



**Great Cities  
Institute**

# **Connecting Racial Equity with Organizational Performance:**

**An Overview and Assessment  
Worksheet for the Racial Equity  
Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) Model**

**August 2021**

**THE  
UNIVERSITY OF  
ILLINOIS  
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**Connecting Racial Equity  
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An Overview and Assessment  
Worksheet for the Racial Equity  
Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) Model**

**August 2021**

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# Introduction

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Mayors and other public leaders across the country are acknowledging that 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges to local governance require a 21<sup>st</sup> century government built on the infrastructure of inclusive, diverse, and high-performing personnel who belong to a community within the halls of government. For too long, the dominant narrative that government is “too big” has resulted in our common core pillar of representative democracy being starved of resources to attract, retain and promote the best and brightest of our country. The consequences of this bankrupt ideology have been to polarize our electorate, increase distrust in government, and continue to dig deeper holes for families and communities.

The operationalization of racial equity does not usually factor into the top 5 lists of innovative or transformative visions for the 21st century, but it should be considered a prerequisite for any of those visions to yield a just, equitable and democratic future - not just for residents but for the planet as a whole. The community *within* governments and organizations must be revived and engaged with a mission that connects racial equity to organizational performance. In order to revive and engage, we must acknowledge that the internal environment of these organizations are rife with decades old structures that have institutionalized racism within the very fabric of everyday work-life which extends outwards to the communities that our public organizations serve.

We need leaders who are committed to a vision of racial equity and democracy within our public institutions, managers who are ready and willing to dismantle dated internal processes that create barriers and marginalize staff, and for everyone inside of the organization to lean into building new structures of inclusion. As the old 20<sup>th</sup> century narrative of “big government” gives way to a renewed sense of mission to the vital role of a strong, vibrant and inclusive public sector, the way we implement and operationalize programs that are designed to uplift communities must acknowledge that centering racial equity into a vision of 21st century democracy addresses historical flaws and builds an inclusive future for all.

# Why does racial equity need to be linked to organizational performance?

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REDI stands for Racial Equity Diversity and Inclusion (REDI). We intentionally use the term race to acknowledge and honor that the root cause of many of our public policy and administrative failings stem from a legacy of legislative and administrative codes that have been used to systematically oppress, marginalize and exclude those who were enslaved, indigenous peoples, women, those with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ individuals.

Within the internal environment of organizations, systemic racism has been embedded in institutionalized practices and policies that yield disparate outcomes not only for the communities that our organizations serve, but also within the organizations themselves. After decades of diversity initiatives, implicit bias trainings and other individual-level efforts to “correct” for historical exclusion, we have come to acknowledge that the role of institutionalized racism persists, even while the diversity of personnel and staff has steadily increased over the decades.

The REDI model is based on an organizational change approach driven by a racial equity core. The model requires the following:

- An organization with a public mission, with leaders who are held to public outcomes that value diversity, inclusion and racial equity as part of the organizational performance metrics commonly used to rate such agencies
- Internal leaders and managers who are ready to engage in a learning-based model that builds a shared vocabulary, common analysis and a community from within that supports learning and innovation and creates a safe space for “failure” as well as “success”
- A clear commitment to institutional level transformation and change connected to organizational impacts and outcomes grounded in community input and evaluation

The model is built upon cohorts of 10 - 15 mid-level staff from across as many departments that are ready and able to commit staff for skills and relationship building across the organization. Selection of cohort members is initially done by organization leadership and then transitioned to the REDI committee for sustainability and transparency. Membership in a cohort requires a 2 year commitment, if possible, so that staff experience both the learning and implementation phase of the model. After the 2 year cycle, members are considered REDI Alumni and are invited to become active mentors, advisors and project leaders depending on their interests and availability.



# What makes the REDI model unique?

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The REDI model is built upon the expertise of faculty and staff from UIC's Department of Public Administration and the Great Cities Institute in the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs. This is not a consulting relationship, but an *intergovernmental partnership* grounded in the public mission of UIC to serve all public organizations across the state. Dr. Kathleen Yang-Clayton is the principal investigator for all projects and remains actively involved in the assessment, strategic planning and implementation of all projects. Staff from the Great Cities Institute support the deep engagement and training needed to ensure sustainability. The REDI model is "open source" and unlike proprietary approaches of private consulting firms, we uplift our public university's mission of expanding knowledge and expertise across all of our communities in our partnerships. Our ultimate goal is for public organizations to sustain this work on their own after the full three year cycle.

