



# Advancing Racial Equity in Housing and Community Development:

## An Anti-Racism Guide for Transformative Change

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# OVERVIEW

## What is the purpose of this guide?

Two national organizations, the National Initiative on Mixed-Income Communities and Grounded Solutions Network, came together in early 2020 to address the need for more practical resources related to racial equity. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the historic movement for racial justice, we received requests from colleagues around the nation who want to eliminate embedded racism within the field of housing and community development. We hope this guide will spark courageous conversations and meaningful actions focused on racial equity.

## Who should read this guide?

The content is relevant to a wide range of audiences, including policymakers, planners, program administrators, developers, owner-operators, property managers, advocates, community organizers, and residents who seek to infuse racial equity into policies and programs.

Even those with the best intentions struggle, as it is a difficult journey to confront the inherent bias and racism that has been built into the systems in which we live and work. We hope this guide and your continued work will advance an unwavering commitment to intentionally support communities of color with anti-racist approaches.

## What do we mean by Racial Equity?

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Why is Racial Equity in the field of Housing and Community Development important?

What resources already exist that could help advance

## Starting Off: Essential Concepts for an Anti-Racism Approach

The continued need for the Movement for Black Lives and related racial justice activism demonstrate how difficult and necessary it is to promote meaningful participation by people of color in the democratic systems of government. The racial justice movement also calls out the importance of responsive government programs to ensure equitable outcomes for people of color.

It is important to recognize how racism manifests in housing, community development, and land use policies

Community Change, Structural Racism is “a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations and other norms work in various, often reinforcing, ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.” This system

# ANTI-RACISM IN ACTION

In this next section, we provide anti-racist interventions at each of the four levels of racism. We also provide guidance on being committed to anti-racism for people of color and for White people since there are different approaches needed in each case.

## INTERNALIZED ANTI-RACISM

### 1. Start with self-reflection - How are you personally activating your commitment to anti-racism?

It is problematic to address racism in policies and programs unless you are also working on yourself and your own anti-racist journey. It is necessary to start with our own personal beliefs, including stereotypes that we hold consciously or unconsciously.

For all people:

- Examine and counteract your bias and implicit bias.
- Understand your own racial, ethnic and cultural identity.
- Build cultural competence.
- Reflect on choices you make in your daily life, such as who you spend your time with, where you spend your money, and how you engage in learning about current events.

If you are aWhite person:

- Do not assume that it is the job of people of color to educate you about racism. Take action to educate yourself.
- Do not assume you know what is best for people of color and their communities.
- Consider how White privilege and White supremacy play out in your own professional lives, including in the creation and implementation of programs and policies.
- Recognize that you can perpetuate harm even though you are well-meaning. Having good intentions about promoting positive change is not enough; your actions and decisions may be reinforcing inequity and exclusion.
- Align with local and national organizations designed to support White people to address racism, such as Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ).

If you are a person of color:

- Continue to expand and deepen your support network by finding new allies and being open to connections with people who can offer additional support and inspiration.
- Reflect on how anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, anti-Asian, and anti-Latinx racism is being perpetuated within yourself and your own communities.
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- It requires meaningful collaborations with community organizations and residents so that policies and programs are truly shaped by people of color whose



standing racism and inequalities perpetuated in housing and community development over time and in today's current environment.

Have you invited people of color and equity-centered organizations to contribute to designing a racially equitable community participation process?

- Oftentimes, people in positions of power and privilege make assumptions. Start by reflecting on how to invite authentic conversations with people across racial identities.
- Invite one-on-one conversations with leaders of organizations that represent people of color who share your desire for authentic community engagement. Ask for how their members would want to contribute.
- Seek input from residents and community-based organizations in communities of color, especially those communities that have experienced cultural displacement, neglect and disinvestment. Consider their interests when designing zoning, land use and community investment strategies.
- Consider the importance of intersectionality. When you work to be inclusive of people of color, be sure to consider the full spectrum of perspectives across economic status, gender, sexual orientation and other identities.

If you are a White person, have you reflected on how you listen, connect and respond to people of color?

- Communication often means that people who are typically in the decision-making seat need to adjust their typical communication norms, so that they be.6 (t th)5q(n)2.2 ( )TJ-0 Td(o)-0.7 (n)-1 Pte (e2)-10.6e(a

- We need to explain technical policies in plain language that is accessible to community members.
- We need to translate complex programs and policies through visual representations and glossaries.
- We need to invest additional time to proactively educate in sensitive and respectful ways, respond to questions and develop resources that enable people to engage meaningfully.

**What strategies encourage participation among people of color?**

- When inviting feedback, listen intently. Express respect and value for the ideas of people of color even if you do not know how to immediately respond or know how you might implement ideas.
- When possible, implement the changes that people express are needed.
- Demonstrate through meaningful actions that the voices of people of color are valued and th.8 (gf)-3.3 (u)JJ-34v



## Resources for Further Learning

### Books

Between the World and Me

By Ta-Nehisi Coates

From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation

By Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

How to Be an Antiracist

By Ibram X. Kendi

Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become A Good Ancestor

By Layla F. Saad

Race talk and the conspiracy of silence: Understanding and facilitating difficult dialogues on race

By Derald Wing Sue

Sister Outsider

By Audre Lorde

So You Want to Talk About Race

By Ijeoma Oluo

Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America

by Ibram X. Kendi

The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How our Government Segregated America

By Richard Rothstein

The Racial Healing Handbook: Practical Activities to Help You Challenge Privilege, Confront Systemic Racism & Engage in Collective Healing

By Anneliese A. Singh

## Short Articles

The 1619 Project

The New York Times Magazine, August 2019

The Case for Reparations

By Ta-Nehisi Coates, The Atlantic, June 2014

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

By Peggy McIntosh

## Documentaries /Films

13<sup>th</sup>

I Am Not Your Negro

Jim Crow of the North

The Pruitt-Igoe Myth

## Podcasts

1619

Bending the Arc

Code Switch

Groundings

Intersectionality Matters (The African American Policy Forum)

Into America

Radical Imagination

Throughline (NPR)



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Please reach out if you have feedback or questions at [amy.khare@case.edu](mailto:amy.khare@case.edu) and [sreyes@groundedsolutions.org](mailto:sreyes@groundedsolutions.org).

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## About Us

Grounded Solutions Network is a national organization that supports strong communities from the ground up. We work nationally, connecting local experts with the networks, knowledge and support they need to promote housing solutions that will stay affordable for generations. Grounded Solutions