaints differed based on race, poverty, crime, and population density. The findings indicated disparities in response times to housing and abandoned building complaints that led to departmental policy recommendations.

Beyond shifts in policy and practice, perhaps one of the most important lessons that Living Cities learned from our local government partners in Racial Equity Here is that **racial equity work is about changing the culture of institutions**. We went into Racial Equity Here wanting to count the number of policies changed. But, we also saw colleagues in the five cities deepen their relationships with each other. We saw conversations about race normalized in city halls. We saw leaders in cities realize their own power as gatekeepers and begin to view their daily work through a different lens. We saw them deeply reflect on how every budget or policy decision they make impacts racial equity. We saw them interrogate whether they are creating advantages or disadvantages for particular groups of people as a result of their individual and institutional decisions. We saw them speaking and listening to communities of color and implementing their ideas. We saw a mayor address his staff after a hate crime was committed in their city, not with the speech of politics, but with poetry aimed at connecting to people's hearts.

We did not know that this 'soft' stuff of culture change would be the most important story we have to tell about these cities, but it was. We are grateful to our evaluation partner, [Community Science](#), who pushed us in our own thinking of how to evaluate racial equity work.

Living Cities was learning about racial equity alongside our local government partners in Racial Equity Here. We too were developing a racial equity vision. We were looking at all of our operations and programs with a racial equity lens. And, thanks in large part to the leaders we met in the five Racial Equity Here cities, Living Cities is changing our own culture. We have trained our entire staff on [undoing racism](#). We have worked to normalize conversations about race, to lean into the heart space, and to build deeper relationships with our colleagues. We open many of our meetings with check-in questions that ask us to engage with poetry, music, and art. We see ourselves, individually and as an institution, as racial equity organizers. This has changed how we approach partnerships with organizations like GARE and Race Forward, who have long been working in racial equity. We started the Racial Equity Here work as a funder. By the end of the two years, we saw ourselves more as a friend, a partner, a learner.

In this report you will find case studies outlining some of the strategies that Racial Equity Here cities have used in their racial equity work, reflections from city leaders, and Living Cities' staff, and tools and resources to support you in your own racial equity journey.

We are thrilled to share this Racial Equity Here capstone report with you. You can join the conversation on social media using the hashtag [#RacialEquityHere](#).



Accelerating Racial Equity in Local Governments

IN THIS SECTION:

- Reflections and Insights from the Racial Equity Here Cohort
- Framework for Accelerating Racial Equity in Local Governments
- Case studies
 - Power of leadership
 - Internal sustainable capacity
 - Community accountability
- Tools and Resources for Action

"We have to ask how we are maintaining inequity. Even when the city comes up with great initiatives, one of the first questions has to be 'how are we contributing to the problem in the first place?'"

- REH City Leader

Reflections and Insights from Racial Equity Here Cohort

Continuing with our theme of the personal to institutional transformation, we asked our Racial Equity Here (REH) city leaders, **"What drives you in this work?"** Almost every cohort team member reflected on the deeply personal nature of this work and what drives them to continue to push for an equity focus in government. People of color in particular, who in many cases have had to live with a foot in multiple worlds, have had to make these transformations out of necessity. These reflections have played a pivotal role in shifting how Living Cities viewed the work we were doing with REH:

Being part of a national cohort created a safe space for REH teams to be bold and courageous.

REH has brought needed structure, recognition and support to the individuals and teams already engaged in racial equity work in cities. National organizations should understand the value of these formal and informal opportunities to bring people and teams together and the multiplier effect of working with multi-city cohorts in this work. Cohort team members reflected on the feelings of isolation and disconnectedness that frequently are hallmarks of racial equity work in bureaucracies. Hearing that "you're not alone" and getting an understanding of other cities' problems, programs and approaches has been inspirational and has helped sustain the motivation needed to move forward in this work, particularly for leaders of color who may feel they are doing this work in isolation.

Leadership in racial equity work takes on different forms.

Multiple REH cohort teams mentioned what it takes to be a "leader" in racial equity work. A sense of courage and boldness, a commitment to issues that don't simply exist from 9 to 5, and deep lived experience have all helped define the leaders in the REH site teams. Site team members have taken on positions of both formal and informal authority by recognizing those who have been working on racial equity by informally organizing for years. Encouraging/supporting them as they take on more formal roles, has been central to the experience. At the same time, leveraging those with formal decision-making authority is also key.

There is no right or wrong starting point, but commitment at the start is important.

REH cohort teams acknowledge there is no one single starting point for racial equity and inclusion (REI) work. The work should be approached as not an initiative, but a different way of doing government. It's about committing to changing systems, procedures, processes, and policies.

White people can serve as powerful allies in racial equity work.

In Grand Rapids, Louisville and other cities, white members of the REH core team reflected on their unique position. White members of the teams have a special responsibility to both "step back" and "step up," giving people of color engaged in this work both the room to lead and share their perspectives, but also share in the burdens of carrying this work.



A Framework for Cities: Racial Equity Here is Creating Change

By Nora Liu, Project Manager, Racial Equity Here, GARE

Through tools, resources, communications and evaluation support, and training to analyze how routine operations impact racial equity, Racial Equity Here hopes to accelerate the process of operationalizing racial equity in local governments. Each city developed an outcome-driven Racial Equity Action Plan. Beyond improving programs, Racial Equity Here transforms systems to shift the national dialogue around racial equity toward equitable outcomes for all.

Racial Equity Here cities are using a strategic approach developed and tested by GARE that focuses on institutional changes. Our approach incorporates four important components:

- **Normalize:** Use a shared racial equity framework and operate with urgency and accountability
- **Organize:** Build internal organizational capacity and partner with other institutions and communities
- **Operationalize:** Implement racial equity tools and use data to drive strategies that work
- **Visualize:** Work toward a vision of racial equity informed by those who have been most impacted by our history of inequity

Each city has created its racial equity vision and framework and is strengthening its internal infrastructure while also developing its Racial Equity Action Plan that prioritizes internal operations (workforce equity and/or contracting equity) and closing disparities for youth of color who are disproportionately disconnected from school and work. A few examples of the five cities moving forward with game-changing work to advance racial equity include:

Building Internal Infrastructure

Louisville, KY trained its entire 6,000-person staff; the newly created Chief Equity Officer and Chief Resilience Officer, along with the Director of the Center for Health Equity, form the Racial Equity Here leadership.

Building Community Partnerships

The new Chief Equity Officer in **Austin, TX** is building community ownership of this work by convening community stakeholders to co-create the city's racial equity assessment tool which will be used for city decision-making.