## **Skill Building**

One of the unique aspects of the REDI model is its focus on individual and team-building skills that are centered around learning about racial equity and applying these concepts to central administrative and managerial functions of organizations such as human resources, operations, planning and evaluation, and procurement, for example. Members are provided the opportunity to cultivate skills in the following fields:

### *Project Management*

- Learning new models of meeting planning and group project management
- Identifying key performance indicators connected to core processes and racial equity
- Train-the-trainer experience to scale the work of racial equity and create organizational sustainability

### *Policy Analysis*

- Learning new applied research tools such as interviewing and focus group analysis
- Applying the racial equity impact analysis approach and results based accountability in program and policy design

### *Process Analysis and Change Management*

- Learning about the PDSA cycle and pilot project testing and learning
- Implementing new racial equity driven process improvement
- Experiencing a strategic planning process that assesses where racial equity works best fits into the existing and future organizational structure

### *Socio-emotional Learning and Emotional Intelligence*

- Building relationships based on shared values and vision
- Understanding the difference between individual and institutional level racism

## **Iterative testing approach: pilot projects**

By utilizing a process improvement approach which focuses on iteration and data-driven analysis, the REDI cohorts learn racial equity by applying new principles and skills to identify pilot projects that they work on through the second half of their first year. As part of their first assignment, REDI members are required to conduct 1-1 interviews to gain some preliminary data on potential pilot projects. Using the common themes and frequently used words in the interviews as the driving forces behind sculpting their project scope, cohort members self-select into their pilot project groups. Below are a few examples of pilot projects that highlight how REDI members have operationalized racial equity through institutional change:

### *City of Evanston - Equity in Language Access*

Through peer-to-peer interviews, REDI members were able to identify a deeper underlying problem to language access that simply hiring new bi-lingual staff would not fix (this had been attempted in the past, and those staff frequently left the organization). Staff who were interviewed noted that it was difficult to retain bi-lingual staff because of the lack of recognition and compensation for the additional efforts that were often demanded of them outside of their core job duties. Modeling the pilot off of a similar time bank system that already exists elsewhere in the city, staff

that use their bilingual skills in the field will have their activities tracked in a time bank system, where upon review will be compensated based on the amount of time spent translating or communicating with non-English speaking residents. Racial equity is reflected in this pilot project in how it recognizes and values cultural competency, in addition to supporting staff and residents that oftentimes come from marginalized backgrounds.

#### *City of Evanston - Equity in Employee Education Access*

REDI interviews surfaced a common sentiment across employees that there was a lack of clear advancement opportunities within the City. Upon identifying this concern, this pilot project group began searching for ways to support staff advancement through access to higher education opportunities. After reviewing benefits already available to city employees, the group discovered the AFSCME Free College Benefit, which offers union members access to a debt-free associates degree, with the potential to expand the benefit to any immediate family members as well. Recognizing that this is a great resource, the group conducted further research to uncover that a large majority of city employees that could benefit from this program were not even aware that it existed. The pilot project will survey employees who are made aware of this benefit to see if they find it relevant to their current and future job aspirations. The group set on expanding awareness of this program through increased outreach initiatives, as well as ensuring that coverage of the Free College Benefit is incorporated into the new-hire orientation process. Racial equity is at the core of this pilot project in how it offers a degree to those that don't have access to higher education, often minority or marginalized communities, and opens the door to pursuing a Bachelor's degree and beyond at a much more affordable price. Furthermore, having an advanced degree provides a greater opportunity for lateral advancement or promotion.

#### *City of Evanston - Equity in Training for New Managers*

The REDI interviews also uncovered a pattern where staff felt they were not given relevant feedback and evaluation from their supervisors, thereby reducing their likelihood for promotion and performance-based raises (this is for non-union employees specifically). Initially, the team made an assumption that the content of the evaluation was what was in question, and they explored options around peer and "360" type evaluations. As they continued to incorporate more feedback, especially from new managers, it was discovered that the city had no on-boarding and training program for new managers beyond the compliance-driven orientation conducted by human resources. This was actually the root cause of the delay or absence of consistent evaluations from managers.

