



LOCAL AND REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON
RACE & EQUITY

Racial Equity: Getting to Results



by Erika Bernabei



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RACE & EQUITY

This resource guide is published by the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, a national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*The authors would like to thank the following individuals
who contributed to this guide by participating in interviews for case studies:*

Kelly Larson, City of Dubuque, Iowa

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EDITORIAL SUPPORT, LAYOUT, AND DESIGN

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GARE is a joint project of



haas institute
FOR A FAIR AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY



CENTER FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

Published May 2017. Updated July 2017.

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INTRODUCTION

Currently across the country, regardless of region, racial inequities exist across every indicator for success—including health, criminal justice, education, jobs, housing, and beyond. We know these inequities are incongruent with our aspirations. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), a joint project of the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at the University of California, Berkeley and Center for Social Inclusion, recognizes that we can and must do better. We know that government has a key role in advancing racial equity, and therefore are modeling at the local level how it is truly possible for government to advance racial equity and to develop into an inclusive and effective democracy.

We know change is possible with intentionality and focus. We must recognize that from the inception of our country, government at the local, regional, state, and federal level has played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequities. Though we've made many strides toward racial equity, policies and practices have created and still create disparate results—even if the intention to discriminate is not present. Despite progress in addressing explicit discrimination, racial inequities continue to be deep, pervasive, and persistent across the country. We are at a critical juncture with an exciting new role for government—to proactively work for racial equity.

Our goal goes beyond closing the gaps; we must improve overall outcomes by focusing efforts on those who are faring the worst. Deeply racialized systems are costly for us collectively and depress outcomes and life chances for communities of color. To advance racial equity, government must focus not only on individual programs, but also on policy and institutional strategies that create and maintain inequities. GARE uses a six-part strategic approach geared to address all levels of institutional change.

Normalize

1. Use a racial equity framework: Jurisdictions must use a racial equity framework that clearly articulates our vision for racial equity and the differences between individual, institutional, and structural racism—as well as implicit and explicit bias. It is important that staff—across the breadth and depth of a jurisdiction—develop a shared understanding of these concepts.

2. Operate with urgency and accountability: While it is often believed that change is hard and takes time, we have seen repeatedly that when we prioritize change and act with urgency, change is em-

Six-Part Strategic Approach to Institutional Change

Normalize

- Use a racial equity framework
- Operate with urgency and accountability

Organize

- Build organizational capacity
- Partner with other organizations and communities

Operationalize

- Implement racial equity tools
- Be data-driven

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braced and can occur quickly. The most effective path to accountability comes from creating clear action plans with built-in institutional accountability mechanisms. Collectively, we must create greater urgency and public will in order to achieve racial equity.

Organize

- 1. Build organizational capacity:** Jurisdictions need to be committed to the breadth and depth of institutional transformation so that impacts are sustainable. While elected leaders and other top officials are a critical part, change takes place on the ground. We must build infrastructure that creates racial equity experts and teams throughout local and regional government.
- 2. Partner with other institutions and communities:** The work of government on racial equity is necessary but not sufficient. To achieve racial equity, government must work in partnership with communities and other institutions to achieve meaningful results.

Operationalize

- 1. Implement racial equity tools:** Racial inequities are neither natural nor random—they have been created and sustained over time. Inequities will not disappear on their own; tools must be used to change the policies, programs, and practices that perpetuate inequities. Using this “Focusing on Racial Equity Results,” along with other tools, such as our **Racial Equity Tool**, will help us to achieve better results within our communities.
- 2. Be data-driven:** Measurement must take place at two levels—first, to measure the success of specific programmatic and policy changes, and second, to develop baselines, set goals, and measure progress towards goals. It is critical that jurisdictions use data in this manner for accountability.

Racial equity means that we no longer see disparities based on race and we improve results for all groups. We believe that in order to disrupt our nation's deep and pervasive inequality of opportunity and results, generate new possibilities for community ownership of government, and establish a new narrative for a truly inclusive democracy, it is essential to transform government. Indeed, in order to advance racial equity and success as a nation, we must transform government.

Prior to using this resource guide, you might want to familiarize yourself with some of GARE's other tools.

