

A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE FOR

Promoting Race Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace



South Carolina Race Equity and Inclusion (REI) Partnership

NOVEMBER 2019

Workplaces that are actively seeking to promote race equity and inclusion (REI) typically work from a shared understanding of the importance of the endeavor. Creating fairness, enacting just policies, and embracing a variety of perspectives, however, can lead to real challenges for workplaces with a desire to become more racially equitable and inclusive.

Racial equity is defined as just and fair inclusion into a society where all people can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential (Glover Blackwell et al., 2017).

How Can They Make It Happen? What's the Best Way to Begin the Effort?

Examining behaviors, norms, perceptions, and values can be stressful for any workplace as it aims to fully engage and empower all of its members. Private and public sectors must work to achieve meaningful change by addressing the factors that contribute to racial inequities and block access to opportunity. By including racial equity and inclusion with universal and targeted strategies within workplace operations and structures, more equitable and inclusive environments and outcomes can emerge.

What is the Purpose of this Document?

This document highlights practice and policy recommendations for members of the public and private sector – regardless of size and specified staff – that can help in facilitating greater racial equity. It was created through a systematic review of the current research literature and expert knowledge of REI practices. This document can assist any sector in getting started and tracking results. It aims to advance REI through the creation of learning environments that allow individuals and workplaces to examine their personal and professional experiences and biases in order to make transformative structural change.

Who is Leading this Effort?

The idea and realization of this product was led by the REI Partnership, which includes 16 Columbia, South Carolina-based organizations. Each organization within the partnership is on a journey toward exploring and implementing these recommendations to promote REI in its practices, policies, and culture. Much like those within the partnership, this document is a work in progress and will meet others wherever they are on this journey.

How is the Information Organized?

The REI practice and policy recommendations apply an ecological framework incorporating four distinct levels. The first level is personal, including biases both implicit and explicit. The second is interpersonal, including respect and relationships. Third is the organizational level, including workplace culture, norms, and policies. And fourth is the community level, including partners and funders. Although promoting public policy is an important part of the process to ensure systematic change towards equity, it is not currently addressed within this document. Lastly, words matter, and this document attempts to offer thoughtful and practical guidelines. The term people of color, which refers to any non-white individual, allows for a more complex set of identities to be included. The authors acknowledge this term may not be right for everyone.



Personal

- Encourage and incorporate individual professional development opportunities that promote self-awareness, personal growth, and a safe working environment with an REI lens.*
- Hold bias training for the board of directors, CEO/ executive director/president, management, hiring committee, and general staff, and continue routine training and dialogue.*

Interpersonal

- Develop a common language of REI with shared definitions available to all employees and board members.
- Familiarize new employees with the workplace culture during onboarding that fosters connections with leadership and allows them to envision a future with the organization.*
- Ask employees for input on making workplace culture more inclusive.*
- Set up mentoring and leadership programs that are open to all employees.*
- Encourage the building of trust and relationships to help employees feel comfortable sharing their experiences. For example, create affinity groups to help foster mentoring opportunities and safe spaces.*

Organizational

LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

- Conduct a workplace REI assessment.
- Include REI initiatives within the strategic plan that includes a shared mission, vision, statement, and SMART goals to help foster staff, leader, and board participation.
- Track goals to measure progress, and adjust approaches as needed to reach desired REI outcomes.

RECRUITMENT AND HIRING

- Evaluate and adjust hiring practices by prioritizing diverse recruitment. An example is following the Rooney Rule, where at least one qualified person of color must be interviewed before hiring, while being mindful of tokenism.*
- Posting job listings on multiple sites outside of normal channels.*
- Review job descriptions to consider what educational requirements are truly necessary for the duties of the positions, realistically align with position salaries, and pick the most general degree possible for positions.*
- Do not request salary history.*
- Post salary ranges to increase transparency.*
- Do not ask questions about criminal history on job applications, unless you are legally bound to do so.

- Build diverse recruitment, hiring, and interview teams for board and staff to ensure the organization is open to a wider population.*
- Use a resume review that's free from names, educational, and demographic information to reduce unconscious bias during screening.*
- Develop interview questions and applicant tests that respect differences and provide a fair opportunity for candidates from differing backgrounds.*
- Offer paid internships, and partner with educational institutions such as local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) to create a diverse talent pool.

