



# RACIAL EQUITY PROMISING PRACTICES PROFILE FORM

<b>Working title for your promising practice: Culture of Ongoing Learning</b>	
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	<b>Do you give permission for HDC to contact your organization for an interview?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

<b>Overview of Practice</b>
<b>What is the essence of the promising practice?</b> Fostering a culture of ongoing learning through personnel trainings and group debriefs, with special attention to the different ways we are impacted by the disparities of power implicit in social institutions and norms.
<b>Where is it being implemented or considered for implementation?</b> The practice is primarily implemented with staff and volunteers. Eventually, we hope to have conversations with tenants and community partners as well.

<b>History</b>
<b>How did the practice get started?</b> The practice began with conversations in the Program Committee as part of a general racial equity initiative, which was conceived from conversations among staff, who were seeking an opportunity to talk about racism and other systems of oppression in the context of the organization's mission and impact.
<b>When was it first implemented or when will it be fully implemented?</b> In April 2017, the Program Committee held its first meeting devoted to racial equity, with participants sharing the why the initiative mattered to them, identifying group practices, and determining next steps. Over the last two years, the practice has continued through the committee's monthly meetings, with time reserved for action items and group learning. Earlier this year, a new section was added to the volunteer training, which facilitates group conversation about privilege and oppression.

<b>Results</b>
<b>What are the expected results and impacts?</b> To develop a culture of inclusivity and mutual compassion; to encourage individual and group understanding of the systemic factors that perpetuate oppression, marginalization, and isolation; to facilitate empowerment and development of change leaders from within all areas of the organization; to cultivate an organizational commitment to undoing institutional racism.
<b>What have you achieved so far? What do you plan to achieve?</b> The Program Committee has taken on an initiative for racial equity with support from the Board of Directors; the volunteer training includes a section on poverty and inequality; hiring practices

continue to be assessed and revised to develop an equitable screening and orientation process; mandatory institutional racism training for all staff and board members is under consideration.

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

The intention of developing a culture of ongoing learning is to foster a sense of commitment to individual and community growth, engagement with mission and values, and adoption of racial equity practices. The fact that we are talking about racial equity, privilege, and systemic oppression, is a sign of change. In general, there is broad willingness to invite perspective and collaboration about arising issues, which is conducive to generating greater consensus about key decisions, organizational goals, and the strategies/tactics that are applied.

**Keys to success**

*List the action steps followed in carrying out the practice.*

Initially, members of the Program Committee determined that a racial equity initiative was important to our mission and aligned with our values. We decided to focus our monthly meetings on developing racial equity practices and drew on the HDC Racial Equity Toolkit to support that process. At our first meeting, committee members shared why racial equity matters to them and we identified group guidelines. We also sought out partnerships with other organizations engaging in racial equity work, which led us to joining the REI cohort. An important part of promoting a culture of ongoing learning has been to regularly invite assessment of our group guidelines and conversations about the purpose of racial equity, both in our work and in our lives.

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

Structuring meetings so that we have ample time to address an issue relevant to racial equity; incorporating material from the REI cohort into committee conversations; regular check-ins and assessment of group process; inviting additional stakeholders to join the committee in order to broaden perspective and impact.

***What are important factors of implementation?***

- Group dynamics and individual investment play a significant part in fostering a culture of ongoing learning. Group guidelines are essential to articulating a mode of communication that promotes mutual respect.

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

In working toward actualized racial equity and inclusion, there are policies and practices that can be implemented to quickly produce results; yet, for organizations that are still in a "pre-meditation" stage, laying the groundwork for action with group dialogue, trainings, and exercises is a significant step toward changing the organizational culture.

**Resources**

A commitment of dedicated involvement by a number of staff and organizational leaders is crucial to sustaining the practice. Even with a small organization, involving a diverse representation of the organization, including customers/clients, is also very important. Regularly scheduled meetings at least once a month at an accessible venue. Trainings, whether facilitated externally or internally, require payment for trainers or consultants.

