

Racial Equity Decision-Making Tool (REDT)

The Racial Equity Decision-Making Tool (REDT) is designed to support a group to work intentionally to ensure decisions are aligned with an organization's racial equity and racial justice values. A Racial Equity Decision-Making Tool is an opportunity to:

- ⦿ Integrate an explicit racial equity analysis in decisions, including policies, practices, programs, and budgets.
- ⦿ Uncover systemic issues which are critical to address while making decisions and moving toward transformational change.
- ⦿ Build a group's knowledge and skill in using a racial equity analysis to assess issues so it will be fully integrated in any future decision-making process.
- ⦿ Create a process to develop strategies and actions that reduce racial inequities, improve equitable outcomes and work toward creating a racially equitable organization.
- ⦿ Develop accountability practices in operationalizing racial equity.

This is a tool to assist you in using a racial equity analysis in decisions and/or responding to an issue. There are several other tools listed at the end with different questions and frameworks. Find one that works for you or create one, adapting different questions shared from these various organizations.

What to Keep in Mind When Using REDT

Determine Benefit and/or Burden

Before using the Racial Equity Decision-Making Tool, it is critical for all group members to have a basic understanding of the history of structural racism, how it operates, and its impact, as well how white supremacy culture¹ manifests in organizations. You need to build the skills to identify the racially disparate impact of policies and practices—which racial identity groups are being privileged and which are burdened with different access as well as voices that are

¹ There are differing opinions about the framing of this concept – sometimes called white culture, white dominant culture, or white supremacy culture. This particular definition focuses on white dominant culture, “the dominant, unquestioned standards of behavior and ways of functioning embodied by the vast majority of institutions in the United States. Because it is so normalized it can be hard to see, which only adds to its powerful hold. In many ways, white dominant culture is indistinguishable from what we might call U.S. culture or norms – a focus on individuals over groups, for example, or an emphasis on the written word as a form of professional communication. But it operates in even more subtle ways, by actually defining what “normal” is – and likewise, what “professional,” “effective,” or even “good” is. In turn, white culture also defines what is not good, “at risk,” or “unsustainable.” White culture values some ways – ways that are more familiar and come more naturally to those from a white, western tradition – of thinking, behaving, deciding, and knowing, while devaluing or rendering invisible other ways. And it does this without ever having to explicitly say so.” Gita Gulati-Partee and Maggie Potapchuk. ["Paying Attention to White Culture and Privilege: A Missing Link to Advancing Racial Equity."](#) The Foundation Review (2014): 25-38. For information about white supremacy culture, one sources is Tema Okun's, [What is White Supremacy Culture?](#) Take the time to understand the concept, how the characteristics manifest in your organization, and learn about ways to intervene. It's also important to read how this concept has been weaponized (Scroll down to read more on [this page](#)) It is important not to just point fingers or name different characteristics that are present. Instead, learn to identify *and* intervene, and most importantly create new structures and culture that reflect your vision for a racially equitable organization.

minimized or marginalized. This is important in considering a targeted² response/decision based on the benefits and burdens to different racial identity groups. Finally, through this process, it is also important to assess the trajectory of a given policy or decision and address any unintended consequences.

Opportunities to Address Root Causes

Many times, we look for an immediate fix to address an issue so that we will quickly lessen the harm – and sometimes that immediacy is needed. Yet we need to analyze the issue/decision using racial equity analysis to find out the root causes that need to be addressed. Exploring more about the history, practices, policies, and narratives that are present may help to uncover issues which will enable your organization to address the root causes and therefore shift the culture, institutionalize racial equitable practices, and work toward transformation.

