



## **Activity for Incorporating a Racial Equity Lens in How We Work as an Action Team** (2 ½ hours)

### **Purpose of activity:**

This exercise is designed to help you have a conversation about how your community's racial dynamics may be impacting your work as you move forward to act on the ideas generated from the dialogues. It will help you think about how you can work together more equitably as a team during this phase of the process.

### **Materials needed:**

- Flip chart
- Markers

### **Part 1: Principles for incorporating a racial equity lens into our work (30 minutes)**

- A. Welcome everyone and let participants know that today's meeting will help the group think about racial equity as they start working on their action ideas.
- B. Break up participants into groups of 3-4 people. Ask for a volunteer to read these principles for working together toward action in an equitable, inclusive way:
  - Involve everyone in a meaningful way. Demonstrate that the whole community is welcome and needed.
  - Embrace diversity. Reach out to all kinds of people.
  - Share knowledge, resources, power, and decision-making.
  - Connect action to social, political, and policy change to address structural racism and create more equitable communities.
- C. Ask the small groups to discuss these two questions (15 minutes):
  - If we don't follow the principles then how could moving to action be impacted?
  - If we successfully follow the principles then how will moving to action be impacted?
- D. Bring the group back together and chart their responses to the discussion questions. Make note of common themes and ideas. (15 minutes)



## Part 2: Equity scenarios (50 minutes)

A. Write the following scenarios on flip charts, one per sheet of paper (it helps to prepare write these scenarios beforehand). Post the scenarios around the room:

- White people are often recruited to lead action groups. While people of color may be invited to participate, they are more “for show.” Old habits and behaviors continue, and white people stay in the lead.
- As people form new partnerships to address problems in the community, they hesitate to include people from different racial groups.
- People who are most affected by new policies are shut out. They have no voice in the policy making.
- While planning action, the planning sessions are held at times and in places that don’t fit the schedules of lower income residents.
- One of the organizational partners that helps with action has a predominately white staff. Neighborhood minority leaders are not involved in the leadership.

B. Ask everyone to break up in small groups of 3-4 people. Encourage people to work with people they didn’t work with during the previous exercise.

C. Ask each small group to take turns visiting each flip chart and talking about each of the scenarios. Give them 5 minutes per scenario to brainstorm and write down ideas on a separate flip chart or piece of paper of how they might address the scenario.

Here are some questions to help people get started:

- Which principles for working together toward action are not being honored? Why?
- What could have helped the group avoid the situation and to honor the principles?

After each 5 minute brainstorm, rotate the groups. At the next easel, the group reads and discusses the ideas left behind by the previous group then adds new ideas.

It should take about 30 minutes for groups to move through all of the scenarios.

D. Once every group has worked on each scenario, invite the groups to spend some time reading all of the ideas on the flip charts. (10 minutes)

E. Wrap up the exercise with a general debrief for the large group (10 minutes):

- What ideas seemed particularly interesting to you?



- Do you have any ideas to add that you have not yet recorded?
- How can you keep these ideas alive while working on the projects and the actions?

### **Part 3: Working equitably as a team (40 minutes)**

In a large group, discuss the following questions to help you think about how you all are working together as a team. These questions will help you think about making sure that the team is inclusive and welcoming to all people and that the whole team models working with a racial equity lens.

#### Participation:

- Does everyone participate, or do some people dominate the group? Whose voices are heard when we make decisions?
- People with special talents are overlooked or not called upon to contribute because of racial stereotyping.
- Even though many new “actors” are speaking up and trying to make change, they are gradually closed out of the process, and things revert to “business as usual.”

#### Leadership:

- Does the leadership in our group reflect the diversity of our community? If not, what can we do about that?
- How do we decide who will lead the group? How are meetings run?
- What dynamics are at play when people of color provide leadership? What are the implications when white people take the lead?

#### Meeting time and space:

- How can we make sure that we choose locations that work for everyone?
- When we plan our meetings, what consideration do we give to racial and cultural differences (location, flexible scheduling, social time/food, etc.)?
- How can we schedule meeting so that everyone can participate?
- How does timing impact our meetings? (Consider people’s schedules, religious holidays, and other community events.)
- Have we included time in our agendas for time for building relationships and for refreshments?



**Part 4: Reflecting on our team dynamics (25 minutes)**

- Where are we doing well? Where could we improve?
- How are our leaders responding to members of our group?
- How effective are we at working equitably across racial groups and other differences? Are we speaking openly and honestly about our successes and our challenges?
- What plans have we made to check in on our own behavior and the racial dynamics of our team? Do we need to set aside time for team building and deeper exploration of the issues?
- What can we do differently for the next meeting?

**Part 5: Next steps (5 minutes)**

- Thank everyone for coming.
- Let everyone know where and when the next meeting will be.
- Make sure everyone knows what the next meeting will be about.
- Let everyone know how you plan to keep in touch and make sure you have everyone's contact information.