Making Structural Change

Philadelphia, PA is partnering with local trade unions to diversify their membership through its \$50M Rebuild project to renovate city-owned properties.

The Power of Leadership

The Mayor of **Grand Rapids, MI** is passionately leading with a racial equity vision and the City Manager is aligned to operationalize it. Their

strong leadership to remove barriers has already created the city's most diverse recruits into the city's police academy.

Strategic Planning to Organize

Albuquerque, NM is strategically planning for sustainability beyond the upcoming mayoral transition by working to embed racial equity with staff, city council and the public through resolutions and a public-facing data dashboard of internal operations.

CASE STUDIES



- The Power of leadership
- Internal culture sustainability
- Community accountability

In the following case studies, you can dig deeper in how the five cities used the power of leadership, internal culture sustainability and community accountability in their racial equity plans.

The Power Of Leadership

Leadership is at the heart of inspiring action. The **Racial Equity Here** cohort highlighted four forms of power to advance racial equity: **formal, informal, staff, and community power**. In each of the cities, we saw different types of power emerge as city leaders led racial equity work from their various positions. Their stories illustrate how leadership and agency can arise at any level within city government.

FORMAL POWER

Formal power refers to individuals with positional authority over city systems and policies. This type of power is often assumed by elected officials and managers.



GRAND RAPIDS made an explicit commitment to advance racial equity by designating its top-level elected and appointed officers to participate in REH. The Mayor and City Manager each firmly supported the project by conveying a shared vision of racial equity and demanding that colleagues take the initiative seriously. Mayor Rosalynn Bliss prioritized racial equity in her campaign and in her administration, and launched the Mayor's Book of the Year with *A City Within a City: The Black Freedom Struggle in Grand Rapids, Michigan* to start a dialogue with the community. The City Manager similarly told his managers that promoting racial equity "is like any other process change within government. We did this successfully before with LEAN and this is no different. I expect that all of you in this room will adopt this just like we adopted LEAN." Through their dedicated, hands-on participation, the Mayor and City Manager deployed their formal power to lead Grand Rapids staff and residents. The results include incorporating racial equity in multiple policy and program arenas including budget decisions, city-wide work plan accountability, and hiring and promotions policies.

ALBUQUERQUE mayor, Mayor Richard Berry, a Republican, eloquently supported racial equity when on the national stage. Newly-elected Mayor, Tim Keller, campaigned on racial equity and made it a priority upon his inauguration in December of 2017. In his first six months in office, Mayor Keller created the Office of Equity and

Inclusion—formerly the Office of Diversity and Human Rights—and hired a passionate director who brings the wealth of her work in community development, leadership, advocacy, social justice, and economic development into the City. He simultaneously normalized the language of racial equity internally and publicly. In little time, the mayor was able to use his position of formal power to make significant progress in the city's approach to racial equity.

LOUISVILLE/JEFFERSON COUNTY uses a triumvirate system of leadership with a Chief Equity Officer, a Chief Resilience Officer, and a Director of Health Equity to integrate racial equity into the lives of its residents. Mayor Greg Fischer incorporated racial equity into his two-day Senior Leadership Retreat at the beginning of the REH cohort, sparking city-wide racial equity efforts. Each lead brings the power of their unique positions to this work. The Chief Equity Officer works closely with Mayor Fischer and exercises her authority to coordinate and implement the work across City government. The Chief Resilience Officer integrates racial equity into the City's resilience plan and brings city partnership to bear. The Director of Health Equity contributes deep expertise on racial equity, staff, and community partnerships to the effort. For lasting change, the thorough and comprehensive approach of this collaborative form of leadership is key.

INFORMAL POWER

Informal power refers to individuals without positional authority over city systems and policies but has influence within departments.



PHILADELPHIA is the fifth largest city in the United States, with its population of 1.6 million people primarily identifying as Black. Transforming government requires a different approach in a city of this size. Racial Equity Here's Philadelphia-based project leader realized that without designated authority, she had to rely on informal power to promote racial equity by supporting discrete projects within the city. When she started, she sought out City staff who had an interest and supported them to incorporate racial equity into their projects, then made sure that their work was lifted for City leadership. As others saw how incorporating racial equity improved policies

and programs, they became interested in this work and reached out to her for support. She gave them the tools that they needed, the training, and the visibility to spread the word. Her ability to move this work forward based on her relationships allowed her to invite city leadership to the final REH convening to reach a decision to move beyond individual initiatives and take this work citywide. In one and a half years, she was able to wield immense informal power and spark change through her work, which has established new norms for the entire city of Philadelphia. Her leadership demonstrates the potential of informal forms of power when making change.

STAFF POWER

Staff power refers to the power that staff members have in organizing towards culture change in institutions



LOUISVILLE understood the need to normalize the discussion about race: to create shared definitions, a shared framework and a sense of urgency among all staff as a first step to sustainably advance racial equity. They created and implemented a train-the-trainer strategy and trained half the staff in six months. The result is a staff that understands government's role and responsibility and a framework for creating change.

COMMUNITY POWER

Community power refers to the power that community has in holding government accountable to racial equity outcomes



AUSTIN used an inside-outside strategy to promote racial equity and inclusion. Community members organized to demand that the city form an equity office within the government. They then helped hire the Chief Equity Officer and required that there be a racial equity tool. The Chief Equity Officer collaborated with 150 community members to create the equity tool following his hiring. The community has challenged and pushed the office to grow in its programs and inclusivity; for example, thanks to the community's support of the Chief Equity Officer and his position, the racial equity tool is being applied to assess land use code. Austin is an example of how residents, too, can leverage their power to demand their city government meets their needs for a better future.

Cities from the Racial Equity Here cohort exemplify how the power to create change can be wielded by anybody who takes action and builds meaningful dialogue between city residents and decision-makers. City residents may propose a call for action from the mayor, or city officials may petition residents and enterprises to support new programs and models of behavior. Individuals may catch the attention of higher-profile people in city government through the commitment of informal, grassroots efforts, or high-profile people in the city may band together to leverage their power and skills for community change. The Racial Equity Here cohort showcases that while there is no single way to achieve change, it can happen with the conviction of an authentic, dedicated leader.

FINDING YOUR PEOPLE (VIDEO) ▶



We interviewed four of our REH Racial Equity Team Leads on their journey to leadership. You can watch the interview [here](#).