Be Accountable

Be clear about what decisions within the organization should be addressed using the Racial Equity Decision-Making Tool and how you will do so. Are those most impacted by the issue/decision leading the process or at least involved in making the decision? If not, how will the people involved in this decision-making process be accountable to those who are most impacted by the decision? Also, determine what is expected (and by when) after the REDT questions are discussed (e.g., who receives the information, who is responsible for addressing issues, who identifies supports). Be prepared to address any challenges and/or issues raised after applying the REDT and implementing a decision. Throughout the process always be transparent, thoughtful, and consistent in your communication.

Assess Implementation

It takes time to integrate the Racial Equity Decision-Making Tool into regular practice. People in your organization will be in learning mode, especially in the first year or so. Be sure to gather intel on how REDT is used, who is involved, finding out what challenges people had with using it, discussing what supports are needed to build people's knowledge and skills, learning about what happened after the implementation, and identifying any patterns that come up during the REDT discussion. All of these can be helpful indicators to work toward institutionalizing this process and ensure the supports are in place for an effective and accountable process.

Time...

Implementing the Racial Equity Decision-Making Tool may feel cumbersome at first and will definitely take longer at the beginning before it becomes a regular part of the group's analysis in making decisions. With continued use of the REDT, the time involved for decision-making may lessen. Individual's racial equity analysis skills will increase and result in more thought/work being done proactively.

² To learn about targeted universalism, read [Targeted Universalism: Policy and Practice](#), John A. Powell, Stephen Menendian, and Wendy Ake.

REDT Sections

I. Self-Reflection

This section invites all people involved in using REDT to understand their individual filters and worldviews³. It is helpful to pause and understand one's worldview, the narratives taught through socialization, biases, and assumptions, before applying a racial equity analysis.

II. Engage and Review

This section walks through a series of questions that are required to collect and review data and to engage and involve stakeholders to inform your analysis and decision.

III. Analysis and Discussion

This section has five subsections of questions and prompts related to history, resources, narrative, people, and policies and practices.⁴

IV. Next Steps

This section provides questions to create accountability practices after the decision is made and prepare for implementation.

V. Individual and Group Reflection

This section provides reflection questions to make meaning of the experience of using the REDT.

³ A worldview refers to your view about how the world works. We all operate from a worldview. Your worldview influences how you interpret events – and it's important to examine and understand your own. Worldviews can be rooted in culture or faith or your evolving understanding of the world. There are many worldviews – such as, “The world is structured to support some people at the expense of others.” Or “we all have equal possibilities if we just work hard.” Or “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead. “One of the most insidious ways that worldview can work is to keep people from engaging in a critical, structural analysis of power relations — it naturalizes relationships of power and subordination and categories of race and gender and contributes to a sense of political powerlessness.” [From Using Worldview to Build Power](#), Grassroots Policy Project.

⁴ This framework is based on [OpenSource Leadership Strategies'](#) Racial Equity Analysis and Strategy worksheet.

Racial Equity Decision-Making Tool (REDT)

➤ *What is the issue you want to address or decision you want to make or analyze using the REDT?*

I. Self-Reflection

Before using this Racial Equity Decision-Making Tool and beginning a discussion about applying a racial equity analysis, each member of the group should pause and reflect on their individual worldview, the narratives they have been taught and that have been reinforced through socialization, biases, and assumptions present. These questions may help your reflection process:

- ⦿ What might you need to keep in mind regarding your role, racial identity and other identities, privileges, and positional power?
- ⦿ Reflect on how internalized racial superiority⁵ or internalized racism⁶ might be present for you?
- ⦿ How do you believe transformational change happens in an organization?
- ⦿ What questions do you have and/or areas would you like to continue to build your knowledge about (e.g., [structural racism](#), power and privilege⁷)?
- ⦿ What supports do you need to address racism, privilege, and power issues within your organization? Take time to reflect based on your racial identity, position, tenure, and role in the organization.
- ⦿ Reflect on the following challenging areas and how you might respond and interrupt if they come up in the REDT discussion:
 - the group is focusing on individual impact rather than thinking about systemic issues and context.

