

Fostering an Opening Dialogue about Racial Equity Webinar

1. **How can community engagement process be restructured to account for equity and inclusion in more meaningful and authentic ways?**
 - a. Often community engagement process is designed to emphasize procedure. Community engagement process that emphasizes procedure is usually organized to meet historical precedent or overly concerned with just the basic logistical nature of convening a group of people to do shared work and discussion. A focus on procedure in community engagement can fail to account for how process might be experienced differently based upon a persons' racial identity and social location within the community. It is paramount that process is designed by diverse groups of people and can account for how that process will actually be experienced. If you are working in a predominantly white community and working as a predominately white working group, it might be appropriate to create mechanisms to be held accountable by people of color in the community. This ensures you are held accountable for the impact of the process you design. Restructured community engagement processes that account for equity and inclusion are both formally inclusive of diverse people, but also provide an experience that ensures full participation of all attendees by recognizing the inherent dignity of all people. In practical terms, consider that small groups are easier to speak up in. You could preassign groups of people to sit together to diversify a discussion. You might also consider inviting facilitators who are people of color to run these engagement events. It's about building trust as a solid foundation for this work; if I don't trust you, I won't show up. Have conversations about racial inequity in your meetings in front of the public. Have someone present to your governing body on the data that indicates racial disparities in your community. This will inevitably start a dialogue that can move toward change.
2. **What does racial equity work and associated community engagement process look like in predominately white communities?**
 - a. Members of the white community have a civic and moral obligation to dismantle racist systems. At a basic level, people that are white must educate themselves before being able to meaningfully be a part of systematic change. Intercultural learning is developmental and never complete. We would recommend reading books, listening to podcasts, and attending lectures that will help you interrogate your own cultural lens and potentially work through both implicit and explicit bias that inform your worldview. Make sure that the books, podcasts, or lectures that you are looking at represent diverse voices. If all of the authors or speakers you are learning from are white, you are missing out on the opportunity to better understand the lived experiences of people of color. Please note that this work will likely be challenging, maybe even painful. Learning to recognize, understand, and then push through feelings of guilt or defensiveness will help you continue to grow and learn. We have found that open curiosity is often the very best tool you can have to hold off judgment. [Showing up for Racial Justice](#) is one organization that invites people that are white into accountable action designed to end racial injustice.
3. **The examples you shared during the webinar were both citizen-led initiatives. Are there examples of cities and municipalities that have fostered discussion related to racial equity?**

- a. Yes, the transformative potential of local government is often leveraged through the power to convene community. You might consider reviewing these two resources: Everyday Democracy <https://www.everyday-democracy.org/> The Kettering Foundation - <https://www.kettering.org/core-insights/institutions>
4. **Who is the author of Racism without Racists?**
- a. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva