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# Protocol for Culturally Responsive Organizations

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2014

# Protocol for Culturally Responsive Organizations

Ann Curry-Stevens, Marie-Elena Reyes &  
Coalition of Communities of Color

Communities of color have long been marginalized in mainstream service delivery – invisible in terms of their access to resources and services, the adequacy of such services, and in the types of interventions available to members of the community. When available, organizations have been ripe with inequitable outcomes. Today, greater attention to racial equity exists, with local leaders of color having been able to leverage influence to ensure that stronger accountability exists among mainstream organizations in terms of how well communities of color are served, with heightened emphasis on the cultural responsiveness of the entire organization. At the request of the Coalition of Communities of Color, the Center to Advance Racial Equity was asked to conduct this research, with this product being a concrete offering to mainstream organizations to assist their assessment and improvement process to advance their cultural responsiveness.

Center to Advance Racial Equity  
Portland State University

December 1, 2014



***Thank you to our funders!***



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September 2014

Dear Friends, Fellow Leaders and Grantors,

On behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color and the Center to Advance Racial Equity at Portland State University, we are pleased to share a new open source tool, the Protocol for Culturally Responsive Organizations. Historically, we have had the honor of creating and sharing some significant data and other open source tools; data and content captured in the 'Unsettling Profiles' series, Racial Equity Policy templates, and last year, the tool for Organizational Self-Assessment (OSA). The Organizational Self-Assessment offered a broad and wide 'snapshot' view for school districts, nonprofits, corporations, foundations, and others. Our next level of work was how to assess cultural responsiveness in social service provision. Much time and research has been provided to create the right tool, mechanisms to measure, characteristics to review, and to identify an effective format.

In short, the Protocol for Culturally Responsive Organizations is designed to assist organizations and granting bodies to assess an organizations practice and commitment to integrating cultural responsiveness across the organizations' policies, practices, culture, and data collection and evaluation mechanisms.

This new tool will make the work of our service community more transparent. It will encourage the development of improved consciousness about our work, increases in and/or reallocation of resources, and improve forward planning for enhanced equity and cultural responsiveness. This confluence of action will help us to grow, learn, and 'stay the course' towards social justice and racial equity. We hope this new tool will raise our aligned and progressive collective efforts toward building a healthy and prosperous community. We believe it will empower us to play a meaningful and intentional role in creating an Oregon where race and ethnicity no longer predict a community member's chance for success.

In enclosed documents you will learn how this tool was borne, rationale for this work, process by which it will be implemented and, of course, the tool itself.

Welcome to yet another part of our journey together. We look forward to the momentous and important work we will do together in insuring the best care and outcomes for our communities. To quote an African proverb, "Alone we may go fast but together we will go far." Let us go together!

Sincerely,

Carmen Rubio

Executive Director, Latino Network  
Co-Chair, Coalition of Communities of Color

Gerald Deloney

Director of Program Advancement, Self Enhancement, Inc.  
Co-Chair, Coalition of Communities of Color

Ann Curry-Stevens

Director, Center to Advance Racial Equity  
Associate Professor, School of Social Work, Portland State University

## Goals of the Protocol

This Protocol was created to assist organizations improve their ability to serve communities of color. It is a deep dive – covering the full arena of an organization’s governance and operations, integrating nine different domains, a set of 99 standards to establish the ideals for our work, and a set of 109 pieces of “evidence” that support an organization to assert its capacity to well-serve communities of color. This evidence will allow an organization to respond to the question, “Where’s the equity in your organization?” and you’ll be able to say, “Here it is.” You’ll be able to go further than that, being able to say, “Here’s our Protocol assessment, and here’s our Improvement Plan, and here are all the details that show you how far we’ve gotten in our efforts to be culturally responsive.”

We have also developed a resource that we hope is useful for funding bodies (foundations and government departments) as they pay attention to how to ensure that their grantees and contractors are meeting the needs of clients and communities of color. While it would be ideal to require grantees to implement the Protocol, such depth might not be feasible or desirable for imposition by funding bodies. A less onerous – but still significant – performance metric is integrated into the “Interview Questions for Funding Bodies.”

The originators of this tool are the Health and Human Services Committee of the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC). Members of the committee represent a range of culturally specific organizations aiming to eliminate racial disparities in health and human services, by advancing racial equity and culturally responsive services. With this goal as their priority, they approached the Center to Advance Racial Equity at Portland State University seeking research support to (a) learn of best practices in the field, through a comprehensive review of the literature in both the academic arena and in publications by public agencies and institutes – many of which have integrated an assessment approach to help interested organizations in becoming more culturally responsive, and (b) to work in deep partnership with the CCC to develop a Protocol which has become an assessment tool that helps both culturally specific and mainstream organizations in their work.

In addition to the main Protocol tool, we provide you with an integrated set of resources to take an organization from the assessment phase to the action phase:

- Grading matrix to “diagnose” one’s status
- Recommended next steps to review options for inclusion in your Improvement Plan
- Documentation list to help organize the evidence that organizations might collect
- Organizational model for a culturally responsive organization that highlights the structures that we perceive to be important for carrying the work

We then also provide a set of resources that might be helpful for an organization that is doing the heavy lifting of undertaking specific action items. These are not prescriptive but rather our compendium of suggestions for several important areas of practice:

- Interview questions for funding bodies (explained above)
- Racial equity policy
- Terms of reference for an Equity Team
- Supervision policy
- Performance appraisal process

- Risk assessment tool
- Client satisfaction survey
- Climate survey
- Resources for deepening your journey

We hope that the Protocol and its resources are helpful to your journey towards greater cultural responsiveness.

Persistent racial disparities compel us to take action. For too long, however, many organizations have had few expectations placed on them for ensuring that they are able to provide evidence of how well they serve communities of color. We hope this Protocol and the resources contained within are able to provide you direction, skills, tools and impetus to act. Simultaneously it offers the Coalition of Communities of Color an opportunity to be proactive – working with organizations and providing a road map. We are excited by the possibility that this Protocol offers enduring directionality for our collective efforts, and our collective wellbeing.

## Background Information on the Impacts of Racial Inequity

As organizations prepare themselves for improving their cultural responsiveness, there are some pieces of compelling research that are important foundations for action. Research descriptions that follow illustrate the impact of racism on the employee of color, the impact of diversity of workforce in the workplace, and the desirability of organizations that have successfully integrated diversity into their operations. While there are few studies explicitly about the impacts of anti-racism organizational change, diversity expansion has been well studied, with positive results illustrated for problem solving, hiring and retention, market share and performance.

As background, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act provides protected classes (by race, color, religion, sex and national origin, with disability protections added in the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act) assurances against discrimination. The organization itself is typically held liable for employment practices that discriminate against workers of color.

Accordingly, it is in the interests of the organization to ensure that its managers and supervisors are equipped to notice inequities, to take action to address them, and ensure that their staff are able to work unimpeded by hostility and inequities. This is part of “risk management” that supports the business interests of the workplace.

So too, workforce composition is described as critical for achieving cultural competence and for delivering culturally responsive services.<sup>1</sup> Staff that reflects the local community are considered essential for connecting with service users from the community. A study of a culturally specific domestic violence agency serving African American survivors<sup>2</sup> cited that a majority of staff members were African American and representative of the clients served. All clients interviewed found this helpful because they related better to African American staff and because of the employment opportunities being provided to their community. A second study of the Latin American Cancer Research Coalition (LASRC)<sup>3</sup> found that gender, ethnic, and language matching of community clinic staff to service users was important for recruiting Latino subjects to participate in their clinical research. A third study<sup>4</sup> reported on interviews with 22 service providers from large urban centers and case studies were collected from Aboriginal Housing Providers in Western Canada demonstrated the value of culturally responsive shelter and support services for Aboriginal peoples. All of the Aboriginal Housing Providers cited had employed Aboriginal staff as they were considered more capable of supporting residents’ cultural and spiritual needs and held stronger potential to reduce at least one cultural barrier in the healing process.

For workers of color who are employed in non-culturally responsive mainstream organizations, there is high potential for damage. The presence of racism and other forms of marginalization is likely to affect one’s work performance and how one is perceived in the workplace. Research tells us that racism inside the workplace is likely to result in lowered morale, higher absenteeism, heightened stress, and higher staff turnover. Racism in the workplace affects mental and physical health<sup>5</sup> with an impact on:

- Biology – stress levels, heart rate, and blood pressure... increasing risk levels for heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, allergies, and asthma... by reduced immune system efficiency.<sup>6</sup>
- Emotional health – self-esteem, sense of wellbeing, psychological adjustment... and all are linked to mental health, particularly depression. The impact on mental health begins at birth and “assail a person’s integrity, producing humiliation.”<sup>7</sup>



- Cognition – conflicting interpretations of events (stereotyping and racism, as opposed to “innocent” incidents) serve to undermine confidence and increase self-deprecation. This can cause isolation, mistrust and externalizing blame.<sup>8</sup>

Such an organization is also likely to build a reputation as being an unwelcoming and inhospitable place to work, and workers of color are likely to avoid seeking employment in such organizations. In one study, two different job calls were posted, one of which communicated a colorblind approach to diversity and the second which clearly demonstrated affirmation for diversity. African Americans did not apply for the former, expressing distrust in such an environment and they anticipated being treated more frequently in a biased manner.<sup>9</sup>

Research also tells us that diversity is a considerable asset for an organization. A leading study<sup>10</sup> determined that diverse groups “became more effective on the task elements of identifying problem perspectives and generating solution alternatives” than did white homogenous groups, meaning that while homogenous groups might start more strongly, they underperform in the long run in problem solving. Regularly, organizational leaders are tapped for their insights on the link between diversity, organizational productivity and performance, with the results aligning with stock performance. In one study, average returns improve from 7.9% to 18.3% per annum when moving from the bottom of companies (100 of them) in embracing diversity to the top 100 companies on diversity practices.<sup>11</sup> Another study<sup>12</sup> shows that benefits also accrue to non-minority groups: white students benefit from working closely with students of color, as they gain exposure to culturally-derived forms of problem solving and coping strategies. The assets of communities of color cannot be shared if racial divides remain pronounced.

## Introducing Culturally Responsive Organizations

Mainstream organizations have faced abundant critiques about their shortcomings in serving communities of color, with conventional approaches severely lacking over the generations: assimilation, colorblindness, diversity and cultural competence are those in our most recent memory. While there have always been a few exceptions to the norms, these initiatives have failed. A quick review of their deficiencies might help build an improved foundation for moving forward:

- **Assimilation** – required obliterating one’s traditional culture and adopting mainstream values and practices served as a modern-day form of genocide, only this time it was cultural.
- **Colorblindness** – the phrase, “I don’t see you as a person of color – I see you as a human being” might sound attractive (and such an approach still rests in our collective psyche as desirable) but it does untold damage to communities of color. By not seeing color (or at least pretending that you do not), the approach strips people of color of their identity, their experience and their cultural assets, and signals that they do not matter to the practitioner. An additional damage is that such beliefs simultaneously signal that it is not acceptable to name racism or white privilege as part of the dynamics occurring in the lives of people of color and in the organization itself.
- **Diversity** – while an improvement over the absence of diversity (or “mono-culturalism”), diversity suggests that by simply adding more color to an organization, its problems will be solved. While some gains will be made, danger comes in not naming racism and white privilege. If the organization’s leadership and staff have not built the skills for moving racial equity forward, then diversity becomes simply “window dressing” giving the appearance of real change but without such change occurring.
- **Cultural Competency** - Over the last two decades, “cultural competency” has been the term of choice to name the work of practitioners (and occasionally organizations) that embark on ways to better meet the needs of clients and communities of color that they serve. Critiques are numerous, with the most challenging being the field’s unfortunate drift away from the centrality of racism, into that of “difference” meaning that some cultures are simply “different” than other ones, without naming the foundational power hierarchies embedded in their relationships. Second, cultural competency has been approached as individual skills that aim for practitioners and administrators to learn skills for understanding self and other, and omit focus on systems, organizations, cultures, discourses and institutions. Its lens has been too narrow. Other problems with the “competency” framework is that it presupposes that people of color are “knowable” by mainstream white practitioners, and that such knowledge is static – if we assume a community is knowable, then we presume that it does not change, nor change depending on the context of our engagement with that community.

Like the fish that cannot notice the water it swims in, most mainstream organizations have been unable or unwilling to notice their centrism – meaning that they do not notice the ways in which people of color are rendered marginal by the organization’s culture, policies, and practices, and have not taken steps to identify the barriers that clients of color experience in getting access to the organization and in the quality of services received while there. In response, the framework of “cultural responsiveness” has been adopted by the Coalition of Communities of Color as the goal for mainstream organizations. Seminal work in this area has developed in Australia, aiming to promote the inclusion of Indigenous communities of color.

Our definition is:

*Culturally responsive services are those that are respectful of, and relevant to, the beliefs, practices, culture and linguistic needs of diverse consumer/client populations and communities whose members identify as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or*

*ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home. Cultural responsiveness describes the capacity to respond to the issues of diverse communities. It thus requires knowledge and capacity at different levels of intervention: systemic, organizational, professional and individual.<sup>13</sup>*

A culturally responsive organization is thus one that has comprehensively addressed power relationships throughout the organization, from the types of services provided and how it maximizes linguistic accessibility, to its human resources practices – who it hires, how they are skilled, prepared and held accountable, to its cultural norms, its governance structures and policies, and its track record in addressing conflicts and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, to its relationships with racial groups in the region, including its responsiveness to expectations. Furthermore, a culturally responsive organization is one that is dynamic, on a committed path to improvement and one that is hardwired to be responsive to the interests of communities of color, service users of color and staff of color.

This Protocol is comprehensive: contained are nine domains, with a total of 99 standards that identify how culturally responsive organizations will illustrate their ability to serve clients and communities of color. We have taken this work a step further, and crafted these standards in “evidence-based” terms, identifying the concrete ways in which cultural responsiveness will be illustrated. These become the metrics for assessing one’s own organization. We also hope that funding bodies will integrate these metrics into their assessment of the ability of mainstream organizations to serve communities of color.

Each organization will rate itself on their evidence, with the requisite elements being undertaken and evidence gathered and stored by executive staff (or readily available from organizational files). Tracking progress is recommended to occur continually, with an annual Improvement Plan developed. This will be a work in progress, and we encourage organizations to continue their efforts. Our investments are in ensuring that communities of color are well served by the full array of organizations in the region.

In short, we are hoping that this Protocol becomes a well-accepted road map for the motivated mainstream organization to turn its good intentions into tangible results, and in doing so ensure that the services and activities of the organization result in positive outcomes for communities of color.

## **Theories of Change that Root this Initiative**

Embarking on a serious effort to improve an organization's cultural responsiveness is rooted in more than a leap of faith – although there is benefit to the guiding importance of faith: if we signal that our goal is to advance cultural responsiveness and racial equity, then this becomes a guiding principle for practice. When such a commitment is visible to staff and also to clients and the community, expectations are heightened that tend to form the foundations for decisions from that point onwards, and staff in turn generate their creative capacity to build more responsive organizations.

### **Assessments: Normative for Responsive Change**

The theories that underlie these change efforts begin with the value of conducting the assessment. The last two decades of efforts in “cultural competency” development have over-relied upon training, with an abundance of this work being “unlikely to have sustained positive effects if implemented in the absence of broader organizational accountability mechanisms and leadership” (p.12, Trenerry and Paradies, 2012).<sup>14</sup> Conducting an evaluation is integral to the change process for the following four reasons: first, it ensures that the organization is thoroughly assessed – gathering insights on needs and strengths, and providing an evidence base that problems exist. The results of the assessment create impetus for serious reforms, and avoid tokenistic responses. Second, it sustains a focus on the organization itself, in tandem with including the practices of individuals in the organization. Third, it creates organizational accountability to determine needs, build interventions and allocate resources. Fourth, it raises expectations inside and outside the organization that improvement efforts are forthcoming, and in this way, creates momentum for change.

The foundations for this Protocol are thoroughly documented in the accompanying literature review that was conducted prior to embarking on this undertaking (Reyes and Curry-Stevens, 2013).<sup>15</sup> The literature review draws upon a total of 18 similar documents, and more than 50 articles. This review is summarized in this text, organized along the same domains as the tool itself. Please know that a solid research base underlies the development of this Protocol, and similarly know that its precursor, “Tool for organizational self-assessment related to racial equity” (Eliminating Disparities in Child and Youth Success Collaborative, 2013) emerged from a review of more than 15 tools and an additional four meta-analyses of the efficacy of organizational assessment tools. The development of the tool itself involved more than ten leading racial equity advocates and practitioners, adding community-validation to the final product contained in these pages.

### **Transformative Learning**

When we move to a 30,000 foot gaze at the change processes we embed the Protocol within, we can see that there are more fundamental theories of change. Here we aim for the work to catalyze transformative learning, meaning that there is a shift in one's world view from one that is more individually-oriented and merit-based (meaning we tend to assume that if individuals face challenges it is of their own doing and they are responsible for finding a way to make things better) to one that is more collective and appreciative of the influences of racism, white privilege and related dynamics of exclusionary cultures, microaggressions, and the degree to which respect (and disrespect) is communicated in white mainstream settings. Completing the Protocol should awaken staff to the full range of issues that influence outcomes for clients and staff of color.

### **Conflict Theory: Oppression Infuses Organizations and Deepens Exclusion**

A second fundamental theory is that of conflict theory, with the specific issue being that the consequences of holding a marginalized identity as a person of color pose difficulties for mainstream organizations – and that

without deep, intentional and remedial interventions, the organization will not adequately serve communities of color. Clients of color have distinct experiences that need to be affirmed for services to have equivalently positive gains with white service users. Young (1990) identified the commonalities of oppression to be violence (and the threat of violence), exploitation, powerlessness, marginalization and cultural imperialism.<sup>16</sup> While not all elements are present in a given organization, the key message is that there are distinct features of one's experience that are worsened by the practices of mainstream organizations: when one comes seeking support and care, the experience of powerlessness, imperialism and marginalization deepen the sense of being an outsider. Accordingly, mainstream organizations need to double down on their efforts to promote the meaningful inclusion of communities of color.

### **Making the Invisible Visible: Receding Whiteness and Euro-Centrism**

Third, the very interventions that the organization relies upon to improve the lives of clients and their communities are likely to have been developed in the context of whiteness, with white participants and relying on western, Eurocentric beliefs and foundations. Most youth development programs are founded on the desirability of independence, most counseling practice theories are devoid of recognizing the debilitating effects of racism, most health therapies ignore the value of traditional healers, and spiritual integration, and most educational practices rely on conventional textbooks that render invisible the histories and contributions of people of color. And the service environment typically relies on a form of imperialism where the "service provider knows best" which is a particular form of marginalization that relegates all service users to the status of consumer of what the provider has to offer, without shaping the services.

Engagement with the "system" thus is one that again invalidates one's community, worldview and culture, rendering one's identity and experiences invisible. Accordingly, it is incumbent on the organization to ensure that its interventions are reoriented to be "culturally responsive" which is more than a technical task (though it is also that) – it is one that requires the organization to consider the multitude of ways that it is imperial and marginalizing, and requires redevelopment of its interventions in ways that have been validated (and that continue to be validated because cultures are not static) by the community and by service users.

### **Democratization and Inclusive Governance**

Fourth, we draw from the idea that organizations are most responsive when they are democratized. If service users of color, staff of color, and their communities are afforded real power in the organization, then they will be able to catalyze course corrections if reforms are too slow in the making, or if people of color are tokenized in their involvement, or if changes just occur in practice or policy (take your pick – relying exclusively on just one orientation will be likely to fail), then people of color – including service users – will have the ability to hold the organization accountable and demand real change. These democratizing practices (sometimes referred to as "inclusive governance"<sup>17</sup>) show up in board membership, creating specific roles for community members on an advisory board, having a complaint process with teeth, and client satisfaction surveys so that people of color can provide direct feedback about their experiences in the organization. Decision making methods are a part of this governance process, with consensus processes being desirable.

## **Implementation Process for Culturally Responsive Organizations Protocol**

The organization's leadership will decide to implement the Protocol, and commit itself to integrating a cultural responsiveness across the organization's policies, practices, culture and assessment. Below are the concrete steps to implement the Protocol (which might be adapted depending on the organization's size and/or structure):

1. Ideally, this process will be led by a pre-existing Racial Equity Team that includes membership from across the organization with strong executive participation. Embedding the Protocol assessment process (p.22-35) and developing of an Improvement Plan (p.36-39) in this Team is recommended as it will root its members in the details of the organization that will support its mandate. Alternatively, for culturally specific organizations, the relevant Protocol tools are to be used: assessment (p.46-58) and Improvement Plan (p.61-64). Racial diversity on this team is important, with people of color making up not less than 20% of the Team.
2. If such a team does not exist, an interim team is recommended, with a likely action outcome being to entrench such a team into the organization's structure.
3. Complete the rating scales for each part of the Protocol assessment. This assessment process should take approximately 80 hours (total) of staff time. For example, if your team has 8 people on it, the assessment process should take the team about 10 hours of committee time, likely broken up into 3-4 sessions of about 2 hours each. We suggest that the time period over which this is done be not more than 3 months as you will want to get to the Improvement Plan while energy and interest is high. In subsequent years, the assessment will take much less time.
4. Part of this assessment is to gather "evidence" that helps define your degree of adherence to the standards, so please allocate some time for collecting these pieces of evidence and develop a plan for where they should "live" should they be requested by funders or other stakeholders.
5. The Racial Equity Team will then move into the Improvement Plan stage, and build a commitment that will stretch over the following year, with concrete performance improvements specified.
6. Once drafted, the Improvement Plan will move through the relevant approval steps for implementation. Ultimately, your governing body will need to see the Plan and endorse its content.
7. Once endorsed, the Protocol Assessment and Improvement Plan should be communicated across the organization to signal intention and expectations for implementation and adherence.

Please keep track of suggested improvements for the Protocol as it is anticipated that the resource will be updated approximately every 5 years.

## Synopsis of the Best Practices Literature on Culturally Responsive Organizations

To launch this initiative, the Coalition of Communities of Color approached the Center to Advance Racial Equity at Portland State University to help prepare them for creating resources designed to help mainstream organizations become better at serving communities of color, and at the same time provide standards and metrics for assessing their status in such work. The project began with a literature review (Reyes and Curry-Stevens, 2013) that can be found at [www.centertoadvanceracialeguity.org](http://www.centertoadvanceracialeguity.org). Excerpts of this literature review are included in this section of the Protocol. We illustrate how this literature review that has guided our development of the Protocol. At the same time, we have added examples of how to take action in each domain, as well as some suggestions for key elements that can help you build organizational improvements.