In May 2018, Glenn Harris, President of [Race Forward](#), joined several of the city government leaders who participated in Racial Equity Here on a panel at the Governing Magazine and Living Cities Summit on Government Performance and Innovation. There, they shared some takeaways on the topic of power with thousands of other leaders from cities around the country.

Stacy Stout, the Assistant to the City Manager in Grand Rapids, MI, shared that her team's analysis of power supported the city's Mayor, Rosalynn Bliss, in using her positional power and her "power of platform" to focus her first State of the City address on racial equity. The Mayor's willingness to say the words "structural racism" in public contributed to normalizing the conversation about race in a city that prides itself on being "Michigan nice."

T Benicio Gonzales, the Executive Administrator of the Department of Public Health & Wellness for Louisville Metro Government, spoke of leaning into expert power in service of building collaborative power. T participated in a 'train the trainer' program offered by Race Forward and the [Government Alliance on Race and Equity](#) and was able to harness the knowledge and adapt the curriculum to train 3,000 Louisville Metro Government employees—over half of its workforce. These trainings have deepened competencies and relationships, and opened the door for movement building.

Nefertiri Sickout, Deputy Diversity & Inclusion Officer in the Office of Mayor James F. Kenney of the City of Philadelphia, highlighted ways in which she and her team used referred and collaborative power to address racial disparities in 311 response times. The team worked with the Director of 311 to disaggregate call data by race. They found that people of color waited longer for housing and abandoned buildings calls. With their analysis in hand, they went to the Commissioner of Licenses and Inspections and worked collaboratively to reconfigure how inspectors got dispatched.

SUSTAINABLE INTERNAL CAPACITY: Institutional Culture Integrates Racial Equity

Creating or encouraging sustained, long-lasting behavior change is one of the most difficult challenges in racial equity work. Local municipal leaders must understand structural racism and its effects in order to instigate meaningful progress in advancing racial equity. Their competency, matched with the power and agency leveraged by their position, is necessary for sustained improvements to a city's racial equity practices. A culture that advances racial equity in an institution permeates external work and catalyzes overall change. Here are five strategies that REH cities used to create behavior change and create sustainable internal capacity:

1.

RACIAL HISTORY NARRATIVE

Acknowledging the local history of racism highlights the injustices faced by community members and provides space for them to voice their stories. Processing histories of racial discrimination invites community healing and highlights areas for problem solving. Racial history narratives investigate the government's role in creating current disparities. They situate the city within the context of past and present cultures and empower a city to recognize the people to whom they are indebted for land, traditions, or otherwise.

2.

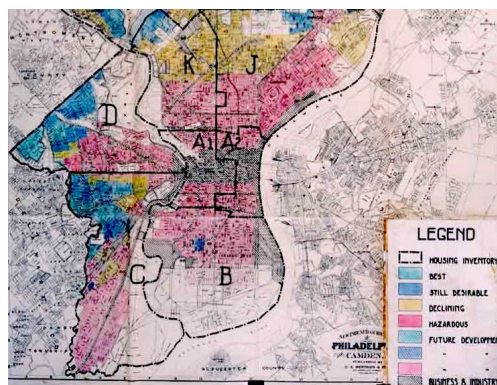
RACIAL EQUITY VISION – MOBILIZING AND RALLYING PEOPLE

Equity has been advanced through movements throughout history. For racial equity, it is important to inspire movement through a compelling vision. Clearly illustrating an ideal, inclusive future invites people to imagine themselves in such a future. Once compelled by the conceptualized future, people are more likely to take action. Activists introduce strategies to meet the ideal end and are able to engage many in changing the situation to actively work towards the idealized future.

3.

NORMALIZING RACIAL EQUITY

Normalizing conversations around racial equity informs approaches to decision-making. When government officials and staff discuss racial equity, they reinforce its importance. The more frequently discussions are had around racial equity, the more it is treated with importance. The decision-making processes of staff in race-informed environments reflect racial equity priorities. The increased internal capacity for racial equity of current government results from awareness and responsibility. This explains why investigating and acknowledging racial history is important to sustainable internal capacity.



A [HOLC](#) 1936 security map of [Philadelphia](#) showing redlining of lower income neighborhoods.

4.

ADOPTING A LEARNING CULTURE

Most widespread social issues like racism do not have one-size-fits-all solutions. For governments to have sustainable internal capacity, they must collectively cultivate a learning culture. This means that the organization's members are willing to take risks, analyze their progress, constantly seek out evidence for areas of improvement, and respond or redirect appropriately. The process demands non-punitive accountability and transparency among everyone involved in the work, as bottom-up approaches to change best reinforce a learning culture.



5.

IMPLEMENTING POLICY AND LEGISLATION

A final strategy for increasing lasting institutional change is legislation. In the past, legislation and policy have helped cement the institutional disenfranchisement of people of color. It is within the power of those same practices to reverse the effect. Codifying racial equity in new policies can direct new administrations, agencies, and institutions towards including and empowering all citizens. The systemic basis of this work gives it promise-- legislation can help push agendas during transitioning administrations. It can sustain the momentum of a movement.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: Impacted Communities, Power Shift and Accountability

By: Kien Lee, Community Science

Community engagement — especially in communities of color — is one of those terms thrown around a lot by cities, nonprofits, and funders. It is used to describe any type of activity from a meeting where residents are informed about a new initiative to a town hall meeting where residents express their concerns and help design solutions. What does community engagement really mean and why is it so important to cities in their racial equity strategy? We learned the following about five cities' community engagement strategies as part of their efforts to apply a racial equity lens to their policies and operations.

1.

HEALTH, ECONOMIC SECURITY, AND OTHER ASPECTS OF WELL-BEING ARE CO-PRODUCED BY CITIES AND THEIR RESIDENTS.

Co-production can only happen when there is community engagement, and residents are able to influence — not just be informed about — decisions and public services that affect their lives. This is especially crucial for communities of color who are typically the ones most affected by health, economic, and education disparities. When cities are developing their racial equity strategies, it is imperative that they hear from residents of color how the city's policies and practices inadvertently disadvantage the residents and what solutions are needed for a different outcome. Residents' engagement by their cities can also help improve their sense of self and collective efficacy, which research has linked to health and well-being. In the end, co-production through community engagement ensures residents' co-ownership of the solutions, which will also make the solutions more sustainable.



2.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT, AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ARE INTERRELATED.