RETENTION

- Form an REI team that is tasked with promoting both the norms and goals, documenting progress, and evaluating outcomes.
- Promote a learning culture that prioritizes REI initiatives.
- Assess bias in employee evaluations and other tools used for promotions.*
- Define paths to leadership that are open and transparent.*
- Remove policies that cause people of color to feel as though they cannot be their true selves, which includes restrictions on appearance, affiliation, and association.
- Use a race equity tool to monitor how decisions are made, including definitions of what professionalism and cultural fit mean.*
- Develop a set of norms and goals for staff to follow and track that acknowledge diverse perspectives.*
- Incorporate and enforce structural policies that include

non-discrimination, equal opportunity, diversity, and flexible work schedules. Keep these policies in a location that is easily accessible to employees and the public.*

Community

PARTICIPATORY INCLUSION

- Involve communities and people of color in the discussion and decision-making process.
- Build a diverse base for all workplace contracts such as vendors, consultants, speakers, partners, and facilitators.*
- Develop avenues to broaden the recruitment and retention of board members from the communities the organization serves.*

FOUNDATIONS AND OTHER FUNDERS

- Increase foundation grants to organizations led by people of color and serving communities of color.
- Expand financial capital for organizations that serve communities of color by providing support to achieve the goals they set out to accomplish.
- Encourage race equity and inclusion as a standard for both foundations and grantees.
- Promote large grants to smaller organizations, specifically general operating grants.*
- Increase funding toward capacity building for organizations.*

** Recommendations from Women's Rights & Empowerment Network: Playbook for Advancing Gender Equity. A link to the guide is provided in the Toolkits and Assessment Resources section.*

About the South Carolina Race Equity and Inclusion (REI) Partnership

The REI Partnership's purpose is to foster ongoing dialogue among child- and family-serving organizations to incorporate race equity and inclusion into organizational practice. This partnership includes Children's Trust of South Carolina, Eat Smart Move More South Carolina, Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina, South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness, South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, South Carolina Human Affairs Commission, South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs, Richland Library, The Hive Community Circle, United Way of the Midlands, Together SC, Women's Rights & Empowerment Network, and others. A digital copy of this brochure can be found at scChildren.org.

Toolkits and Assessment Resources

The following resources contain toolkits to start your REI journey. Find the toolkit that fits your workplace.

American Academy of Family Physicians. (2019). *Health Equity Curricular Toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/social-determinants-of-health/everyone-project/health-equity-tools.html>

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Center for Social Inclusion. (2017). *Talking About Race Toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/talking-race-toolkit/>

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Collective Impact Forum. (2014). *Community Engagement Toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org/resources/community-engagement-toolkit>

D5. (2014). *Policies, Practices, and Programs Resource Guide*. Retrieved from Advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in philanthropy: <http://www.d5coalition.org/work/policies-practices-and-programs-for-advancing-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/ppp-scan-resource-guide/>

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National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) (2018). *Power Moves: Your essential philanthropy assessment guide for equity and justice*. Retrieved from NCRP: <https://www.ncrp.org/initiatives/philamplify/power-moves-philanthropy/inside-the-guide/additional-resources/reading-list>

Project Implicit. (2011). *Project Implicit*. Retrieved from Project Implicit: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

Race Equity Here. (n.d.). *Resources*. Retrieved from Race Equity Here: <https://racialequityhere.org/resources/>

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Race Equity Tools. (n.d.). *Organizational Change Process*. Retrieved from <https://www.racialequitytools.org/plan/change-process/organizational-change-process>

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Seattle Office for Civil Rights. (n.d.). *Racial Equity Toolkit*. Retrieved from <http://www.seattle.gov/civilrights/what-we-do/race-and-social-justice-initiative/racial-equity-toolkit>

Women's Rights Empowerment & Network (2019). *Power Up Your Workplace: A Playbook for Advancing Gender Equity*. Retrieved from <https://www.scwren.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/WREN-Power-Up-Your-Workplace.pdf>

Reports and Academic Resources

The following reports and articles give concrete data and research for why this effort is needed in the workplace. Exploring these resources can help organizations understand the importance of committing to REI.

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