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- **Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas into Action**
- **Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity**
- **Racial Equity Action Plans: A How-to Manual**

If you are not familiar with GARE's work and theory of change, you may want to start with the Advancing Racial Equity resource guide.

This work builds on the work of numerous other organizations, including the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, Race Forward, Western States Center, the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, and many others. This issue paper also aligns with and builds upon Results-Based Accountability™ (RBA), developed by Mark Friedman.

We have intentionally lifted up the importance of centering racial equity within an RBA framework. We have seen too many cases where not doing so reinforces structural racism. Many planning or evaluation tools were designed within environments of institutional or structural racism. When we fail to name and center race, though we may be well-intentioned, we will reinforce racial inequities. Getting clear about racial equity first, then using a powerful tool like RBA flips the status quo on its head—it shifts the power to drive toward racial equity. Only through the use of a structured process will we achieve transformative results, shifting the very foundation of the institution we seek to change. By developing a clear racial equity lens first, we provide a foundation for a racial equity-centered RBA process that facilitates improved results.

BEGIN WITH THE DATA

Often, the work of identifying, collecting, and using qualitative and quantitative data to inform community change processes is left to staff or partners doing work behind the scenes. But, as noted in the **Racial Equity Action Plans manual**, the role of identifying, collecting, and using data must be shared and owned by community leaders and the early adopters (or Core Team) of staff responsible for developing a plan of action.

The design and usefulness of the data will hinge on whether transparent, proactive data analysis and use become a part of the culture of your group. This is different from the compliance structures often required in funding reports or the deficit orientation affixed to communities of color because of poor outcomes. The use and analysis of data are about empowering you to make good decisions—and to advance racial equity.

Using a racial equity-centered RBA process requires you to use the same amount of rigor in your work with and in communities of color as you would put into any other endeavor. Racial equity implementation must be just as disciplined, albeit with different results. This requires, as noted in the Racial Equi-

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ty Action Plans manual, that every activity you pursue is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely.

There is a difference between experimentation and deliberate testing of ideas designed to disrupt and shift those practices that create racially inequitable results. When community is authentically engaged in the work, it becomes clear when something is a good idea and when a particular action lacks alignment with community values and goals. Furthermore, when the data trend goes in the wrong direction, authentic, trusting relationships with the group will encourage and empower people to seek solutions rather than assign blame. An anti-racist, racial equity-focused Results-Based Accountability™ framework is one of many tools that can help you to move your plans forward in a disciplined way that is structured for equitable results. The next section will give you more information about RBA.

WHAT IS RACIAL EQUITY-CENTERED RESULTS-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY™?

Results-Based Accountability™ (RBA) is a tool that starts with the desired results and works backwards towards the means, to ensure that your plans work toward community results with stakeholder-driven implementation. This disrupts historic patterns of “doing what we’ve always done, because we’ve always done it that way.” That way of work, done with the best intentions, does not produce the racial equity we demand in our communities. RBA also helps distinguish between population level (whole groups) indicators, that are the responsibility of multiple systems and take a long time to shift, and performance measures (activity-specific) that organizations can use to determine whether what they do is having an impact.

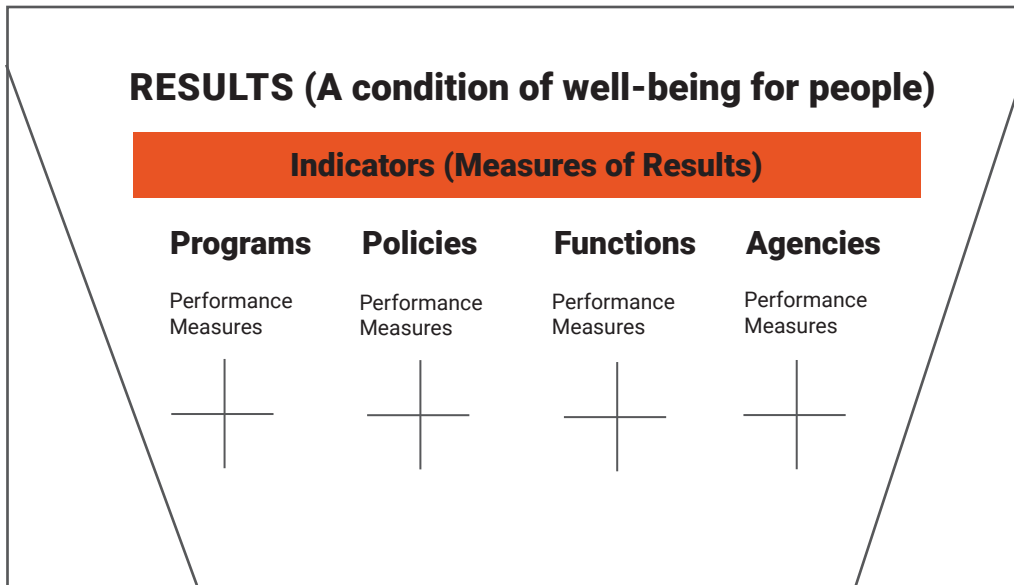
Tools are not the work, but they are a part of the work. The following guide will help you begin the process of using a powerful tool, Results-Based Accountability™ that incorporates a racial equity lens.

