



Building for Digital Equity Event

Racial Equity-Centered Best Practices
for Engaging Communities and Trusted Community
Partners in Digital Equity Strategies

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Issue



More than 320,000 (9.7 percent) of households in Los Angeles County **do not** have an internet subscription



More than 150,000 (4.6 percent) of households in Los Angeles County **do not** have a computer

These digital inequities disproportionately impact lower-income households and communities that are predominantly Black, Latino, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), communities with lower educational attainment, and older adults (ages 65 years and older)

Guiding Question

How can we be equitable, inclusive, and culturally relevant when engaging with communities most impacted by the digital divide and with trusted community partners as part of the development and implementation of our digital equity strategies?

Broadband internet services outreach, enrollment, and adoption strategies

Internet-enabled devices distribution strategies

Digital skills training, hardware and software support, and digital navigation support strategies

Approach & Framework

- **The Collaboration Spectrum:** Increases the intensity of collaboration across stakeholder organizations with the outcome of fully integrating all planning, activities, and funding
- **The Collective Impact Model:** Brings stakeholder organizations and the community together long-term in a structured way by learning and improving collaboration, aligning activities, and integrating their actions to achieve large-scale population and systems-level change
- **Equity Lens:** Steps taken to ensure inclusivity, intentionality, and thoughtfulness to improve community outcomes in all decision-making activities including budgets, policies, practices, and programs

Approach & Framework

- **Racial Equity Tool:** Leads explicitly but not exclusively with race by operationalizing racial equity in all decision-making activities including budgets, policies, practices, and programs
- **The Spectrum for Community Engagement:** Strengthens and transforms relationships with communities and stakeholder organizations by uplifting the community's lived experiences, expertise, and wisdom through increased voice, power, and ownership in decision-making processes
- **Systems Change:** Shifting the conditions that are holding the problem in place

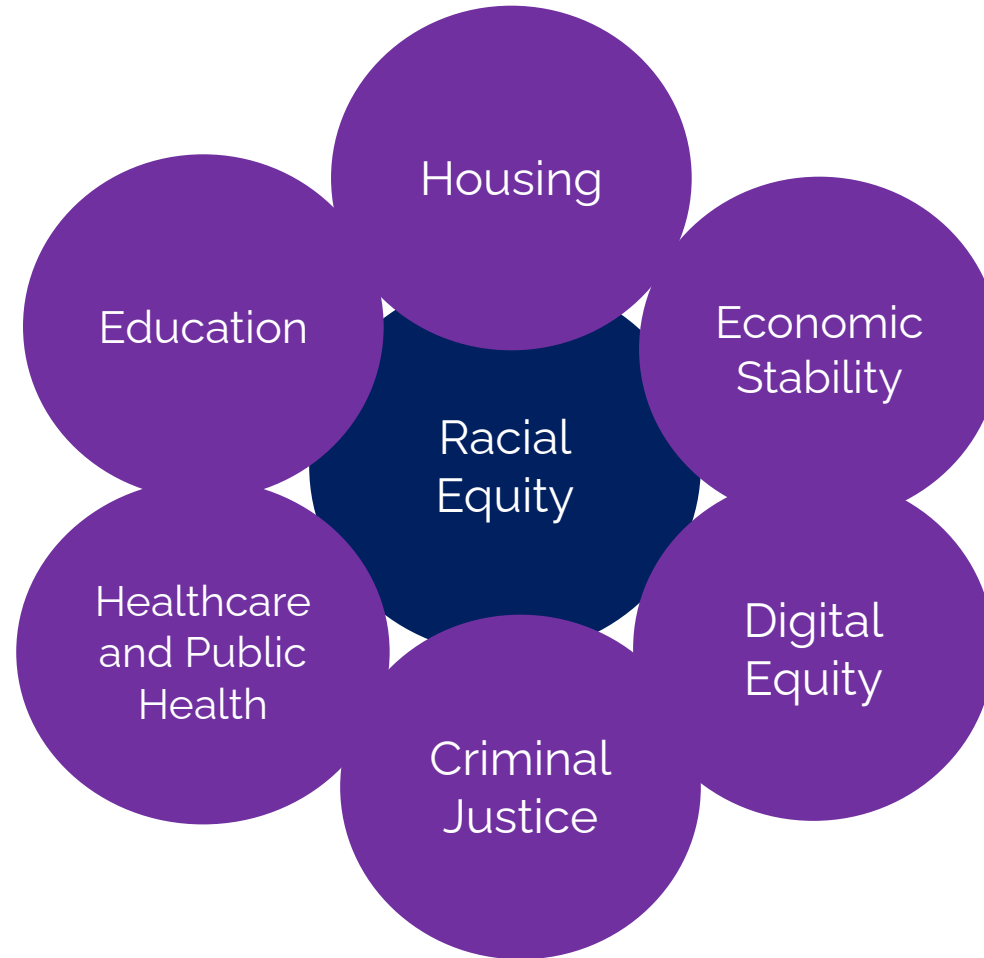
What is Racial Equity?

