

# Promising Practice: Board and Staff Buy-in from the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance

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## Overview of Practice:

The essence of this promising practice is bringing in consultants to help us run a survey informing us about how we are viewed in the community regarding anti-oppression/equity. The consultants also helped facilitate a series of presentations with staff and board about the need for this work. The process also resulted in the development of a board/staff workgroup to bottom-line the process.

## History

This practice was precipitated by a staff conflict that had a racial element and consistent calls in the community for the organization to focus on this work. Full implementation begins with including anti-oppression goals and milestones in the next 2015-18. Then this anti-oppression lens is integrated in all the staff members' work plans. The Housing Alliance hopes that anti-oppression/equity issues will be solidly integrated in both the Housing Alliance internal culture and external work.

## Results

This practice has resulted in an anti-oppression/equity mission/values statement which is: publicized and used in hiring and job evaluations, used to cultivate accountability for all staff and other people in positions of power within the organization. So far we have implemented a full section of our new strategic plan devoted to staff/board anti-oppression goals. In both informal conversations and staff meetings, we prioritize talking about anti-oppression/equity issues within the organization, as well as broader issues in the community. We have also increased staff trainings in the intersection of anti-oppression/equity and housing/homelessness issues. For the 2015 Legislative Session, the Housing Alliance has included anti-oppression/equity analyses for all lead issues. And the website includes a section on the intersection of various race and social justice issues and housing/homelessness.

## Keys to Success

1. Hiring of consultants.
2. Survey with consultants of past Housing Alliance staff members, as well as community members and allies.
3. Outline results and series of recommendations.

4. Create board and staff anti-oppression workgroup to check-in about the recommendations.
5. Publicize to the broader community our renewed work on anti-oppression/equity issues.
6. Implement anti-oppression/equity goals into strategic plan.
7. Implement strategic plan goals into staff work plans.
8. Transition workgroup into a smaller board/staff team that will bottom-line the work plans with the executive director and overall direction of anti-oppression/equity goals in the future.

We have taken the measures of both informal meetings with staff members and formal meetings with key staff and board to get buy-in in order to make this practice a success

An important factor of implementation is a dedicated, committed (and patient) person or persons wanting to see the process through. What makes this practice attractive and worth trying is that it provides a discussion/action-oriented framework with a set of deliverables. The anticipated resources necessary for this practice come in the form of funding for hiring the consultant.