After refocusing their efforts, the team realized that evaluations were often left undone because managers were not aware of how and when to complete them until they received a notice from HR. When new managers were hired or promoted, there was no formal training or onboarding process that outlined all of their managerial duties, often leaving managers flustered and feeling overloaded. With a new project scope, the team is working towards piloting a formal training program for new managers that is informed by "best practice" managers that have been with the city for multiple years. Beyond administrative responsibilities, the team is also adding in training for managerial competencies, such as how to recognize and support staff, manage teams, de-escalate conflict, and more. Racial equity can be seen in this pilot project in how managerial competency is prioritized, as it is critical to improving equity and improving organizational performance.

#### *City of Evanston - Equity in Service Provision: Community policy through environmental design*

External political influence can disrupt and drive disparities in the deliver of municipal services. Evanston is not alone in experiencing the "squeaky wheel" phenomenon where better resourced and connected neighborhoods get more maintenance of roads, trees and sidewalks. The pilot team that is working on this issue combined members from the public works and police departments and discovered that there were shared but siloed challenges that each department faced when it came to certain areas of the city. Forestry maintenance crews were close to seven years behind schedule because of "special requests" and upon analysis of the data, the areas that were least serviced were also the areas where community police noted areas of dense overgrowth where contraband and other illegal activity often occurred. Collecting and overlaying census demographic data with 311 request data, as well as police data, the team is working on creating a new service provision map that prioritizes community areas that have typically been underserved. Community policing through environmental design, which posits that crime can be reduced/deterred through urban planning and maintenance of green space, is also a concern for the team as they analyze police data overlaid with 311 data. The ultimate goal is that this form of scheduling through data mapping will be scaled up and applied to other departments in the city. Racial equity is reflected in this pilot project in how those that are underserved and are at most risk of violence, are being rightfully prioritized over the "squeaky wheel."

### *Forest Preserves of Cook County - Equity in Training Access*

By conducting close to 100 individual surveys of maintenance workers in the district, this pilot team discovered that employees of color have less certifications compared to their white peers, and are less likely to sign-up for trainings offered by the training department. A major contributing factor to this discrepancy was distance and the commute associated with traveling to a training, as the Forest Preserves operates across over 1,600 square miles. Recognizing this, the pilot team began to work on identifying new and accessible locations for future trainings and to address technology access concerns at locations on the south and west sides of the district. While COVID-19 disrupted plans to implement new training locations and schedules in 2020, the current team has taken the time to thoroughly consider the logistics of moving trainings, such as capacity, technology, timing, and materials needed. Racial equity is reflected in this pilot project in how it directly targets employees of color and part-time employees and ensures they have access to the trainings they need to effectively carry out their work.

### *Forest Preserves of Cook County - Equity in Hiring Panels*

Many large public organizations have multiple layers of rules and procedures to try to ensure fairness and transparency in hiring. Through REDI interviews, this pilot team uncovered that there was a lack of diversity in the actual three-person hiring panels for many of the departments, and that questions about cultural competency and diverse background experience was not mentioned in any questions that were asked. This resulted in a two-way gap. Candidates from diverse backgrounds may not have seen themselves reflected in the panels nor their lived experience factoring into any of the questions asked. Staff who were from diverse backgrounds who were willing to sit on panels did not know what the selection process was to be considered. The first year piloted a set of REDI questions and trained REDI committee members to serve on a small subset of panels to test for fit and effectiveness. Based on positive feedback from the departments and the results of the hiring process, this pilot project is now being implemented district-wide and in partnership with the HR department.

### *Forest Preserves of Cook County - Equity in Community Engagement*

While many organizations point to external examples of “effectiveness” in their community engagement work, the REDI teams were more interested in understanding why the multiple efforts that many departments made in community engagement seemed never to be enough, or leave the district open to continuous critique that they were “not doing enough”. The REDI team therefore, focused on an asset-based approach that identified how the district was already engaging with community stakeholders, paying close attention to the internal reporting and communications related to each effort. Unfortunately, throughout this research, it was observed that the organization frequently conducts repetitive surveys and forms of outreach - going to the same communities and asking the same questions multiple times. This can be frustrating and alienating to the very communities that the Forest Preserves are trying to reach, as it can be interpreted that the organization is not listening to their constituents. The team decided to develop a pilot database and internal process that is available to all departments. The database will house previously completed events and information gained through different forms of outreach, so that future initiatives can be built upon rather than built back up from ground zero. Racial equity can be seen in this pilot project in how it works toward incorporating and engaging a wide range of people from various backgrounds more effectively.