⁵ To learn more about internalized racial superiority, go to RacialEquityTools.org's page and [scroll to the third box](#).

⁶ To learn more about internalized racism, go to RacialEquityTools.org's [page of resources](#)

⁷ To learn more about these terms and others in REDT, see the [glossary](#) page on www.racialequitytools.org

- people are centering their own experience and perspective, and possibly trivializing the experience and/or voices of others, especially those most impacted by the issue.
- people assume a conflict is only based on personality differences rather than exploring whether it is based on different worldviews, the impact of institutional racism, organization culture, narratives present in organization, and/or power dynamics.
- people are making assumptions based on people’s identities and/or role within the organization
- the group is prioritizing the opinions of people with positional power over those most impacted by the issue.

Take a Moment to Ground Yourself and Re-imagine the World...

As you begin your reflection of your situation, center yourself on your commitment to racial justice and dismantling the system of white supremacy and racism. Take a moment, reflecting on, or journaling or drawing or sharing with others your response to the following re-imagining question:

➤ *What is your vision of a racially just world you are working to create?*

Take a Deep Breath...

II. Engage and Review

Engage and Involve Stakeholders

The people who know the most about how to make a decision, develop and shape a policy, or address an issue are those who are or will be most impacted. There may also be other important voices who can offer different perspectives about implementation, e.g., managers who will be implementing the policy, or necessary perspectives such as legal counsel, depending on the situation.

Though other individuals or groups beyond those most impacted may be important to involve, it is important to notice whose voices are privileged in the review of the data, in the decision-making process and in considering the next steps. Sometimes voices of those most impacted—

People of the Global Majority—are heard, yet the process and group members do not prioritize and privilege their perspective and opinions in the making decisions, developing a policy or addressing an issue.

Some final decisions can only be made by the Board or the CEO. Be very clear with the group about boundaries regarding a decision before you start the process. If anything in consideration is off the table - be sure to share what and why. If you are asking people to invest their time and respecting their experience and expertise, be transparent about constraints.

How are those most impacted by the decision engaged in this REDT process to determine the decision?⁸

How will you be accountable to those most impacted?

What accountability practices need to be in place/used?⁹

Gather and Review Data¹⁰

- ⊙ Has data been collected about a particular policy or issue to see what racial inequities are currently present that will need to be addressed? If not, how could you do this?
- ⊙ It is important to track different racial identity groups to identify benefits and burdens when analyzing data. For example, with regard to hiring, is there racially disaggregated data on:
 - Who has been interviewed?
 - Who has not been invited to the interview stage?
 - Who was hired to work at the organization?
 - With all the data, are there any patterns of inequities based on racial identity groups?
- ⊙ What data is missing or needed? What racial identity groups don't show up in the data? Why? What will be the process for collecting the data to correct this?
- ⊙ Who will be involved in analyzing the data?
- ⊙ Based on review of the data, which racial identity groups are most advantaged and most disadvantaged currently within the organization? How do you know?

⁸ One resource that's helpful to review - starting on page 3 of this document, [Spectrum of Family and Community Engagement for Educational Equity](#) – Facilitating Power and Movement Strategy Center. More resources are located on [community engagement page](#) on RacialEquityTools.org

⁹ To read more about different accountability practices, review the [Accountability page](#) on RacialEquityTools.org

¹⁰ Here are a few resources to support your analysis of the data: [A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration](#) – Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy; [Data Equity: What Is It, and Why Does It Matter?](#) – JLI Consulting; and [Using Data to Move Racial Equity Conversations Forward](#), Dusty Olson, Abt Associates Alissa Parrish, ICF. Also, check out these [tipsheets](#) created by Center for Assessment and Policy Development – scroll to the box – Collecting Information.

- ⊙ What do you need to consider, be pro-active about, interrupt, and/or dream can be different in decisions that are made from here forward?

