

This Alliance webinar offered practical road maps for making profound and sustainable racial equity changes at the systems level. Throughout this webinar, presenters encouraged attendees to reflect on how their racial equity goals have changed the way their Continuum of Care (CoC) operates.

### **Presenters:**

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### **KEY TAKEAWAYS:**

Most minority groups are overrepresented in the homelessness system and generally experience homelessness at higher rates than White people. African Americans are by far the group with the most glaring disparity: they typically represent approximately 40 percent of people experiencing homelessness, while only representing about 13 percent of the general population.

Understanding the causes of racial and ethnic disproportionalities in homelessness requires an analysis of centuries of systemic racial discrimination. The overrepresentation of marginalized, minority groups in homelessness is a result of intentional and racist institutional policies, practices, and procedures.

Feeder systems like criminal justice, foster care, housing, health care, and employment largely account for the disproportionality. However, homelessness systems at the national and local levels may create disparities in the assistance they provide and the outcomes they achieve, as well. The goal is to help organizations think about building racial equity skills and practices that will equip them with the ability to effectively tackle racism and to center equity in housing assistance and opportunities. The movement to end homelessness must include the field's ability to articulate and act on racism and unequal practices in the sector.

The following tips may help communities to better center racial equity in their systems.

## **Equity and Diversity in the Workplace**

- Increase the rate of hiring and promotion of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) to bring the demographics of staff and leadership in line with the racial and ethnic diversity of the population served.
- Consider intentional activities like targeted advertising in publications that attract minority groups.
- Utilize staff, external consultants and industry best practices to develop/strengthen equitable HR policies and practices related to the recruitment, hiring, promotion, titles and compensation, professional development and retention of people of color.
- Track and report progress on key results on a regular basis.

## **Learning to Operate Differently: Changing Staff Expectations about Centering Equity in the Work**

- Develop and support racial equity skills and practices among staff in order to be a race-conscious, inclusive and equitable organization.
- Organizations should strategize about the resources and practices needed to help staff clearly and consistently articulate a sophisticated understanding of racial equity and structural racism, including the centrality of this analysis to the work of ending homelessness.

## **Equity Work Requires Commitment and a Deep Investment**

- Identify and/or create staff or teams that will be charged with either leading or ensuring that the racial equity work is undertaken, and be prepared to provide supports, including financial.
- Organizations should hold ongoing opportunities to discuss racial equity and how to achieve progress - with all levels of staff, administration, consumers, board members, CoC boards, and partners invited to the table.
- Opportunities for people of different races/ethnicities who have lived experience of homelessness to provide expert advice and opinions on policy, procedures, and services delivery, including employment, should be expanded (pay being a must).

## **Analyze Your System or Programs for Disparities**

### **CoCs or organizations should:**

- Rethink how they can gauge vulnerability in a more trauma informed, equitable way.
- Take action like rewording screening questions to avoid embarrassment, and to better collect data and assess needs. The ultimate aim is more equitable outcomes.

**CENTERING RACIAL EQUITY SHOULD BE EVERY STAFF MEMBER'S AND ORGANIZATION'S ONGOING WORK AND BE REFLECTED IN THE OUTCOMES OF EFFORTS TO END HOMELESSNESS.**