### **Implementation, Scalability, Sustainability**

As expressed by some of the previously mentioned pilot projects, the second year of the REDI model asks REDI committee members to commit to leading implementation projects that are based on the findings from Year 1 pilot projects. REDI committee members also serve as mentors for new REDI members, and start a strategic planning process to identify concrete ways in which the implementation work can be sustainably planted into either existing or new positions that would have specific parts of their job descriptions shaped to support racial equity driven organizational performance improvement projects for years to come.

# The REDI Model for Organizational Change

## – Initial Assessment Worksheet

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There has been an explosion of various definitions and approaches connected to racial equity, which barely ten years ago, was barely a known concept. Many leaders have been challenged to produce immediate signs that racial equity is being “done” in their organizations, much to the dismay of organizational change experts who have studied the phenomenon of why organizations change for decades. Most of the time, the responses that have been produced have remained on the surface (e.g., new racial initiatives, hiring of BIPOC staff to fill certain roles) and runs the risk of continuing to reproduce institutionally racist structures and processes.

For leaders who have secured a high level of support and endorsement from their boards, trustees, councils or other governing body, knowing if and when the REDI model is a good fit for your organization may still remain murky. The following step-by-step process will give you a sense if you can launch an organization-wide REDI or if it makes more sense to start with a specific department or project.

**Step 1:** Determine the source of motivation; is this a challenge or opportunity based on some events that have highlighted issues of racial inequity, social injustice, disparate outcomes or external scandal or exposure for your organization?

**Step 2:** What is the current level of understanding across all levels of the organization about what racial equity is and why it is relevant and important for the future of the organization?

1. What is the socio-demographic makeup of your organization and is it reflective of the communities you serve? If you are in a predominantly white racial community, please also consider the other aspects of diversity that are salient for the work of public organizations: income, gender, immigration status, dis/ability, sexual identity, etc. If you are in a majority-minority situation, assess how meaningful the diversity in your organization is with respect to the leadership level, policy analysis positions, and service-based positions.
2. Has your organization engaged in racial equity work in the past and if so, carefully examine the effort to see if the work was focused on individual-level awareness building (e.g., implicit bias training) or on institutional-level policy analysis and organizational change. Most organizations have the former, but not much of the latter. The REDI model is focused on the latter.

**Step 3:** What are some of the persistent organizational challenges you have seen that are related to a lack of shared understanding and operationalization of racial equity? What are the racial equity outcomes that are focused on internal organizational change that would have the most meaningful impacts on external programs and policies your municipality currently could improve upon?

Example 1: If you wanted to increase the number of affordable housing units in high-performing school districts within the next 5 years, what would be the *internal* staff support and capacity you would need to launch and sustain *intergovernmental partnerships* (between your municipality and school districts, for example) and *external engagement* (with electeds, non-profits, community leaders). You will also need to assess the current set affordable housing initiatives your city already has underway, what staff are doing in those initiatives (if relevant) and what kinds of training and capacity building they will need to see a multi-year initiative through.

Example 2: If you want to increase access to city services such as libraries, police and fire by new immigrant communities by increasing language access and cultural competency in your staff, then you must assess what has prevented language access from being sustainably implemented within your city. If no such efforts have been made, or limited ones such as hiring external vendors to provide 3-1-1 interpretation or using volunteer efforts of staff to translate materials, then you want to consider what some of the persistent organizational challenges may be in any new efforts to operationalize this program.



**Step 4:** Who are the existing people in your organization that can help build the case for racial equity driven organizational change? Please note, for larger municipalities, focusing on internal staff/leaders is the first step in this process, but for smaller municipalities, you will want to look at affiliated districts (e.g., school, library, forest preserves, other shared service entities) for individuals who would be willing and able to serve as an asset to your organizational change efforts.

1. Create a quick grid such as the one below to start brainstorming what existing partners and allies you may have and what other assets your organization may have invested in that you can leverage. There are 4 areas of expertise and experience that are most important to creating your initial racial equity team:
  - a. Analytical (has deep knowledge of policies, racial dynamics and power structures)
  - b. Convening (can bring different stakeholders together for honest conversation)
  - c. Communicative (can reach appropriate audiences with your messaging)
  - d. Networking (has capacity to participate in formal and informal networks)

	Analytical (has deep knowledge of policies, racial dynamics and power structures)	Convening (can bring different stakeholders together for honest conversations)	Communicative (can reach appropriate audiences with your messaging)	Networking (has the capacity to participate in formal and informal networks)
Role in organization				
Financial investment by the organization in this space				

Source: Sherrill, LaTrenda L. "Racial equity outcome toolkit: A six-step process for your organization" Heinz Foundation publication

2. If you were to discuss with your partners and allies what an ideal REDI committee would look like, what would be some of the qualities of the committee members you would select on? Some examples would be age, race, gender, disability, LGBTQ+, etc.

