

***“[The most important meditation is] critical thinking followed by action. Discern what your world is: know the scenario of this human drama, and then figure out where your talents might fit in to make a better world. And each of must do something that will make your heart sing because no one will want to do it with us if we are not passionate and inspired.” - The Dalai Lama***

## ***Dear Colleagues and Friends,***

We are pleased to share with you our emerging model and our next step along this journey toward racial equity and transformation. As the Office of Diversity and Equity of Multnomah County, we strongly value embodying the changes we seek to realize. Our intended audience for our work in progress is our colleagues and fellow practitioners in the field of racial equity analysis.

We bring this to you with excitement, fervor and some trepidation. Our commitment to racial equity and empowerment compels us to walk the talk - to lay bare our guiding assumptions and what we have learned about the importance of purpose, strength in vulnerability, transformation, mindfulness, and understanding trauma in achieving our goals. We know that these guiding assumptions challenge the status quo, are sometimes derided as soft, impractical, or ineffective and are rarely discussed in relation to racial equity.

Our purpose is to add to, and change the conversation with our fellow practitioners about what transformation around racial equity looks and feels like. For us this meant presenting a logic model (that we will use an evaluation guide) that focuses on transformative change and that highlights the role of purpose in this work. What is also true is that by putting this model forward based on our best thinking and research, we are elevating models and ways of being that have been present on our planets for thousands of years, within deeply collective cultures, many of which are grounded within several communities of color.

### **What We Mean By Racial Equity**

- ✓ Fair and just distribution of resources and opportunities for individuals, culturally specific business and CBOs and economic and social systems that are sustainable and that sustain all people;
- ✓ Meaningful engagement of communities of color in planning, decision making and evaluation that support shifts in perception, paradigm, and demonstrated values;
- ✓ Authentically embodying racial equity and empowerment principles (including transformative and non-traumatizing practices) in planning, decision-making, implementation and evaluation; and
- ✓ Bold and courageous long term commitment to unearthing racism’s root causes and addressing barriers to racial equity in and between individuals, institutions and systems.

# Part 1: Context and Setting the Conditions

## Our Approach and Guiding Principles Within A Grander Context

Our work is grounded in the belief that we can choose our approach and response to current social, economic, and political conditions. We, as a civilization, are at a crisis point in our development and survival. Acknowledging this, there are three main approaches put forth by social change and eco-scholar, Joanna Macy, to consider. We choose to lead from the third.

**Business As Usual:** The central plot in this story is about getting ahead. The problems of other peoples, nations, and species are not of our concern, and there is little need to change the way we live. This story dismisses the problem as being overblown.

**The Great Unraveling:** This story highlights five main areas of universal concern: economic decline, resource depletion, climate change, social division and war, and mass extinction of species. This paradigm sees decline as inevitable and unchangeable, making it not worth talking about.

**The Great Turning:** This is the paradigm we choose to operate from. It moves from staying in the frame of dooming statistics, towards integrating such statistics into (1) holding and deconstructing actions, (2) life-sustaining and reconstructing actions, and (3) shifting our consciousness towards more purposeful action leading to racial equity and sustainability. Actions are grounded in transformation and hope.

## **We are better together. We exist as part of a national and international movement around transformation and racial equity.**

The work we are engaged in at Multnomah County is part of a national and international movement that supports human rights for all, and eliminating racism at all levels. We are proud to walk alongside national leaders including the City of Seattle, King County, the City of Portland, San Francisco's Office of Human Rights, and City of Madison/Dane County. This list is growing. We are a part of a three-year-old Governing for Racial Equity Conference and Network (GREN), a partnership of government jurisdictions working to achieve racial equity. There are several incredible racial equity tools we have and are learning from created in our region that deeply support changes in structural and procedural strategies.

## **A Brief Overview: The Equity and Empowerment Lens with a Racial Justice Focus**

The Equity and Empowerment Lens with a Racial Justice Focus (the Lens) was an initial reflective quality improvement tool and set of processes that focused its analysis in four areas (the four P's) People, Place, Power and Process. At Multnomah County we have been using, developing and re-imagining the Lens for five years. This effort began in the Health Department focused on health equity and has blossomed and spread throughout our organization via leadership trainings, capacity-building strategies, and in-depth technical assistance as a set of transformative quality improvement tools.

In addition to focusing on reflective questions in the 4P areas, we found over the past many years that in order for the Lens to take seed, it must be accompanied by a set of activities that create the conditions necessary for transformative change. New trainer and facilitator positions now lead the effort in our Talent Development program to educate and build capacity around such conditions.

