



Racial Equity Promising Practices Profile Form

The Housing Development Consortium exists to connect and convene our 165+ member organizations in enacting racial equity through engagement events, advocacy efforts, development programs, affinity groups and the sharing of promising and best practices.

With increasing competition around funding and resources, it's imperative that we become *more* open – not less – to further our collective vision and ensure the prosperity and efficiency of the sector in achieving racial equity. As challenging as it might be to find the right forums or share our learning through our failures, communicating lessons learned is the only way for us to more rapidly reinvest in improvements toward the sector and meeting our shared goals in affordable housing.

We invite you to share your insights by using the form below to record preliminary information on new or revised promising practices. The HDC Racial Equity Project Coordinators will follow up with you to collect more details shortly.

Share your insight by using the form below to record initial information.

Please tell us as much as you can, following the prompts below. We will follow up with you to obtain additional details that will create a complete profile of the practice. Our goal is to help you share your knowledge and experience with others to build stronger, more sustainable affiliates, which will help to create stronger communities.

Working title for your promising practice: Education Station	
Your name, HDC member organization, title, email address, web address, and telephone number: Caleb Marshall, Executive Director Rebuilding Together Seattle cmarshall@rtseattle.org www.rtseattle.org 206-682-1231	Best method / time to contact you? Email or phone, during workday 9-5 Do you give permission for HDC to contact your organization for an interview? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Overview of Practice

What is the essence of the promising practice?

The purpose of the practice is to increase staff knowledge and awareness of, and reflection on social justice, race and equity, and inclusion topics, particularly where they intersect with housing or homeownership issues. The practice involves shared readings and discussions by our staff on a weekly basis.

Where is it being implemented or considered for implementation?

We incorporate our "education station" into our staff meeting each with, with staff members rotating who will be responsible for sharing out an article or other media piece that we review ahead of time and then discuss as one of the opening segments of our meeting.

History

How did the practice get started?

In wanting to redesign our staff meetings to be more engaging and to take into account our work within a larger context, staff at the time had a discussion of what types of elements would really help us foster the type of culture, teamwork, and communication that we were striving for through our staff meetings.

When was it first implemented or when will it be fully implemented?

We started the practice a little over a year ago and have kept it up as a regular staple within our staff meeting framework each week.

Results

What are the expected results and impacts?

The expectations were varied, but included getting everyone in a thinking and reflection mode, ready to engage in conversation and discussion during our meetings. As mentioned, we wanted to increase our own understanding and awareness of race, equity, and inclusion, particularly within the context of our work and sector. And we expected our discussions to help us evaluate and in some cases change our practices in order to better address some of the inequities and other challenges raised in the articles that we examined.

What have you achieved so far? What do you plan to achieve?

While I'm not sure there have been significant actions as a result of the conversations, I can say that the practice has spilled over into more sharing and thinking around topics of race, equity, and inclusion outside of just the education station venue. That level of awareness and keeping awareness and ideas on the forefront of our minds, I think has served us well in examining some of our operations, materials, and interactions that we might have otherwise not thought much about. We hope that coupled with other formalized practices, that our education station can be an anchor point in implementing a racial equity and inclusion plan across our organizational functions.

How could it impact racial equity? Has it affected day-to-day practices in the organization?

I think knowledge, awareness, and empathy are the first steps to affecting racial equity in a positive way. The practice has certainly influenced the conversations and sensitivities we have in working with communities of color, it has led us to make some minor changes to our application process and materials, and it has even influenced our service priorities and program initiatives when considering funding opportunities.

Keys to success

List the action steps followed in carrying out the practice.

1. Allow colleagues to volunteer to lead the education station at each following staff meeting.
2. Select and distribute an article or media piece at least a few days in advance of the meeting to allow people time to review and reflect on their own.
3. Provide copies of the article at the meeting, if practical, or bring your own annotated copy.
4. Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak, but is not forced to, and that questions are prepared to help spark conversation and discussion.
5. Make sure to end by tying the story back into some direct or correlating aspect of the organizations work, preferably with an actionable outcome from the discussion.

What measures have been taken to make this effort a success?

We've added the education station segment as a standing placeholder in our staff meeting agenda. At the meeting, we always try to designate the next person who will identify an article and lead the discussion. And we usually do the education station after a small team building exercise that kicks off the meeting - that way folks are already primed to participate and share ideas and thoughts openly.

What are important factors of implementation?

We think it's important to not put restrictions on what types of stories can be shared during the education station. The idea is that these are topics that resonate with individual staff members. It's up to us as a team to draw comparisons and connections to our work. Like all discussions and conversations, it's important to encourage dialogue, but not to force people to comment or share. We try to all make space to hear each other and to ask questions that can deepen participation rather than cut it off.

What makes this practice attractive and worth trying? How could this work for other member organizations?

I think what makes it attractive is that it is easy to do, private in the sense of it takes place just with your team and peers. On the downside, it is also a somewhat passive activity, in the sense that you really have to be intentional in creating action, otherwise it can just be talk - which is important too, but which misses the mark in really creating personal, organizational, or structural/societal change. It also works well for us since our team is small. For other organizations, they might want to do something like this just within their department or workgroup meetings.

Resources

How much? - What are the anticipated total resources (people, money, time) necessary for this practice and are there likely sources of external support?

The resource input is pretty low. I would say it takes the presenting person maybe 30 minutes to an hour to identify an article and put together a few thoughts and questions around it. In fact, now that we've been doing it for a year, most of us are primed to keep an eye out for articles, which makes volunteering for the next opportunity easy to fill (it does have the downside of sometimes keeping stories private for longer than we would normally wait to share). For the rest of the staff, 15 minutes or so is all that's needed to read the article ahead of time. And then we usually allocate about the same amount of time to discussion during the meeting. We don't put a hard cap of time on the discussion though.

Project photos

Feel free to also send photos that best illustrate the practice to a racial equity project coordinator at hdc@housingconsortium.org

Submissions will be reviewed for fit with the HDC Racial Equity Project mission, goals and principles. Profiles will be posted on the Racial Equity Project webpage and will be considered for use in other HDC publications. Approved and disseminated partnership ideas are not necessarily suitable for all contexts and those interested should discuss implementation with their supervisors, HDC support staff and/or boards.