### 1. Organizational commitment, leadership & governance

Organizations that effectively lead with and integrate racial equity are able to influence the organization most significantly. The ways that organizations influence the entire organization are through publicly expressed commitments, which influence both the culture and the performance of the organization. When this leadership influence is backed up by cohesive governance structures to ensure that the commitment to racial equity is enacted throughout the organization, it is most fully able to create an equitable organization. The levers available to governing bodies include policies and procedures, role definition, accountability practices, and governing and management structures. Organizational leaders are also able to ensure that resources are allocated to ensuring that cultural responsiveness is maximized, and that priorities for action can be sufficiently resourced. Community leaders are engaged in planning, review, assessment and improvement through a Community Advisory Board or an alternate body. Organizational leadership and Board membership reflects the racial diversity of the constituency served by the organization.

What can you do to make these commitments and implement them?

- Create a policy that expresses your commitments to being a culturally responsive organization.
- Ensure that the governing body and upper leadership supports this policy, and that they understand that success depends on implementation of the full spectrum of domains included in this protocol.
- Recruit leaders who have experience with these issues and can assist in governing and managing to advance cultural responsiveness.
- Given the governing body's role in approving organizational budgets, it must ensure that budgeting reflects cultural responsiveness and racial equity (in general), and that it ensures sufficient resources exist to implement the Improvement Plan (that is built on the Protocol Assessment).
- Invite community of color leaders to help your organization develop a Community Action Board.
- Complete a review of the organization's integration of this Protocol on an annual basis, including the Improvement Plan. Generate sufficient revenues for implementing your Improvement Plan, and that such resources are a priority across time.
- Ensure that the Protocol Assessment is conducted accurately.
- Have your annual Protocol Assessment and Improvement Plan reviewed and verified by the Community Action Board, the community of service users of color and their advocates.

#### LOCAL EXEMPLAR: Sisters of the Road

Sisters of the Road has long been committed to the meaningful integration of community members in the organization's leadership and staffing, and gives priority to upstream advocacy work on issues of importance to its members. Policy priorities have included a living wage for staff and creating a shared governance model.

## 2. Racial Equity Policies and Implementation Practice

The goals of racial equity policies are threefold: to ensure that progress is not lost when leadership changes; to make a clear and direct commitment of intention to advance racial equity; and to establish lines of accountability for the effectiveness of the policy. In the area of systems change work that is typically incorporated within health and human services, there are a set of reform elements around vision and policy, data systems, training, human resource improvements, budgeting, service-based practice competencies, community engagement and accountability structures. In child welfare disparity reduction efforts the following implementation practices have emerged<sup>18</sup>:

- a. Accurate data systems
- b. Leadership development
- c. Culturally competent workforce
- d. Community engagement

### Action Options

- Develop a policy that clearly identifies the rationale for cultural responsiveness and for racial equity, allowing all staff and volunteers to understand the benefits to service users, the community, the organization and to wider society that can emerge from the initiative.
- Appoint lead staff with responsibilities added to their job description, to ensure that progress on cultural responsiveness and racial equity is monitored.

#### EXAMPLE – RACIAL EQUITY POLICY IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY SCHOOLS

Most school districts in Multnomah County have adopted a racial equity policy, indicating that they are committed to eliminating disparities. Elements of their policies include a vision of racial equity, justification for the need for the policy, the importance of leading with race, recognition of the role of partnerships, the importance of the role of resource allocation, and offer concrete next steps and accountability mechanisms. These policies also provide relevant definitions.

#### EXAMPLE – UNDOING INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

In 2010, Multnomah County Chair Cogen sent a letter to all staff indicating support undoing institutional racism. In the letter, he expressed that “our vision is to eliminate the barriers that preclude staff, service users and the community from being full and equal contributors to our collective wellbeing.”

#### EXAMPLE – EQUITY INITIATIVE

The City of Portland, in the Portland Plan that sets priorities for the next 25 years, asserted that “equity is the foundation of the Portland Plan, and it will be a central focus of all the strategies in the plan. Equity objectives and actions are built into all of the Portland Plan strategies. The Equity Initiative focuses on objectives that have to do with the way the City does business, including human resources, contracting, access, funding and decision-making.” It set the following as explicit goals: reduce disparities across all plan areas, starting with the most severe inequities, ensure accountability and implementation of equity initiative, and ensure that the City does business in an equitable manner.



### **Local Exemplar: Northwest Health Foundation**

The NWHF has led efforts to define racial equity and to commit itself to advance both upstream and downstream interventions that improve the lives of the region’s most vulnerable communities. Equity features prominently in its presence through its mission statement, its guiding principles, and its board and staff composition. Equity also is prominent in its funding practices and leadership among local and national foundations.

### **Organizational Climate, Culture and Communications**

While climate is a challenging element to modify, it can be directed by a set of policies, vision, and practices that promote inclusion and acceptance of communities of color. Organizations that understand cultural perceptions of services, respect and quality have the greatest prospect of being responsive to the communities they serve. Cross-cultural communication policies and training within the organization will enhance interactions and build trust with served communities while improving effective relationships and collaboration with community members.

#### **Action Options...**

- Develop service satisfaction surveys, suggestion box, small group discussions, and other methods to regularly collect feedback from users about organizational responsiveness to community. Use results to inform organizational planning and training programs to progress responsiveness.
- Review brochures, reports, meeting minutes, and other documents to find evidence of this responsiveness to community.
- Ask the Community Advisory Board to review satisfaction survey results to validate this culture.

### **EXAMPLE – Developing Trust**

Program staff providing services for homelessness among Aboriginal communities in Canada emphasized the importance of “knowing cultural ways rather than cultural facts” including understanding the “names, histories, and politics of local bands” for developing trust. Clients reported that working with Aboriginal staff meant "one less cultural barrier to overcome in the healing process" and staff that were more capable of supporting residents cultural/spiritual needs.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. Service-Based Equity & Relevance

The most direct experience that service users have with the organization is when they receive services. It is here that they might experience barriers to getting services, and the degree to which their needs are held central in service provision, and the degree to which quality outcomes occur. It is also the place where workers exert direct influence over experiences such as respect, inclusion, responsiveness and trustworthiness. Two key elements of services deserve our attention because of the significance of the barriers they create: language accessibility and integration of cultural perspectives and practices. Organizations should provide language assistance through competent interpreters at no cost to the service user. Resources and materials should be translated into relevant languages to improve awareness of available services. Staff workers are more effective when interacting with service users with the respect that evolves from a deeper understanding of the community being served. Training programs that include the history, cultural beliefs and values, discrimination experiences, policy barriers, and assessment of biases will positively impact accessibility of services for all users.

#### **Action Options...**

- Ask organizations that represent the communities you serve about what knowledge of their communities workers should understand. Pay attention to culture, history and customs, as well as the local experiences that are likely to include discrimination, exclusion and marginalization. Include learning about the community's strengths and assets.
- Discuss these standards with the higher education units that prepare your staff for employment. Ensure that they understand the imperative to train providers to these standards and that they recruit a student body that is representative of the communities who you serve.
- Assess your organizations plan for language accessibility. Are competent interpreters available when needed? Are materials and resources **printed in languages relevant to local communities**?
- Welcome feedback from community about:
  - Welcoming culture of the organization (represented in materials, website, office, pictures)
  - **Respect by relevant staff**
  - Understanding by staff of culture, history, **policy barriers, discrimination**
  - Experience of being valued by the organization and **absence of disparaging discourses**
  - Cultural interpretation of needs and **strengths and have these affirmed**
  - **Quality of services**
  - **Experience of interpreter services**
  - Barriers in **seeking and receiving services**
  - Degree to which service provision desires are adhered to.

#### **EXAMPLE – Language Assistance**

Patient satisfaction and significant improvements for participants “in select clinical outcomes, behavioral outcomes and diabetes-related knowledge” were documented when competent language assistance was provided. The National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality (NICHQ) project provided interpreters resulting in “better communications, more appropriate diagnosis, and a deeper understanding of patient needs”.<sup>20</sup>

#### **EXAMPLE – Cultural Influences for Service Provision**

The Aboriginal Health and Wellness Center of Winnipeg was designed in response to expressed needs within community forums and Elder Circles for a blending of both Traditional and Western approaches for healing. Cultural and spiritual activities, Aboriginal staff, community involvement, and community capacity building are considered important elements of their culturally responsive programs.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4. Service User Voice and Influence

Service users influence policy, practice, environment and service delivery through service user voice. While client satisfaction surveys or interviews have provided client perceptions of quality and culturally sensitive service, we can do more to assure that the services received are culturally responsive. Service users involved in an annual Protocol Assessment and development of an Improvement Plan have the potential to influence the organization at multiple levels with culturally based values and perspectives. When perceptions of quality and culturally responsive service are gathered through client satisfaction surveys and shortcomings are addressed in the subsequent Improvement Plan the organization is exemplifying true commitment to be culturally responsive. Development of a complaint process that is culturally responsive and effective will include a plan for disaggregating satisfaction data results (by community, language, refugee status or other important cultural grouping) and reporting out to the community will foster in racial equity.

##### **Action options...**

- Ensure that service users participate in the annual Protocol Assessment process and in the development of the Improvement Plan
- Create culturally responsive policies and procedures on how to file a complaint including protection from penalties for complaining; ask service user or CAB to review policies and procedures
- Share culturally responsive policies and procedures with new service users, in writing (in relevant languages) and in person
- Report on client satisfaction survey results and complaints with results disaggregated by relevant communities and include remedies for addressing shortcomings.

##### **EXAMPLE – Student Voice**

When educational leaders in schools provide concrete roles for enabling student voice, and ensure these perspectives influence curriculum design and school climate improvements, students of color have particularly benefited and the achievement gap has narrowed. Strong student voice has been found to be best supported both through improved structures (creating places for student voice to be collected, voiced and responded to), larger institutional reforms and pedagogical shifts (with greater student-centered education and integration of the principles of adult education).<sup>21</sup>

##### **Example – Consumer Voice in Health Services**

The creation of a service user advisory group in a mental health clinic resulted in the following achievements: extended day care hours, the appointment of a policy advocate who aimed to advance their priorities for reforms outside of the organization, the availability of better information about services (via a booklet), and enhanced self-advocacy and communication skills.<sup>22</sup>

##### **Local Exemplar: Multnomah Youth Commission**

Local teens have been tapped for their policy voice, and for their ability to both organize and gather the insights of youth in the region. Their work has been instrumental in naming issues related to violence, building a platform of advice for service providers seeking to reduce bullying and other school-based violence, and in pressing local leaders to listen to youth and to share power and influence with such youth, as they are the ultimate stakeholders in anti-violence work.

## 5. Workforce Composition and Quality

Service users are most comfortable when organizations reflect the demography of the communities being served in racial, ethnic, and cultural dimensions and in proportionality. Tokenism will never achieve the impact of having a workforce that represents proportionally all of the communities being served.

Compliance/collaboration and quality of service improves when the service provider shares the same language as the service user. Providing opportunities to hire, promote and integrate workers who share the racial, ethnic, cultural, and language as the community being served demonstrates cultural responsiveness.

### **Action options...**

- Direct Human Resources to report the racial, ethnic, and cultural composition of the organization and corresponding demographic profile of community served, on a cyclical basis.
- Develop Human Resources and/or training department plans for equity-based and community-representative workforce development.
- Seek community review of documents, programs, and assessment regarding workforce composition and quality; that is: organizational policy statement, job description, training program plans and assessment of training outcomes.

### **EXAMPLE – Representative Workforce**

The Latin American Cancer Research Coalition (LASRC) found that gender, ethnic, and language matching of community clinic staff to service users was important for recruiting Latino subjects to participate in their clinical research.<sup>23</sup>

### **EXAMPLE – Worker/Advocates**

Worker/Advocates recruited from within a Native American community were intensively trained on Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) as child welfare specialists (scholarships were provided for training). Advocates (under the supervision by a licensed social worker, LCSW) would assess whether cases were compliant with ICWA and that services being provided were culturally responsive. The Worker/Advocate acted as a resource to service users and the non-Native caseworker or agency by gathering information on the service user's tribal affiliation, traditional values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals as well as facilitating tribal reunification of children and families.<sup>24</sup>

### **Local Exemplar: Metropolitan Family Service**

Many job postings of MFS integrate a focus on diversity, which includes the following elements: (1) values working in a multicultural, diverse environment, (2) values and supports inclusion and program access for clients, and (3) supports agency goals for enhancing diversity within program. Metropolitan Family Service has gained the respect of many culturally specific organizations for the work it does with service users of color and the partnerships it forms with them.

## 6. Community Collaboration

Community collaborations are essential resources for organizations in the progression towards becoming culturally responsive organizations. For it is within the community collaboration that cultural values, needs, strengths, history are shared and also where the potential impacts on service are explored. Community elders who advise on the design of a building that would encourage use by their respective community members will positively impact the delivery of culturally specific program by a mainstream organization. Collaborations that are true partnerships require the organization to value and promote community voice in assessment, planning, program delivery, and evaluation.

### **Action Options...**

- Create a Listening Circle (led by CAB in collaboration with organization) to hear and collect community voice through focus groups, listening sessions, surveys, and advisory councils.
- Develop a process of incorporating suggestions and recommendations from the community into the organizational Improvement plans for policy, assessment, planning, program delivery, and evaluation.
- Develop performance-based outcomes that hold the organization and its representatives accountable to the community.

#### **EXAMPLE – Consulting with Local Native Leaders**

Planning for a new community clinic brought together architects, tribal elders, and health providers to discuss “What does the community need for wellness?” Recommendations for modeling buildings after traditional Native American homes of the local community were incorporated into the building design of a new community clinic center.<sup>25</sup>

#### **EXAMPLE – Family Group Conferencing**

Focus groups comprised of professionals, service providers, lay community members, and service users explored important themes in family conferencing for African-Americans, Latinos/Hispanics, and non-Hispanic whites. Rather than finding a common model to use with all ethnic groups, the serving organization developed a unique process for engaging community members from each ethnic group, leading to greater acceptance and involvement within each of the communities.<sup>26</sup>

#### **Local Exemplar: Center to Advance Racial Equity (CARE), Portland State University**

CARE has developed from the experience of a research project between the Coalition of Communities of Color and Portland State University. PSU has committed, through this center, to respond to community requests for research support. In this exemplar, the institution of PSU has developed an innovative design for research projects, inviting community groups seeking to advance racial equity to make requests of it, and committed itself to finding ways to address these needs. In this way, community collaboration created a new center, and all subsequent research projects are then undertaken in partnership with the requesting group, involving it in the ways that make sense to that community group.

## 7. Resource Allocation and Contracting Practices

Resource allocation and contracting practices can be used to achieve heightened performance in equity arenas and also concrete methods for financial accountability – or “budgeting for equity.” The trend toward “performance based budgeting” reflects the same elements of ensuring that budgets reflect the strategic priorities of an organization. Similarly “minority contracting”, prevalent since 1972, ensures that governments stretch beyond their “business as usual” contracting practices and reach historically disadvantaged businesses and that public dollars are used strategically to support such sectors, of which “minority-owned businesses” is one (joining women and emerging small businesses).

### **Action options...**

- Learn more about equity-based and performance-based budgeting to see how your organization can assess efficiency and outcomes for equitable resource allocation. A model performance-monitoring framework for education, health, housing, and community services was developed for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG; see: [www.pc.gov.au/gsp](http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp)).
- Review your contracting practices (and those of other organizations with whom you contract) to find if your organization can do more to engage with to minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, and emerging small businesses.
- Develop a mentoring program with minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, and emerging small businesses to promote their success in proposal submission and awards.

### **EXAMPLE – Budgeting for Equity**

The Portland Development Commission (PDC)<sup>27</sup> has adopted an equity policy for investments, projects, and programs including: 1) applying an equity lens to activities, projects and investments of PDC as well as increasing equity and diversity awareness within PDC; 2) expanding and aligning the definition of “certified firms” to federal designation of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises; and 3) expanding the authority of the PDC Executive Director to implement the equity policy without prior approval from the governing Board. The Equity Policy will require that new program proposals address disparities in access or outcomes (including “community benefit agreements for all significant projects”), strategies for recruitment, retention and training; cultural competency and inclusionary plans; and annual work plans that are reflected in performance evaluations.

### **EXAMPLE – Contracting Practices**

The Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority (ACTA) in California, initiated a rigorous Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program with the equity goal of engaging, at a minimum, 22% professional services and construction work from DBEs (that includes minority contractors). Effective outreach and supports to strengthen minority contractors’ ability to compete for subcontracts was instrumental in their success. ACTA contracted 22.3% of its contract dollars, 29% of professional contracts, 39% of construction management contracts and 20% of construction contracts to 155 DBE companies.<sup>28</sup>

### **Local Exemplar – Portland Public Schools**

Portland Public Schools has created an “Equity Allocation” of 4% of its annual budget to be directed to schools that have high percentages of historically underserved communities, with expectations that these resources will be deployed to reduce educational disparities. Putting budgetary commitments to address racial equity is essential for both demonstrating commitment and making essential resources available for racial progress.

## 8. Data Metrics and Continuous Quality Improvement

Organizations need to assess their compliance with the Protocol for Culturally Responsive Organizations on an annual basis as well as gauge progress on their Improvement Plan, developed during the previous year in collaboration with the CAB. Collection of demographic data on clients are important for understanding population shifts among service users signaling potential changes in needs or services (including competent language assistance). Regular and consistent demographic data collection of staff, leadership, and boards are also important for ensuring equitable representation within the organization at multiple levels. Stakeholder satisfaction surveys will assist in determining the organization's effectiveness in serving the communities they wish to reach. Transparency through public reporting of compliance with the Protocol and progress on the annual Improvement Plan will signal the Organization's commitment to the communities they serve.

### **Action Options...**

- Create a set of assessment tools that might include
  - Service users satisfaction assessment
  - Demographic change monitoring template
  - Needs assessments for services useful to communities of color
- Conduct annual assessments that include the following
  - Service user satisfaction (including experiences of inclusion/exclusion)
  - Comparisons of patient care outcomes between English speakers and non-English speakers (health chart audits might include treatments, prescriptions, recommended tests, etc.)
- Create resource lists that will be useful for staff that includes
  - Cross-cultural communication resource network
  - Reflexive tool for auditing self about bias and differences in treatment of communities of color with goal of adapting practice to eliminate disparities
  - Health literacy protocols

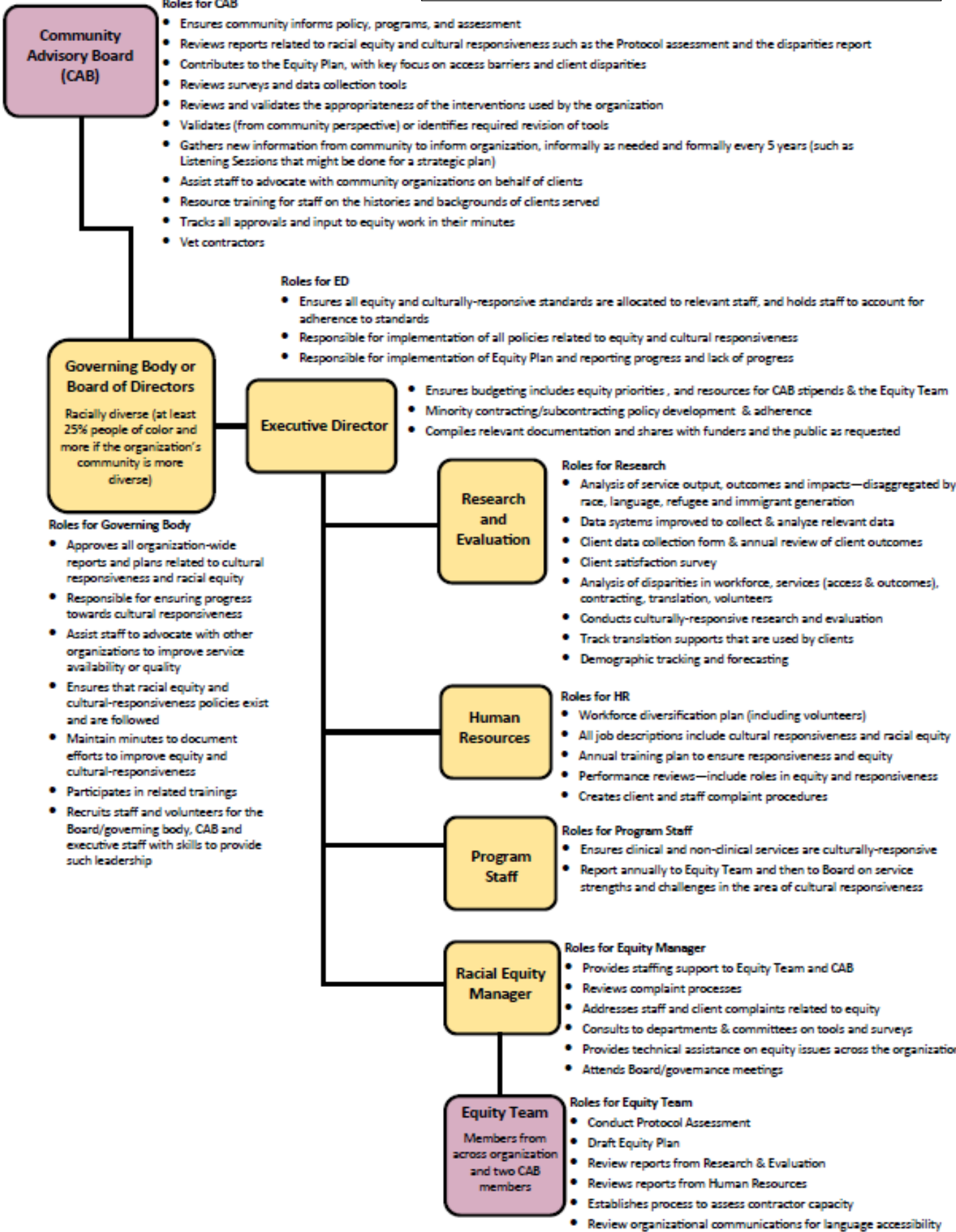
### **EXAMPLE – PATIENT SATISFACTION**

Patient satisfaction was impacted by the quality of interpretation (higher satisfaction with language concordant physicians). The National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality (NICHQ) project provided interpreters resulting in "better communications, more appropriate diagnosis, and a deeper understanding of patient needs".<sup>29</sup>

### **Local Exemplar: Visibility Initiative of the Department of Human Services, Multnomah County**

Inspired by the work of the Coalition of Communities of Color, local administrators sought to improve data collection practices to ensure that the communities of color represented by the CCC were visible to the organization. The development phase included presentations and consultation with the CCC and the product was the implementation of a data collection form that included the racial categories preferred by local communities.