Community engagement — especially engagement of communities of color — must begin as soon as a city decides to make racial equity a priority. However, some cities may hesitate to engage the community for fear of disappointing their residents or inviting too much criticism. Some cities don't want to bring attention to anything negative. In addition, they may be nervous that they won't be able to meet the community's demand for action and change. Cities also tend to wait until they have a plan before making public announcements about their decisions or activities. This is why cities need a communication strategy early on to convey their goal for racial equity, their vision for a racially equitable city, and how they can't do it alone, but need residents, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to be part of the effort. This is better than informing residents of the goal and plan later. Therefore, cities cannot think about strategic communications as a public relations, crisis management, or independent activity, but an activity in service of community and partnership engagement for racial equity. The five cities reported that in hindsight, they should have included the staff person responsible for their cities' communications and public relations in their racial equity teams.

3.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT — WHAT ENGAGEMENT MEANS AND WHO THE COMMUNITY IS NEED TO BE CLEAR. The discussions about community engagement facilitated by the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) with the five cities raised some of the cities' awareness that holding meetings to inform residents about their decisions and plans — which was the typical practice — was not the same thing as community engagement. Cities must strive for the highest level of engagement where residents can influence decisions that affect them. This means that cities have to consider the following in order to treat all residents equitably and be intentionally inclusive of communities of color who experience the consequences of racial inequity on a daily basis: meetings in the evenings outside of traditional work hours, venues that people of color are familiar with and feel safe and welcomed, interpretation assistance for people with limited English proficiency, skilled facilitation that helps uncover the root causes of poor health and well-being outcomes, and, most importantly, an agenda that seeks input and not just informs.



4.

CITIES NEED TO GO BEYOND THE USUAL SUSPECTS. The five cities reached out and engaged organizations with which they already had relationships — these organizations typically were the usual suspects for publicly-supported efforts. This helped the cities maintain their relationships with particular influential leaders and constituencies. At the same time, the cities risked maintaining the status quo by not reaching deeper into communities, especially communities of color, to identify additional formal and informal trusted leaders who are critical for their racial equity goals, but most likely don't have a direct line of communication to the city's leadership. It would be helpful for cities to get technical assistance and coaching to understand how communities organize for self-support and how to go about identifying authentic community leaders.

In summary, community engagement cannot wait until cities decide that they are ready to go public with their racial equity work, and cities must strive for the highest level of engagement. To do racial equity work naturally means to authentically engage the community because the exclusion of certain communities — particularly communities of color and low-income communities — is the consequence of structural racism.

TOOLS & RESOURCES



- Planning for Action
- Measuring Impact
- Building Partnerships with racialequityhere.org
- Racial Equity Narratives



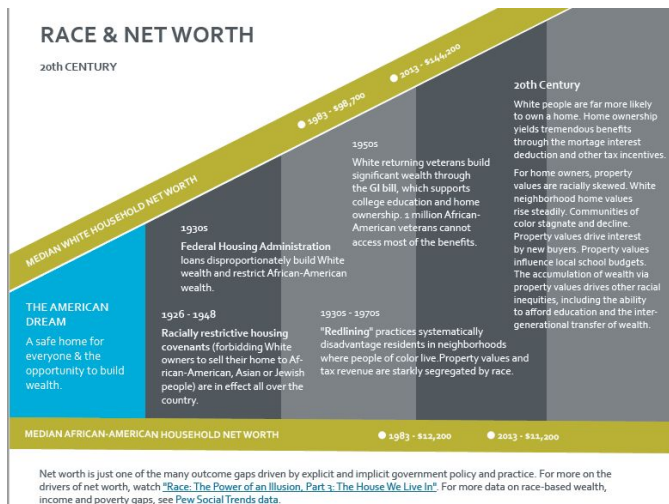
We are excited to share the tools and resources mentioned in the case studies. We hope that these tools and resources will help you in your own racial equity work!

Tools: Planning for Action

Racial equity is both a process and an outcome. Here are some resources from Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) on how to create a racial equity plan for your institution:

- [Racial Equity Plans How To Manual](#)
- [Racial Equity Workforce Development Tool](#)
- [Racial Equity: Getting to Results](#)

Tool: How to Talk about Racial Equity



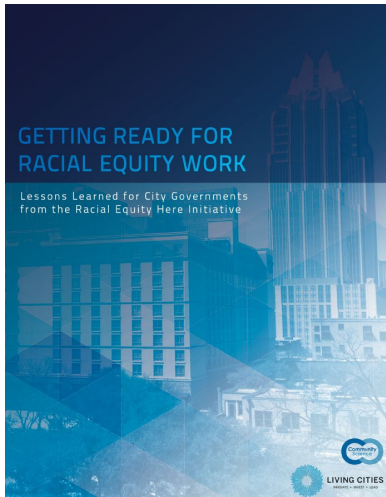
This communications guide seeks to support cities to use a racial equity narrative to effectively explain REH and inspire long-term staff and community engagement to advance racial equity outcomes. This guide is meant to serve as your toolkit for informal and formal communications about your jurisdiction's work toward racial equity. Communicating about race and structural racial inequities can feel like a challenge, but it doesn't have to be. GARE has learned and developed many best practices over the last 15 years as the team has supported more than 150 local jurisdictions to advance racial equity and improve outcomes for all. This guide was developed by the team at GARE, in partnership with GARE jurisdictions all over the

country, the Racial Equity Here cohort cities (Albuquerque, Austin, Grand Rapids, Louisville and Philadelphia), staff at the Center for Social Inclusion, (which united with Race Forward in 2018), Living Cities, the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at the University of California, Berkeley, and Provoc, a

communications firm contracted by Living Cities to support communications strategies for Racial Equity Here Cities. [Access the guide here.](#)

Resource: Measuring Impact

Getting Ready for Racial Equity Work: The Racial Equity Here Evaluation



Living Cities contracted [Community Science](#) to evaluate Racial Equity Here with two major goals: 1) assess the institutional changes affected by REH in the five participating city governments, and 2) identify the capacities (i.e., infrastructure, resources, knowledge and skills) needed to expand Government Alliance on Race and Equity's (GARE) model to other cities. The evaluation team consists of Kien Lee, Principal Associate/Vice President of Community Science, Inc.; Margaret Hargreaves, Principal Associate; Marcella Hurtado Gomez, Associate I; and Anne Price, Managing Director and Chief Asset Building Officer of Insight (subcontractor).

The evaluation findings have been transformed into insights that serve as recommendations for cities interested in applying a racial equity lens to their policies and operations. The recommendations are organized according to the normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing framework developed by GARE, which illustrates three stages of development and

capacities in a local government's effort to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.