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3. Look at the skills-building list in the previous section – what skills or capacity building would be ideal for the REDI committee to build together?

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# Organizational Checklist

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This checklist is best done after you have gone through the step-by-step process in the previous section, but if you are in a hurry, review the 5 bullets below and check the ones that best describe your current situation.

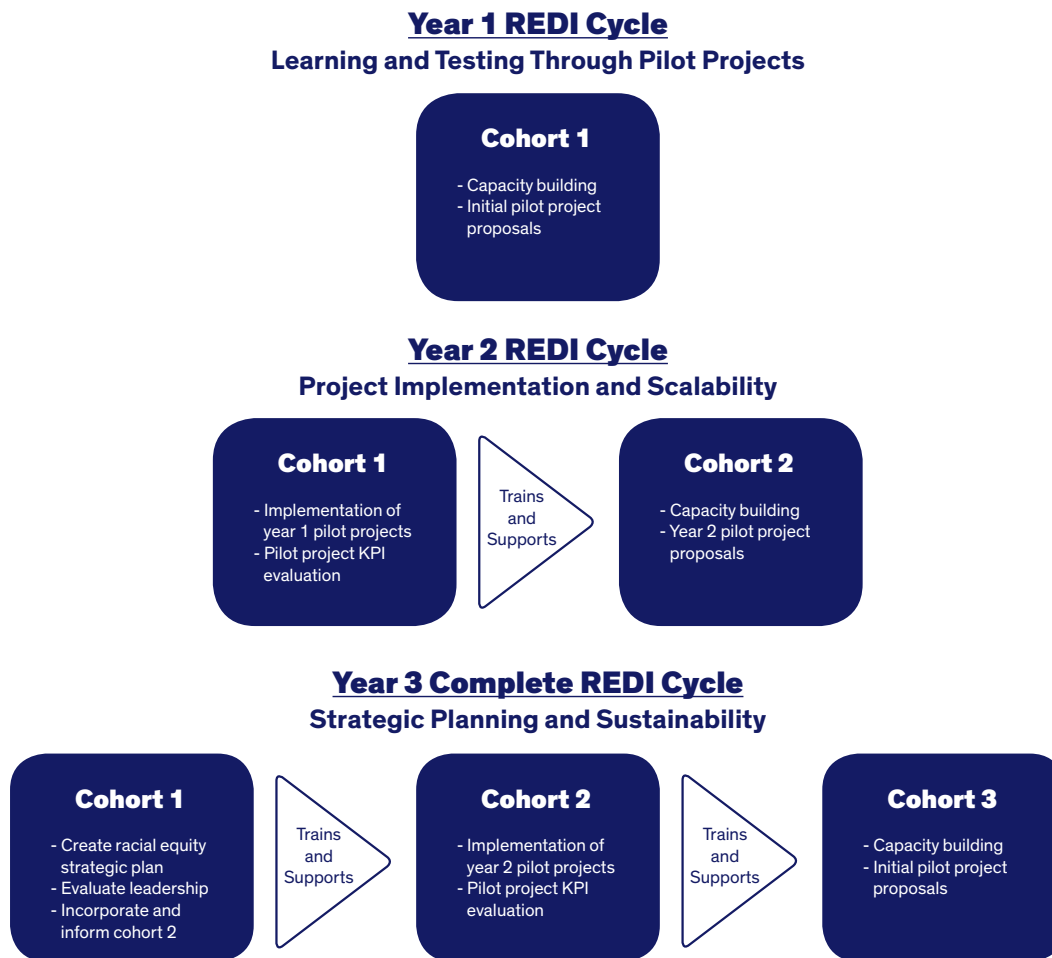
- External pressure to demonstrate effective implementation of racial equity principles to the core mission of the organization
- Top level leadership is fully on-board and open to a racial equity driven organizational change model
- Urgent need for mid-level staff to be trained so that there is a shared understanding, vocabulary and toolkits related to racial equity implementation
- General desire to build collaboration and buy-in across all departments
- Commitment to allocate resources to support this work (e.g., funding for partnership with locally-based faculty and trainers who are highly-familiar with the particular challenges found in the public sector, willingness to allocate and honor staff time dedicated to REDI trainings)