# Model for a Culturally Responsive Organization





## Scoring & “Diagnosing” Matrices

We aim for organizations to determine their profile and identity along a continuum (shown below) of degrees to which the organization is and is not culturally responsive. Akin to “diagnosing” health, determining the degree to which one meaningfully serves communities of color is required for internal and external purposes. The internal function is to help determine our starting place, and to identify options for concrete improvements. By conducting this equity assessment, our hope is that you (1) gather insights on needs and strengths, and providing an evidence base that problems exist, (2) create impetus for serious reforms, and avoid tokenistic responses, (3) sustain a focus on the organization itself, in tandem with including the practices of individuals in the organization, (4) create organizational accountability to determine needs, build interventions and allocate resources, and (5) raise expectations inside and outside the organization that improvement efforts are forthcoming, and in this way, creates momentum for change.<sup>30</sup>

From the external perspective, the Protocol (through both its assessment and improvement plan elements) provides accountability to communities of color who have long suffered considerable racial inequities in services. The Protocol also offers accountability to funders who make investments on the basis of a belief that communities of color can be well served by an organization, and to the general public who contribute through their tax dollars and through foregoing the tax base of untaxed investments of charities.

The following continuum provides a framework for assessing the degree to which an organization is reflective of equity and cultural responsiveness. By extension, it simultaneously reflects the degree to which people of color are likely to be meaningfully served by the organization.

Mono-Cultural Organization	Diversity-Oriented Organization		Culturally Responsive Organization			
	Status Quo	Satisfied	Considering	Inquiring	Aspiring	Acquiring
Not willing to undertake work on racial equity or on cultural responsiveness.	Understands the value of building racial diversity into the organization. Unwilling to address racial equity or power sharing with communities and consumers	One or more organizational leaders are considering implementing the Protocol	We have conducted an equity assessment	We have completed our Protocol Assessment and have a community-validated Improvement Plan	We are making progress by implementing standards, addressing inequities & increasing responsiveness of services	We have few disparities and inequities in services, validated by the communities we serve. We continue to learn and strengthen our capacity in this area.

This diagnosis matrix will again show up in the “Scoring Summary” section of the Protocol where organizations will be asked to assess how well their scores in the nine domains align with this diagnostic matrix.

### Scoring Metric

For each piece of evidence that demonstrates commitment to racial equity and becoming a culturally responsive organization, we use a six-point rating scale. Organizations are to rate themselves in each element, tally the score in each standard. These scores are integrated into the “Scoring Summary” chapter of the document so that a profile of the organization can be established and potential action items brought forward and assessed from a variety of perspectives.

This rating scale is used for the evidence elements in each standard. Circle your score for each item in each domain:

- 0 Not yet thinking about this
- 1 Thinking about this
- 2 We are assessing this feature in our work
- 3 We have an initial improvement effort underway
- 4 Benefits are in evidence from implementing this approach/element
- 5 This is entrenched across the organization

## Domain #1: Commitment, governance and leadership

**Standards** – Here are the standards to which culturally responsive organizations are expected to be held accountable:

- Organizational governance and leadership promotes racial equity and cultural responsiveness through policy, practice, and resource allocation.
- The organization’s commitment to racial equity is publicly declared.
- Resources are dedicated to building the organization’s cultural responsiveness across all domains to ensure progress on all standards.
- Resources are dedicated to building the organization’s cultural responsiveness to ensure progress on all standards.
- A Community Advisory Board (CAB), or alternative community governance model, ensures that community members are involved in planning, improvement and review of services on an ongoing basis. If the organization decides on an alternative structure, the same functions need to be assured, and that relevant community groups provide input that influences the development of culturally responsive services. Tokenistic involvement is precluded.
- An Equity Team is responsible for consolidating input gathered through implementation of this Protocol assessment and Improvement Plan, providing leadership to the organization’s work on racial equity and cultural responsiveness, while the Board/governance body is responsible for assuring the caliber and usefulness of its services.
- Stay up-to-date on the wider social and political content that affects the communities you serve, including public policy. Participating and/or leading advocacy efforts builds stronger relationships with communities of color, expresses solidarity and, when successful, works to improve the wellbeing of communities of color.
- Decisions made on behalf of the organization reflect a commitment to racial equity and cultural responsiveness (and the related specific improvement goals). Use of an “equity lens” may help guide the decision making process.
- Internal equity council or committee ensures internal review of racial equity practices within the organization and monitors progress on racial equity outcomes.
- Organization’s leadership reflects the racial diversity of the constituency served by the organization.

**Evidence** – In a culturally responsive organization, evidence of this equity commitment and practice should be available. You need to assess your progress on each element, assessing the degree to which such practices are integrated into the organizations’ standard practices, and their integration across all departments in the organization (required for a score of 5).

1. An ability to document a narrative about how the organization attains racial equity.	
2. Public statement, signed by executive leadership that reflects the commitment to racial equity.	
3. Mission statement that incorporates racial equity.	
4. Budgeting practices that are performance-based, and tied to equity investments so that racial equity can be achieved.	
5. Organizational structure formalizes community roles in assessing equity achievements and needed improvements, ideally by an ongoing body such as a Community Advisory Board.	
6. Job descriptions for organizational leaders (including governance volunteers) include community engagement responsibilities, and responsibilities for progress towards racial equity.	
7. Organizational structure supports racial equity and cultural responsiveness via an Equity Team with senior leadership included. Body is responsible for making recommendations for the organization’s Equity Plan each year. Senior management is accountable for implementation. At least two members of the CAB should be part of the Equity Team.	
8. Membership in coalitions and advocacy bodies that press for social justice in public policy and institutional reforms.	
9. Statistical reports on the composition of the racial and linguistic diversity of the Board, in comparison with persons served by the organization.	
10. Organizational minutes or proceedings (including annual reports) reflect the actual equity work being conducted.	
11. Use of an “Equity Lens” framework to ensure major organizational decisions, including budgets are oriented towards improving cultural responsiveness.	
12. To ensure the organization’s ability to fulfil the requirements in this Protocol, recruitment of governance volunteers, CAB members and executive staff must ensure these skills are internally available to lead the organization in equity & cultural responsiveness, as shown in job descriptions.	

**Rating:** Tally your score on this standard. Score = \_\_\_\_\_ out of a possible maximum of 60 points.

## Domain #2: Racial Equity Policies and Implementation Practices

**Standards** – Here are the standards to which culturally responsive organizations are expected to be held accountable:

- A cultural responsiveness and racial equity policy is endorsed by the governing body, including the annual Protocol Assessment and Improvement Plan and monitoring of progress on standards that are contained within this Protocol.
- The policy clearly identifies the rationale for cultural responsiveness and for racial equity, allowing all staff and volunteers to understand the benefits to service users, the community, the organization and to wider society that can emerge from the initiative.
- The governance body holds responsibility for the organization’s improvements in cultural responsiveness and racial equity across all domains and that the annual assessment and planning process to ensure such progress occurs in a timely and comprehensive manner.
- Portfolio responsibility ensures that services are culturally responsive. Each standard within this Protocol is allocated to a responsible management staff, and the Executive Director holds responsibility for reporting progress to the governance body on an annual basis (at least).
- Lead staff on each standard must have these responsibilities added to their job description, and ensure that appropriate elements are integrated into the job descriptions of all relevant staff, and progress on these responsibilities is reviewed as part of the performance review procedures.
- The Improvement Plan must include goals, staff responsibilities, timelines, accountability and reporting practices.
- The Improvement Plan must lead to greater attainment of these standards, and specifically to reduced racial disparities in services and increased cultural responsiveness
- The organization must implement sufficient monitoring methods to ensure that progress on these standards can be measured accurately.
- Ongoing implementation efforts integrate communities of color fully and intentionally.
- Progress towards adherence to standards is rewarded through an array of mechanisms.

**Evidence** – In a culturally responsive organization, evidence of this equity commitment and practice should be available. You need to assess your progress on each element, assessing the degree to which such practices are integrated into the organizations’ standard practices, reinforced via policy, and integrated across all departments in the organization (required for a score of 5).

1. Racial equity policy is endorsed by the governing body.	
2. The policy clearly identifies the rationale for cultural responsiveness and for racial equity, asserting the benefits to service users, the community, the organization, and to wider society that can emerge. The policy also identifies the importance of leading with race, the role of partnerships, the importance of resource allocation, accountability mechanisms and definitions.	
3. The governing body holds responsibility for the organization’s improvements in cultural responsiveness and racial equity.	
4. Annually, a progress report is prepared on progress towards these standards.	
5. Annually, an Equity Plan is prepared that identifies key goals for the coming year.	
6. Governing bodies (executives, board members, managers) have written responsibilities for racial equity and cultural responsiveness.	
7. Job descriptions identify responsibilities for implementation of adherence to these standards, and for implementation of the annual Equity Plan.	
8. The organization has a policy about ensuring that all job descriptions reflect specific roles for adherence to these standards, and for coverage of roles in the Equity Plan.	
9. Program managers and executive staff are evaluated for their ability to implement racial equity and culturally responsive services.	
10. Equity Plans and progress reports are publicly available to consumers, partners and the public.	
11. The CAB participates in the development and monitoring of the Equity Plan and progress reports.	
12. The organization has a recognition and reward system to reinforce adherence to these standards.	

**Rating:** Tally your score on this standard. Score = \_\_\_\_\_ out of a possible maximum of 60 points.

### Domain #3: Organizational Climate, Culture and Communications

**Standards** – Here are the standards to which culturally responsive organizations are expected to be held accountable:

- Service users are valued as the center of the organization. The organization consistently expresses appreciation for service users, and eliminates disparaging discourses, including those that expect service users to be grateful for the organization and its staff.
- The organization views the knowledge and experiences of service users as essential to the wellbeing of the organization. Their perceptions of services, culture, respect and quality are given primacy in the assessment of the organization’s cultural responsiveness.
- The organization’s commitment to racial equity and cultural responsiveness is visible in your physical locations through signage (in multiple relevant languages), art, and pictures that are welcoming to and representative of the communities being served.
- Staff training complements policies and procedures to advance cultural responsiveness, allowing staff to build awareness and develop skills to intervene effectively. Staff training is expected to occur across the organization, with attendance mandatory when training addresses an element of staff job descriptions and the organization’s Improvement Plan.
- The governing body is included in training opportunities.
- Organizational materials and website are assessed and reviewed for racial bias.
- The organization’s work on cultural responsiveness (including policies, summary of the Protocol Assessment and the annual Improvement Plan) is publicly available to staff, service users and community members.

**Evidence** – In a culturally responsive organization, evidence of this equity commitment and practice should be available. You need to assess your progress on each element, assessing the degree to which such practices are integrated into the organizations’ standard practices, reinforced via policy, and integrated across all departments in the organization (required for a score of 5).

1. Brochures, reports, meeting minutes, and other documents show that service users are deeply valued and respected across the organization.	
2. Satisfaction survey results show that service users affirm that the culture is respectful and inclusive.	
3. Service user provide feedback to the organization through client satisfaction surveys, suggestion box, small group discussions, and other methods, collected regularly, analyzed and used for planning and training.	
4. Signage in multiple languages and artwork on walls reflects local races and backgrounds.	
5. The organization addresses barriers to access that are tied to culture.	
6. Positive attitudes and conversations occur about the communities served.	
7. Staff talk positively about people who are not being served but should be.	
8. Board members’ job description includes attending training sessions on racial equity and inclusion.	
9. At least one staff person is assigned to review every publication and online resource. A procedure exists for this.	
10. The organization has a community-endorsed strategy to assess its culture.	

**Rating:** Tally your score on this standard. Score = \_\_\_\_\_ out of a possible maximum of 50 points.

## Domain #4: Service Based Equity

**Standards** – Here are the standards to which culturally responsive organizations are expected to be held accountable:

### **On Access**

- Service barriers are routinely identified and remedied, via an accepted procedure that the community has validated.
- Staff advocate effectively with service providers in other organizations to ensure access is available to all who need the service.
- Flexibility in service provision occurs to reduce barriers, including seeing clients in their homes, providing group-based and self-help and para-professional based interventions (as an alternative to conventional expert providers), limiting requirements to come to the office, providing childcare and transportation, reducing treatment costs and providing incentives to attend (such as gift certificates).

### **On Language Accessibility**

- Each service user has a qualified interpreter if they so need.
- Language assistance is provided at no cost to service users, in a timely manner and without diminishment of service comprehensiveness or quality.
- All individuals providing language assistance are competent to provide services (requires certification and resource allocation).
- Resources (print, signage, and multimedia) are made available in the languages used by service users and those used in the local community.
- The organization ensures that service users know how to access interpreters at all levels of engagement with the organization: seeking service, initial encounters, substantive services, complaints and research participation.

### **On Service Responsiveness and Effectiveness**

- The organization serves all service users with equitable results. It does not “skim” low needs clients, referring more challenging clients to culturally specific organizations.
- Services provided by the organization have been validated as useful, relevant and likely to promote health and wellbeing by the communities being served.
- The organization uses what in health settings are called “universal precautions” in providing instructions and resources to service users to ensure they understand how to manage their own care and wellbeing. This approach requires providers to avoid assumptions about capacity to understand, and instead asks all clients to reflect their understanding of what is being advised/required.
- Staff adapt conventional practices and interventions to the local cultures and contexts facing clients, ensuring that services are relevant.
- Service roles are extended in ways deemed useful by the user – and likely to include advocacy, education, advising, and information sharing – stretching beyond conventional professional interventions in health and human services.
- Evaluation research is conducted by the organization to ensure the identification and elimination of bias in assessment and intervention practices.
- Service providers understand the service user’s “explanatory model for need” (identifying, for example, the spiritual and cultural beliefs about illness of the community).

### **On Respectful Recognition by Providers**

- Staff understand the communities they serve, in a non-static manner, including their culture, values, norms, history, customs, and particularly the types of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion they face in the USA. This knowledge needs to be applied in a responsive, non-limiting and non-stereotyping manner.
- Culture-bound issues are understood to include constructs of individualism, collectivism, private property and the permission-granting process.
- Community members confirm that staff practice with respectful recognition, meaning that they consistently affirm the dignity of who one is and one’s entitlement to the very best of services. Conditions for the relationship are not limited
- Wherever possible, the organization interacts with service users according to their preferred cultural norms including social greetings, family conventions, dietary preferences, welcoming culture, healing beliefs, and spiritual needs.
- Staff know the resources available in the community that best support service users, including the strengths and weaknesses of these services, and particularly the conditions to access the services.

- The entire organization works to build a climate that promotes acceptance, inclusion and respect.
- Respect is maximized under conditions of solidarity, and advocacy for social justice is a part of the core work of the organization.
- Staff are effective in building purposive relationships with service users. Working cross-culturally typically requires deep listening, reciprocity, cultural respect and commitment to trustworthiness.









**On Staff Awareness**

- Staff know the disparities facing local communities of color, particularly those that limit (1) service users’ ability to improve their health and/or wellbeing and (2) the specific health and wellbeing risks faced by the community.
- Staff engage in continuous learning about their own biases, assumptions and stereotypes that limit their ability to be culturally responsive, and to understand how these biases affect their work with service users.
- Staff review their profession’s cultural norms and standards, updating these to eliminate the racial bias embedded within, and replacing them with knowledge about culturally responsive approaches.
- Staff understand the dynamics of inclusion within US society for immigrants and refugees, and the barriers typically experienced by these communities.
- Staff are held accountable to the performance levels to which they are trained.

**Evidence** – In a culturally responsive organization, evidence of these equity practices must be tangible. Assess your progress on each element, assessing the degree to which such practices are integrated into the organizations’ standard operations, reinforced via policy, and integrated across all departments in the organization (required for a score of 5).

<b>Access</b>	1. The CAB reviews staff reports such as: client satisfaction survey, climate survey, translation survey, demographic survey, disparities analysis, and complaint summary reports (client and staff). The goal of their analysis is to identify prominent access barriers, remedies for disparities, and make organizational recommendations and priorities for action. These reports are presented to the Board/governing body, and decisions are documented in such minutes.	
	2. Staff advocate with other organizations to improve access for the communities and clients they serve. Staff may request advocacy support from the CAB and/or the Board/governing body. Client perspectives on this role is included in the client satisfaction survey.	
	3. Client tracking systems allow for “dashboard” of the services that clients are involved with. Composites can be created to identify priority organizations for improvements.	
	4. Program managers report annually on the service improvements and ongoing challenges that exist in the quality of their services. This report is filed with the Equity Team and available to the Board/governing body on request.	
	5. To ensure that all customers understand the advice they are given, “universal precautions” are implemented, with this approach (and typical details) published online.	
	6. Program staff are evaluated for their effectiveness in implementing “universal precautions” and their redress of service barriers over which they have control, with such assessments included in their performance evaluations.	
<b>Language Accessibility</b>	7. The organization tracks translation supports made available at each point of service, and compliance is based on the percentage of contacts that are supported by professional translators and language provision in clients’ preferred language. This metric is made available by the research and evaluation staff, and submitted to the relevant staff and the Equity Team.	
	8. Policy guiding translation services includes an assurance that no fees are charged to the client for translation, that timely provision exists and that service quality and quantity is preserved.	

	9. Research and evaluation staff report annually on disparities experienced by service users speaking different languages. If disparities are high, they are expected to be a priority in the work of the Equity Team, and show up in both minutes and the annual Improvement Plan.	
	10. The contract/s for translation services include quality assurance measures.	
	11. All print, signage and multimedia resources across the organization reflects the prominent languages used by customers, and is annually reviewed and updated as needed by the Equity Team. Their minutes reflect this effort.	
	12. The adequacy of how clients are made aware of translation services is a section in the Client Satisfaction Survey.	
<b>Service Responsiveness and Effectiveness</b>	13. The types of interventions provided are review by and validated by the Community Advisory Board, in order to determine their appropriateness for the communities of color being served by the organization. Details of this validation process and required/recommended reforms to interventions are filed with the Equity Team, and become part of the Protocol documentation.	
	14. The results of these consultations (and there may be several) are shared across the organization and with other organizations. Local practices are likely to generate useful insights of value to other services and other jurisdictions.	
	15. Clients are asked to share their beliefs of the usefulness and cultural appropriateness of services available to them as part of the client satisfaction survey.	
	16. Non-clinical services (advocacy, organizing, education, information sharing, community development, client advising, case management) are similarly assessed for their cultural responsiveness, with revisions approved by CAB, again with the results broadly shared.	
	17. Intake forms for customers include the risk factors they face for various forms of distress (such as mental health, homelessness, involvement in child welfare) and an “average” client profile is determined, and can be compared with the profiles of other service providers. This data is provided to funding bodies and can be used to assess whether or not the organization is “skimming” the easiest to serve clients of color (as is believed a dominant practice).	
	18. Service providers seek and validate the customer’s “explanatory model for illness/distress” (encompassing spiritual, cultural and social factors) and integrate these perspectives in service provision, partnering with culturally specific service providers when they cannot improve services in a timely way. This ability is assessed in the client satisfaction survey, and in the performance evaluation of staff. Related knowledge is shared across the organization.	
<b>Respectful Recognition by Staff</b>  (see definitions section for further explanation)	19. Staff are knowledgeable about the histories and backgrounds of those who they serve, as confirmed by their clients through the client satisfaction survey and relevant trainings are supported by CAB, and reflected in minutes.	
	20. Negative racial bias and micro-aggressions exist inside organizations. They are particularly damaging when unchallenged and when accountability for such behavior does not exist. They can be directed at clients of color, and also at staff of color. Monitoring their prevalence occurs through an annual client satisfaction survey and in an organizational climate survey (to be done every two years), and also showing up in complaint summaries.	
	21. Training to identify and “unlearn” harmful racial bias needs to be universal across all staff and volunteers and needs to be integrated into the training plan for the organization.	
	22. Respectful recognition of all customers and community members is to written into job descriptions and adherence is expected to be reinforced in performance evaluations and reward/disciplinary systems.	

	23. Staff create and maintain a centralized database of community resources, including client and staff comments on the strengths and weaknesses of these resources, including access barriers and conditions of respect.	
	24. A “Climate Survey” is conducted every two years by the Equity Team to identify patterns of inclusion and exclusion, of the degree of respect afforded to all communities of color, and of trends over various years. Results are shared across the organization and recommended improvements integrated into the Improvement Plan.	
	25. Staff and the organization are valued when they take on advocacy roles that address some of the root causes of client distress. Reporting these advocacy and solidarity roles is captured by a narrative that is submitted annually to the Equity Team, and summarized in the annual report.	
<b>Staff Awareness</b>	26. Staff know the racial disparities faced by communities of color across the lifespan, and particularly (1) those that limit clients’ abilities to improve their health and/or wellbeing, and (2) the specific health and wellbeing risks faced by the community. Staff also need to be aware of the specific disparities within their own organization and the Improvement Plans to address them. Diverse communications strategies (including training) are designed and used to build awareness, and efforts are recorded as part of the tracking system of the organization. Human resource staff are likely charged with this responsibility.	
	27. Job descriptions of all service providers include expectations for “unlearning” biases and expanding skills in cultural responsiveness. Supervision, evaluation and training reinforces the importance of this critical self-learning.	
	28. Human resource staff assess the effectiveness of its training and development programs, stretching beyond participant satisfaction and including improved performance.	
	29. The organization prepares and submits strongly worded letters to relevant institutions of higher education about the shortcomings of professional credentialing processes to prepare their workforce for effectiveness in racial equity and cultural responsiveness.	
	30. Staff are evaluated for their ability to practice and implement policies and procedures for racial equity and cultural responsiveness.	

**Rating:** Tally your score on this standard. Score = \_\_\_\_\_ out of a possible maximum of 150 points.










## Domain #5: Service User Voice and Influence

**Standards** – Here are the standards to which culturally responsive organizations are expected to be held accountable:

- Service users are included in the team that conducts assessment of Protocol standards and development of the Improvement Plan.
- Input from service users is gathered to confirm the relevance of programs and services. The organization responds to shortcomings.
- Service users affirm that the organization is culturally responsive, and high satisfaction exists across communities of color, including disaggregation by language, refugee status and generational time in the USA.
- Service users have access to a complaint process that itself is culturally responsive and effective.
- Service users or former service users are present at all levels of the organization, including staff and governance positions.

**Evidence** – In a culturally responsive organization, evidence of these equity practices must be tangible. You need to assess your progress on each element, assessing the degree to which such practices are integrated into the organizations’ standard operations, reinforced via policy, and integrated across all departments in the organization (required for a score of 5).

1. “Service User Inclusion Policy” allocates membership slots in the governing body of the organization, as well as concrete roles to review the organization’s compliance with these standards, as well as the annual Equity Plan and its achievements.	
2. Policy on conducting a Client Satisfaction Survey requiring that it be conducted at least annually, and including the following elements: attitude of and treatment by service providers, barriers to service access, cultural-responsiveness of services, organizational climate, translation services, organizational welcome, effectiveness of complaint process, staff advocacy roles with other organizations, and quality of services provided.	
3. Client satisfaction survey report is disaggregated by race, refugee status, language and for first and second generation immigrants, and endorsed as valid by CAB, as reflected in their minutes.	
4. Results of the client satisfaction survey are posted online for staff, community, consumers and potential consumers to review.	
5. Policy and procedures for a client complaint process includes protections from retaliation and an annual review process, and has been confirmed by the CAB and the Equity Team as important to resolving inadequate service provision, and reflected as such annually in their minutes.	
6. Information on how to file a complaint exists in paper form and is given to clients as they begin services.	
7. Annual Equity Plan includes a section that reviews the complaints made by consumers and defines actions to address the structural elements of these complaints, as well as summarizing the staff punitive and remedial actions that arise from complaints.	