You can find the link to the [full evaluation](#) on our website.

Tool: Building Partnerships with Racial Equity Pledge

On June 19, 2018, all Racial Equity Here partners launched [Racial Equity Here pledge](#). This pledge is a national institutional commitment to LEARN, ACT & PARTNER, using simple tools to get started.

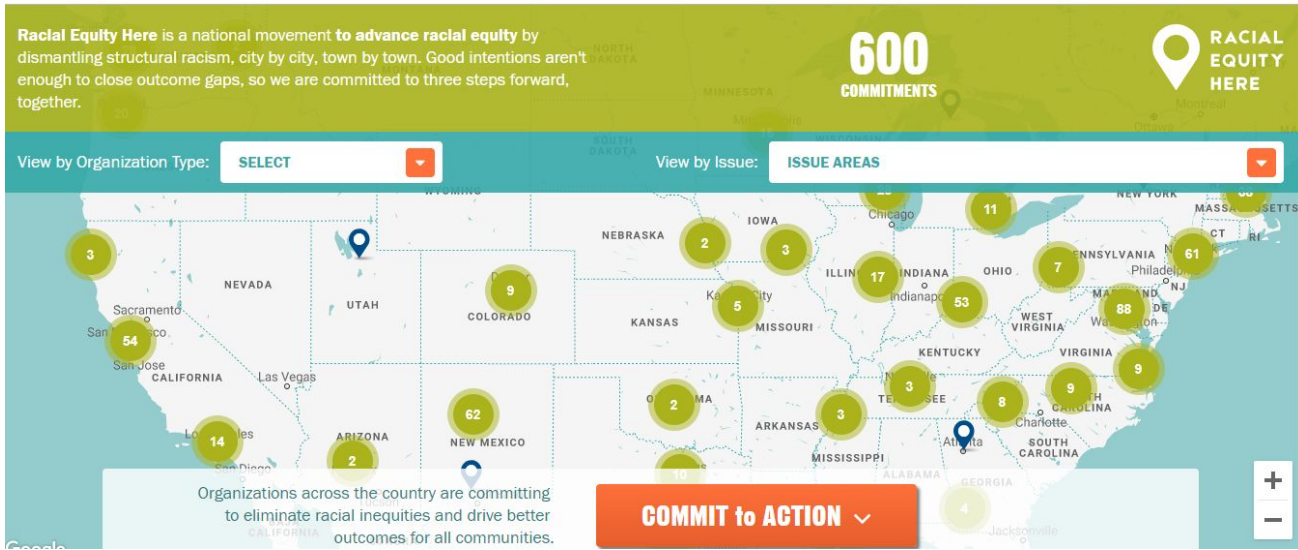
Although each of us is only one person, when we work to transform and align our organizations and institutions toward a common vision, we can change our communities and our country, creating an inclusive, vibrant democracy. You have the power to make shifts in your organization toward better outcomes for people of color and stronger, more inclusive communities for all.

Racial Equity Here is meant to help you do just that. The site provides simple tools to help your organization:

- LEARN about race, racism and racial equity
- ACT to advance racial equity by using a simple racial equity tool
- PARTNER locally and across the country to drive a common agenda

Our Racial Equity cities have used this tool to build long-lasting partnerships with other departments and agencies, small businesses, community based organizations, nonprofit organizations and other institutions that are pivotal to bringing racial equity in their cities.

Across the country, organizations are committing, together, to dismantle structural racism, accelerate better outcomes for people of color, and improve outcomes for all. [Please join us.](#)



Tool: Racial Equity Historical Narratives



One of the hardest things about working on racial equity in American cities is the tension between urgency and deep structural entrenchment. Racial inequities weren't created overnight, so we must plan both long- and short-term strategies. The cities participating in Racial Equity Here — Albuquerque, Philadelphia, Austin, Grand Rapids, and Louisville work urgently and believe in a growth mindset. The work requires them to reckon with the history of oppression and exclusion so that they can begin to chart a path forward that moves

America's cities to equitable transformation. The timelines they created here remind us just what we are up against, but also remind us that change is possible. You can find the timelines [here](#).



Interrogating Power as Funders Supporting Racial Equity Work

IN THIS SECTION:

- Putting a Mirror on Ourselves: A Call to Philanthropy
- Living Cities' staff reflections:
 - We can't achieve racial equity without reckoning power by Nadia Owusu
 - No wrong place to start by Matt Baer
- What we've learned:
 - Building racial equity capacities
 - Supporting sparkplugs
 - Our work moving forward
- Recommendations for this work

"There is power of having a national organization for cover. Having been here [in local government] for 16 years, I can say how helpful it has been to be able to name race explicitly"

- REH City Leader

Turning the Mirror around on Ourselves:

A Call to Philanthropy

As the Racial Equity Here cities have been working to take effective action toward racial equity, Living Cities has also been on our own journey of transformation. We have, in effect, been taking the same approach as the cities to examine all our operations with a racial equity lens and to make changes. This document outlines reflections and insights from Living Cities' internal racial equity work and the work we've been able to do with Racial Equity Here. We hope our reflections can support other philanthropic institutions looking to do this work.

Living Cities' journey was a journey that was very much driven by the same forces that initially brought this taskforce together to create Racial Equity Here. Our first meeting was convened in 2015 in response to the death of Freddie Gray. In confronting the shocking and sobering news headlines every day, we cannot avoid reckoning with the history of America—from genocide and slavery to Jim Crow to mass incarceration— with the role that institutions like ours have played in creating and perpetuating inequity. At the Living Cities office, this has meant having some tough conversations. As you dig into the materials we are sharing, you will note that a key learning of both the REH work and our own internal work has been that systems are made up of people.

To change systems, we must start by turning the mirror on ourselves.

Now, all Living Cities staff create a racial equity objective for which they are held accountable in their annual review. We have adopted racial equity and inclusion as a value and have articulated associated norms that we have all committed to living. We have conducted a racial equity and inclusion competency survey (adapted from GARE's Employee Survey for local governments) to understand how equipped our staff are to create equitable policy, facilitate conversations about race, and interrogate our own biases.

In this section of the report, you will find reflections from Living Cities staff on what we have learned from our work together with the Racial Equity Here cohort, and how we have been able to reflect on our own roles and our place in the larger system in undoing racism.