- When race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes
- It is important to lead explicitly but not exclusively with race
- Racial equity is both an outcome and a process
- Racial equity uplifts fairness and justice
- Racial inequities exist across all systems (e.g., criminal justice, education, healthcare, housing, etc.)
- Racial equity tools address other areas of marginalization and oppression including but not limited to (e.g., ability, age, education level, gender, immigration status, language, religion, socioeconomic status, etc.)

Racial Equity & Systems Change

A system is the relationship among interdependent, interconnected, and interrelated factors, people, and structures

Systems change is shifting the conditions that are holding the problem in place



Culture, history, ideology, and interactions of systems work together to perpetuate racial inequities

There is intersectionality across systems

We need to advance digital equity and inclusion through racial equity by addressing the six conditions of systems change

Racial Equity & Systems Change



Policies

Government, institutional, organizational rules, regulations, and priorities that guide the organization's own and other's actions



Practices

Activities of institutions, coalitions, networks, and other organizations targeted to improving social and environmental progress



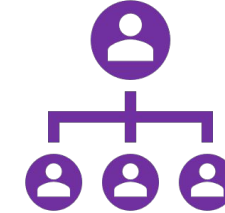
Resource Flows

How money, people, knowledge, information, and other assets such as infrastructure are allocated and distributed



Relationships & Connections

Quality of connections and communication occurring among actors in the system, especially among those with differing histories and viewpoints



Power Dynamics

The distribution of decision-making power, authority, and both formal and informal influence among people and organizations



Mental Models

Habits of thought with deeply held beliefs and assumptions taken for granted by ways of operating that influence how people think, what people do, and how people talk

Racial Equity in Practice

Trusted Community Partners Engagement

- Consider equity, inclusion, and representation when deciding which trusted community partners to collaborate with
- Bring together the trusted community partners that represent the digital equity ecosystem
- Provide fair compensation to the trusted community partners to develop and implement digital equity activities
- Defer to the trusted community partners for culturally appropriate and community-centered digital equity strategies that work for the communities

Racial Equity in Practice

Trusted Community Partners Engagement

- Uplift the assets, best practices, and strengths of the trusted community partners
- Dismantle the power and privilege dynamics and uplift power-sharing when engaging the trusted community partners
- Collaborate with trusted community partners for language access services

Racial Equity in Practice

Community Engagement

- Establish an appropriate budget for extensive community engagement
- Strengthen and transform relationships with the communities by uplifting their lived experiences, expertise, and wisdom through increased voice, power, and ownership in government and organizational decision-making processes
- Engage the communities most impacted by the digital divide
- Meet the communities where they are already gathering
- Host digital equity activities in community-friendly trusted spaces

Racial Equity in Practice

Community Engagement

- Be trauma-informed (e.g., recognize and understand the historical/current cultural trauma and oppression)
- Eliminate the community engagement barriers, challenges, and harm
- Create spaces for healing and sharing art, dance, food, music, and storytelling
- Provide oral interpretation and written translation in multiple languages
- Honor the community's time by providing food, beverages, and giveaways that address the community's day-to-day needs

Racial Equity in Practice

Spectrum of Community Engagement

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Racial Equity in Practice

County of Los Angeles Community Broadband Networks

- The County of Los Angeles (County) is facilitating free residential access to reliable broadband internet services for low-income communities that do not have affordable high-speed broadband internet service
- The County is in the process of contracting with various Managed Service Providers (MSPs) to deploy and operate the Community Broadband Networks in communities most in need throughout Los Angeles County as part of a 5-Year public-private partnership pilot
- County staff applied racial equity best practices that determined which communities would receive the free broadband internet services such as looking at disaggregated Census-level data and prioritizing communities that align with the County's Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative

Racial Equity in Practice

County of Los Angeles Delete the Divide (DTD) Initiative

- The County's Delete the Divide (DTD) Initiative focuses on advancing digital equity in underserved communities throughout Los Angeles County through partnerships, infrastructure investments, and technology resources that empower residents and small businesses
- County staff used racial equity best practices by directly hiring digital navigators from communities most impacted by inequities and providing them with internships and job training opportunities to help them explore and pursue careers in computer and information technology while serving communities most impacted by the digital divide

Racial Equity in Practice

County of Los Angeles Intergovernmental Broadband Coordinating Committee (IBCC)

- The County's IBCC is a regional collective body and standing committee of multidisciplinary stakeholder organizations and community members collaborating to pursue, secure, and implement Federal and State grant program funding to address the digital divide in all of Los Angeles County through County-led intergovernmental and cross-sector regional coordination
- County staff is currently in the process of using racial equity best practices by prioritizing communities and neighborhoods most in need of digital equity resources and services as part of Federal and State grant program funding development and implementation and including communities most impacted by the digital divide in the decision-making processes of the IBCC



Feel Free to Reach Out & Let's Connect!

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