III. Analysis¹¹ and Discussion

These questions may not seem to fit and may feel awkward as your group begins your analysis to make the decision. Adapt the questions – do not let the tool be a barrier to using a racial equity analysis. Read the question and identify its intent, then reformulate the question to fit your discussion. For instance, when answering the very first question about historical patterns, you may be working on a remote work policy and previously didn't have one in your organization. If so, adapt the question – *discuss the historical patterns of racial inequities in the policies and practices within your organization regarding how staff is supported and about expectations regarding work time.*

You may not know the answer to some of these questions – there may not be a direct answer, or you may need to do some homework and/or talk to other people. You can decide which questions to focus on, though I encourage you to work to answer those that are challenging or may seem riskier. One thing you may notice as your group is answering the questions is that there may be some recurring themes. That is good – it will assist you in identifying key points to address as you move toward building consensus. At the same time, pay attention to whether this means that your group is in total alignment and may be missing perspectives from others not in the group. Are there different perspectives or experiences you may need to consider? What might be some impacts or inequities that you have not considered yet? This process is also about building and deepening relationships, learning about each other's worldviews and different points of view. Take time to focus on this as well; it is critical not just for using REDT but also in the long-term organizational change process¹².

Reflect on the History:

- ⊙ What are the historical patterns of racial inequities and racism in the context of the issue? Consider the history: within the organization, within the organization's ecosystem, and the within society as a whole that may impact the particular issue you are discussing.
- ⊙ *Brainstorm: How could the decision address and disrupt these historical and any cumulative racism and racial inequitable patterns and impacts?*

Reflect on Resources (e.g., monetary, time, access, materials):

- ⊙ Who are the resources designed for? Who are they distributed to? Identify any racialized patterns and racial inequities.

¹¹ This framework is based on OpenSource Leadership Strategies' Racial Equity Analysis and Strategy worksheet.

¹² Read more about the organizational change process, "[Operationalizing Racial Justice in Non-Profit Organizations](#)," Maggie Potapchuk, MP Associates. Explore more resources on racialequitytools.org: [Organization Change](#) and [Organizational Change Process](#).

- ⊙ Whose needs are being met by these resources? Whose needs are not being met? Identify any racialized patterns—current and historic.
- ⊙ If resources are designed to be distributed to *everyone*, is that how resources are or will be distributed? Is there a targeted approach necessary to address the historical or current racialized patterns and racial inequities?
- ⊙ *Brainstorm: How could the decision address and disrupt racism and the patterns of current and/or cumulative racial inequities regarding resources? What is needed to ensure racial equity is core to the distribution, type of and access to resources?*

Reflect on the Narrative:

- ⊙ What are the different racialized stories being told about the particular issue?
- ⊙ Are there coded images, myths, racist narratives, and assumptions that are used to rationalize or describe the issue?
- ⊙ What assumptions are being made about who and what matters?
- ⊙ *Brainstorm: How could the decision address and disrupt any racist assumptions, stories, biases, and/or stereotypes.*

Reflect on People:

- ⊙ Who is most impacted by the issue? What, if any are, the racial inequities, harm and/or racism targeted toward People of Color regarding this issue?
- ⊙ How can your response address the impact of the current and/or cumulative racial inequities and harm to People of Color? How can your response address the impact of the current and cumulative privileges received by white people?
- ⊙ *Brainstorm: How can the decision address and disrupt any implicit and explicit bias and/or any cumulative and current impact of racial inequities on People of Color.*

Reflect on Policies and Practices:

- ⊙ What is the differential racial impact of your organization's policies and practices (historic and/or current) that may be contributing to this issue?
- ⊙ How might the policy/practice be reinforcing white supremacy culture, power imbalances, and/or racial inequities within the organization?
- ⊙ *Brainstorm: How can the decision address and disrupt policies and practices that reinforce racial inequities and white supremacy culture?*

What were some of the themes that emerged when your group used the REDT questions?

What do you want to make sure you pay attention to in formulating the decision?