The overarching RBA framework shows a relationship between Results, Indicators, and Activities. The orange bar in the diagram separates the population level results and indicators that are the responsibility of many systems over time; below the orange bar are the activities for which jurisdictions can develop performance measures and hold themselves accountable. The activities below the line should contribute to the change toward which the jurisdiction aims. The illustration on the next page visualizes what that looks like.

To start, Results-Based Accountability™ uses seven primary steps, also called questions of population accountability.

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POPULATION ACCOUNTABILITY: START AT THE END

1) What are the desired results ?

First, you need to be clear about what desired racial equity conditions you and your group want to see in your whole community. This requires the recognition that the whole community cannot experience well-being when communities of color experience it at disproportionately lower rates. Results focus on a city, county, or state and are articulated as positive conditions of well-being—such as people are healthy in [city], or Latino children are ready for school in [state]. This requires you to think about the larger context—toward the transformation of systems to get equitable results for communities of color. Because changing results is a bigger responsibility than any one agency can shoulder, you need institutional, agency, and community partners to accomplish your goals.

For example, Portland, Oregon’s statement “Develop planning and sustainability solutions that eliminate racial disparities thereby creating prosperous, resilient, healthy, and affordable communities for all Portlanders” includes four results toward which the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability’s planning and sustainability solutions aspire: prosperity, resilience, health, and affordability. In order to get to those results, the Bureau will have to partner with other groups. The first step, then, is for your group to determine results.

Fill in the following statement: “We want families/communities that are...”

These statements should be positive (i.e. “healthy” versus “not sick”). They should also be about the condition itself, not a choice or possibility of a condition, (i.e. “educated” versus “the opportunity or to be educated”)—allowing the choice to be built in to the condition. Saying “the opportunity” reinforces notions that community members experience disparate outcomes because of choices they make rather than as a result of institutional and/or structural racism.

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2) What would the result look like?

The next step is to answer the following question: What would this result/condition of well-being look like if you experienced it in the community? What would it physically look like? What would it feel like?

This question should be answered in a culturally relevant, contextualized manner that is connected to the vision you have for racial equity. The question is not about any community, but about this community. You should ask yourself, whose vision does this picture reflect? Does it reinforce a deficit orientation about behaviors or does it authentically reflect what a result means to that city/county/state/community?

3) What are the community indicators that would measure the desired result?

The next step is to identify community indicators, of the population-level result(s). Indicators may not be quick to move because they should be community-level measures that reflect generations of policy and systems failures that have produced racial inequity. Nevertheless, they are powerful measures that focus and hold your efforts accountable to population-level systems change over time.

These measures might look similar to others across the country, but once you disaggregate the data by race and ethnicity and review it, they tell a unique story about a particular community.

The group should keep ambitions practical and identify a small number of indicators on which to concentrate; it is easy to get distracted or avoid work when taking on too much at once. You can use some of the guiding questions outlined in the **Racial Equity Action Plan manual** to help identify the most relevant indicators.

- What needs or opportunities were identified during the information-gathering phase of this process?
- What does our organization define as the most important racially equitable indicators?
- What are some known racial inequities in our organization's field?

Indicators are large-scale measures like unemployment rates, chronic disease rates, or academic achievement rates. Because of the scope and scale of the collection, population level data often comes from federal, state, city, or county government or agencies, university partners, or Census data.