We Can't Achieve Racial Equity Without Reckoning with Power

By Nadia Owusu, Associate Director for Learning and Equity, Living Cities

Consider the word *power*. What do you see when you say this word aloud? What appears in your mind's eye? Do you see a board room full of people in fancy suits? How many of the people in the board room are men? How many of them are white? Or, do you see a politician behind a podium? Does that politician represent you or your community? Perhaps you see a CEO of a tech company or an oil company or a bank. Perhaps you see the flag of a powerful nation. Do you see your boss or your landlord? Perhaps you see a vault of money, the identity of its owner but a shadow behind a shell company.

How do you think of the word *power* in relation to yourself? Do you think of people who have power over you? Do you think about the ways you have power over others? How do you define power? Is it about control or access or money? Is it about decision-making? Is it about having the right degree or title or gender or skin color? Is it the sum total of those things?

One of the great barriers to addressing some of America's most wicked problems, problems like income inequality, the wealth gap, and the failure of the public education system to help low-income children thrive, is our culture's

unwillingness to truly reckon with power. How often have you been in a conversation—a school board meeting, a community meeting with a public official, or a meeting with your boss, for example—where power dynamics have been explicitly named?

Often, the powerful use false modesty or beneficence to disguise their power and thus maintain it, unchallenged.

Sometimes, they claim that their power is the result of their own smarts or talent or skills, and thus merited. The myth of the meritocracy is at the foundation of what we call the American Dream, our national ethos that holds that prosperity and the power that comes with it are achievable for all people through hard work and determination. Unspoken is the power that comes through inherited wealth or gender and race privilege. Meanwhile, people who seek to resist oppression, to speak truth to power, to redistribute it and make it more equitable, often spend too little time considering the ways in which they are powerful, despite their limited resources or formal authority.

Racial Equity Here, at its core, has been about understanding, naming, and moving towards sharing power. Leaders in

the participating cities considered ways in which they can establish trust with communities by recognizing past and current abuses of power. They had deep and frank conversations about [redlining](#), police brutality, and racial inequities in government services, from health to libraries. And, as they worked to bring anti-racism training to swathes of government employees, to change government hiring and procurement policies, and create new programs to support young people of color in accessing good jobs, they had to approach their work as internal

organizers—building relationships, mobilizing everyone from their mayors to frontline staff around racial equity, negotiating with decision-makers, and coordinating cooperative efforts across departments. As any good community organizer will tell you, analyzing power—its different forms and sources—is key to success. A good power analysis, one that is honest and thorough, and that considers boundaries, authority, role, and tasks (BART) in relation to power can help to drive more effective strategy.

Some questions that Racial Equity Here leaders came back to over and over again were:

- *What power do I and/or my team have to create the change I want to see, and what kind of power is it? Is it positional power that comes from authority? Expert power that comes from information, knowledge, or experience? Referred power that comes from proximity and relationships to people with positional power? Collaborative power that comes from an ability to be in partnership with others? What else is at play here?*
- *What relationships do I and/or my team have with people with other types of power?*
- *How might we use our power as individuals and as a team to build trust, community, goodwill, and momentum; and, how can we use it to achieve our racial equity goals?*

We can't address racial inequity without talking about power because the construct of race is fundamentally about power. The work of the Racial Equity Here cities underscores that truth.



No Wrong Place to Start

By Matt Baer, Senior Associate, Living Cities

Growing up on the Upper West

Side of Manhattan, it was easy to imagine the neighborhood as an oasis. The area, bounded by Lincoln Center to the south and Columbia University to the north, is known as a progressive stronghold filled with bookstores, cultural institutions, and liberal intellectuals. Beginning in the 1970s, the [once-gritty neighborhood](#) began attracting middle-class whites, like my parents, who were committed to public schools at a time when many others were leaving the city altogether.

But, like any neighborhood in any American city, **the Upper West Side was built upon and shaped by structural and institutional practices like redlining**, housing segregation, and an enormous wealth gap between whites and people of color. The area's schools, while perhaps more integrated than others, have historically been fed by residential patterns that break cleanly on race: white, wealthy students are zoned for some schools, and Black and Latino students from the neighborhood's large public housing developments for others. The result is a district that is diverse overall, but deeply segregated at the individual school level.

This situation came to wider view earlier this year, when the city unveiled a plan to diversify some of the most sought-after, and whitest, schools in the neighborhood. Reactions varied, but [a video from a town hall on the proposal](#) showed several white parents raging against the plan. The video was shared widely, including by the school's chancellor (notably, the video also included a white neighborhood principal rebuking the opposition and speaking forcefully in support of the desegregation effort).

As a product of Upper West Side schools, and now as a new parent, the issues of race and equity, public schools, and real estate seem harder to untangle than I would have guessed. It's easy to vote the right way, march with the right sign, donate to the right causes, or work for an organization committed to racial justice and equity in American cities. What's much harder is trying to make decisions for your own family when the stakes feel so high. I want my daughter to attend a wonderfully integrated school someday. **But I've been conditioned to view integration cautiously, and to stay within a system centered on whiteness.** Will I really stand up and volunteer to break away from that system when the time comes for choosing?

Throughout the Racial Equity Here project, we've seen leaders in cities take risks large and small in embedding racial equity in local government operations. Five mayors made public and repeated commitments to bringing equity into the public conversation. City staffs had hard conversations that normalized, organized and operationalized around equitable outcomes for all city residents, particularly those residents of color who have been historically oppressed by the very systems now charged with undoing racism and white supremacy. This legacy weighs heavily on every aspect of government, from police-community relations and civil service rules to 311 response times and summer youth employment.

In conversation after conversation with these city leaders, I've been struck by the same theme. Undoing hundreds of years of systemic and intentional exclusion is bigger than any one specific act, decision or policy change. Racial equity work is about changing systems, and doing the business of government in a new way. It's about recognizing the formal and informal ways people can leverage their power, and meeting people where they are. Being a leader in this work is something different than a formal title or a credential (although both of those certainly can help). Leaders for racial equity in government have a sense of courage and boldness, a deeply personal commitment to issues that don't simply exist from 9 to 5 at the office, and a respect for those who have been doing this work informally, often in isolation and without recognition, for their entire careers.

Among the Racial Equity Here cities, some chose to start with programming and policymaking. Others felt the first step was getting thousands of city employees trained to build their racial equity competencies. One mayor established a citywide book recommendation focused on local Black history, while other cities started their work by standing up the internal structures needed to advance racial equity across all city departments.

There truly is no wrong place to start this work. Instead, it's about a commitment to reframing complicated and seemingly-intractable issues, elevating sparkplugs that can advance the work, and bringing focus, power, and seriousness to eliminating long-standing racial disparities in opportunity, access, and economic self-sufficiency.

