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## From the Inside Out: Race Equity Culture is Key to Driving Social Impact

Equity in the Center Research Offers Nonprofit and Philanthropic Organizations a New Tool for Building Race Equity Culture Internally to Better Advance Their Missions

WASHINGTON - April 24, 2018 — U.S. nonprofits neither reflect nor fully understand the populations they are looking to help because they have failed to embrace a fundamental element of social impact: race equity.

But groundbreaking research by Equity in the Center offers nonprofit and philanthropic organizations a new framework for approaching race equity — and for ensuring that the billions they invest annually in driving social change is making a greater impact.

The study, **Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture**, is the result of extensive research on race equity at nonprofits and foundations that includes insights from more than 140 practitioners, thought leaders, and subject matter experts on diversity, inclusion, and race equity in the social sector.

It finds that while many people who work in the sector understand the need to develop a Race Equity Culture in their organizations, the organizations themselves have struggled to implement the changes necessary to achieve this goal.

In turn, they are missing opportunities to achieve greater impact.

“It starts with culture,” Equity in the Center director Kerrien Suarez said. “A Race Equity Culture creates the *conditions* that help us center race equity in our life and in our work. Organizations that build a Race Equity Culture and intentionally infuse their strategy with race equity can actually weaken structural racism and broaden the reach of their work to long-

marginalized individuals. By doing this, they will not only help the populations they serve, the organizations themselves will become more effective at driving social impact.”

The research was funded by a number of foundations, including the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Meyer Foundation, and The David & Lucile Packard Foundation.

## The Race Equity Cycle

The study finds that organizations typically move through a cycle as they build a Race Equity Culture:

At the **AWAKE** stage, organizations are focused on *people* and on building a workforce and boards comprised of individuals from different race backgrounds. The primary goal is *representation*, with efforts aimed at increasing the number of people of different race backgrounds.

At the **WOKE** stage, organizations are focused on *culture* and on creating an environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their experiences, and everyone feels equipped to talk about race equity and inequities. The primary goal is *inclusion* and internal change in behaviors, policies, and practices.

At the **WORK** stage, organizations are focused on *systems* to improve race equity. The primary goal is *integration of a race equity lens* into all aspects of an organization. This involves internal and external systems change and regularly administering a race equity assessment to evaluate processes, programs, and operations.

The study explores how organizations can use a number of key levers to help them move through the Race Equity Cycle.

## Methodology

Equity in the Center created **Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture** in collaboration with more than 140 practitioners, thought leaders, and subject matter experts on diversity, inclusion, and race equity in the social sector. The project used both primary and secondary research to validate theory and tools, including an extensive literature review of more than 25 reports, scholarly articles, and other peer materials; in-depth interviews; and a series of focus groups to refine and validate findings. These activities informed the Race Equity Cycle and helped identify the key levers for action and impact.

## About Equity in the Center

Equity in the Center works to shift mindsets, practices, and systems within the social sector to increase racial equity. We envision a future where nonprofit and philanthropic organizations define, implement

and advance race equity internally while advocating and centering it in their work externally. Equity in the Center was launched by AmeriCorps Alums, ProInspire, and Public Allies following the Casey Talent Pipelines Learning Lab. Our work is informed by 100+ Advisory Committee members and supported by The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Meyer Foundation, and The David & Lucile Packard Foundation.

## Accessing the Report

The full report is available online: <http://equityinthecenter.org/>

Equity in the Center is also playing host to a Facebook Live conversation about the findings at **3 p.m. EDT, Tuesday, April 24** on ProInspire's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2326440530915883/>