Once the group has identified the indicators that they would like to measure, partners should be identified to decide: (a) how to get this data, (b) how it can be disaggregated by race and ethnicity, and (c) with what regularity the data can be produced.

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THINKING THINGS THROUGH: A SAMPLE DIALOGUE

Upon reviewing data that show a gap between the diabetes rates of white and African American residents of a city, a facilitator asks, “Why is the rate of diabetes so much higher for X residents?” A person might say “because X eat poor quality, sugary foods.” If the process ended there, it would not get at the root causes of the issue, and would also reinforce the assumptions some people make about the “choices” people make. Instead, the facilitator would ask the group, “But why?” and someone might say, “because it is cheap,” to which the facilitator might ask “so why would X people in city buy cheap food?” This might prompt the group to talk about the economic inequality wage and employment difference, or food deserts/the lack of access to healthy foods by neighborhood. A final “why?” might bring the group to identify historical, structural racism in the context of that community.

4) What do the data tell us?

Your group then needs to look at the data trend for each indicator, disaggregated by race/ethnicity and whatever relevant demographic breakdowns matter to your work, while asking “what would happen if we did nothing different?” Longitudinal indicator trends can help you see the racially disproportionate results for communities of color over time, and therefore past data is critical at this point in the process.

Then, facilitators will help the group to uncover the root causes behind the data trend, asking the group, “why does the trend look like this?” and for each answer, they should ask “why” three to five more times to move past superficial understandings of racial inequity and get to the underlying causes.

During this part of the process, you need to maintain discipline to dig into the root causes represented by indicator data trends. The review of data trends and analysis of root causes of racial disparity are critical to setting the stage for the rest of your work with your group. The process must be facilitated by someone skilled at pushing back on views that reinforce individual responsibility and shifting the focus to institutional and structural racism, and able to actively surface the historic and present-day root causes underlying the assumptions. This is most effective when there are two facilitators in a multiracial team who can use their understanding of racial equity; individual, institutional, and structural racism; and power and politics to lead the conversation.

For example, when seeking root causes, some participants will likely state assumptions about people’s behavior that presume that all people, when they make choices, start on an even playing field. This often comes up when reviewing health data and child-related data on parenting—(i.e., assuming that

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people make bad eating, purchasing, or parenting choices that cause poor outcomes). It is critical to understand structural and institutional racism and how it plays out in people's lives, and to use a root-cause analysis to understand underlying causes of disparities and to disrupt deficit thinking.

When done well, root-cause analysis produces the foundation upon which all actions and next steps are built. When done poorly, it causes confusion and tension in the group. When insufficient time is spent on root-cause analysis or it is skipped over, groups revert back to the same actions that they have used in the past rather than working with new processes or partners that would change results.

5) Who are your partners?

After you've completed your root-cause analysis, your group should consider which partners you should work with in order to reach your goals. As noted in the **Racial Equity Action Plan manual**, in order to do systems change work, government must partner not only with community leadership, but also with a range of types of institutions. The group should consider:

- other government agencies;
- local government leadership;
- nonprofits;
- philanthropy;
- community-based advocacy and community organizing groups;
- the private sector; and
- any other partners that would be required.

For each of the identified partners, the group should also determine their role ("Why are they important? What are they needed for?"), and when it would be effective to bring that partner into the effort so as to phase the work strategically. Identify partners from other institutions whose participation will ensure that you have impact in your priority communities. Representatives from community-based organizations and grassroots community groups bring a more holistic understanding of inequities, as well as innovative solutions.

The group should also challenge itself to identify "unlikely suspects" or partners that have been avoided in the past—these might well be the exact partners you need in order to produce the results you seek. In addition, consider current partners and how they might expand or change what they are doing, allowing all options to be on the table. To reach impact, it is critical to set a culture of transparency about past performance by current partners.

Even if the group cannot yet determine how to engage a needed partner, the process of identifying strategic partners allows us to determine what we need, and prevents us from falling back on business as usual. Making the connection with the partner is a separate step that can come at a later time.

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6) What works to change the data trend towards racial equity?

When determining what might work to transform results in your community, begin by having brainstorming sessions. No one program or policy will change an entire result, but any can be a good starting point.