As a white person, I've often grappled with my role in this work. Here's where I've landed. Listen more and talk less. Respect the lived experiences of other. Understand that I don't have a monopoly on truth. Be an advocate and an ally, and be willing to carry more than my share of the load, while not diminishing the contributions or abilities of others. Recognize that my own choices and actions as a white person have, fairly or not, outsized influence, and use the power I've been granted to do what's right.

I know that change will never come without a group of caring and brave people, formal and informal leaders, committed to stepping up. I honestly cannot yet say what that will mean when it comes time to select schools and neighborhoods for my family. While I have a few years before I need to choose a school, I know that I can make better decisions starting today—and every day—by continuously interrogating race and equity, and **the impacts I can make by simply choosing to start somewhere.**

It begins with calmly talking and listening with my friends, family, and fellow parents about living the values we hold dear, and by rejecting the creeping panic that seems to characterize the conversation around public schools. It begins by loudly standing up for the solutions I can unequivocally get behind today, and holding back my natural instinct to focus on the problems and points of contention. And it begins by understanding that my racial equity journey is both personal and public. This is where I've chosen to start my work. **As the REH cities have shown, there are different and powerful entryways for everyone.**

Building Racial Equity Competencies and Supporting Sparkplugs

We invested in technical assistance from GARE to support REH cities in developing their Racial Equity Action Plans, evaluation support from Community Science and communications and messaging support from PROVOC. In this section, we outline lessons learned from supporting the infrastructure needed to do REI work, as well as our reflections on the role of funders in funding this work. We hope this can help us reflect on our role as funders and practitioners in the philanthropic sector.

Through our Racial Equity Here initiative, we learned that there are "spark plugs" everywhere, at every level, who are working to normalize, organize and operationalize racial equity in institutions. Our Racial Equity Here evaluation partner, **Community Science**, found that spark plugs are essential for promoting and advancing racial equity. Spark plugs are compassionate, patient, trustworthy, courageous and naturally inclusive of people who are different from them. They understand how their institutions work and how to navigate and break down barriers. They build relationships with decision makers, community leaders and others without aggression or judgment. Spark plugs create a safe environment for people to talk openly about how their work can advance racial equity.

On building racial equity competencies:

- **"Sparkplugs"** is a useful frame for thinking about how to support people who are doing this work.
- **Person/Role/System** from Results Based Accountability frame is helpful - people are rarely asked to be in their person space in a professional setting. It really helped folks acknowledge their humanity and how it contributes to their role and the system.
- **Shared analysis** on racial equity and contextualizing history and place is fundamental for the cities to move forward with their racial equity plan. Creating the racial history timeline helped in standardizing ways for city leads to understand history and context and gave a deep understanding on how government contributes to inequities including how each agency is complicit.
- **We need to talk about different kinds of power!**

On supporting spark plugs:

- Resources need to be invested and while senior leadership is not needed to do the work, the authority from senior leadership is key. **Without leadership authority, it puts the burden on largely Black women who are tasked to this work without authority or pay.**
- There are constructs of power in cities that could be a barrier and could be harnessed. We saw that **white institutional norms are most strong within two groups: highest level of leadership and those deeply entrenched in bureaucracy.**
- Support leaders, specifically women of color who have been carrying the bulk of this work **by creating space for healing and reflection during convenings.**
- Focus on **Anti-Blackness and Decentering whiteness** in conversations about race.
- **Find space to pause and reflect between in-person meetings.** Building in time and interaction in between meetings to keep the momentum and connection is key.
- **Supporting leadership and understanding of power dynamics is key.** It's a process to get people attuned to their power. Cohort participants began to understand power dynamics and how they're

owning their own power later in the journey. Session on power analysis and leadership were the highest rated by cohort members.

- **Critical partnerships as a way to sustainability.** Public sector needs support in recognizing and identifying those outside of government that are critical partners in REI work. Be clear that this work needs to be centered in community. Cities should have identified who their community partners are up front and acknowledged that this is an integral part of REI work.

On building communications capacity:

- **Communications capacity is often overlooked even though it is integral in building relationships and partnerships to move REI work forward.** It's important to identify early the point person for communications. It would be ideal if they are already sitting within a communications role in the city.
- **There is a need to understand capacity in a granular way and adapt the work plan to accommodate and push the city.** Flexibility is important: Jump in to help with pressing issues particularly in moments when city leaders are in position of taking a risk.
- **Organic and honest conversations are happening informally** but the challenge is to translate these moments of honesty into communications and public-facing materials without sanitizing the truths. This might mean that there needs to be more support for city leaders taking more risks in what they are saying in public.

On measuring racial equity progress:

Currently, there is not a standard in the field on measuring this kind of work, which has been a challenge for our partners and key players in this work.

- **Measuring impact and change in REI work is an evolving process.** We need to understand that policy change is critical but this kind of change happens in different ways and needs to be measured in different ways. REI work has a very strong value base and it takes time and experience to understand why we have the value and why it drives everything that we do.
- **When we have breakthrough moments, we need to pause and reflect on it so that we don't fall into memory bias.** There are many moments during this journey where participants had breakthrough moments that shifted their thinking. These stories are useful in tracking what change could look like.
- **Build more formal ways to mark progress and lift up failures as well as best practices.** We need to make sure that we can we put all our current learnings and best practices in one place where all external partners can build from, and not keep reinventing the wheel.

How we've incorporated these lessons at Living Cities

- Since 2017 Living Cities conducted an employee survey on racial equity. The questions from this survey were adapted from GARE's Employee Survey for Local Governments, D5 initiative's Field Survey, and additional best practices from the field.
- We are changing the way we look at racial equity measurement. Racial equity is both a process and outcomes, and progress cannot be measured only by counting policy changes.
- GARE's **Normalize, Organize and Operationalize** framework can be applied in all institutions seeking to do racial equity work.



For our work moving forward:

- For local government, we need to think about who is at the table with longer term views, i.e. Chiefs of Staff are not necessarily the only intervention point. One potential strategy could be to bring together people who hold different parts of supporting cities and others in doing the work to meet the needs of cities they're in.

- We should explore ways to get to shared analysis/language on connecting the person to role and system before getting to the operationalizing piece.

- We understand how isolating this work could be if there is no support from leadership. We can continue to support people to be in community with others and make sure they know that they're not alone in this work (within and beyond their cities). This can be done through our convenings, content we create, and

other opportunities to convene folks doing this work.

