

## Racial Equity Lasik Tool

Date:  Completed By [name(s)]:

Focus Area for the Applying the Racial Equity Lasik to Your Work:

### ***How This Tool Can Help You Advance Racial Justice in Your Work<sup>1</sup>***

The goal of this worksheet is to give you practice in applying a racial equity “Lasik” on an ongoing basis in service of developing anti-racist policies, programs, practices, and decisions.<sup>2</sup> Lama Rod Owens, teacher and author of Love and Rage, says: “There is no liberation without practice.”

This worksheet is best used *before* you undertake a new proposed policy recommendation, work decision, or initiative to help you embed racial equity work processes from the start. It is not intended to be a comprehensive work planning document—it is an equity assessment and reflection tool that asks you how your intersecting identities and life experiences inform your approach to the work. This tool centers the stakeholders and communities impacted by the issue at hand and explores how to imbed accountability on an ongoing basis.

### ***Instructions***

- This worksheet can be filled out individual or collaboratively. You and your team are welcome to print or reformat this document to best fit your needs (e.g., converting into a Google doc).
- Answer the questions in chronological order.
- Doing the assessments and reflections necessary to fully use this tool might feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar – that’s okay! There are no wrong answers, and you are encouraged to answer genuinely.
- A Glossary of key terms is included at the end of this document to refer to as needed.

### **About H-CAP and The Center for Equity**

Healthcare Career Advancement Program (H-CAP) builds the workforce for quality care through workforce development, training resources, and working with unions, employers, and workers. The Center for Advancing Racial Equity and Job Quality in Long-Term Care (Center for Equity) is an H-CAP initiative to advance an equitable caregiver infrastructure by confronting the links between systemic racism, sexism, ableism, and poor job quality in long-term care and centering the majority Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) women and caregiving workforce.

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<sup>1</sup> Thank you to the Center for Equity Advisory Board members who have provided invaluable feedback throughout this racial equity “Lasik” tool development process, in particular: Denny Chan, Charlene Dickerson, Jeremie Greer, Shantonia Jackson, Sarah Triano, and The Training and Education Fund PA Racial Justice Committee.

<sup>2</sup> Racial equity “Lasik” is the perspective through which we strive to approach all our work – not a step or “box to check” in the process, a “lens” to take on or off, or one of many factors to consider after the rest of the work is done.

## Step 1: Understand Your Context

1a) What is the issue or problem that you are trying to address?

1b) What historical events or factors that have contributed to this problem and its impact on systemic inequities? (related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, immigration status, disability, and more...) If you didn't already know this information, why do you think that is?

## Step 2: Understand the Impacts of Structural Inequities

2a) What are the group identities of the people most impacted (positively and negatively) by this issue? (For example, Black women, LGBTQ+ older adults, immigrants with dependents, etc.) How might this issue impact people differently depending on their group identities?<sup>3</sup>

2b) Identifying each of our unique identities and how they intersect with each other can help us see how implicit biases may impact our approach. What are your own identities, life experiences, etc. in relation to race, gender, class, sexuality, (dis)ability, age, etcetera?<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For example, free evening classes may be offered to workers to support career advancement, but no consideration has been given to the fact that a single parent would need childcare in order to participate.

<sup>4</sup> For example, an older white disabled heterosexual cis-gender man experiences systems of oppression differently from his millennial Latina able-bodied queer cis-gender woman co-worker.

2c) *If your proposed policy recommendation, work decision, or initiative has already been identified:* Are there ways in which your [policy recommendation, work decision, initiative] might fix a problem, but also unintentionally replicate underlying systems or structures of inequity? If so, how? (For example, securing new funding for workforce development that doesn't tackle the root causes of occupational segregation.)

### Step 3: Build Your Team

3a) Based on your answers to the questions in Step 2, who are the groups of people, organizations, and stakeholders that should be at the table to fully understand the issue, the issue's impact on affected communities, identify the solution(s), and develop a plan to solve it?

3b) What the concrete steps will you take to make sure that perspectives, knowledge, and lived experiences of Black, indigenous, and People of Color are centered in developing your [policy recommendation, work decision, initiative]?

### || Pause & Reflect ||

After completing this worksheet, what do you notice? How are you/your team feeling?

**Things to Consider as You Move Forward:**

- Track how your implicit biases may show up while planning and implementing your work.
- Plan to make shifts to your plan if/when you notice implicit bias showing up on the individual, group, or systemic levels.
- Revisit this tool as you apply a racial equity Lasik to your work. This is a living document!
- Consider how you will develop an evaluation plan as the work progresses that is grounded in anti-racist practices.

## **Racial Equity Lasik Tool Glossary of Terms**

### **Accountability**

In the context of racial equity work, accountability refers to the ways in which individuals and communities hold themselves to their goals and actions and acknowledge the values and groups to which they are responsible. To be accountable, one must be visible, with a transparent agenda and process. Accountability demands commitment. It might be defined as “what kicks in when convenience runs out.” Accountability can be externally imposed (legal or organizational requirements), or internally applied on a continuum from the institutional and organizational level to the individual level. From a relational point of view, accountability is not always doing it right. Sometimes it’s really about what happens after it’s done wrong.<sup>5</sup>

### **Implicit bias**

Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals’ attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals’ stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess.<sup>6</sup>

### **Occupational segregation**

Occupational segregation occurs when one demographic group is overrepresented or underrepresented among different kinds of work or different types of jobs.<sup>7</sup> Occupations with more men tend to be paid better regardless of skill or education level. This is due to structural sexism: if work is done predominantly by women, then it is valued less in the labor market. Occupational segregation is also highly racialized: women of color at all education levels are segregated into jobs with lower wages than their white female peers of similar skill levels.

### **Racial equity**

Racial equity can be defined as both an outcome and as a process.<sup>8</sup> As an outcome, racial equity exists when one’s racial identity no longer predicts how one fares in a society, or within institutions such as schools or workplaces—everyone has what they need to thrive, regardless of where they live or their background. As a process, racial equity replaces policies, practices, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race with those that produce equitable access, opportunity, and treatment for everyone.<sup>9</sup>

### **Systemic inequity**

The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Systems of oppression fuse institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry, and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures that saturate most aspects of life in our society. Systemic inequity arises because of the structural and material constraints that significantly shape a person’s life chances and sense of possibility because of society’s hierarchical structure in which dominant or privilege groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted groups.<sup>10</sup>

### **Tracking**

Tracking is a skill of paying attention to and naming patterns of behaviors by group identity. This awareness is the first step to interrupting patterns that exclude others. If those exclusionary patterns of behavior at the group level continue unchecked, discrimination becomes embedded in the organization and the organization as a whole must take it on and address it.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [Accountability and White Anti-Racist Organizing: Stories from Our Work](#), Bonnie Berman Cushing with Lila Cabbil, Margery Freeman, Jeff Hitchcock, and Kimberly Richards (2010)., via [racialequitytools.org](http://racialequitytools.org).

<sup>6</sup> *State of the Science Implicit Bias Review 2013*, Cheryl Staats, Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University.

<sup>7</sup> Fact sheet: Occupational segregation in the United States. (2017, October 3). *Equitable*

*Growth*. <http://www.equitablegrowth.org/fact-sheet-occupational-segregation-in-the-united-states/>.

<sup>8</sup> *What is Racial Equity?* (2021, March 1). Race Forward. <https://www.raceforward.org/about/what-is-racial-equity>.

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from the Center for Assessment and Policy Development.

<sup>10</sup> Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>11</sup> Delyte Frost, PhD. SEIU Bold Center.