Results-Based Accountability™ starts with these categories of ideas:

- **Low-cost, no-cost ideas:** free or nearly free ideas that members of the group identify. Because these solutions are not resource dependent, they may help the group get started more quickly than other activities that require money.
- **Community knowledge:** ideas and solutions that are culled from the wisdom and experience of residents and community members who have already informally tried out actions and have found them to be effective.
- **Promising practices:** solutions that are not considered “evidence-based” because they haven’t been rigorously studied, but that people in or outside of the community have tried that show promise.
- **Evidence-based practices:** actions that research has shown to be effective.
- **Out-of-the-box/“Imagine if” ideas:** ideas that may seem unorthodox or nontraditional but that just might work. With a diverse partnership come a diversity of ideas, and RBA believes that the more initial ideas the better. Creative, out-of-the-box ideas that relate to the root cause analysis can be particularly impactful.

Ask the group to think about the city/county/state’s current policies and service systems, and how they maintain or reinforce structural racism. During this part of the process, the group considers all actions—from policy changes or implementation to new, client-level programs with the end of decreasing racial disparities. Remember that the root causes they have already identified will inform their brainstorming.

The group should identify a large number of actions in each of the categories above in a judgment-free zone. The brainstorm is not a research project for evidence-based practices, although that can be a part of the brainstorming process. The brainstorm is a way to gather the ideas that have the best chance of impacting indicators at the macro-level.

7) What actions should you start with?

Once you’ve recorded the brainstorm, the group should use the following RBA criteria to determine which actions to begin with:

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- **Values:** Is it strengths-based, people-centered, and culturally relevant/anti-racist? Does it advance a racial equity agenda?
- **Leverage:** How likely is it to change the trendline? What additional resources for change does it activate?
- **Reach:** Is it feasible? Will it actually benefit communities of color experiencing racial inequities?
- **Specificity:** Does it have a timeline with deliverables that answer the questions *who, what, when, where, and how?*

The **Racial Equity Action Plan manual** highlights action and accountability; in this large-scale, whole-community work, action commitments are critical to holding the group accountable. You should make action commitments at the end of each meeting to ensure that actions and new partnerships move forward. Action commitments require each member of the group to personally commit to one action related to moving indicators, and complete it by an agreed-upon deadline. People should report on progress on these actions at the beginning of every stakeholder meeting.

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ACTIONS: THE ROAD TO GETTING RESULTS

The hard work begins after the groundwork has been laid. For each community indicator, the group has already identified a set of actions. Now, as noted in the Racial Equity Action Plans manual, facilitated action planning sessions—within departments, across departments, and sometimes with nonprofit or other partners—help to refine the potentially broad set of actions. The Core Team should bring population-level indicators and results to these sessions and begin to build a performance plan.

Whether your actions are department-level policy changes, or changes to nonprofit programming, each need a set of performance measures to ensure that the action or activity is crafted to decrease racial disparities. RBA's seven steps of performance accountability will guide your action refinement and your development of performance measures.

1) Who do you serve?

For each action, the group working on that measure must first identify the intended beneficiary. Identifying who you serve (whether an institution, people, a group, or a system) helps you gain clarity about the intended impact of your work and not attempt to make people accountable for change outside their scope of work. For example, some actions will impact community members directly (i.e. parenting program); some will impact other kinds of stakeholders, such as elected officials (i.e. policy brief development), board members (i.e. training), or internal staff (i.e. use of a Racial Equity Toolkit policy).

2) What is an action's intended impact?

This simple question, articulated as a measure, is the most critical part of performance accountability. This is the difference between doing business as usual, which has produced racially inequitable results for generations, and being accountable for the impact of our work.

Begin by having the group answer these questions:

- How would I know if this action worked?
- What is the intended impact?
- How would I know if anyone is "better off" as a result of it?

These answers will inform the development of performance measures that will be critical to measuring the impact of your work. The three performance measures are:

- How much did you do? (Quantity, number of clients and/or activities)
- How well did you do it? (Quality, percentage of activity that was of high quality, percentage of common measures of appropriate/high quality)
- Is anyone better off? (Impact, number or percentage change in skills/knowledge, attitude/opinion, behavior, or circumstance)

For example, a "better off" skills/knowledge measure might be the percentage of people that participated in an activity that have gained knowledge of their rights. An attitude/opinion measure could be the percentage of people that feel empowered as a result of an action. A behavior measure might be a change in the percentage of school attendance rate. And a circumstance measure could be the percentage working in family-sustaining wages as a result of a new employment policy.

