Using Racial Equity to Transform City Operations

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Work, done with good intentions, does not produce racial equity….

We need to focus on systemic impact

Erika Bernabei, Equity & Results
Our Continued Commitment

• Current moment offers opportunities to transform our government operations and the chance to make substantive and lasting change.

• This moment also brings challenges and uncharted territory. The voicing of justifiable anger and frustration from communities of color and allies have galvanized our City to act.

• Our work is more pivotal than ever. Internal organizing, infrastructure, and accountability can push change across within our organization and our City, if we choose to use this moment to better our democracy.
Types of Racism

INDIVIDUAL

A person’s beliefs and actions that serve to perpetuate oppression
- Conscious and unconscious
- Externalized and internalized

INTERPERSONAL

The interactions between people - both within and across differences

SYSTEMIC

INSTITUTIONAL
Policies and practices at the organization level that perpetuate oppression

STRUCTURAL
How these effects interact and accumulate across institutions and across history
Role of Government in Creating and Maintaining Racial Inequities

- Initially explicit
- Became implicit
- Push towards Social Justice
Understanding the Past

• Past inequitable investment shaped the City.

• Power in decision-making influence is shaped by our social history, including in the budget process.

• Identifying historical inequities provide a frame for new decision-making
Meeting the Needs of the Present

COVID-19 disruptions have stronger effects on vulnerable populations
• Analysis of impact should inform what services are needed, and all community needs need to be accommodated.
• Service adjustments to meet new prioritized outcomes

Implications for the budget
• Budget adjustments should be done based on service needs, not fund balance
• Shift from across the board cuts to targeted adjustments
• Reallocate staff temporarily to new functions, if possible
Racial Equity in Evanston

Equity means that our policy-making, service delivery, and distribution of resources account for the different histories, challenges, and needs of the people we serve.

Racial equity is achieved when one’s race and identity cannot predict one’s outcomes.
When Leading with Race, we are...
Race **explicit**, not exclusive

Race and...
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Disability status
- Educational attainment
DI&E - Not a single concept
Achieving racial equity requires us to...

- Target strategies to focus improvements for those worse off.
- Move beyond service and program provisions to focus on changing policies, institutions and structures.
- Change our current ways of doing business which maintains and reinforces structural racism.
Steps to Transforming Organizational Culture

• Equity-centered training for all-staff

• Cross department equity committee

• Development of a Budget for Equity tool and outcome-based budgeting process

• City-wide implementation of department assessment and development of equity action plans.

• Community Engagement Policy

• Increase access to relevant equity data
Racial Equity Impact Assessment Tool

The Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) tool evaluates potential policies benefits and burdens before decision-making.

An REIA aims to intentionally focus on advancing racial equity, which can only be done by actively bringing those most impacted to the table.

In this practice, racial equity is defined as both a process and an outcome.

As an outcome, racial equity is achieved when one’s racial identity no longer determines one’s life outcomes.
Equity-driven Results-based Accountability

Step 1: What are the tangible results of improved social services delivery?

Step 2: What are the tangible outcomes in each of our departments/programs?

Step 3: What kinds of data matter?

Step 4: Who must we engage?

Step 5: Benefits and Burdens
Four Principles of Equity Based Budgeting

#1 • Establish Outcomes informed by equity

#2 • Develop Approaches rooted in Equitable Practice to Achieve Outcomes

#3 • Develop a Budget with Approaches to Achieve Outcomes

#4 • Evaluate Performance Aggregated by Race and Make Adjustments