**Rating:** Tally your score on this standard. Score = \_\_\_\_\_ out of a possible maximum of 35 points.

## Domain #6: Workforce Composition and Quality

**Standards** – Here are the standards to which culturally responsive organizations are expected to be held accountable:

- Workforce of the organization reflects the racial composition of service users or the community (whichever holds a larger portion of people of color).
- The organization retains, promotes and integrates workers who share the racial identity of service users.
- The organization has an internal structure and entity responsible for workforce diversity.
- Staff are supported to build their capacities to develop culturally responsive practice and to advance racial equity through provision of training that advances learning and practice regarding racial equity, cultural responsiveness and corresponding service provision capacity in these areas.
- The organization adheres to the rules within House Bill 2611 requiring professional to adhere to cultural competency continuing education.
- Racial equity and cultural responsiveness goals are incorporated into performance objectives and evaluations of staff, and the organization’s board-endorsed strategic plan.
- Complaint procedures for staff to report race-related complaints exist, have been shown effective, and are clearly accessible to the workforce.
- Former service users can gain employment in the workforce, with clear pathways for these opportunities accessible to them.

**Evidence** – In a culturally responsive organization, evidence of these equity practices must be tangible. You need to assess your progress on each element, assessing the degree to which such practices are integrated into the organizations’ standard operations, reinforced via policy, and integrated across all departments in the organization (required for a score of 5).

1. Lead organizational staff have responsibility for workforce alignment with the community served, with such responsibility integrated into job descriptions, including performance expectations in achieving such alignment.	
2. Human resource staff file a report on the composition of its workforce and its alignment with the racial composition of its service users or the community (whichever is greater), and files this report with the Equity Team who reviews and analyzes the findings, submitting it to the governance body annually. Disaggregation by organizational units and rank is incorporated.	
3. Human resource staff develop a plan to diversify the workforce (based on the workforce composition report), present it to the Equity Team and the CAB, and integrate their feedback into a Diversification Plan that is filed annually with the Board/governance body.	
4. Policy that commits the organization to racial equity and community representation of service users in its workforce, including the hiring of former service users.	
5. Organization-wide training plan to expand abilities of all staff and volunteers to cultural responsiveness that is submitted annually to the Equity Team and the CAB to gather their input before submitting it to the Board/governing body. Minutes of these consultations are attached to the training plan when submitted.	
6. Annual training is conducted to ensure that staff and volunteers understand the specific challenges, policy issues, assets and histories facing communities of color currently served by the organization and those emerging in the region who might not yet be served by the organization. Curriculum on such training content is retained by the Equity Team, HR staff and line supervisors to ensure that practice standards are heightened to reflect new learnings.	
7. Recruitment practices emphasize the goal of hiring staff and volunteers who have a proven track record in culturally responsive practice, as evidenced in all job calls and job descriptions.	
8. A complaint process for staff is written into policy and its ability to address issues of discrimination, micro-aggressions, and patterns of exclusion and inclusion is determined in an annual review of complaints and their resolution, with a synthesis being forwarded to the Equity Team and the CAB for input before being filed with the Board/governing body. Minutes of these consultations are attached to the review.	

**Rating:** Tally your score on this standard. Score = \_\_\_\_\_ out of a possible maximum of 40 points.

## Domain #7: Community Collaboration

**Standards** – Here are the standards to which culturally responsive organizations are expected to be held accountable:

- Functions as a collaborative partner with communities of color, supporting community voice in building cultural responsiveness in assessment, planning, program delivery, and evaluation.
- The organization understands the priorities of local communities being served by the organization, particularly the improvements they would like to see from the organization’s services.
- Human resources works with community advocates to support leadership recruitment and selection, and performance reviews.
- Resources are dedicated to support engagement with communities of color (including payment for their expertise and time).
- The organization has a long-term practice of partnering effectively with organizations and leaders of color.
- The organization actively supports the policy issues of importance to communities of color.
- The organization is well respected by the communities of color that it currently serves or intends to serve.
- Leaders of color, clients and community identified as part of the community to be served recognize the organization as a culturally responsive provider.

**Evidence** – In a culturally responsive organization, evidence of these equity practices must be tangible. You need to assess your progress on each element, assessing the degree to which such practices are integrated into the organizations’ standard operations, reinforced via policy, and integrated across all units in the organization (required for a score of 5).

1. Unit-based annual reports (usually tied to a budget cycle) include a major section on community input into the operations of the unit, identifying how specific partners have been included, and the reach of their contributions, and the units’ responses to this input.	
2. At least every five years, the organization hosts a series of listening sessions with local communities being served or potentially served by the organization, regarding desired improvements to services. This report is authored by the CAB, with recommendations highlighted in their report which is filed with the Board/governing body.	
3. Hiring committees for all Executive positions include community leaders of color to ensure that community voice and priorities is reflected in hiring decisions. Composition of these hiring committees is filed as part of the annual progress report on cultural responsiveness. Such standards are integrated into organizational policy.	
4. Letters of support from communities of color about the nature of their relationship with the organization, including highlights of its actions to improve racial equity and cultural responsiveness are kept on file.	
5. Annual reports include the list of supporters who formally represent communities of color.	
6. All practices are documented in the annual progress report on racial equity and/or the annual report, identifying the concrete ways in which policy priorities of communities of color have been acted upon.	

**Rating:** Tally your score on this standard. Score = \_\_\_\_\_ out of a possible maximum of 30 points.

## Domain #8: Resource Allocation and Contracting Practices

**Standards** – Here are the standards to which culturally responsive organizations are expected to be held accountable:

- The organization prioritizes spending to achieve cultural responsiveness, including the elimination of disparities in service experiences and outcomes. Funding is allocated proportionately to communities that experience the greatest disparities.
- The organization develops funded partnerships with culturally diverse community-based organizations and individuals to help develop, implement and evaluate the organization’s programs and policies to meet the needs of culturally diverse communities.
- The organization has a minority contracting and subcontracting policy, and collects appropriate disaggregated data to assess effectiveness of the policy. Where disparities in funding are identified, targeted outreach occurs and any potential policies (or lack of policies) that are creating barriers for communities of color to access funding are removed (or added).
- The organization ensures that its contractors and subcontractors adhere to the culture and practice of cultural responsiveness. Where contractors deliver services to communities of color, they are held to the standards contained within this Protocol.

**Evidence** – In a culturally responsive organization, evidence of these equity practices must be tangible. You need to assess your progress on each element, assessing the degree to which such practices are integrated into the organizations’ standard operations, reinforced via policy, and integrated across all units in the organization (required for a score of 5).

1. Annual budget report outlines how funding is allocated to reduce specific disparities.	
2. Annual report outlines funded partnerships with community based organizations.	
3. The policy on minority contracting/subcontracting requires annual reporting by dollars and # of contracts awarded disaggregated by race, and includes expectations for annual improvements, and consultation with the CAB on setting priorities and improvement plans, with these minutes attached to the annual report that is filed with the Board/governing body.	
4. All contractors/subcontractors have key elements of cultural responsiveness and racial equity integrated into their contracts, with performance expectations specified in the contract. Language for such contracts is to receive input from the Equity Team and the CAB, with minutes of these consultations being filed with the organization.	
5. The Equity Team creates an assessment process for interpreting the ability of a contractor or subcontractor to serve communities of color, with the process filed with the Board/governing body	
6. Vetting of applicants by the CAB during the award process occurs when various applicants are being considered so that community perspectives are available on the track record that applicants have for racial equity and cultural responsiveness. Notes of these consultations exist in the minutes of the CAB.	
7. Contractors and subcontractors report on their outcomes disaggregated by race and language.	
8. Financial compensation is provided for members of the CAB to support their roles with the organization, and is an amount not less than minimum wage, with this being a line item in the organization’s annual budget.	

**Rating:** Tally your score on this standard. Score = \_\_\_\_\_ out of a possible maximum of 40 points.

## Domain #9: Data, Metrics and Quality Improvement

**Standards** – Here are the standards to which culturally responsive organizations are expected to be held accountable:

### **Evaluation Research**

- Annually, the organization will assess its compliance with these standards and progress made on its Improvement Plan.
- Required data collection and analysis is integrated within a staff portfolio and data collection systems established to support review of progress on standards.
- Research practices themselves are culturally responsive, with the CAB (or equivalent) reviewing the data collection tools, methods of analysis, and representation of the results.
- The portion of service users who need and who receive interpreters is tracked and reported.
- Racial disparities are assessed across the organization at each point of service and change in service, and updated annually.
- Data are collected on the race, ethnicity, and linguistic makeup of all Boards, Administration, and Staff, with policies guiding its frequency and composition.
- The effectiveness of training in creating desired outcomes is assessed.
- Tools to assist staff to assess their own practice competencies and biases are made available. This Protocol may serve as a starting basis.
- Disparities are available at the level of individual practitioners as part of a performance review process when outcomes are unacceptably low, and become part of an individual improvement plan.

### **Service User Identification**

- The race and origin of service users is collected via local best practices, drawing from local expertise. In 2013, this includes self-definition of race (or origin), refugee status, preferred language of communication, and generational time in the USA.
- The rules of House Bill 2134 (Uniform Standards for Race, Ethnicity and Language Data) are adhered to, including the specific racial identifiers to be used, and updated as the rules are modified.
- Service user satisfaction data is collected, assessed and publicly reported routinely. All domains identified in the Protocol are assessed, including satisfaction with the organization's policy and practice of racial equity.
- The languages spoken by service users and potential service users is collected and updated annually.
- The use of untrained individuals or minors as interpreters is tracked (and avoided).

### **Continual Quality Improvement**

- An Equity Team of staff and community representatives leads the assessment and improvement process, staying engaged throughout the year to strengthen progress across the organization. This group receives support, training and recognition for their role in advancing cultural responsiveness in the organization.
- At least one staff person is identified to support the quality improvement process and resource the Equity Team.
- Changing demographic information is tracked, along with emerging community needs and priorities.
- Conduct regular assessments of the needs and assets of service users and potential service users so as to support the advancement of the health and wellbeing of local communities of color.
- The completion of this Protocol Assessment is comprehensive, and illustrates transparency, rigorous self-reflection, and accuracy.
- Recognizing that this Protocol will need updating every 3-5 years, the organization will provide advice to the convening body (anticipated to be the Coalition of Communities of Color) as to how improvements can be made, and will adopt the new Protocol when available.

**Evidence** – In a culturally responsive organization, evidence of these equity practices must be tangible. You need to assess your progress on each element, assessing the degree to which such practices are integrated into the organizations' standard operations, reinforced via policy, and integrated across all units in the organization (required for a score of 5).

<b>Evaluation Research</b>	1. The results of compliance with these standards (the results of having conducted this Protocol Assessment) as well as the coming year’s Improvement Plan, and annual updates, is filed with the Board/governing body and reflected in the minutes.	
	2. Responsibility for data collection and analysis of the workforce and client outcomes, of completion of this Protocol assessment, of service outcomes, of translation services, of demographic trends, and of required data systems (and needed reforms) are assigned to specific staff, and reflected in their job descriptions.	
	3. Data collection and analysis is done annually to document progress and accountability on Protocol standards, reviewed and endorsed by the Equity Team and the CAB (with minutes attached to the plan), with the final plan submitted to the Board/governing body and reflected in their minutes. A narrative of how data systems and evaluation practices achieve these standards is part of the plan.	
	4. Workforce and volunteer profiles are prepared and submitted to the Equity Team (workforce) and CAB (volunteers) for review and integration into their own planning documents. Meeting minutes reflect these reviews.	
	5. Analysis of services provided, disaggregated by race and language of customers, at all major points of service, and particularly for outcomes achieved, is consolidated in an evaluation report, to be filed with the Equity Team, the CAB and the Board/governing body for their review and integration into future planning. The evaluation report and minutes reflecting filing with the three bodies reflects compliance.	
	6. Policy defines the research practices (documentation and analysis) that support racial equity and cultural responsiveness and specifies those responsible.	
<b>Service User Identification and Experiences</b>	7. A client data collection form includes race and origin of service users, as well as refugee status, indigenous status, preferred language of community, and generational time in the USA. Variations from the “Research Protocol” standards recommended by the Coalition of Communities of Color are explained with a rationale.	
	8. Policy reflects the details to be included in the data collection form, and the specific form being used, and is endorsed by the Equity Team and the CAB.	
	9. Analysis of languages spoken, alignment with languages provided, and quality of interpreters provided is conducted annually and submitted to the Equity Team and CAB for review, and filed with the Board/governing body annually. Recommendations for improvement are part of the final submission to the Board.	
<b>Quality Improvement</b>	10. The Equity Team’s and the Community Advisory Board’s composition, goals, roles and accountability practices are written into policy.	
	11. The Equity Team and CAB are allocated budgets to fulfil their roles, and clearly apparent as operational budget lines.	
	12. The Equity Team and CAB is resourced by at least one staff person (or portion of an FTE depending on the size of the organization) also responsible for liaising with other units in the organization, and who ideally reports to the Executive Director (and <i>not</i> to Human Resources) and routinely attends Board/governance meetings, and reflected in the job description. Portfolio responsibility for cultural responsiveness in specific organizational units still rests with the managers responsible for these units.	
	13. Demographic changes are tracked, and forecasts for emerging service needs are identified by the evaluation/research staff (ideally) and shared with the CAB and Equity Team. Minutes of such presentations are available.	
	14. Management and the Board/governance body is responsible for cultural responsiveness and racial equity. Board minutes reflect efforts to strategize improvements, and this role is written into policy. The Equity Team is responsible for tracking the achievements and barriers to racial equity and cultural responsiveness, and being a resource to management and the Board/governance body.	
	15. The Executive Director compiles relevant materials to document efforts to improve responsiveness, with materials available to funders and to the public as requested.	
	16. The Equity Team will provide input to the external convening body responsible for improving this “Protocol for the Provision of Culturally responsive Services” when so invited, and thus maintains a working document for such advice.	

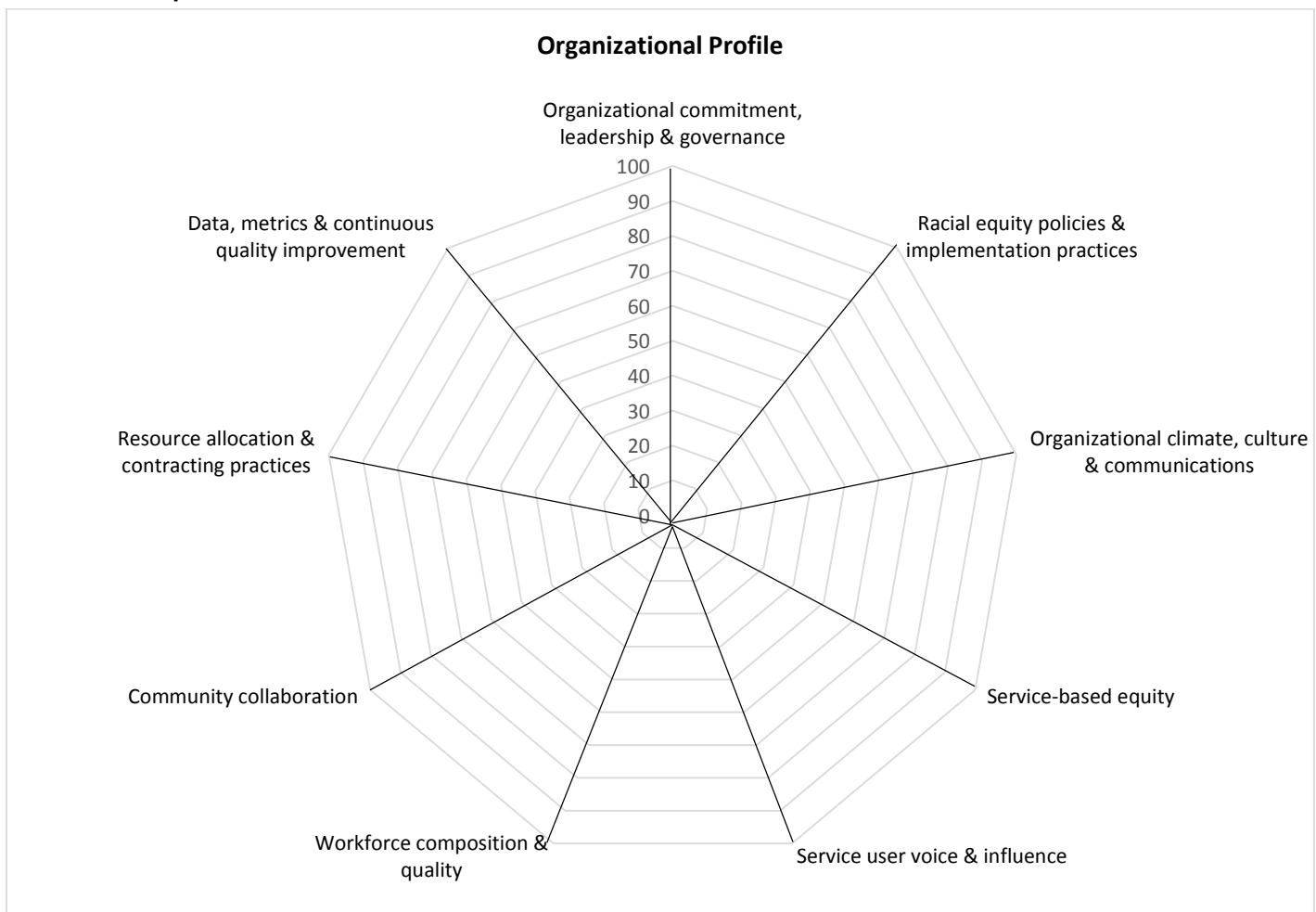
**Rating:** Tally your score on this standard. Score = \_\_\_\_\_ out of a possible maximum of 80 points.

## Scoring Summary & Locating your Mainstream Organization

In the chart below, enter your raw scores in each domain. Then take out your calculator and convert each number to a percentage value. Each figure will need to be converted according to the instructions in the brackets.

Domain #1: Commitment, governance and leadership	_____	out of 60.	Equals _____%	(divide by 0.6)
Domain #2: Racial Equity Policies and Implementation Practices	_____	out of 60.	Equals _____%	(divide by 0.6)
Domain #3: Organizational Climate, Culture and Communications	_____	out of 50.	Equals _____%	(divide by 0.5)
Domain #4: Service Based Equity	_____	out of 150.	Equals _____%	(divide by 1.5)
Domain #5: Service User Voice and Influence	_____	out of 35.	Equals _____%	(divide by 0.35)
Domain #6: Workforce Composition and Quality	_____	out of 40.	Equals _____%	(divide by 0.3)
Domain #7: Community Collaboration	_____	out of 30.	Equals _____%	(divide by 0.3)
Domain #8: Resource Allocation and Contracting Practices	_____	out of 40.	Equals _____%	(divide by 0.4)
Domain #9: Data, Metrics and Quality Improvement	_____	out of 80.	Equals _____%	(divide by 0.8)

Now plot the percentage figures in the chart below, and link each point on the chart together. This is your “footprint” for cultural responsiveness.



You’ve done it! You have completed your assessment of your organization’s cultural responsiveness. That was a lot of details, gathered by your team. We hope that despite the heavy lifting you needed to do to complete the tool, you have learned a lot and opened up important conversations and wonderings about how to improve your organization. Turn to the next page to see the concrete advice we have for moving forward.

## Recommended Next Steps

Here are suggested avenues for building your Improvement Plan. Review the image above and identify the areas of weakest performance.

1. Look over your footprint chart and identify the weakest three domains. Then go back to your data for the domain and identify three actions you could undertake that would improve your results.
  - a. Weakest Domain: \_\_\_\_\_
    - i. \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
    - iii. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Next Weakest Domain: \_\_\_\_\_
    - i. \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
    - iii. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Third Weakest Domain: \_\_\_\_\_
    - i. \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
    - iii. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Now review your selections. You are going to rate them according to the following criteria:
  - a. Which are your “low hanging fruit” meaning that they are relatively easy to accomplish?
  - b. Which are the most important, meaning that they hold the potential to reduce racial disparities the most significantly?
  - c. Which would achieve the greatest buy-in from your staff, meaning that you could most easily generate enthusiasm and the resistance would be lowest?
  - d. Which would impress your stakeholders (including clients, community leaders, funders or potential funders), meaning that this action signals that you are serious about becoming a culturally responsive organization?
  - e. Which are relatively low cost to implement, meaning that you can do this without compromising the organization’s existing commitments?
  - f. Which could generate important gains within a year, meaning that you could have gains by the time you update the Protocol next year?

Use the worksheet on the next page to help track this review.



Enter your domains and action options, and then rate each action on the five factors described above. On each factor, give the action a score according to the following scale:

- 1 = No chance that getting involved in this action will meet this goal (of, for example, it being easy to implement)
- 2 = Weak prognosis
- 3 = Fair prognosis
- 4 = Good prognosis
- 5 = High prognosis for meeting this goal

Domain	Action	Low hanging fruit?	High impact?	Staff buy-in?	Impress stakeholders?	Low cost?	One-year returns?	TOTAL SCORE
Domain:	1.							
	2.							
	3.							
Domain:	1.							
	2.							
	3.							
Domain:	1.							
	2.							
	3.							

You now have reviewed your optional actions through lenses that are frequently chosen to help organizations set strategic priorities. On the basis of these scores, which actions are most appealing to you?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Now look forward to the organizational chart on Page 25. Look at the degree to which your organization aligns with this chart. Are there significant omissions in your organization’s structure to carry forward the work embedded in this Protocol? If you need to add structural supports for your work on culturally responsive services, please identify them here. What additional structures do you need to maintain cohesive work on inequities?

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4. Now is the time to determine your priorities for the coming year, consolidated into an Improvement Plan. Here is a suggested framework for your report.
- a. Here are areas where we are already doing well and we want to affirm...
  - b. Here are the priorities we have chosen for our organization to implement in the coming year...
  - c. Here is why we have selected these...
  - d. Here are the organization’s structural improvements we see as important for our ongoing work on becoming culturally responsive, and here is what we will do to implement these changes...
  - e. Here are ways in which just completing this Protocol have been important to the organization...
  - f. We encountered some difficulties in using this Protocol which are important to pass along to the Coalition of Communities of Color when they do a review of the Protocol in 3-5 years from now...