You can sometimes expect to experience skepticism from community members. Remember, there are many reasons why communities of color might not trust government. Restoring trust will require time and government must demonstrate a long-term commitment and a willingness to partner in responsive, engaging, and power-sharing new ways. Internal to government, some staff may be skeptical as well; some may have seen similar conversations or initiatives come and go. Similar to working with community, building trust with employees of color will require demonstrated commitment from leadership over the long term.

3) What is the quality of the action?

It is essential to use metrics that measure the quality of the strategy in ways that span the gamut from cultural relevance, language access, and participation rates to more technical measures of staff training and staff-to-client ratio.

THINKING IT THROUGH: QUESTIONS TO ASK

Just because something is “evidence-based,” or should work, does not mean that it will work. A perfect, high-quality replication of an evidence-based service in your community does not mean that it is an impactful solution. You must ask yourself: Is it culturally relevant? Does it take into account community values? Was it selected with an eye to the root causes of racial inequity? If so, evidence-based practices can be part of the solution as long as you pay attention to the associated “better off” measure. But merely being evidence-based does not guarantee positive change, and some can have neutral or detrimental impacts in communities, and others might result in overall improvement, but still result in increases in racial disproportionalities. It is important to maintain a focus on closing racial inequities, as well as lifting up results for all.

The main purpose of this group of metrics is to ensure that action is being done well. If the “better off” measures show no change, quality measures sometimes tell us why we are not having an impact. Alternately, just because the action is being implemented in a high-quality manner, does not mean that the “better off” data will move in the right direction.

You can see how all three types of measures relate in this RBA graphic on page 16 (from Mark Friedman’s *Trying Hard is Not Good Enough*):

4) What is the story behind the data?

Much of what was noted in population level accountability section for step four is the same for each performance-level action identified in your process. We recommend that you review that section again at this point. Even when groups select actions that they believe will address root causes at the population level, it is critical to regularly review data at the performance level and ask “why?” This is where the rubber hits the road on racial equity. This is the difference between perpetuating systemic failures to address racially disproportionate outcomes and disrupting them.

5) Who are the partners with a role to play?

Again, this step is similar to the process at the population level, but it is often skipped at the action level. Generally, identifying partners after looking at data helps organizations fill in service, policy, and community gaps.

Internally, organizations often fail to think about the partners that would make their work more effective. This can be because of ego, resources, or time. This failure causes them to continue business as usual, and prevents them from having the thought partners at the table that would allow them to take their

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<p>How much did we do?</p> <p># Clients/people served</p> <p># Activities (by type of activity)</p>	<p>How well did we do it?</p> <p>% Common measures <small>(e.g. client staff ratio, workload ratio, turnover rate, staff morale, % staff fully trained, % clients seen in their own language, unit cost)</small></p> <p>% Activity-specific measures <small>(e.g. % timely, % clients completing activity, % correct and complete)</small></p>
<p>Is anyone better off?</p> <p>#/% Skills/knowledge <small>(e.g. parenting skills)</small></p> <p>#/% Attitude/opinion <small>(e.g. toward drugs)</small></p> <p>#/% Behavior <small>(e.g. school attendance)</small></p> <p>#/% Circumstance <small>(e.g. working, in stable housing)</small></p>	

work from good to transformative. If you are committed to racial equity, partners are critical to doing work differently, because they can expand and accelerate impact. Organizations cannot afford to stay siloed any longer—multiple systems impact people and their efforts need to be coordinated and effective.

Again, think about all of the types of partners named in step five in the population part of this tool and consider who is needed, in what role, and when to move the work.

6) What works to have greater impact?