What ideas did you brainstorm about how this decision can address and disrupt patterns, policies, bias, stories and practices that reinforce current or cumulative racial inequities?

Decision...

Based on discussing these questions and brainstorming different options, then working together to narrow the ideas, what decision has your group made about this issue to ensure the organization will operationalize racial equity and address past/current racialized harms and inequities?

Take a moment before you finalize the decision:

- ⊙ Did you hear from everyone in the group? Did you do a process check to make sure that everyone was fully involved in making the final decision? Be sure to pay attention to how power dynamics, racial identities and other marginalized identities, privilege, and positional power may have influenced this decision. Pause. Reflect. If need be, go back and return to the discussion and build equitable consensus.
- ⊙ Make sure the decision is addressing root causes. If not, how could it?
- ⊙ What might be some adverse impacts or unintended consequences which could result from this decision that you want to address now or in implementation?

IV. Next Steps and Accountability

- ⊙ How will this decision be communicated to ensure those hearing will understand the analysis, process, intent, and impact? Who will communicate the decision? By when?
- ⊙ What stories and/or biases were uncovered through this process that will need to be addressed so they don't continue to cause harm? How will you do this?
- ⊙ How will those who are most impacted be involved in shaping the implementation, communication, and/or response?
- ⊙ What information needs to be communicated to the full organization (or specific groups) that you uncovered regarding racial inequities, white supremacy culture, power imbalances that will need to be address as you move forward on your racial equity change process? How will you communicate this? Who will communicate it? By when?
- ⊙ What support do you need to implement the decision? From whom?
- ⊙ Are there additional resources needed to implement this decision?

V. Individual and Group Reflection:

- ⊙ What did you learn from the process through using a racial equity analysis that can inform going forward?
- ⊙ What questions/struggles came up (individually & collectively) while using REDT?
- ⊙ How did the REDT conversation reveal the strengths or gaps of the relationships within the group discussing the issue? What are ways to strengthen them going forward?
- ⊙ What practices or policies might be changed? How can you cultivate a culture to increase alignment with the organization's commitment to racial equity?
- ⊙ What will you do differently, individually or as group, next time the REDT is used to help the process and make decisions that reflect your values of racial equity?

Racial Equity Decision-Making Tool is informed by these sources:

- [OpenSource Leadership Strategies'](#) *Racial Equity Analysis and Strategy worksheet*.
- An Equity Lens for Reviewing Policies, Programs, and Materials. [Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations](#), by Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas. Toronto: Between the Lines), 2006. P. 243.
- [Concentric Circles: Unpacking Privilege and Power Diagnostic Tip-sheet](#), Maggie Potapchuk, MP Associates. 2007.
- [Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide – Seven Steps to Advance and Embed Race Equity and Inclusion within Your Organization](#), The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- [Racial Equity Impact Assessment Guide](#), *Race Forward*, 2009. Terry Keleher. Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity, Government Alliance on Race, and Equity.
- [To Equalize Power Among Us](#), Tools for Change.
- [Operationalizing A Structural Racism Framework: A Guide for Community Level Research and Action](#), The Aspen Roundtable Structural Racism and Community Revitalization Project. 2002.
- Additional Racial Impact tools are located [here](#), scroll to the box labeled, *Racial Equity Impact Questions and Process*.

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It is important to mention again there are different types of decision-making, policy assessment, and program worksheets that have been developed over the years to apply a racial equity analysis. Explore them. Figure out what might work for your organization or your specific need. Working to operationalize racial justice in your organization means practice and rigor and goes beyond just using a tool as check off in a change process. Explore, create, continuously practice, and act with accountability.

"The challenge is that we are all the inheritors of previous systems of oppression that have shaped our current perceptions of reality. It is quite difficult to be fully aware of the current moment and our existing 'limited-situations' without intentionally noticing and reflecting in order to act in the world for our own liberation."

~Paulo Freire