## Diagnosis of Location on Continuum

Returning to our promise to assist organizations to identify their location on the continuum, we invite participating organizations to translate their scores from the “scoring summary” into the grid below. Place a checkmark in the space where you have scored in each domain. Given that this is a new approach to providing a diagnosis to one’s organization, we are not certain as yet whether or not our guidelines are appropriate. You may override the guideline to portray your organization as you see as appropriate.

Type of Organization	Mono-Cultural	Diversity-Oriented		Culturally Responsive			
Domain	Status Quo	Satisfied	Considering	Inquiring	Aspiring	Acquiring	Achieving
Guidelines	Not Done	Not Done	Not Done	Not Done	> 0% & < 20%	≥ 20% & ≤ 85%	> 85%
1. Commitment, governance & leadership							
2. Racial Equity Policies & Implementation Practices							
3. Organizational Climate, Culture & Communications							
4. Service Based Equity							
5. Service User Voice & Influence							
6. Workforce Composition & Quality							
7. Community Collaboration							
8. Resource Allocation and Contracting Practices							
9. Data, Metrics and Quality Improvement							

Interpreting the profile creates a varied set of diagnoses. Here is our evocative position: our capacity for equity is only as good as our weakest position, and that any weak performance area needs to be tended before affirming the strengths that we have. While this might be a discouraging position, it is worthy of contemplating.

We ask for organization who have completed the tool to provide us with feedback on utility of this approach and whether such diagnosis is helpful to your work. Feedback can be provided through the links at the Coalition of Communities of Color’s website.

## Documentation to Confirm Ratings

This list consolidates the documentation identified in the tool and it can be used as a checklist for tracking progress. It can also be used as the organization’s way to respond to the question, “where is the racial equity in your organization?” By maintaining a list of the elements the organization has incorporated, one would be able to point to these elements and say, “here it is.”

Purpose	Document	Completed?	Updated Annually?
<b>Intention and commitment documentation</b>	Narrative of how Protocol is committed to at highest organizational levels		Yes
	Organization’s mission statement		No
	Union commitment (if applicable)		No
	Racial Equity Policy		No
	Protocol adherence policy		No
	Protocol Assessment, including relevant documentation		Yes
<b>Content that shows plans for moving forward</b>	Improvement Plan – including goals, responsibilities, timelines, accountability and reporting practices		Yes
	Written plan to diversify your workforce (called Diversification Plan)		Yes
	Document that maps responsibilities for standards and also how adherence and performance will be tracked		No
	Creation of CAB and its roles (also in policy section)		No
	Written Racial Equity Plan (required in Organizational Assessment Tool)		No
	Annual report includes report on larger policy and cultural context, systems change advocacy involvement, funded partnerships with CBOs, and budget support for disparity reduction		Yes
	Staff training plan – to adhere to Standards, and to evaluate effectiveness		Yes
	Contracts with interpreters and with contracts and subcontracts – requiring them to adhere to racial equity and relevant elements of Protocol		Yes
	Reference letters from culturally specific organizations to assert “skimming” is not occurring		Kept updated
	Centralized data base of appropriate referral sources		Kept updated
	Narrative of social justice and racial equity involvement		Yes
	Sample of performance evaluations to illustrate accountability and focus on racial equity and cultural responsiveness		Kept updated
<b>Standardized forms</b>	Customer data collection form		No
	Service tracking sheet		No
	Client (or stakeholder) Satisfaction Survey (and translated into relevant languages)		No
	Climate Survey		No
	Client Risk Assessment		Ongoing
<b>Organizational policies</b>	Adherence to Protocol		No
	Protocol implementation		No
	Roles and responsibilities of governance body and staff, identifying portfolio responsibilities		No
	Community Advisory Board – roles (including in the Protocol and Improvement Plans), membership, reporting lines		No
	Equity Team – roles [double check this... carry forward from other tool]		No
	Budget policy on how you are “budgeting for equity”		No
	Committee minute taking on decisions, documentation review, membership and attendance, and retention of minutes in organizational files		No
	Client/Customer satisfaction survey and analysis		No
	Customer complaint policy and procedure		No
	<b>Human Resources Policies</b>		No

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Job descriptions – equity responsibilities, training, self-evaluation, individual learning plans</li> <li>2. Job descriptions for volunteers and board members – includes knowing local resources, policy issues, partnership opportunities, participation in training</li> <li>3. Job descriptions for managers – report on improvements to services</li> <li>4. Responsibility for the elimination of service disparities</li> </ol> <p><b>Performance review process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes self-appraisal of skills and self-improvement plan</li> <li>• Includes assurance of practicing to level at which one is trained</li> <li>• May include individual level of disparities generated by practitioner</li> <li>▪ Reward system for progress</li> </ul>		
	Methods to confirm cultural relevance of services provided (customized for the organization’s services)		Updated
	Service user involvement on governance bodies, CAB, and as staff		No
	Equity lens used to assist in decision making		No
	Minority contracting and subcontracting		No
	Adherence with HB 2134 (uniform data reporting) and HB 2611 (cultural competency training)		No
	Data collection and analysis policy to illustrate adherence to standards		No
	Translation and interpretation policies		No
	Review and updating process every 3-5 years		No
<b>Research and reporting documentation</b>	Disparities reports on all points in services, and disaggregated by language and additional specified variables, including level of need		Yes
	Narrative of culturally responsive data practices		Yes
	Client tracking system – services received, location of services, referrals made, additional resources secured, interpreters provided at each point of service		Yes
	Report on preferred language use and actual languages used, and percent by qualified interpreters		Yes
	Report on racial equity in contracting and subcontracting		Yes
	Summary of client/customer satisfaction survey, disaggregated by community being served (origin, language)		Yes
	Workforce and Board (possibly also volunteer) composition disaggregated by race and language		Yes
	Calculation of disparity in staff-to-community served		Yes
	Collecting information from those who don’t use services, or who leave early		Yes
	Scan of signage and other relevant literatures and communications for inclusion, respect and also for language and interpretation, and information on complaint procedure		Yes
	Effectiveness of training programs in building awareness and services		Yes
	Synthesis of complaints and resolution		Yes
	Progress towards goals set within Improvement Plan		Yes
	Reporting on quality of interpreter services		Yes
	Climate survey report		Every 2 years
Report that consolidates contracts’ and subcontracts’ adherence to Protocol		Yes	
<b>Other</b>	Please identify additional materials you have found useful to your work:		

# Resources

## Interview Questions for Funding Bodies

Granting bodies are encouraged to integrate high expectations for grantees to deliver racial equity and cultural responsiveness in their services. While we encourage funders to consider requiring their grantees to adopt the Protocol and to share with them their Protocol assessment and Improvement Plan, we anticipate some funders will be reluctant to press for such a magnitude of commitment. To adjust to these conditions, we encourage funders to implement the following “key expectations” for assessing the organization’s ability to serve communities of color.

Accordingly, we have reviewed the full content of the Protocol and asserted the following elements reflect the intersection of what is most important, overlapped with what is reasonable to expect from organizations without additional resources, and that which is most evident in the literature. Remember this is not complete for assuring the path towards becoming a culturally responsive organization or an evidence-based culturally specific organization, but believe these to be key features for such progress.

Funders can use this guide in two ways:

1. Take the “evidence base” content and embed it in your RFP process, asking for the potential grantee (or contractor/subcontractor) to provide this evidence, and the RFP process will review the evidence assessing the degree to which the standards are reflected in the submission.
2. During a site visit or a “due diligence” visit, ask the questions of the applicant.

In both cases, funders will want to recommend that that applicants review this Protocol to become familiar with why these questions are being asked and the fuller picture of how these key elements fit into a larger organizational improvement process.

Grant reviewers should receive sufficient information from submitted proposals and other attached documentation in order for the grantor to be able to rate the grantee on these elements. Look for the adequacy of narratives, the specifics of initiatives cited, and the degree to which evidence exists to confirm the organization’s ability to serve clients and communities of color.

Turn the page to see the grid which contains the “evidence base” as well as interview questions. These are cross-referenced with the relevant standards and domains, showing both where to turn for more information and specifics, as well as providing indicators of how high a bar is being set for what this evidence might show. In essence, the standards can help the funder operationalize what it might be looking for in answers to the questions and in the evidence provided.

Evidence Base to be provided by applicant	Interview Questions to be asked of applicants	Standards reflected by the evidence	Domains
1. Narrative of how racial equity and cultural responsiveness is committed to at governance and top leadership levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the explicit racial equity commitments of the organization and how are these demonstrated?</li> <li>• How does the organization ensure that the leadership and governance processes uphold to racial equity?</li> <li>• Is the organization well-regarded as an authentic contributor to racial equity? How do you know this?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational governance and leadership promotes racial equity and cultural responsiveness through policy, practice, and resource allocation.</li> </ul>	Organizational commitment, leadership and governance
2. Racial equity policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the organization have a racial equity policy and does it include the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vision of racial equity?</li> <li>- Justification for the need for the policy?</li> <li>- The importance of leading with race?</li> <li>- Recognition of the role of partnerships?</li> <li>- The importance of the role of resource allocation?</li> <li>- Concrete next steps?</li> <li>- Accountability mechanisms?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Racial equity policy is endorsed by the governing body.</li> <li>• The policy clearly identifies the rationale for cultural responsiveness and for racial equity, allowing all staff and volunteers to understand the benefits to service users, the community, the organization, and to wider society that can emerge.</li> <li>• The governing body holds responsibility for the organization’s improvements in cultural responsiveness and racial equity</li> </ul>	Racial Equity Policies and Implementation Practice
3. Narrative of social justice and racial equity involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are advocacy efforts part of the organization’s work? If so, what advocacy efforts are they engaged in? Does this reflect the priorities of communities of color?</li> <li>• How does the organization characterize its solidarity with the diverse community it serves and the struggles these communities may face on a regular basis? Does the community value the roles taken on and how is this known?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect is maximized under conditions of solidarity, meaning that advocacy for social justice is a part of the core work of the organization.</li> </ul>	Service Based Equity and Relevance
4. Customer data collection form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you know the racial and ethnic identity of those you serve?</li> <li>• Are you able to accurately disaggregate your client base to identify local communities of color?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The race and origin of service users is collected via local best practices, drawing from local expertise. In 2013, this includes self-definition of race (or origin), refugee status, preferred language of communication, and generational time in the USA.</li> <li>• The rules of House Bill 2134 (Uniform Standards for Race, Ethnicity and Language Data) are adhered to, including the specific racial identifiers to be used, and updated as the rules are modified.</li> </ul>	Data Metrics and Continuous Quality Improvement
5. Client satisfaction survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you gather feedback from clients about your organization’s delivery of culturally responsive services?</li> <li>• How do you know that all the communities you serve equivalently value the organization’s services?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service users are valued as the center of the organization. The organization consistently expresses appreciation for service users, and eliminates disparaging discourses, including those that expect service users to be grateful for the organization and its staff.</li> <li>• The organization views the knowledge and experiences of service users as essential to the wellbeing of the organization. Their perceptions of services, culture, respect and quality are given primacy in the assessment of the organization’s cultural responsiveness.</li> <li>• Service barriers are routinely identified and remedied</li> <li>• Staff advocate effectively with other service providers to ensure access is available to all who need the service.</li> <li>• Flexibility in service provision occurs to reduce barriers</li> <li>• The organization ensures that service users know how to access interpreters at all levels of engagement with the organization:</li> </ul>	Organizational Climate, Culture and Communications  AND  Service Based Equity and Relevance  AND

Evidence Base to be provided by applicant	Interview Questions to be asked of applicants	Standards reflected by the evidence	Domains
		<p>seeking service, initial encounters, substantive services, complaints and research participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff adapt “universal interventions” to ensure they are relevant for the community and individuals being served.</li> <li>• Service roles are extended in ways deemed useful by the user – and likely to include advocacy, education, advising, and information sharing – stretching beyond conventional professional interventions in health and human services.</li> <li>• Service providers understand the service user’s “explanatory model for illness” (identifying the spiritual and cultural beliefs about illness of the community).</li> <li>• Staff understand the communities they serve, in a non-static manner, including their culture, values, norms, history, customs, and particularly the types of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion they face in the USA. This knowledge needs to be applied in a responsive non-limiting and non-stereotyping manner.</li> <li>• Culture-bound issues are understood to include constructs of individualism, collectivism, private property and the permission-granting process.</li> <li>• Community members confirm that staff practice with respectful recognition.</li> <li>• Staff know the resources available in the community that best support service users, including the strengths and weaknesses of these services, and particularly the conditions to access the services.</li> <li>• Staff understand the dynamics of inclusion within US society for immigrants and refugees, and the barriers typically experienced by these communities.</li> <li>• Input from service users is gathered to confirm the relevance of programs and services. The organization responds to shortcomings.</li> <li>• Service users affirm that the organization is culturally responsive, and high satisfaction exists across communities of color, including disaggregation by language, refugee status and generational time in the USA.</li> <li>• Service user satisfaction data is collected, assessed and publicly reported routinely. All domains identified in the Protocol are assessed, including satisfaction with the organization’s policy and practice of racial equity.</li> </ul>	<p>Service User Voice and Influence</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Data, Metrics and Continuous Quality Improvement</p>



Evidence Base to be provided by applicant	Interview Questions to be asked of applicants	Standards reflected by the evidence	Domains
6. Narrative and/or policy of methods used to confirm cultural responsiveness of services provided (customized for the organization’s services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the organization demonstrate the cultural relevance and responsiveness in its services?</li> <li>• What organizational self-assessments has the organization completed in the last 5 years?</li> <li>• What improvements emerged from these?</li> <li>• How is racial equity embedded in research and evaluation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services provided by the organization have been validated as useful, relevant and likely to promote health and wellbeing by the communities being served.</li> <li>• The organization serves all service users with equitable results.</li> </ul>	Service Based Equity and Relevance
7. Narrative of how the budget reflects priorities for improvements in cultural responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the organization’s budget support your efforts to deliver stronger cultural responsiveness?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources are dedicated to building the organization’s cultural responsiveness across all domains to ensure progress on all standards.</li> </ul>	Organizational commitment, governance and leadership
8. Narrative with supplemental human resources policies and job descriptions that details how an effective workforce is recruited, retained, monitored, supported, trained and held accountable for racial equity and cultural responsiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the organization ensure that staff are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Committed to cultural responsiveness?</li> <li>- Have the skills to practice to these standards?</li> <li>- Demonstrate this capacity throughout their work tasks and responsibilities?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What recruitment processes are used to ensure racial diversity of the board and community membership from the communities served?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead staff on each standard must have these responsibilities added to their job description, and ensure that appropriate elements are integrated into the job descriptions of all relevant staff, and progress on these responsibilities is reviewed as part of the performance review procedures.</li> <li>• Staff are effective in building purposive relationships with service users. Working cross-culturally typically requires deep listening, reciprocity, cultural respect and commitment to trustworthiness.</li> <li>• Staff know the disparities facing local communities of color, particularly those that limit (1) service users’ ability to improve their health and/or wellbeing and (2) the specific health and wellbeing risks faced by the community.</li> <li>• Staff are supported to build their capacities to develop culturally responsive practice and to advance racial equity through provision of training that advances learning and practice regarding racial equity, cultural responsiveness and corresponding service provision capacity in these areas.</li> <li>• Racial equity and cultural responsiveness goals are incorporated into performance objectives and evaluations of staff, and the organization’s board-endorsed strategic plan</li> </ul>	Service Based Equity and Relevance  AND  Workforce Composition and Quality
9. Share the equity lens or alternative used to support racially equitable and culturally-responsive decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you ensure that your decisions both support your movement towards being culturally responsive and that they do not block such progress?</li> <li>• Are there tools that you use, such as an equity lens, to assist in your decision making?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions made on behalf of the organization reflect a commitment to racial equity and cultural responsiveness (and the related specific improvement goals). Use of an “equity lens” may help guide the decision making process.</li> </ul>	Organizational commitment, governance and leadership
10. Translation and interpretation policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What policy does the organization have to ensure that every service user has access to a qualified interpreter?</li> <li>• How do you monitor compliance with this policy?</li> <li>• What is your success rate?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each service user has a qualified interpreter if they so need.</li> <li>• Ensure competence of individuals providing language assistance (requires certification and resource allocation).</li> <li>• The organization ensures that service users know how to access interpreters at all levels of engagement with the organization: seeking service, initial encounters, substantive services, complaints and research participation.</li> </ul>	Service-Based Equity and Relevance (elements of “access” and of “language accessibility”)

Evidence Base to be provided by applicant	Interview Questions to be asked of applicants	Standards reflected by the evidence	Domains
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The portion of service users who need and who receive interpreters is tracked and reported.</li> <li>The use of untrained individuals or minors as interpreters is tracked (and avoided).</li> </ul>	
11. Disparities reports on all points in services, and disaggregated by race, refugee status, language and additional specified variables, including level of risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well are communities of color served?</li> <li>How is this confirmed?</li> <li>What documentation does the organization have that identifies disparities across all points of service?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Racial disparities are assessed across the organization at each point of service and change in service, and updated at least every two years.</li> <li>The organization serves all service users with equitable results. It does not “skim” low needs clients, referring more challenging clients to culturally specific organizations</li> </ul>	Data Metrics and Continuous Quality Improvement
12. Workforce and Board composition disaggregated by race and language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the racial, ethnic and linguistic composition of the staff, leadership, and Board?</li> <li>How is racial equity embedded in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hiring and training?</li> <li>Staff orientation and performance evaluations (clear job descriptions, onboarding process, probationary reviews, work plans, annual evaluations, corrective actions, etc.)?</li> <li>Professional development and promotional opportunities?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data are collected on the race, ethnicity, and linguistic makeup of all Boards, Administration, and Staff.</li> <li>Workforce of the organization reflects the racial composition of service users or the community (whichever holds a larger portion of people of color).</li> <li>The organization retains, promotes and integrates workers who share the racial identity of service users.</li> <li>The organization has an internal structure and entity responsible for workforce diversity.</li> </ul>	Data Metrics and Continuous Quality Improvement
13. Calculation of disparity in staff-to-community served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well do your staff reflect the communities or color served or the demographics of the community in which the organization is based (whichever is bigger)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Racial disparities are assessed across the organization at each point of service and change in service, and updated at least every two years.</li> </ul>	
14. Organizational chart that shows responsibilities for racial equity and cultural responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the organization have structures and capacities to support its path to becoming a culturally responsive organization?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizational governance and leadership promotes racial equity and cultural responsiveness through policy, practice, and resource allocation.</li> </ul>	Organizational commitment, governance and leadership

## Racial Equity Policy

This document provides an overview of suggested components for a successful racial equity policy. The components were developed after reviewing a set of similar policies, discerning the elements that are important for setting directions, expressing need, identifying roles and establishing accountability. In this policy guide, we provide the substantive elements, the key features of each element, and samples from three organizations.

### Substance Recommendations

1. Provide a vision of racial equity
  2. Justify the need for the policy
  3. Lead with race
  4. Recognize the role of partnerships
  5. Recognize the role of resource allocation
  6. Offer concrete next steps and accountability mechanisms
  7. Provide definitions
  8. Add ratification date
- 1. PROVIDE A VISION OF RACIAL EQUITY.** Begin the Policy with a positive strengths-based vision of what your organization is trying to achieve and what successful advancement of racial equity will mean. Include a connectivity to the community or communities targeted by your organization. Ensure a specific focus on racial equity while highlighting that improved outcomes for communities of color improves outcomes for all.

### Examples

**Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB):** *The OEIB has a vision of educational equity and excellence for each and every child and learner in Oregon. We must ensure that sufficient resource is available to guarantee their success and we understand that the success of every child and learner in Oregon is directly tied to the prosperity of all Oregonians. The attainment of a quality education strengthens all Oregon communities and promotes prosperity, to the benefit of us all. It is through educational equity that Oregon will continue to be a wonderful place to live, and make progress towards become a place of economic, technologic and cultural innovation.*

**Portland Public Schools (PPS):** *The Board of Education for Portland Public Schools is committed to the success of every student in each of our schools. The mission of Portland Public Schools is that by the end of elementary, middle, and high school, every student by name will meet or exceed academic standards and will be fully prepared to make productive life decisions. We believe that every student has the potential to achieve, and it is the responsibility of our school district to give each student the opportunity and support to meet his or her highest potential.*

**City of Portland:** *The Portland Plan declares a vision for Portland where: all Portlanders have access to a high-quality education, living wage jobs, safe neighborhoods, a healthy natural environmental, efficient public transit, parks and green spaces, decent housing and healthy food; the benefits of growth and change are equitably shared across our communities, and no one community is overly burdened by our region's growth; all Portlanders and communities fully participate in and influence public decision-making; and Portland is a place where your future is not limited by your race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, income, where you were born or where you live.*

- 2. JUSTIFY THE NEED FOR THE POLICY.** Outline current and/or historical racial, ethnic and linguistic inequities related to the populations that your organization serves or engages. List specific communities experiencing inequities. Utilize culturally-appropriate data and research and cite the research. Use the most local and specific data available to you. Ensure that discussion of inequities is not solely broad-based, but includes

specific inequities in the organization or entity adopting the policy. Connect inequities with organization and system structures, including those identified in the Assessment Tool developed by the collaborative.

### **Examples**

**OEIB:** *Oregon faces two growing opportunity gaps that threaten our economic competitiveness and our capacity to innovate. The first is the persistent achievement gap between our growing populations of communities of color, immigrants, migrants and low income rural students with our more affluent white students. While students of color make up over 30% of our state – and are growing at an inspiring rate – our achievement gap has continued to persist. As our diversity grows and our ability to meet the needs of these students remains stagnant or declines – we limit the opportunity of everyone in Oregon. The persistent education disparities have cost Oregon billions of dollars in lost economic output and these losses are compounded every year we choose not to properly address these inequalities.*

*The second achievement gap is one of growing disparity between Oregon and the rest of the United States. Our achievement in state benchmarks has remained stagnant and in some communities of color has declined while other states have begun to, or have already significantly surpassed our statewide rankings. If this trend continues, it will translate into economic decline and a loss of competitive and creative capacity for our state. We believe that one of our most critical responsibilities going forward is to implement a set of concrete criteria and policies in order to reverse this trend and deliver the best educational continuum and educational outcomes to Oregon’s children.*

**PPS:** *Portland Public Schools’ historic, persistent achievement gap between White students and students of color is unacceptable. While efforts have been made to address the inequities between White students and students of color, these efforts have been largely unsuccessful. Closing this achievement gap while raising achievement for all students is the top priority of the Board of Education, the Superintendent and all district staff. Race must cease to be a predictor of student achievement and success.*

*In PPS, for every year we have data, White students have clearly outperformed Black, Hispanic and Native American students on state assessments in every subject at every grade level. White students consistently graduate at higher percentages than students of color, while students of color are disciplined far more frequently than White students. These disparities are unacceptable and are directly at odds with our belief that all students can achieve.*

*The responsibility for the disparities among our young people rests with adults, not the children. We are aware that student achievement data from school districts across the country reveal similar patterns, and that complex societal and historical factors contribute to the inequities our students face. Nonetheless, rather than perpetuating disparities, PPS must address and overcome this inequity and institutional racism, providing all students with the support and opportunity to succeed.*

**City of Portland:** *Portland has become more diverse. Communities of color and immigrant and refugee communities are growing. Today, approximately 1-in-2 students in Portland’s public schools are students of color. Data presented by the Urban League of Portland’s State of Black Oregon and the Coalition of Communities of Color’s Communities of Color in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile, shows that racial and ethnic disparities are pervasive and worsening over time. In poverty, employment, and education measures, Portland’s communities of color have outcomes between 15% and 20% worse than white communities.*

- 3. LEAD WITH RACE.** The collaborative committed to develop *racial* equity policies, not catch-all equity policies. Addressing issues of race brings significant benefits to other communities facing inequities. Inequities that exist within oppressed communities are most severe when people of color hold multiple oppressed identities. We want to support initiatives that address all forms of oppression, while at the same recognizing that one-

size-fits-all equity initiatives end up inadequately addressing any community. Maintaining an explicit focus on race is essential to advancing equity across our community. Note that improving outcomes for people of color will improve outcomes for everyone in our community.