## Results

- If you checked 1 box (or less), you may want to start with a smaller project to test the support and will for deeper organizational change driven by racial equity.
- If you checked 2-3 boxes, you might want to consider a larger department that has forward-facing programs and staff that would benefit from a more comprehensive and asset-based approach to addressing racial equity issues within their specific programs. You could also consider connecting an organizational change model like REDI to upcoming strategic, budgeting or other global planning opportunities.
- If you have checked 3 or more boxes, you might be ready to commit to the multi-year process that will yield the capacity building among your current and future staff to scale and sustain racial equity driven work across your organization.

# The Full REDI Model

There are three phases to the full REDI model which require a 3 year time commitment for one full cycle of organizational change:



- Phase 1 (Year 1) - Learning and testing through pilot projects
  - Outcomes
    - Capacity building for REDI members on project management, the racial equity framework, and facilitation of participatory processes
    - Pilot project iteration and impacts
    - Annual report of REDI and racial equity related activities across the organization
- Phase 2 (Year 2) - Project implementation and scalability
  - Outcomes
    - Implementation of most promising pilot projects
    - Train-the-trainer for REDI 101 Workshops led by REDI members
    - Key Performance Indicator development for racial equity projects
    - Annual report of REDI and racial equity related activities across the organization
- Phase 3 (Year 3) - Strategic planning and sustainability
  - Outcomes
    - Create a organization-specific strategic plan to integrate racial equity practices in work plans of existing staff positions and evaluate if a unique racial equity leadership position is needed
    - Train-the-trainer of a core REDI training team for initial 8 month training for new cohort members
    - Annual report of REDI and racial equity related activities across the organization

# The REDI Model for Department-specific Change

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The REDI model has also been adapted to more short-term projects that would greatly benefit from a racial equity approach, but the effects are limited in scope and duration. The shortest amount of time would be 4-6 months, with a higher level of time commitment from internal staff and leadership for training, application and rapid-iteration testing with both internal and external stakeholders.

What should be in place to utilize the modified REDI model:

- Department-specific change driven by racial equity values desired by leadership within the department and organization
- Project-specific issue has already been identified that would strongly benefit from a racial equity approach
- Internal assessment has confirmed that staff capacity building is needed for project success
- Success metrics include both internal performance measures and external community impact indicators



# Appendix

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## Glossary

- Cultural Competency - the ability to recognize and engage with various cultures, languages, and backgrounds, and being able to tactfully navigate and integrate them into processes.
- Individual Level Racism - an individual's personal racist assumptions, beliefs, and behaviors.
- Institutionalized Racism - racism that is enacted and upheld through various laws, policies, and procedures.
- Intergovernmental Partnership - an agreement between two or more national, state, or local governments to collaboratively work towards a shared goal.
- Key Performance Indicators - quantifiable and qualifiable data that highlight if a plan or program is successfully working towards its intended goal.
- Operationalize - creation and integration of an abstract process to fit into a daily work plan.
- Racial Equity - a process committed to achieving favorable outcomes across racial categories through the uplifting of the most marginalized communities.
- Systemic Racism - a form of racism beyond the individual that includes institutional and structural racism.

## Additional Resources/Links

Jacob, B. (2020, December). Governing for Equity: Implementing an Equity Lens in Local Governments [PDF file]. Retrieved from [https://icma.org/sites/default/files/Governing%20For%20Equity%20Implementing%20an%20Equity%20Lens%20in%20Local%20Government\\_0.pdf](https://icma.org/sites/default/files/Governing%20For%20Equity%20Implementing%20an%20Equity%20Lens%20in%20Local%20Government_0.pdf)

Sherrill, L. L. (2019). Racial Equity Outcome Toolkit: A Six-Step Process for Your Organization [PDF file]. Retrieved from [https://www.heinz.org/UserFiles/Library/Racial\\_Equity\\_Outcome\\_Toolkit.pdf](https://www.heinz.org/UserFiles/Library/Racial_Equity_Outcome_Toolkit.pdf)