- We need to disrupt the pattern of the disproportionate impact on Black women who are tasked doing this work without authority and the very real ways this impacts their well being. We've seen this pattern across sectors and organizations. We need to name this pattern, and deepen our understanding of what support people, specifically Black women, need to do this work.
- Change our ways of asking for grant reports from grantees. Don't ask for widget counting separate from outcomes.
- With our board continually asking for personal reflection helps track competence-building/behavior change/personal transformation, and this can also be a way to normalize thinking beyond success/failure binary of measurement.
- Ensure we're not exploiting expertise of people of color (specifically Black women) by asking them to take this work on as another unpaid job.
- Operationalize recommendations for funders by Community Science.



Key Recommendations for Funders, Evaluators and Technical Assistance Providers for Racial Equity Work

By: Kien Lee, Community Science

1.

Funders and evaluators have to take the time to develop the same depth of understanding as they expect of their grantees and partners about the normalizing, organizing, operationalizing, and visualizing framework and logic model.

The stages of change reflected in the framework and logic model can be tailored to any effort to achieve racial equity. The framework is essential to help funders and evaluators understand the progression of change that is feasible and realistic to expect within the performance period of a racial equity grant. This understanding drives their expectations for outcomes and evaluation as well as the technical assistance support required for grantees. Therefore, funders and evaluators must take the time to fully understand the framework and the assumptions, experiences, and knowledge underlying the framework.

2.

Funders can apply the framework and logic model to their own institutional policies, norms, and practices and set an example for their partners, grantees, and peers.

The framework is about institutional change and as mentioned above, the stages and sequence of change can be applied and tailored to any type of organization. Funders can use it to normalize racial equity and develop a plan to use their power as funders to achieve racial equity by setting an example for their partners, grantees, and peers. They can build in expectations about racial equity into their partnership agreements and grant requirements.

3.

Funders have to ensure that their partners (including evaluators and technical assistance providers) and grantees develop a shared and thorough understanding about the meaning, role, and function of community engagement in racial equity efforts, and have the competencies to engage communities.

Community engagement is essential in any racial equity effort because inclusiveness — especially of communities of color — is a key factor in the process of achieving racial equity as well as an outcome of racial equity. Community engagement is a frequently-used term by foundations, nonprofit and grassroots organizations, and public agencies, and it has a different meaning to each of them. If funders and their partners (e.g., technical assistance providers, coordinating entities, and evaluators) and grantees do not arrive at a shared understanding and clear expectations about who is referred to as the “community” and what is meant by “engagement,” not only can the implementation go awry, the evaluation could end up measuring the wrong thing. Funders are also responsible to ensure that grantees and partners have the competencies needed to conduct community engagement work, particularly when the engagement relates to communities of color.

4.

Funders need to examine the power differences they can create or eliminate through their funding efforts and also require grantees and partners to conduct a similar examination of their work and roles.

Power is a very salient issue in efforts to achieve racial equity, and funders and their grantees and partners affect power dynamics through their work and roles. Power dynamics are present

among funders, grantees, and their partners, as well as between each of them and the communities in which they operate and which they serve. Funders have to create time and space in their own institutions as well as with grantees and partners to confront — in an honest and courageous manner — the issue of power and the roles they play to affect power. Their discussions — if done honestly — will surface discomfort, disagreements, and conflicts. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that a skilled and neutral expert facilitator who also understands equity and power designs and facilitates the discussions.

Power mapping or a similar activity is an important part of racial equity work, and funders have to confront and be comfortable with the fact that they are frequently part of the power structure. Funders who want to fund racial equity work have to confront the fact that they too are part of the power structure and may inadvertently perpetuate the inequities experienced by the organizations they fund and communities in which they work. They have to check themselves and their practices and be willing to consider changing their current practices.

5.

Technical assistance providers need to assess the norms and typical practices of grantees related to strategic communications, community engagement, and partnership development, and be prepared to address tensions that could emerge from this assessment.

When grantees have an organizational culture around strategic communications, community engagement, and partnership development, they tend to approach the work in a way that is familiar and comfortable for them. These functions, however, have to be approached differently when the work is explicitly about racial equity. For instance, the strategic communications strategy has to be intentional about the language and terms used (e.g., racial equity, equality, diversity,

inclusion, etc.), how messages are delivered and by whom, and how power differences are dealt with. The community engagement and partnership strategies have to be thoughtful and deliberate about who from the community is invited to share their perspectives and the credibility of that person or persons in their communities, and how to go about reaching deep into communities for partners who are not the “usual suspects.” The shift from the typical practices and norms of a grantee organization to new and more deliberate ways of communicating, engaging the community, and developing partnerships could create tension and discomfort for the people responsible for these functions in the organization. In addition, new knowledge and skills may be required. Therefore, it would be helpful for technical assistance providers to be very intentional about understanding how grantees have done their work in these areas before, help grantees examine how they need to do the work differently to achieve racial equity and what competencies are needed, and then assist the grantees appropriately.

6.

Funders must be prepared to allocate resources to regularly convene participants.

Especially if the participants come from different places across the United States, facilitate peer learning, especially with regards to 1) helping participants see that they are not alone in some of the challenges they face in dismantling structural racism, and 2) lifting up some of the attempts that have worked to continually raise the standards for racial equity work. The work of promoting racial equity is undoubtedly hard and often, participants from across places are relieved to know that they are not “behind.” At the same time, they also need to bolster each other’s work by sharing what has

worked in their respective places and using each other’s success to add credibility to racial equity work. An effective facilitator is needed to facilitate the cross-site learning and to surface uncomfortable situations related to race and racism, and to use these situations as learning opportunities. These convenings should also include time for participants to process and reflect on what they learn about structural racism, both introspectively and with their colleagues or peers. This time is crucial because the information about structural racism can be very intense, in part because it makes participants look at the world differently if they had not been exposed to the topic before.

7.

Funders and their partners and grantees must see racial equity as a process and an outcome, thus, it is not about qualitative versus quantitative measures.

Changes in policies and practices that support racial equity are primarily captured, documented, and measured in qualitative terms (i.e., description of the change as a result of the intervention), and the number of changes can be quantified.

Changes in equity can also be measured by a reduction in disparate outcomes, whether it is education, health, or income disparities; however, this is only part of the story because a reduction in disparities does not necessarily mean equitable policies and practices. Therefore, funders need to accept both qualitative and quantitative measures and also understand that quantifiable changes such as a reduction in disparities will not likely occur within three to five years — the typical timeframe for grant initiatives.

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