After you’ve reviewed data on any action, it is time to use it. If you do not use the data, you perpetuate the same practices that have contributed to racial inequities all along. When things are not going well, or as planned, or the data does not show impact, remember that you have already identified root cases and know that it takes time to see change. You should begin by thinking about how you might change the action. Start by reflecting on the lessons learned within the agency’s experience, but also think about what works in other parts of the community and in other communities—as well as formal best practices/evidence-based practices that you can use or adapt. This may require you to consider the requirements of funding streams, contracts, and evidence-based

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THINKING IT THROUGH: EQUITY REQUIRES COMMUNITY INSIGHT

To ensure maximum fidelity between the data and the intended impact of an action, ensure that community leadership is in the room for data reviews and root-cause analysis. Sometimes data looks like it is having an intended impact, but you need community residents or people on the receiving end of the implementing a solution to identify the “why?”—or the unintended consequences of “success.” For example, new residents in a community may increase the number of business opportunities/jobs, hence increasing employment in the neighborhood. It is critical to notice/track the beginning stages of that increase in new residents to see whether it is moving into gentrification, displacing existing residents or businesses, or if businesses are selling goods that are affordable to the existing community. Community leadership is best positioned to flag these root causes of otherwise neutral-seeming actions or other things “under the radar.” Community insight is also necessary when designing and refining solutions—so make sure to have them at the table.

models—balancing what is required of you with what you believe will work to change systems. While it can be hard to change or stop existing practices, change can produce improved results.

7) What are the next steps?

To figure out the next steps, you will need to ask and get answers to specific questions:

- Who will do what, by when?
- What resources are needed to get it done?
- Is this a long-term action that needs time or can it be done tomorrow?
- What is the active role of community leadership in making these decisions?

A commitment to action, just like in the population level process, is critical. The more precise the better, and they must be written.

A COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY AND BETTER RESULTS

A Racial Equity-focused Results-Based Accountability™ (RBA) in and of itself is not the work; authentic and principled engagement with community is the work. If a tool could accomplish the hard work of transformative public systems change that would produce better results for communities of color, jurisdictions would have solved racial inequities. On the other hand, without tools and a disciplined and focused way of doing work, communities can unintentionally perpetuate inequity by relying on goodwill and intellect alone. In places like Fairfax County and Dubuque, and many places around the country, hard work is underway—laying the foundation for systems change by investing in both a common understanding of racism and tools for transformative change.

RESOURCE GUIDE
Racial Equity:
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CASE STUDY: DUBUQUE, IOWA

Dubuque, Iowa, a majority white community with disproportionately poor results based on race and ethnicity, is building the public will and institutional ability to look at racially-disaggregated data to inform decisions. They have been embedding the RBA framework into their already-evolved racial equity-focused work on advancing housing equity, and building a local model from which other groups can learn. In addition, Dubuque is investing in empowering and developing the ability of local direct-service staff and managers to use disaggregated data to improve results for people of color in real time. They believe that when lawyers, social workers, and managers themselves do this work with data, it helps them internalize the related values and skills over time, and they can apply those learnings more directly to their work. Dubuque is modeling how smaller, disproportionately white communities across the country can deliberately build a foundation using a racial equity lens—and embed a disciplined approach to use data to change systems.

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CASE STUDY: FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA

In July, 2016, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and School Board adopted the One Fairfax Resolution envisioning an opportunity-rich community in which everyone can participate and prosper. This resolution provides the vehicle to understand how issues of equity impact all Fairfax County residents and directs the development of a racial and social equity policy—at its core—to be applied in the planning and delivery of all public services and investments. The policy, once adopted, will facilitate the use of equity tools to ensure that equity becomes an intentional point of consideration in decision-making and resource-allocation processes. A cross-systems (County and Schools) Executive Leadership Team, along with an inter-disciplinary, multi-agency policy development workgroup was convened and charged to develop the policy and recommendations regarding the infrastructure necessary for implementation and sustainability. Meaningful metrics, supported by an accountability structure that bridges the County Government and the Public School System will ensure common terminology, disaggregated data standards, and “better off” measures to evaluate progress towards achieving racial and social equity. Finally, and importantly, to redefine public engagement in ways that affirm effective democracy through implementing inclusive actions, processes, and structures that build community capacity and reflect the diversity of all residents. Fairfax County is working hard to make their vision for racial and social equity a reality with and for the community.

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Across the country, governmental jurisdictions are:

Making a
commitment
to achieving
racial equity

Focusing on
the power
and influence
of their own
institutions

Working in
partnership
with others

**When this occurs, significant leverage
and expansion opportunities emerge,
setting the stage for the achievement of
racial equity in our communities.**