### **Examples**

**OEIB:** *The primary focus of the equity lens is on race and ethnicity. While there continues to be a deep commitment to many other areas of the opportunity gap, we know that a focus on race by everyone connected to the educational milieu allows direct improvements in the other areas. We also know that race and ethnicity continue to compound disparity. We are committed to explicitly identifying disparities in education outcomes for the purpose of targeting areas for action, intervention and investment.*

**PPS:** *Recognizing that there are other student groups that have not reached their achievement potential, this policy focuses on the most historically persistent achievement gap, which is that between White students and students of color.*

**City of Portland:** *The City recognizes the need to eliminate disparities based on race, ethnicity, national origin, English language proficiency, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, source of income, geographic location of residence, familial status, disability, age, physical and mental illness, and other factors. Data indicates that racial and ethnic disparities and those for people with disabilities are vast across all indicators, supporting the need for the City to lead with race and ethnicity as a starting focus and also for disabilities to be an initial priority for the City and the Office of Equity and Human Rights.*

- 4. RECOGNIZE THE ROLE OF RESOURCE ALLOCATION.** Policies should set the expectation at the outset that the advancement of racial equity will require resource differentiation or reallocation. Too often, racial equity is advanced as long as it does not require the differentiation of resources. Resource allocation is required for successful implementation of a racial equity policy: if you can't see it in the budget, then you aren't serious about it.

### **Examples**

**OEIB:** *We believe that resource allocation demonstrates our priorities and our values and that we demonstrate our priorities and our commitment to rural communities, communities of color, English language learners, and out of school youth in the ways we allocate resources and make educational investments.*

**PPS:** *To achieve educational equity, PPS will provide additional and differentiated resources to support the success of all students, including students of color.*

**City of Portland:** *Advancement of equity may require resources to be shifted and reallocated.*

- 5. RECOGNIZE THE ROLE OF PARTNERSHIPS.** Organizations adopting racial equity policies do not need to advance racial equity by themselves and, in fact, the ideal is to partner with others, particularly those communities most impacted by inequities.

### **Examples**

**OEIB:** *We believe that communities, parents, teachers and community-based organizations have unique and important solutions to improving outcomes for our students and educational systems. Our work will only be successful if we are able to truly partner with the community, engage with respect, authentically listen – and have the courage to share decision-making, control and resources.*

**PPS:** *The District shall welcome and empower students and families, including underrepresented families of color (including those whose first language may not be English) as essential partners in their student's education, school planning and District decision-making. The District shall create welcoming environments*

that reflect and support racial and ethnic diversity of the student population and community. In addition, the District will include other partners who have demonstrated culturally specific expertise – including government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, and the community in general – in meeting our educational outcomes.

**City of Portland:** *Advancing equity for and protecting the human rights of all Portlanders will require coordination with other equity and human rights work not only in government but also in private business, nongovernmental organizations, academia, community groups, and the media.*

## 6. OFFER CONCRETE NEXT STEPS AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS.

Typically, this section includes the creation of a timeline (including yearly reporting requirements), as well as the mandatory creation of an Equity Plan (or its equivalent), alongside who is responsible for developing it, and the manner in which it is to be submitted for approval (typically to organization’s governance body)

### Examples

**OEIB:** *[After creating a racial equity lens . . .] OEIB will apply the equity lens to strategic investment proposal reviews, as well as its practices as a board.*

**PPS:** *[After listing the goals . . .] The Board will hold the Superintendent and central and school leadership staff accountable for making measurable progress in meeting the goals. Every Portland Public Schools employee is responsible for the success and achievement of all students. The Board recognizes that these are long term goals that require significant work and resources to implement across all schools. As such, the Board directs the Superintendent to develop action plans with clear accountability and metrics, and including prioritizing staffing and budget allocations, which will result in measurable results on a yearly basis towards achieving the above goals. Such action plans shall identify specific staff leads on all key work, and include clear procedures for district schools and staff. The Superintendent will present the Board with a plan to implement goals A through F within three months of adoption of this policy. Thereafter, the Superintendent will report on progress towards these goals at least twice a year, and will provide the Board with updated action plans each year.*

**City of Portland:** *[After establishing the Office of Equity & Human Rights . . .] The draft work plan of the Office of Equity and Human Rights attached as Exhibit C is an outline of the potential work of the Office. The Office of Equity and Human Rights will finalize an initial work plan after it is staffed and begins operations . . . The Commissioner in Charge will provide a progress report to Council and the community within six months from the date of adoption of this Ordinance. This report will include the structure of an advisory system for the Office of Equity and Human Rights, including community members and City staff . . .*

7. **PROVIDE DEFINITIONS.** Have individuals and organizations review the draft policy for words or terms that they do not understand. Potential words or terms for definition include the following: achievement gap, culturally responsive, disproportionality, educational equity, embedded racial inequality, equity, opportunity gap, race, underserved students, and white privilege.

8. **RATIFICATION DATE.** Include the ratification date in the policy document itself.

## Terms of Reference for an Equity Team

### Mandate

This permanent organizational committee shall ensure that the organization's commitment to racial equity is incorporated into and reflected throughout the organizational culture and operational practices of the organization. While the Board of Directors and Executive Staff are responsible for ensuring this commitment is increasingly actualized in the organization, the Equity Team is the vehicle for operationalizing this work in the organization, and ensuring that expectations and accountability becomes embedded structurally across the organization in operations such as job descriptions, training, program evaluations, and data systems. Nothing that the Equity Team is responsible for is removed from the Executive or Board leadership roles.

### Responsibilities

#### a. Core Activities

- At the onset of this process, the Equity Team is responsible for conducting an assessment of the organization's cultural responsiveness by completing the Protocol Assessment or other comprehensive equity assessment. This team of approximately 8-10 people needs to include the following:
  - Executive-level staff, including the Executive Director (or equivalent) and ideally one or two Board Members who will likely benefit from participating in the process.
  - A breadth of representatives from across the organization with each department ideally represented.
  - Mostly senior and administrative staff, with at least two non-management staff included to ensure that input into the assessment is not solely that of management perspectives.
  - Racial diversity with at least three staff of color participating. This number is designed to resist tokenism and marginalization through the process.
- Annually prepare two reports:
  - A progress report on racial equity that identifies the achievements and challenges of the organization. This will involve reviewing reports provided by departments including Human Resources, Research and Evaluation, Programs and Services, and Finance that is likely to cover contracts and subcontracts. Additional areas of focus may not be embedded in a specific department (such as community partnerships) and will need a customized tracking process. Each year, the work done in depth may shift in focus as priorities transition.
  - A draft Equity Action Plan that identifies priorities for the coming year, submitted for approval by the Board of Directors or other governing body.

#### b. Equity Promotion and Capacity Development

- Participate in relevant Committees such as Human Resources, Operations and Strategic Planning. Within these committees, it is expected that the Equity Team members will join hiring processes, performance evaluations, revisions of job descriptions and any other function where racial equity performance is below the standards established in the *Protocol for Culturally Responsive Organizations*.
- Participate in and/or provide input into Board orientation, volunteer training, and staff orientation and training.
- Consult with the Executive Director (or equivalent) to identify internal barriers to advancing racial equity and provide advice on addressing barriers and advancing a culture of racial inclusion and respect.
- Assist the organization in staying up-to-date with improvements in the field of "equity in organizations."
- Resourcing staff of the organization – the team will develop and communicate resources for staff in advancing equity work in their own units, and provide consultation as needed.
- Develop and maintain a list of resources including consultants and trainers, books, videos and web links.

### **c. Accountability and Transparency**

- Transparency measure – the two reports are to be posted on the agency’s website and remain posted until the next report is available. These reports are to be archived and available on the public use areas of the website.

### **Decision Making**

The Equity Team shall support and whenever possible use a consensus decision making model. Consensus shall be formally confirmed at the end of any given discussion and/or decision-making process. In those instances when any one team member chooses to pass and/or stand aside from the process, it is understood that they will support the consensus the group achieves. In order to ensure that consensus is achieved in an efficient manner, discussions and decision-making will likely need to be time limited.

### **Membership and Composition**

The Equity Team shall have a minimum of 5 members, including:

- The Racial Equity manager (or equivalent staff person who holds expertise in this field and is appointed the lead staff person for the Equity Team). If the Racial Equity Manager reports directly to the Executive Director, the ED does not need to sit on the committee but will likely be frequently invited to these meetings. If s/he does not report to the ED, it is advisable for the ED to be a member of the team.
- Depth and breadth of organizational participation of staff who are motivated to be an important part of movement towards cultural responsiveness
- At least three staff of color should be members of the Team. Every effort shall be made to ensure that the composition of the Equity Team reflects the diversity of our local and national communities.
- Where the organization has an established Community Advisory Board, two members would ideally be cross-appointed to the Equity Team. Given, however, that the CAB members are less likely to be available during regular workday hours, this may prove difficult to coordinate. Electronic participation is an appropriate venue for participation, and stipends to support such participation may promote ongoing engagement.

### **Meeting Schedule**

This team should meet at least 12 times per year. Meetings should be scheduled to ensure the majority of members can attend and participation needs to be a paid work activity.



## Racial Equity in Strategic Planning and Program Planning

Organizations often approach strategic planning whereby they intend to map out the next five years of their organization with clear goals to achieve greater sustainability, relevance and innovation, often seeking to update somewhat tired approaches to human need, or seeking to address specific newer needs, or reflect emerging local priorities and opportunities. These efforts are geared at providing a unifying direction for the organization, detailing a vision that allows the organization's many parts to align with and embody in policy, practice and culture.

Racial equity, particularly in Oregon and Multnomah County, is at the top of human needs, as inequities are pronounced and pervasive across health, human and education services. For organizations moving into a strategic planning process, an important query is on how to implement an "equity lens" in this process, supporting focus on racial equity and social justice from start to finish. This resource aims to provide insights on how to implement racial equity throughout the initiative.

### 1. General considerations

- a. **Will racial equity be a domain of this plan, or infused throughout?** It is recommended that "both" be the answer so that there is concrete efforts to move racial equity forward as an explicit agenda item, as well as expecting various units and working groups to enact this approach to their work.
- b. **Will "racial equity" be explicit or implicit?** Clarity and directness is recommended, instead of embedded in race-devoid terms such as "diversity" or the more global construct of "equity" in general. Remember that "colorblind" approaches to equity do not work, and that they frustrate communities of color for communicating an unwillingness to directly commit the organization to racial equity.
- c. **Among equity issues, will it lead with race?** Arguments for leading with race include
  - i. Direction setting: Clarity of objectives and centrality of expectations
  - ii. Improved outcomes: Historic pattern of race being obscured when other features are added, as frequently the toughest issues "fall off the table" when (a) it is a crowded table, and (b) starting elsewhere is easier.
  - iii. Community expectations: Communities of color want assurance that institutions will improve racial equity in their operations and outcomes. Note that when multiple forms of equity are centered, the implicit message for communities of color is that they must continue to wait for a better time for racial equity.

If the organization insists that it cannot ethically organize around race, it is advised that a racial equity lens be used explicitly, and that a second equity lens be applied to other equity issues. A multifaceted equity lens has not been deemed effective to reduce racial disparities.

2. **Leadership commitment:** Given the importance of leadership positions to advance racial equity, it is important to have clear, direct and visible commitments and intentions from organizational leaders to guide the work of various units and planning groups. Ideally, this would exist as a "racial equity policy" that is already in place inside the organization. If it does not exist, the following is recommended:
  - a. That the organization embeds a racial equity principle into the strategic planning process and outcome guidelines that reads something like this:
    - i. "Racial equity is a central goal for this strategic plan. We live in a region where racial disparities are pronounced and where communities of color have been historically marginalized in civic engagement. As a public institution, we hold responsibility to address our

roles in this marginalization. We understand our contributions to include the following....  
[here the organization names specific ways it has contributed to racial disparities].

- ii. “We are guided by this principle in setting a vision for the organization, in implementation, in the plan itself and in accountability metrics that will tell us if we are improving racial equity in our future actions. Accordingly, all units involved in the strategic plan are expected to use a racial equity lens in conducting their strategic planning work, and we expect that all submitted documents will include details on how this has been conducted and how racial equity is reflected in the contributions.”

**3. Promoting a Culture of Inclusion and Respect:** The most fertile foundation for effective racial equity work includes a welcome and affirming environment. That said, organizations can still change simply by requiring altered and improved policies, practice and accountability requirements. The time needed to move an organization towards racial equity through the former construct, where the culture shifts and the staff are amenable and even catalysts for a racial equity agenda, are, however, considerable, and reforms should not be limited or activities curtailed until the environment is “ready.” Quite simply, it is unreasonable to ask communities of color to wait while mainstream organizations undergo a culture shift. The best alternative is something in the middle: In response to how one promotes, but is not dependent, on such a cultural shift include:

- a. Create a cadre of aligned leaders and equity champions, who have organizational supports and resources for moving the work forward.
- b. Simultaneously, provide training and support for allies and potential allies, providing them with a more in-depth understanding of equity issues and opportunities in the organization,
- c. Provide technical assistance for the leaders to strengthen their leadership of racial equity throughout strategic and program planning.
- d. Using a “training-for-trainers” model, provide some organizational leaders with the skills necessary to in turn provide technical assistance for allies who might be participating at various levels in strategic planning.
- e. Provide comprehensive “onboarding” of new staff to ensure they clearly understand how and why racial equity features prominently in the organization.
- f. Consider a long-term development of training for all staff in racial equity, particularly as tied to the dissemination of the strategic or program plan once it has been approved.

**4. Data systems and data gathering:** A principle about data that infuses directions for the organization need to be disaggregated by race. Without this, we do not know which communities are well served by the organization and those that the organization is failing. Organizations need to know their own racial disparities and hold themselves accountable for knowing this and acting to eliminate disparities. This would apply to several domains:

- a. “Access” profiles such as who is served by the organization, and who is blocked from access
- b. “Service” profiles such as who are the service providers (staff, disaggregated by unit and level of authority) and who are the decision makers (Board composition, leadership composition)
- c. “Outcome” profiles such as who gets through the services successfully, and what is their ability to manifest the benefits that the organization has endeavored to prepare one for. This typically includes both routine service outcomes data (according to whatever metric the organization uses to assert its “success”), and longer term tracking of those served and how well they are able to benefit from the services provided. For an employment program, it would include long-term follow up regarding employment status, income and length of time in the position. For an education program, it would include student dropout patterns, graduation rates (ideally measured for the cohort of those who

entered at the same time), debt loads on graduation, type of employment gained on graduation (is it related to what one prepared for?), length of time one stays in the job, and wages paid at the job. It is likely that organizations will not have the requisite data systems in place to do this disaggregation by the categories included in the following section. Because of the importance of the visibility of communities of color, it is highly recommended that data system improvements be included in a strategic and/or program plan. Invisibility signals that the institution does not care about the community.

5. **Racial identifiers:** Without sufficient details about racial identity, entire communities are typically invisible in the organization, and more broadly in society. There are emerging “best practices” regarding racial identifiers. Know that racial categories are not static and that they have regional character (for example, in Oregon the Slavic community is recognized as a community of color). Accordingly racial identifiers will need updating over time.

a. **Data categories.**

- i. Ensure that every data form has an open-ended racial identifier section where service users are able to enter their identity as they wish to describe it. Following this open-ended section, close-ended and drop-down boxes can be used.
- ii. Use the most current racial categories that are deemed vital to understanding communities of color. In Oregon, this is the racial identity categories embedded in House Bill 2134. Note that these racial identifiers can be rolled up for institutions that are required to report their activities according to federal requirements. No limitations are provided by federal bodies for organizations that wish to provide their communities with additional information.
- iii. Ensure that multiple races to be identified, and service user selection of a prime racial identity if one is required.

b. **Identifying practices:**

- i. Ensure that those collecting data are properly trained for this role, and that ideally they be members of communities of color. People of color are more likely to self-identify as minority racialized when they are asked these questions by workers of color.
- ii. Obvious (we hope) is that service users are asked to identify themselves as opposed to staff interpreting their racial identify for them.
- iii. The Census Bureau practice of omitting a category called “multiracial” is recommended and that people enter as many categories as they wish to accurately identify themselves.

c. **Organizational data coding:** Coding practices need to retain the full details that the service user has provided. We also want to ensure that multiple categories for identity are retained in the database and not amalgamated into a “multiracial” category. Sufficient details need to be preserved so that two different extractions can be calculated: “alone” and “alone or in combination with other races” reviews of the data.

For more information, please see Curry-Stevens & Coalition of Communities of Color (2014).<sup>31</sup>

6. **Inclusion during the process:** The very process of how the strategic or program planning development unfolds is ripe for dynamics of inclusion and exclusion to occur. In anticipation, the organization is advised to tend to an array of practices so that (a) missteps are minimized, (b) the organization demonstrates its commitment to “walking the talk” on racial equity, and (c) the organization provides a culturally-responsive set of input practices that maximizes the likelihood that the best information is gathered and the most fertile ideas forwarded. For this to be actualized, the processes need to be highly inclusive.

a. **Decision making procedures:** Decision making processes are where the “rubber hits the road” and they reflect either conventional hierarchical decision making (majority rule votes, by a conventional

body that is made up the organization's leadership) or more egalitarian models which formally support greater pluralism and emphasis on equity.

- i. Ensure communities of color have real influence in the process of strategic planning – as leaders of team, as holding real influence in the organization's process of discerning priorities, and as holding the authority to make decisions about the matters that affect them.
- ii. Decision making methods that are well recognized for equalizing power include the following: consensus, modified consensus, participatory decision making (such as dot-mocracy) and stratified representative decisions (where communities get to appoint their own representatives who take their positions forward into a smaller body).
- b. **Time for process:** Too often, processes are narrowed when time is short, and the first narrowing occurs with community and the second with service users, and the third in staff who hold marginalized identities. Time for decent process must not be curtailed. Recognize that different community groups have different assets and constraints for participation and that these must be factors in planning and carrying out participatory activities.
- c. **Resources for inclusion:** Sufficient resources to support participation are required. Consider issues tied to time of day, location, transportation, culture, child care, food and payment for expertise.
- d. **Empowerment-oriented processes:** There are numerous opportunities for racial equity in the practices that lead up to the development of a strategic or program plan. Here are recommendations:
  - i. Ensure that facilitators of events understand power dynamics that are tied to participation and that the facilitators have the ability, confidence and motivation to equalize participation.
  - ii. Ensure that the right people are invited to the event and that this is considered at the onset instead of a later add-on. Joining a moving train is much more disempowering than getting to configure the tasks at the onset.
- e. **Inclusion of community members:** Build processes that ensure that the perspectives of communities of color infuse the initiative, and that these processes are empowering (with the discourse being that this is the organization's opportunity to strengthen its relevance and responsiveness being desirable, as opposed to "something one has to do"). Complaint mechanisms can support where infractions to this principle occur.
- f. **Recognizing that power exists hierarchically, increasing the power of communities of color is needed:** While the organization may not have concrete methods to achieve this already in place, long-term commitments to building the formal power of communities of color need to be expressed in the organization's strategic plan. Strategies can include:
  - i. Creating policies to ensure that ¼ (at least) of governance bodies are held for communities of color, which would increase if communities of color hold a larger portion of those in the community (Multnomah County is currently 28.5% minority racialized).
  - ii. Community Advisory Boards are effective vehicles to ensure that communities are able to imprint on the organization's operations and that they have a protected space to raise issues of relevance to them, and that they serve as an advisory body for the organization itself.
  - iii. Employee Support Groups are effective for providing a protected space for workers to reflect together on shared issues and advance a shared opinion, request or demand to administration. The best ESGs are also treated as resource experts for management to draw upon for understanding employee needs and who can also provide links to their communities.

**7. Equity Lens for Strategic Planning Decisions:** An array of equity lenses exist across many sectors. The updated version from Multnomah County (2014) forms the basis for this customized tool that has been adapted for use in strategic and program planning, when a variety of options are being considered. The set of questions

would be asked of each unit doing specific strategic/program planning assessments and discernment of viable steps forward.

- a. **Considering options:** Among the proposed ideas being forwarded,
  - i. Who is positively and negatively affected by the options and how? Who has validated these impacts? Ideally they will have been affirmed by communities of color themselves.
  - ii. What are the effects of these situations on various communities of color?
  - iii. What might be harmful or traumatic effects of moving forward? Consider physical, spiritual, emotional and context-specific effects.
  - iv. What are the differential impacts of different decisions on various communities of color?
  - v. With as much prediction as possible, identify the options that potentially generate harmful impacts.
  - vi. What are differential impacts on communities' emotional and physical safety, and their need to be productive and feel valued?
  - vii. What can be done that is within your reach to mitigate the negative impacts on communities of color? Are there participation barriers that can be removed, or service adaptations to improve relevance?
  - viii. Can the positive impacts be amplified to improve outcomes?
  - ix. What customizing for various communities of color is possible to ensure that (a) benefits are maximized and (b) negative outcomes are minimized?
    - x. Which support the leadership development of people and communities of color?
    - xi. Which hold potential to have positive community-wide benefits?
    - xii. What are geographic distributions of positive and negative outcomes? Different parts of the region are inhabited by different communities and thus geographically-oriented investments are likely to have differential impacts on communities of color.
    - xiii. What is the quality of data you are drawing on to assess outcomes? What divergence of opinion exists about the likely outcomes?
- b. **Making decisions:** Once options have been assessed as the questions above are answered, narrowing the range of options can be more formally guided by the questions below. There are obviously additional priorities for informing decisions; the ones below reflect racial equity. Consider which options:
  - i. Have the highest benefits for communities of color (in comparison with benefiting mainstream communities)?
  - ii. Respond most thoroughly to communities with the highest needs?
  - iii. Have the potential to reduce racial disparities the most?
  - iv. Have the highest level of support from communities of color?