# Dr. Yang-Clayton Biography

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Dr. Kathleen Yang-Clayton brings extensive legislative, advocacy, organizing and applied research experience to her clinical professor position in the Department of Public Administration, College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois-Chicago. She is also a Research Fellow at the Great Cities Institute. Her most recently funded work was on the Illinois 2020 Census, providing training and applied data analysis to over 350 nonprofits, public agencies (libraries, public health systems) and local municipalities to increase self-response rate numbers in Hard to Count communities. Her current work on democratic systems issues focuses on voting rights, redistricting, and racial equity. She also is leading two major racial equity projects for the Forest Preserves of Cook County and the City of Evanston that focus on the internal environment of public organizations and how to operationalize racial equity practices to improve government performance and impact.

She is Director of Civic Partnerships, having previously been Director of Undergraduate Studies (2017-2020) and increasing enrollment of public policy majors from 15 to 95 students. Through funded applied research projects, Dr. Yang-Clayton strives to provide paid policy opportunities to first-generation undergraduates and graduates. Her extensive background in nonprofit advocacy, management and leadership informs her teaching approach in her classes such as Nonprofits and Civil Society (PPOL230) and Individual Action and Democratic Citizenship (PPOL100). Her current focus is on incorporating racial equity principles and practices into the core graduate theory course for all masters' students (PA401) and in the MPA course on Management and Leadership in Public Organizations: Racial Equity Practices (PA468). PA468 provides graduate students with direct training from practitioners in the field who work on racial equity impact analysis, participatory budgeting, citizens assemblies and equity-centered design for democracy.

Dr. Yang-Clayton is a member of several national initiatives sponsored by the Kettering Foundation, International City/County Management Association and the National League of Cities such as the inaugural Leadership Institute on Race, Equity, and Inclusion and learning exchanges on public administration and democratic practice. Her experience in social and racial justice campaigns includes immigrant and voting rights issues, with a current focus on expanding the use of racial equity policy analysis across a range of sectors and issue areas. Her cross-movement work on voting rights resulted in the passage of landmark legislation in Illinois that expanded access to underserved communities through Same Day Registration. She has given presentations and participated on panels related to voting rights, redistricting and racial equity at numerous conferences and meetings. She is a co-founder of a racial equity leadership development organization, sits on several boards and associations, is the faculty adviser for UIC's chapter of the Roosevelt Institute and recipient of civic engagement research awards for UIC faculty by the Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement at UIC.



# About Great Cities Institute

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## Serving UIC's Great Cities Commitment: Solutions for Today's Urban Challenges

### *The Power of Research:*

*GCI offers bold solutions for urban problems to improve the quality of life in our cities and regions*

UIC's Great Cities Institute is a research hub for scholars, policymakers, and stakeholders who share an interest in finding answers to the question, "What can cities and regions do to make themselves into great places?"

The Great Cities Institute (GCI) represents UIC's commitment to "engaged research" while contributing to its stature as a Research One University thereby highlighting the value of quality research for addressing today's urban challenges.

*By harnessing the power of engaged research, Great Cities Institute:*

- Advances conversations on key issues
- Promotes community economic development strategies
- Produces, with neighborhoods, commercial revitalization and quality of life plans
- Provides data and technical assistance
- Facilitates collaboration and public engagement
- Assists with mentorship, training and capacity building
- Conducts policy and impact analysis
- Convenes local, national and international scholars

### **Our Goal**

*Improve the quality of life of residents living and working in Chicago, its metropolitan region, and cities throughout the world.*

### **Our Strategic Focus**

GCI's work focuses on *employment and economic development, local and regional governance, dynamics of global mobility, energy and the environment and community wellbeing*. GCI's develops strategic partnerships that leverage the intellectual capital of the university with the local knowledge of neighborhood residents, government and non-profit, foundation, business and civic organizations. GCI is home to the UIC Neighborhoods Initiative, a university-community partnership with neighborhoods both adjacent to the UIC campus and in the Chicagoland area.

### **Our Vision**

Formulate solutions to tackle the multi-dimensional challenges of the changing socio-political economy of cities and their metropolitan regions.

### **Our Mission**

The Mission of the UIC Great Cities Institute is to link its academic resources with a range of partners to address urban issues by providing research, policy analysis and program development. Tied to the University of Illinois at Chicago *Great Cities Commitment*, GCI seeks to improve quality of life in Chicago, its metropolitan region and cities throughout the world.



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