8. **Communications:** Assuming the organization commits to transparency of the process, communications are needed to share how the following have been addressed within the initiative:

- a. Who is included in the process? Who has been invited and who has participated?
- b. How is community voice and influence incorporated in both process and product?
- c. How are service users of color included? How are their perspectives gathered?
- d. How are decisions being made?
- e. When can communities expect to learn about the process and substance of the initiative?
- f. What weight will each set of inputs from communities of color hold? What accountability does the organization have to the input gathered? At the very least, the organization should share the information gathered, and how it will incorporate the information, and if the information is not incorporated, then the reasons for such an omission are shared back with the community.

- g. How will the organization ensure that inputs are not tokenized and that they carry real weight? Input gathered from community groups need champions for bringing forth these insights and expectations. These champions should sit at the major decision making tables throughout the initiative.

## Recruitment Policies and Strategies

Explicit attention during a hiring procedure to racial equity supports the recruitment of candidates and employees of color. In this section, we share advice for several dimensions of the hiring process.

### When a Hiring Request is Proposed

The organization needs to be aware of the specifics of their own racial disparities in their workforce, and be aware of the composition of the organization's disparities overall (across the organization), in the specific sector needing a new employee (such as the custodial staff), and within the specific level of the position (example, senior management). It also needs to understand the ways in which its workforce profile falls short of reflecting the racial composition of those it serves. Hiring workers of color provides an opportunity for the organization to increase its representation – and simultaneously increase its relevance to, respect for, and connection to the communities it serves.

**Foundational Advice:** Take your time! When time pressures exist, and people feel rushed, attention to equity will be narrowed. The organization is likely to reduce expectations for distribution, careful posting language, and for recruiting a diverse pool. When the hiring committee is time pressed, implicit bias and stereotypes will likely be in stronger evidence. A hiring process that is denied time to be “thorough, deliberate and self-correcting ... [is prone to reach] unsound conclusions about colleagues and potential colleagues.”<sup>32</sup>

### The Job Description

- Does the job description appropriately emphasize the skills in cultural responsiveness required for the position?
  - a. In working with colleagues and teams?
  - b. In concrete roles and responsibilities?
  - c. In communication skills (including conflict resolution) with all service users, colleagues, community groups and stakeholders?
- Has the job description been reviewed by HR managers skilled in understanding embedded biases within job descriptions, and revised the position to eliminate such bias? Job descriptions should not seek American labor market credentials or work experience unless absolutely necessary to perform the role. Job descriptions should also aim to reduce the education level required for the position – again, unless absolutely necessary. The pool of candidates of color will be larger if there are reduced educational requirements.

### Sample Posting Language<sup>33</sup>

Know that when organizations portray themselves as “colorblind” with terms such as “we value all our employees” and “we advance humanism and believe we equivalently share responsibility for an inclusive environment” they dissuade candidates of color from applying. One study compared the impact of two different job calls – one colorblind and one that valued diversity. African Americans expressed distrust of the colorblind organization, and decided not to apply for the positions. The perception was that this language communicated a threat to their racial identity and they anticipated being treated more frequently in a biased manner.<sup>34</sup> In response to such insights, three explicit elements of a posting are suggested: one that explicitly invites the participation of candidates of color, the second that names equity as a service goal, and the third that names equity as a concrete organizational objective:

- Candidates of color are encouraged to apply. The organization is committed to building a culturally diverse and inclusive environment.
- Successful candidates must be committed to working effectively with diverse community populations, and expected to strengthen such capacity if hired.

- The organization is committed to racial equity across the organization: in its services to clients, in our workforce composition and practices, and in our organizational culture. While still seeking to improve our demonstration of this commitment, candidates should know that racial equity is a cornerstone of our commitment to all communities in the region.

### **Sample Job Description Elements**

The following are suggestions for additions to a job description. Know that these are not limited to managerial or executive positions, and can be used for all positions in an organization.

- Demonstrated commitment to racial equity, with experience in racially diverse settings or working with diverse communities.
- Deep understanding the culture, history and current disparities that certain communities of service users may face more broadly in society and within the organization.
- Demonstrated success at working effectively in a diverse, collaborative team environment, with skills in promoting inclusion and cultural responsiveness.
- Skilled in assessing all areas of one’s sphere of influence for cultural responsiveness, and with concrete ideas and experiences in improving conditions for both service users and staff of color.
- Experience in collaborating with community partners to identify shortcoming in the organization and in building partnerships to improve outcomes.

### **Recruitment Efforts and Effectiveness**

Before you begin, learn your reputation in the community as an attractive place to work for candidates of color. Often our reputation discourages strong candidates from applying. If you are serious about improving racial equity and cultural responsiveness in the organization, you will be able to communicate this to potential candidates. For candidates who might previously not considered applying, get on the phone and share the work you are doing to improve the conditions of the organization.

Here are advice for steps to improve recruitment activities:

- Learn where candidates of color get their employment news and post in these spaces.
- Use community networks and distribution lists to get the position in front of potential candidates of color. This can include making requests of members of such networks to distribute electronic versions of your posting.
- Work upstream – contacting universities and colleges who might be doing workforce development in your sector. Ask for two things: (1) to distribute the position to potential candidates, and (2) to ask for a handful of recommendations for you to connect with directly.
- Use your existing employees to assist with distribution, particularly if they are well connected to a community where you are under-represented.
- Ask your employees and your community leaders for advice on how to reach strong candidates. Get on the phone and personally invite them to apply.
- Has a racially diverse pool of candidates been recruited for the position? If not, the hiring should be delayed until the pool is diversified.
- Is a racially diverse pool being interviewed for the position? Again, delay until this can be achieved.

### **The Hiring Committee Composition**

Candidates of color will be interested in understanding the culture of the organization and its racial diversity and dynamics of racial equity. Insights from OHSU (2014) identifies the pressing concerns for candidates of color considering employment in an organization:

- Will I fit in here and be accepted?



- Are there role models for me?
- Can I become a part of a network of employees?
- Will I have support here?<sup>35</sup>

Additional insights are provided by Sue (2010):

- Will I be able to move up in the organization?
- Will I be welcomed and wanted here?
- How will the organization respond if I am disrespected?<sup>36</sup>

These concerns have impacts on both the hiring committee’s composition as well as its practices. In composition, the following are advised:

- Is the interview team racially diverse?
- Does the interview team have expertise in racial equity and culturally responsive organizational practice?
- Does the interview team understand the importance of ensuring that the workforce composition needs to reflect the community being served or the population composition in the local region (wherever diversity is greatest)?
- Does the hiring committee understand the expectations to hire a candidate skilled for the tasks s/he needs to perform? Two cautions are urged:
  - Finding candidates able to “hit the ground, running” are likely to favor those who already have access to the organization, usually obtained through informal channels that are likely to favor conventional candidates who already reflect the organization’s culture
  - Hiring committees need to be urged to avoid hiring candidates with the most “bells and whistles” who are seen as having “value-added” beyond the skills and experience for the position. Candidates with the most “bells and whistles” are more likely to be mainstream white candidates who have had greater employment opportunities in preceding years.

### **The Hiring Committee Preparation**

One piece of recent research advice is for the hiring team to address their own internalized racial bias to prepare for this task. One suggestion is to schedule a training on unconscious bias for the committee.<sup>37</sup> Anticipating that racial bias will exist in hiring deliberations and decisions should cue the committee (or those administering the hiring) to prepare for this possibility. Practice advice is for a combination of approaches that include:

- Reviewing the specifics of the job description so as to stay grounded in the details of the job and job performance, as opposed to drifting into more cultural elements such as whether or not the candidate will “fit in” with the organization’s culture
- Being exposed to counter-narratives of people of color prior to entering interviews and deliberations. Such an approach can involve watching videos of exemplary leaders of color, historic figures, and local current employees, reading their stories and learning about their contributions. Dialogue about this issue and intentional surfacing of counter-narratives can also be made available for the hiring committee. The intention is to interrupt stereotypes, with this approach being shown to have a significant impact on reducing implicit bias.<sup>38</sup> The strongest impact is likely problematic to introduce intentionally: to link the positive features of people of color with negative features of white people. The contrast leads to a stronger reduction in implicit bias that works to the benefit of white candidates.
- Such an exposure program would benefit from the research on diversity – that diverse workplaces have stronger creativity and problem-solving capacities, even though such team effectiveness can take longer to build than a mono-cultural white environment.
- Human Resources needs to hold the hiring committee accountable to the expectations that hiring practices will advance racial equity and eliminate racial disparities. The committee should justify decisions

and actions taken in the interviews, deliberations and decisions. The committee needs to be advised of this in advance of their process.

### **Recommended interview questions to assess cultural responsiveness:**<sup>39</sup>

Vetting your interview questions before you begin allows you to gain feedback from Human Resources and, ideally, the organization's Equity Team, about two things: (1) biases that might be embedded in the questions that the hiring committee was unable to identify, and (2) advice on how issues that are tied to the organization's culture should be handled. Work from the assumption that the hiring committee is an important site for racial equity to be advanced and that it is simultaneously a site for mistakes and missteps to be made.

Here are sample questions for an interview:

- Provide a frank assessment of your own equity skills and challenges.
- How has your culture influenced you? (Listen to see if the candidate is aware of their cultural influences and how it has shaped their perspective.)
- How do you see yourself contributing to the organization's effort toward cultural competency? (Listen to see if the candidate has past experiences that will add to or enhance the organization's efforts.)
- Describe how an organization you were part of challenged racial inequities. Share its challenges and successes and describe your role in this work.
- Please describe a situation in which you worked on a project with people who were from cultural backgrounds other than your own. What was challenging for you in this work? What did you do to make your work together successful?
- Our organization is working hard to become more culturally responsive. How would you contribute to that work?
- Our organization has been on this path for a few years and some interest is lagging in a few departments. What are key steps you would take to address this slowing interest in racial equity?

### **Tips for Interviewing Multicultural Candidates**

Advice has been collated by OHSU for attention to cultural norms and appropriate accommodations for successful hiring conditions for candidates of color. Cultural norms are reflected in some of the tips, and language challenges might also be well addressed by these tips. We have adapted the list here:

- Provide a written outline of the interview process and the general topics to be covered.
- Tune in to the culture embedded in your questions. Examples might be expecting a certain approach to conflict, or anticipating one wants to move up a ladder, or expecting a certain cultural characteristic such as assertiveness to be in evidence for some position functions.
- Avoid jargon and culturally specific metaphors.
- Avoid colloquialisms and acronyms.
- Train interviewers in legal issues such as protected personal questions.
- Allow time for casual chit-chat that can help put candidates at ease.
- Learn a bit about the cultures of those you are likely to interview such as degree of formality, the appropriateness of eye contact, and how to pronounce candidates' names.
- If accents are thick and you do not understand what was said, ask for clarification. Do not interrupt the candidate in mid-sentence.

- Ask interview questions that can be interpreted within a group context so that candidates who are not aligned with an individualist orientation to work achievements can respond fully. In cultures that are more collectively oriented, “bragging or taking credit for successes may not be perceived as appropriate.”<sup>40</sup>
- When an interview includes the development of a work product onsite, provide some of the content ahead of time so that candidates who need more preparation time do not feel the pressure to perform in a context they are unfamiliar with.
- Provide feedback for unsuccessful candidates so they can improve future interviews.

## Supervision Policy

Sample<sup>41</sup>

The following content is appropriately housed in an organizational policy on supervision. Sections may be added to job descriptions of each employee with supervision tasks.

- A. The supervisor is to have leadership skills to promote the effective hiring of employees:**
- The supervisor is to effectively promote and participate in hiring environments that illustrate commitment to racial equity, meaning that s/he:
  - Ensures equitable recruitment and hiring practices.
  - The job posting identifies the specific responsibilities for culturally responsive practice, and the expectations for experience in this practice.
- B. The supervisor is required to provide workers with key elements for culturally responsive supervision, including:**
- Sustain respectful and appreciative relationships, which includes preserving supervision time as an important investment in the employee.
  - Provide both task and process supervision to workers in ways that integrate one's racial and cultural identity.
  - The supervisor is to regularly seek feedback from those s/he supervises on the following:
    - The adequacy with which one provides supervision, along with concrete recommendations for improvement
    - What activities of the supervisor would most support the work life of supervisees, including what they want the supervisor to learn about, how the supervisor should invest their resources (including time) and the supervisees priorities for action
  - The supervisor emphasizes that workers be accountable to their clients – as much as, if not more, that “up” the organizational ladder to one's supervisor. Elements of this accountability include maximizing one's availability to clients, including prompt return of phone calls, sharing information about decisions, resources and opportunities, and being responsive to the priorities of the client.
  - The supervisor advocates for improvements in working conditions that supports the employee to perform his/her job, including noticing and responding to the ways in which the worker's social identities influence working conditions.
- C. Related personal development skills include:**
- Be on a learning path about her/his own identity, embedded biases, and deep awareness of one's own privileges and oppressions, along with growing awareness of this this identity influence the supervisory relationship, and relationships with colleagues, clients and communities.
- D. Related organizational capacities include:**
- The Human Resources department will make available resources to assist when some skill deepening is required. HR is not expected to provide all training in this area; the supervisor is expected to be hired with such skills already in place.
  - The organization's ability to demonstrate racial equity offers its employees working conditions that takes microaggressions seriously, including when they are imposed on the employee by its clients. Fairness in retention practices, promotions and developmental opportunities will support the employee in his/her performance of work responsibilities.

## Performance Reviews

### **Introduction**

Performance appraisals are opportunities for all staff to receive feedback on the ways in which an employee's performance is experienced by those around them – up, down and laterally in the organization, including clients and communities – plus a self-evaluation. The forte of such an approach is in gathering different perspectives about performance, particularly those “down” the hierarchical ladder which are often ignored in performance reviews. Input should be gathered on all elements of capacity for and evidence of culturally responsive practice. For organizations that are more conventional and have not yet integrated a 360° evaluation process (meaning that one collects organizations akin to a full circle around the staff person being evaluated).

Key elements of such an evaluation includes the ability of the staff to become skillful in working (a) across racial differences and (b) to dismantle power hierarchies that marginalize communities and individuals of color (both as service users and as staff), and (c) understanding of how the organization is moving forward on its racial equity commitments and of one's role in supporting this commitment.

### **Suggested Performance Review Questions**

1. Review the standards from this “Protocol for Culturally responsive Organizations” that apply to the areas of work for which you are responsible. Identify 3-5 areas in which you are skilled and can demonstrate such skills, and 3-5 where you have yet to develop such skills and practice. Bring these forward into your performance review as a place to begin the assessment process. Also review your job description which ideally has formal roles for your work in cultural responsiveness. If such roles do not exist, bring forward roles that could appropriately be integrated into your job description.
2. What formal or informal learning have you engaged in that has increased your capacity to (a) lead, and (b) practice with heightened cultural responsiveness?
3. What actions have you taken with this increased capacity? Provide specific examples.
4. What are the outcomes of these actions? In your opinion, what have been the concrete client/community gains from your actions? Which of these can be formally documented as of benefit to the communities served?
5. How has the work environment supported/impeded your work performance in general?
6. How has your work environment supported/impeded your culturally responsive practices?
7. Describe your ability to notice and assess your own cultural responsiveness and the improvements that have occurred in this review period. Also describe your ability to process this capacity in supervision.
8. What goals do you have for the next review period?
9. What feedback do you have for the organization for ways it can support your activities in this area?
10. What priorities do you think are important for the organization to set for its movement on cultural-responsiveness?
11. How should you be held accountable for enacting your commitments on cultural responsiveness?

The Manager responsible for conducting the performance review is expected to be skilled in noticing inequities in the ways in which workers and clients provide feedback (eg. Such as how workers of color receive negative feedback for bringing equity issues forward, while white workers are applauded for such engagement), and be fully committed to improving the organizational environment in order to eliminate discrimination and inequitable treatment. S/he needs feedback on their advocacy effectiveness for those sincerely working to improve their cultural responsiveness. Responsibility needs to rest with management for enhancing the conditions under which staff fulfil their roles and the conditions under which clients and service users engage with the organization.

## Risk Assessment Tool

### Sample Content

Note that these do not need to be collected upon entry to the organization's services but should be completed prior to reporting the profile of those served to funding bodies.

1. **Social identity** (so intake profile and outcomes evaluation can be conducted for various populations)
  - a. Racial identity, language and origins
  - b. Disability status
  - c. LGBTQ identity
  - d. Poverty and low income
    - Family Income and sources of income
    - Employment status
    - Family size (how many are supported on this income?)
2. **Risk factors for adult employment**
  - a. Education – particularly not graduated high school
  - b. Foreign credentials not recognized
  - c. English language skills
  - d. Literacy
  - e. Criminal record
  - f. Housing stability
  - g. Transportation availability
  - h. Responsibility for young children
  - i. Physical, oral and mental health
  - j. Work history – long term unemployment is most challenging
3. **Risk factors for youth success**
  - a. Family stability
    - Family income and sources of income
    - Employment status
    - Single parent status
    - Parents who are/were teenaged
    - Family size
    - Involvement in child welfare
    - Drug and/or alcohol use/abuse
    - Juvenile justice system involvement
    - Domestic violence
  - b. Academic challenges
    - Test scores that do not meet passing level
    - Attendance – more than 10% of kindergarten missed is tied to being a year behind in reading by G.3; same level in high school means being unlikely to graduate<sup>42</sup>
    - Discipline
    - On-time promotion
    - Language skills and ELL status
    - Special education status
  - c. Housing stability

- Number of moves in last 12 months – moving during the school year can reduce graduation rates by 30%<sup>43</sup>
- Housing costs as portion of income (over 50% highly imperiled, over 30% housing burdened)
- d. Physical, oral and mental health
- e. Social factors
  - Racism, exclusion and marginalization
  - Future prospects limited
  - Weak peer structure
  - Few supportive adults
  - Low life skills
- f. Time and structured activities
  - After-school educational supports
  - Meaningful community connection – sports, faith, community activities
- g. Character
  - Absence of perseverance or “grit”
  - Without future goals

## Improving Cultural Responsiveness of Interventions

The vast majority of health and human service interventions have been created and researched among mainstream populations. What this means is that assertions of their usefulness have rarely been demonstrated via research among communities of color. Such is also true for “evidence based practices” that have come into prominence over the last 15 years. Today, Oregon requires that 75% of many services funded by the state be “evidence based practices” meaning that such services form the basis of services provided for drug and alcohol treatment, mental health, adult corrections, and juvenile justice and related prevention programs. This directive has been voided for Oregon’s Tribes as an exception was made on the basis of the cultural mismatch that is embedded in EBPs for working with Native Americans. Instead, what is called “practice-based evidence” is instead entrenched in policy, allowing the Tribes to build and conduct their own research and evaluation agenda to illustrate and discover the effectiveness of the services used within these communities.

Rising from this “whiteness bias” in interventions is the emergence of excellent contributions on how to review and adapt interventions to improve their relevance for communities of color. The best and most accessible of these efforts is from Samuels, Schuldrich and Altschul (2009) on how to assess “evidence based practices” and improve their cultural responsiveness (or in their framework, cultural competence).<sup>44</sup>

The logical place to start is to identify the intervention and the foundations on which it is based. This is a “deep dive” into an assessment of the cultural appropriateness of the intervention. The task is basically one of determining the degree to which white-centric or euro-centric norms and culture have infused the model.

What are we looking for?

The first two steps can be conducted by staff who are familiar with the model and its implementation. Sometimes a consultant or researcher will be of value to assist in this investigation – other times, staff can do it alone. Once completed, it is strongly advised that the results be reviewed by both the Equity Team and the Community Advisory Board in order to have an equity perspective and cultural perspective in the foreground of the review.

**STEP #1: Assessing Ethics and Values.** What types of ethics and values are embedded in the intervention?<sup>45</sup>

These identify potential areas of incongruence between what is provided and the cultural norms of those who use the services.

### Innate Predisposition

- Are there perspectives on spirituality integrated into the service? Whose spirituality?
- Are clients perceived as able to be self-determining, able to define their own path in the world? Is the value of making good choices given priority?
- Is human accomplishment a measure of self-worth?
- Who is encouraged to make decisions? Are individuals, family, close friends, or communities supported to make decisions?
- Whose definition of the “problem” is centered in the approach?
- What is the dominant perspective of the problem? Is it one of biology, psychosocial, structural (as in tied to inequality and inequity), punishment by a higher power, magical and mysterious, or one of chance?



- Is it presumed that one's locus of control is external or internal?
- Is individualism emphasized over collectivism? Is the individual's need to be given preeminence or it is to be subordinate to the family's needs or the community's needs?
- Is it presumed that there is an optimistic, pessimistic or realistic view of the world?

### **Social Justice & Racial Equity**

- How do experiences of racism and white privilege factor into the intervention? These can limit (or if white, expand) one's ability to self-define a pathway through the world.
- Is racial identity affirmed in the model? Is positive racial identity development integrated?
- Is there any explicit attention to the different issues faced by clients who live in different skins and who hold different social identities? Or are all clients presumed to be equivalently challenged by their identities?
- Is there heightened focus on the presenting problem – typically individual and local, rather than systemic and social (or population based)? Is there explicit attention to the “personal is political”?

### **Relationship to Nature and Spirituality**

- What is the relationship between humans and the natural and/or spiritual world? Is there a focus on mastery over one's path through the world?
- What religious beliefs are expected to exist? What adherence to spiritual guidance is expected? Normalized? Rejected?
- Is there attention to the value of harmony and sustainability? Some cultures focus on harmony with nature while others ignore such expectations.
- Is there an absence of control over nature – and clients are perceived as holding no influence over nature, described as being “at the mercy of fate and genetics”
- Are natural healers, spiritual guides or elders provided a role in the intervention?

### **Health**

- What norms about drugs and alcohol are embedded in the intervention? Abstinence, risk reduction, experimentation, and rejection are all approaches that are tied to substance use and that tend to vary by culture.
- What specific health issues are addressed? Anticipated? Understood in their cultural context and racial disparities are also well understood?

### **Time Orientation**

- What is the orientation towards time? Is the emphasis of preparing for the future pronounced? And that one should sacrifice now for the future? Or is living in the here-and-now emphasized. Or is there a stronger orientation to the past, to history and tradition, and an embrace of what is at the traditional roots of the culture?
- How are prior commitments respected? Do staff make their commitments early, or do they make them with little notification?
- How available are staff to respond to the immediate and pressing needs of clients?
- Are clients expected to be highly accountable for time and appointments? What flexibility exists?

### **Modality of Relationship**

- What type of family structure and extended kinship roles is typically expected to exist?
- What type of discipline is expected of parents with their children?
- How strongly is hierarchy legitimated in the intervention? Is the power of the service provider pronounced? Is one to be deferential to experts? To an external power? To a boss or other organizational or community leader?

- What are implicit and explicit perspectives within the model about sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marriage and divorce?

## **STEP #2: Assessing Implementation Practices**

- ***What modality is used?***

- Is it group, individual or family? What cultural norms underlie these decisions?
- Are trained experts, para-professionals, peers, or natural healers from the culture providing the services? What cultural norms are reinforced by the organization's decision to deliver services through the selected provider/s?
- Who of the client's kin included? Are families and/or natural supports included? What cultural bias is represented in the decision to include and exclude?

- ***What accessibility barriers exist and are likely to require adaptations?***

### **Stigma and shame**

- What cultural messages need to be first overcome to consider seeking services?
- Who should be messaging acceptance of the person needing support? Who will the individual and his/her community listen to and be supported by?
- What subgroup attributions pose extra challenges in seeking services?

### **Linguistic – for those without strong English language skills**

- Is promotional material translated and signage appropriate for accessing the location?
- Are materials translated?
- Are interpreters available?
- Are interpreters credentialed?
- Are service providers able to speak the language of clients?

### **Physical**

- Where are services provided? What types of barriers exist for entering these spaces?
- Can one physically get to the space?
- Is the location and space psychologically "safe" for the client?
- Are hours of operation convenient?

### **Financial**

- Are costs prohibitive?
- Do costs stress the individual and family in damaging ways?
- Are costs a deterrent for seeking regular service?

## **STEP #3: Determining Areas of Convergence and Divergence**

Once these have been answered, the task is to then assess the degree of congruence or incongruence with the cultures of those who use the services. Doing this task, however, is likely beyond the skills of most service providers. To assess this, a group approach is advised, drawing in members of the community, and inclusive of those who have experienced the service. This can be a task of the Equity Team (if such expertise or insider perspectives exist) or the Community Advisory Board, with a number of invited guests to assist in the review process.

It is suggested that staff do a presentation of their insights and then, working sequentially or circuitously through the content, cover the variations that exist in the main cultures who are served by the organization. You are looking to uncover the patterns of convergence and divergence with what is being offered.

Remember that no community or culture is monolithic and all change across time. In response, staff need to explore both the main forms of divergence and convergence with the model, and also the ways in which subgroups vary from these norms. For example, it is likely that women have different cultural norms from men, and that their roles in the home vary also by income and education. Pay close attention to these variations, particularly if service is being provided to as subgroup in the population, for example, Somali mothers who arrived as refugees. Inquire as specifically as possible about the ethics, values and implementation practices that are potentially mismatched for the community.

Conclusion of this step involves writing a clear report of the model and the areas of convergence and divergence with the culture of those being served.

#### **STEP #4: Determining Alternatives**

Areas of greatest divergence are likely to impose the greatest limitations on the effectiveness of the intervention, and likely a good place to begin your identification of alternative services or modifications of the service.

Again working with a team that includes heavy representation by the communities being served, the task is to gather insights about needed modifications to the intervention. Gather from the team their insights about what has worked in the past with this community. Gathering these indigenous insights is both a signaling of respect as well as an opportunity to explore integrating indigenous approaches to local needs.

Tapping what has been written about his issue elsewhere in the USA and around the globe is also an important contribution. At this point, it would be useful to have a researcher able to conduct a literature review about alternative approaches that might be considered by the team.

This task is likely to take the team a few months of information gathering and discernment of what is likely to generate strong results. It is recommended that narrowing down to a set of 3-5 intervention modifications been developed.

#### **STEP #5: Selecting the Path Forward**

At this point, it makes best sense for the community of service users to select the interventions that they perceive will best address their needs. This can be accomplished with a “town hall” type of gathering that allows community members to come together, to have discussions about the options and to work (ideally) towards consensus. With the community’s input on discerning the best interventions to make available to their community, the community will have “validated” the interventions and been afforded the visibility and respect of determining their own pathways towards wellbeing.

#### **STEP #6: Evaluating the Improved Intervention**

It is important to ensure that the hoped-for results actually materialize. Developing and implementing a program evaluation or organizational evaluation that is able to determine the benefits of the intervention will be helpful for clients, staff, funders and the community.

# Client Satisfaction Survey

## Sample Content

### Part 1: Introduction

We are asking you to complete this survey to gather information about how well we are serving you. We will make use of the information you give us, learning about our strengths and weaknesses, and how well we serve people from different communities.

**Our commitment to you:** We promise that our results will be shared with you, along with the improvements we are going to make to our work. We aim to get better every year and want you to know how we have made use of the information that you provide to us.

### Part 2: Questions about our cultural responsiveness

1. How welcome do you feel when:
  - You walk in the door?
  - You talk to the staff at the front desk?
  - You wait for service?
  - You get together with service staff?
2. What improvements would you like to see made?
3. How easy was it to get served by our organization?
4. What barriers did you face in getting served?
  - Location and getting here?
  - Cost of transportation to get here?
  - Eligibility requirements?
  - Paperwork or documentation requirements?
  - Cost of services?
  - Language?
  - Culture?
  - Reputation?
  - Knowing that the service exists?
  - Days of the week we are open?
  - Hours we are open?
  - Waiting list?
5. Would you have preferred to have been seen at home? In your neighborhood? In a less formal setting?
6. How many different practitioners have you seen? How many of them share your background?
7. Would you have preferred to have had more practitioners who share your background?
8. How useful are the services that you have used so far?
9. What are additional services that you wish we provided? [open ended]
10. Let's hear more explicitly about how our service providers work with you. Please give us a grade in the following areas:
  - The level of respect provided by staff
  - How well they understand your culture, your community's history, and the types of challenges those from your community face in Portland
  - How well you were listened to
  - Encouraged to take the time you need with the service provider (and not rushed)
  - Being invited to share your own assessment of what is wrong and what you need

- Coordinate services with traditional healers from your own culture
  - The staff's willingness to explore your experiences of racism and other forms of discrimination
  - The staff's willingness to meet with other members of my family and friends
  - The staff's willingness to include family and community members in decision making about your care
  - Providing you with as much extra information that you want
  - The clarity of the instructions you received in what to do next
11. Our staff try to make sure your needs are met. Please give us a grade in the following areas:
- Knowledge about other services available to you
  - Advocacy on your behalf with other organizations or service providers
  - Providing you with helpful information about what you are going through
  - Navigating the array of service providers and getting what you need
12. We have a few additional services that try to improve your overall experience in our organization. Please grade us on these resources:
- Interpreter services
  - Follow up services
  - Complaint processes
  - Helping me get my basic needs met for food, shelter and money
  - Making sure I am safe and not being harmed by others
  - Referrals for additional services
13. What level of respect to you experience here?
- Everyone treats me with the utmost of respect
  - I never feel like I am an outsider
  - Sometimes people look down on me
  - Sometimes people treat me like I should be more grateful for the service I'm getting
14. Do you think you would receive better support and care here if you were white?
15. Please make recommendations for how we can improve our work with you [open ended]
16. Overall, please grade us on your overall experience of the following:
- a. Feeling like you belong
  - b. Feeling like your wellbeing is our highest priority
  - c. Getting useful services that help improve your life

**Part 3: Identifying Information**

1. Please share your race, ethnicity, ancestry, country of origin, and/or Tribal affiliation in any way you wish [open-ended question]
2. What is your race?
3. What languages do you communicate in?
4. Please check off all statements that apply to you
  - I was born in the USA
  - I arrived in the USA as a refugee or asylum seeker
  - I am an immigrant to the USA
  - My parents were immigrants to the USA
  - I am an indigenous person (meaning your ancestors are original peoples of a nation conquered or colonized by others)

## Climate Survey

### *Sample content*

#### **Part 1: Introduction**

We are conducting this tool to gain understanding on the ways in which the organization has been able to “walk its talk” on racial inequities. As you know, the organization is committed to improving our cultural responsiveness in tandem with efforts to undo institutional racism, particularly as it affects the racial disparities facing our clients of color. Part of that effort needs to detail how well we are creating a workplace that is equitable and appealing to staff and volunteers who spend their work lives (or portions of it) with us. Accordingly, we ask you to provide us with feedback on your experiences inside the workplace. Please answer as accurately as possible as we are committed to take action on the collective responses that we receive.

#### **Part 2: The substance of your experience**

1. In your relationships with colleagues, how well are you:
  - a. Respected?
  - b. Listened to?
  - c. Valued for the contributions you make?
2. What is the frequency with which you experience the following:
  - a. Ignored?
  - b. Talked down to?
  - c. Presumed incompetent?
  - d. Made fun of?
  - e. Been treated in an intentional way to isolate you or make you feel like an outsider?
  - f. Unintentionally made to feel like an outsider?
3. How many times in the last two years while at work did the following occur?
  - a. Harassed?
  - b. Discriminated against?
  - c. Threatened?
4. In your experiences with your supervisor and with higher up administrators, please indicate your agreement with the following statements:
  - a. I am valued by the organization
  - b. I am treated as though I am a difficult person to work with
  - c. I am treated as though I am capable of taking on higher levels of responsibility
  - d. I have received feedback that suggests I would be seriously considered for a promotion
5. How well do the organization provide you with the necessary resources to complete your job tasks?
6. How skilled are your colleagues at responding to acts of marginalization when they occur?
7. How confident are you in the complaint mechanisms in the organization to deal with issues of oppression?
8. How supportive are colleagues when you are faced with adversity in the workplace?
9. What recommendations do you have for the organization to improve its climate?

#### **Part 3: Demographic information**

1. What department do you work in?
2. Of the following, what best describes the role you have in the organization?
3. What is your race?

4. Other identifying information that may be valuable to the organization? (LGBTQ, disability, age, etc.)

## Additional Web Resources

We have reviewed many different web resources and recommend the following to assist deepen an understanding of specific issues related to the nine domains of the Protocol. This is not a complete list of resources but a good place to start!

### 1. Organizational commitment, leadership & governance

- <http://www.costi.org/whoweare/equity.php>
- <http://centerfornonprofits.wisc.edu/scholars/documents/UttalMakingOrganizationsandProgramsCulturallyCompetent.pdf>

### 2. Racial Equity Policies and Implementation Practice

- <http://coalitioncommunitiescolor.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2014-Assement-Tool-Final.pdf>
- <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/46/>

### 3. Organizational Climate, Culture and Communications

- <http://www.ioe.org/ioe/2001june/a1.php>
- <http://ethnomed.org/culture>
- <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/resourceguide.html>
- <http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/>

### 4. Service-Based Equity & Relevance

- <http://www.diversityrx.org/>
- <http://www.dvinstitute.org/media/pubs/SuperVisitBook.pdf>
- [http://www.immi.gov.au/about/charters/\\_pdf/culturally-diverse/practice.pdf](http://www.immi.gov.au/about/charters/_pdf/culturally-diverse/practice.pdf)
- <http://www.mhima.org.au/framework/supporting-tools-and-resources/key-concepts/culturally-responsiveness>
- <http://www.counseling.org/Publications/FrontMatter/78082-FM.PDF>
- <http://ethnomed.org/clinical/mental-health/Culturally-Competent-Care-Boynton.flv/view>
- <http://ethnomed.org/cross-cultural-health/interpretation/access-report.pdf/view>
- [http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/Tools\\_Resources/DOCS/AoA\\_DiversityToolkit\\_full.pdf](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/Tools_Resources/DOCS/AoA_DiversityToolkit_full.pdf)

### 5. Service User Voice and Influence

- <http://www.mhima.org.au/framework/supporting-tools-and-resources/key-concepts/consumer-and-carer-participation>
- <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2013/08/behavioral-health.pdf>
- [http://www.easternhealth.org.au/app/cmslib/media/umlib/about/eh\\_comm\\_part\\_resp\\_plan\\_2014-16.pdf](http://www.easternhealth.org.au/app/cmslib/media/umlib/about/eh_comm_part_resp_plan_2014-16.pdf)

### 6. Workforce Composition and Quality

- <http://vimeo.com/65814104>
- <http://www.asph.org/userfiles/StrategiesforImprovingDiversityinthHealthProfessions.pdf>
- <http://diversity-executive.com/articles/view/10-ways-to-diversify-your-workforce>
- [http://www.saintpaulfoundation.org/\\_asset/rbvqqv/hiring\\_guide.pdf](http://www.saintpaulfoundation.org/_asset/rbvqqv/hiring_guide.pdf)

### 7. Community Collaboration

- [http://www.mcwh.com.au/downloads/MCWH\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_2012-2015.pdf](http://www.mcwh.com.au/downloads/MCWH_Strategic_Plan_2012-2015.pdf)



- <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/fnmi/collaborativeframework.aspx>
- [http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files\\_nhmrc/publications/attachments/hp19.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/hp19.pdf)

#### 8. Resource Allocation and Contracting Practices

- [http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/index\\_43058.html](http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/index_43058.html)
- <http://www.uclg-cisd.org/en/observatory/inclusion-indigenous-women-local-participatory-budgeting-process>
- <http://www.funderscollaborative.org/partners/contractor-and-workforce-inclusion>

#### 9. Data Metrics and Continuous Quality Improvement

- <http://www.cssp.org/publications/constituents-co-invested-in-change/customer-satisfaction/customer-satisfaction-framework-improving-quality-and-access-to-services-and-supports-in-vulnerable-neighborhoods.pdf>
- <http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10003FC9Serviceuserfeedbacktools-anevidencereviewandDelphiconsultationfortheHealthProfessionsCouncil.pdf>

## Definitions

**Coalition for Communities of Color (CCC)** – The Coalition of Communities of Color was founded in 2001 to strengthen the voice and influence of communities of color in Multnomah County, Oregon. The CCC’s mission is, *“The communities of color unite as a coalition to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities. The Coalition will organize communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity.”*

**Climate Survey** – Employee climate surveys are studies of employees' perceptions and perspectives of an organization. Surveys address attitudes and concerns that help the organization work with employees to instill positive changes.

**Communities Of Color (and local communities of color)** – Communities of color are identity-based communities that hold a primary racial identity that describes shared racial characteristics among community members. The term aims to define a characteristic of the community that its members share (such as being African American) that supports self-definition by community members, and that typically denotes a shared history and current/historic experiences of racism. An older term for communities of color is that of "minority communities" which is increasingly inaccurate given that people of color are majority identities on a global level. That term has also been rejected for its potential to infer any inferior characteristics. The community may or may not also be a geographic community. Given that race is a socially-defined construct, the definitions of these communities are dynamic and evolve across time. At present, in Multnomah County, the Coalition of Communities of Color defines communities of color to include Native Americans, Latinos, Asian and Pacific Islanders (further disaggregated according to local preferences), African Americans, African Immigrants and Refugees, Middle Eastern, and Slavic communities.<sup>46</sup>

**Community Advisory Board** – Advisory Board made up of representatives from the communities being served, who are involved with planning, improvement and review of programs and services on an ongoing basis.

**Community based organizations (CBOs)**– A community based organization is one that is driven by community members in all aspects of its existence. By that we mean:

- The majority of the governing body and staff consists of local community members
- The main operating offices are in the community
- Priority issue areas are identified and defined by community members
- Solutions to address priority issues are developed with community members
- Program design, implementation, and evaluation components have community members involved in non-tokenistic leadership positions<sup>47</sup>

**Constituents** – Members of an organization and those whose interests are represented by it. This typically means clients of the organization, their families and kin, and sometimes community members who are involved in the organization.

**Cultural competency** – A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals that enable that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.<sup>48</sup>

Cultural competence requires that organizations: have a defined set of values and principles, and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies and structures that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally; have the capacity to (1) value diversity, (2) conduct self-assessment, (3) manage the dynamics

of difference, (4) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge and (5) adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities they serve; incorporate the above in all aspects of policy making, administration, practice, service delivery and involve systematically consumers, key stakeholders and communities. Cultural competence is a developmental process that evolves over an extended period. Both individuals and organizations are at various levels of awareness, knowledge and skills along the cultural competence continuum.<sup>49</sup>

**Cultural proficiency** – is a transformational approach and an inside-out perspective on change, involving making the commitment to lifelong learning for the purpose of being increasingly effective in serving and integrating the needs of cultural and ethnic groups. Employees and leavers who embody cultural proficiency

- recognize and value professional development
- hold a value for social justice
- advocate for students and community groups as a par to their professional responsibility<sup>50</sup>

**Culturally responsive organizations** – A culturally responsive organization comprehensively addresses power relationships throughout the organization, from the types of services it provides and how it maximizes language accessibility to its human resources practices – who it hires, how they are skilled, prepared and held accountable, to its cultural norms, its governance structures and policies, and its track record in addressing conflicts and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, to its relationships with racial groups in the region, including its responsiveness to expectations. Furthermore, a culturally-responsive organization is one that is dynamic, on a committed path to improvement and one that is hardwired to be responsive to the interests of communities of color, service users of color and staff of color.

**Culturally responsive services** – are services that have been adapted to maximize the respect of and relevance to the beliefs, practices, culture and linguistic needs of diverse consumer/client populations and communities. Cultural responsiveness describes the capacity to respond to the issues of diverse communities. It thus requires knowledge and capacity at different levels of intervention: systemic, organizational, professional and individual.<sup>51</sup>

**Culturally specific organizations** – The Coalition of Communities of Color’s 2014 definition of a culturally specific organization includes the following:

- Majority of members and/or clients must be from a particular community of color (6 specified, plus pan-immigrant/refugee)
- Organizational environment is culturally focused and the community being served recognizes it as a culturally-specific organization
- Staff must be majority from the community being served, and the leadership (defined to collectively include Board members and management positions) must be majority from the community being served
- Organization has a track record of successful community engagement and involvement with the community being served
- The community being served recognizes the organization as advancing the best interests of the community and engaging in policy advocacy on behalf of the community being served

**Equity Team** – an organizational leadership group that is responsible for determining and moving a racial equity agenda forward in the organization. Membership usually includes upper executives, equity staff, and representatives from the breadth of the organization and different levels in the hierarchy. The typical team is about 10-12 people and at least 3 people of color. This level of at least 25% minority racialized staff resists isolation, increases support for surfacing tough topics, and minimizes tokenism.

**Equity and Empowerment Lens (E&E Lens)** - A tool that can be widely used to intentionally examine and address root causes of inequities and specifically highlight the importance of integrating racial justice

principles and practices. The E&E Lens in Multnomah County, OR, was developed through the combined efforts of county staff, policy makers, and community members.

**Evidence-based practice (EBP)** - EBP is the integration of clinical expertise, patient values, and the best research evidence into the decision making process for patient care. Clinical expertise refers to the clinician's cumulated experience, education and clinical skills. The patient brings to the encounter his or her own personal preferences and unique concerns, expectations, and values. The best research evidence is usually found in clinically relevant research that has been conducted using sound methodology.<sup>52</sup>

**Generational time in the USA** – Rather than asking about the number of years someone is in the USA, we instead seek to know whether they are a first or second generation immigrant. A first generation immigrant means they were born in another country. A second generation immigrant means one's parent(s) were born in another country, and they were born in the USA.

**Improvement Plan** – Following completion of the Protocol assessment, the organization develops a written plan that spells out the goals for the coming year (including concrete actions, timelines, and responsibilities) that addresses shortcomings identified in the Protocol assessment.

**Performance-based budgeting** - involves explicitly defining outcomes from intended services (outputs), collecting evaluation data on performance indicators of services delivered, and using the relevant data to inform future budgetary decisions was recommended to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

**Practice-based evidence** - a range of interventions and supports that are derived from, and supportive of, the positive cultural attributes of the local society and traditions. Practice based evidence services are accepted as effective by the local community, through community consensus, and address the therapeutic and healing needs of individuals and families from a culturally specific framework. Practitioners of practice based evidence models draw upon cultural knowledge and traditions for treatment and are respectfully responsive to the local definitions of wellness and dysfunction.<sup>53</sup> For examples see: <http://www.dimensionsofculture.com/category/cultural-health-beliefs-behaviors/>

**Practitioner** – refers to the professional or paraprofessional service provider who delivers services to individuals, families, groups and/or communities.

**Protocol Assessment** – details the organization's status regarding integration of each standard in the Protocol. Part of this assessment is to gather "evidence" that helps define its degree of adherence to the standards.

**Qualified interpreter** - Bilingual staff who communicate directly with clients/consumers in their preferred language must demonstrate a command of both English and the target language that includes knowledge and facility with the terms and concepts relevant to the type of encounter. Ideally, this should be verified by formal testing. Research has shown that individuals with exposure to a second language, even those raised in bilingual homes, frequently overestimate their ability to communicate in that language, and make errors that could affect complete and accurate communication and comprehension. Prospective and working interpreters must demonstrate a similar level of bilingual proficiency. Interpreters must be assessed for their ability to convey information accurately in both languages before they are allowed to interpret.<sup>54</sup>

**Race and ethnicity** - Race is a social construct. Racial classifications are rooted in the idea of biological classification of humans according to morphological features such as skin color or facial characteristics. An individual is usually externally classified (meaning someone else makes the classification) into a racial group rather than the individual choosing where they belong as part of their identity. Ethnicity refers not to physical characteristics but to social traits that are shared by a human population. Some of the social

traits often used for ethnic classification include: nationality; tribe; religious faith; shared language; and shared culture and/or traditions. Unlike race, ethnicity is not usually externally assigned by others. The term ethnicity focuses more upon a group's connection to a perceived shared past and culture.<sup>55</sup>

**Racial equity** - Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include root causes of inequities not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.<sup>56</sup>

**Racial equity policy** – An organizational policy that confirms the importance of an explicit focus on the eradication of racial inequities to improve the lives of people of color. See the sample guidelines in this text.

**Respectful recognition** – is a service philosophy for providers requiring them to consistently affirm the dignity of who one is and one's entitlement to the very best of services. Conditions for the relationship are not limited by conventions such as gratitude, appreciation or politeness – clients are accepted in the fullness and complexity of who they are, and staff are expected to be respectful and affirming of the histories of client's communities, including the full range of oppression and suffering they have faced and continue to face. Recognition means that one seeks to understand the full range of who one is, and the experiences they have faced, without invalidating any part of it, making assumptions, or imposing bias on the interpretation of these experiences.

**Staff** – This term refers to the full range of employees in an organization and is extended to include volunteers, students, interns, and sometimes extended to include contracted and subcontracted service providers if they primarily work at the organization's main sites.

**Universal interventions** - a program or approach that promotes the mental health and wellbeing of everyone in the group or community, rather than just a particular individual or group, e.g. a whole school program to prevent bullying or to promote resilience.

**Universal precautions** – An emerging best practice to ensure health and service literacy is understood by all, and thus clarity is emphasized in communicating health assessments, care instructions and follow up advice. Rather than screening for those who need such clarity, best practice suggests that all patients and clients can benefit from basic, clear and repeated instructions, with practice that requires clients reflect what they heard from the practitioner.

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