But we were still having deep and troubling conversations about a lack of clarity, alignment, and intention in the racial equity strategies and planning. In addition, both practitioners and initial participants with the tool were reporting challenges in staying focused, maintaining enthusiasm, sustaining courageous conversations and practicing the new behaviors that interrupted racism in its many forms. After several months of research, critical thinking, meditation, and reflection, the idea of doing a logic model on transformation leading to racial equity emerged, essentially providing a holistic start of a vision for what the ideal could look and feel like that went beyond structural changes alone. Additionally, even within structural change as an action area, the model further integrated transformative principles and approach. On a parallel track, a 5th 'P' (Purpose) emerged in our tool that, up until that point, had only highlighted People, Place, Process, and Power.

We couldn't contain our excitement, for it felt right and absolutely necessary to integrate 'purpose' into our processes and outcomes. We vetted the logic model and 5th P concepts with a few practitioners and community leaders. We were told we had hit upon something deep and critical, something that supported decisions coming from a place of wisdom as opposed to reaction alone, and something missing from this work in the public sector. The 5th P, 'Purpose,' asks us as to identify and revisit constantly our purpose in doing this transformative work towards racial equity, as individuals, institutions, systems, and communities. What is our sense of purpose and sense of meaning towards our actions? What is the difference we will make towards racial equity as individuals and institutions?

The new working logic model helps begin the conversation of what transformative change looks and feels like if racial equity tools and other key strategies are reaching their goals. This ideal vision in terms of resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes speaks to the necessary merging of science and spirit, structure and relationships, dominant and non-dominant worldviews, head and heart, and linear and cyclical paradigms. These beginning pieces will serve as the DNA for our emerging moving-into-action and evaluation stages over the next year.

## ***Part 2: The Draft Logic Model, Foundational Assumptions, and the 5th P: Purpose***

### **Background**

We have seen and are experiencing tremendous advances in the work of racial equity analysis and the use of racial equity tools in our region, supporting research-based structural and procedural changes leading to racial equity<sup>1</sup>. Over the six years of doing this work, we've heard from participants time and time again, however, about the need to discuss something beyond knowing

1 Key tools include: Racial Equity Toolkit (*City of Seattle*), Equity Roadmap (*City of Portland, not officially released yet*), Equity Impact Review Tool (*King County*), Protocol for Culturally Responsive Services (*Coalition of Communities of Color, not officially released yet*)

how to conduct racial equity analyses and action planning. After listening for years to constructive feedback from participants and community members, we've heard the strong desire and real need to discuss individuals' and organizations' purposes in working towards racial equity, how best to develop a sense of meaning and connection to their analysis and recommended changes, and how to sustain work that can be incredibly challenging at all levels if the goal is to truly transform.

We began to recognize an underlying assumption of our own work: that the process to achieving the outcome of racial equity is as critical as the outcome itself, and that racially unresponsive processes would not lead to racially just outcomes that truly integrated community voice and paradigms. Grounded in the truth emerging from these voices, and after being challenged by colleagues and external leaders across multiple disciplines to necessarily include trauma informed approaches, neurobiology, mindfulness, cultural transformation, the Relational Worldview, and quality improvement as we move towards racial equity, we found a bigger picture emerging we were called to share.

### **Purpose of The Logic Model**

In this update, we are excited to put forward a model of change grounded in racial equity and transformation principles, that, as our colleagues have shared, responsibly and holistically speaks to transformation across various dimensions of well-being, and at all levels of change. We believe and hope that this holistic model will better support and sustain deeply needed structural change. To that end, the following materials center on the presentation of a working logic model (evaluation guide) to assist us in tracking progress around transformation leading to racial equity, and supporting materials that emphasize the necessary immediate integration of the topic of 'purpose' in relation to racial equity.

This serves our overall field's need to better define evaluation within a transformative context. At Multnomah County, although change is happening in a variety of ways, we are lacking a strong, comprehensive evaluation approach that is guided by the root solutions to the root causes of racial and ethnic inequities. This guide puts us in the right direction leading to the changes we want to see.

### **Why A Logic Model, and How We Arrived Here**

We grounded much of this work in the Kellogg Foundation's logic model frame. We tried using different kinds of plans, formats, and creative visual structures to show our emerging understanding of the resources, activities, and results we hoped to achieve around transformation leading to racial equity. At first, we felt the model appeared to be too bureaucratic in its format. In the end, however, it truly was the best way to tell the story of how sustained transformative change:

- ✓ occurs across all three levels of racism (individual, institutional, and systemic – integration of the effects in the realm of communities will be integrated in the future);
- ✓ interweaves multiple disciplines necessary to achieve racial equity and trauma-informed approaches;
- ✓ addresses other areas such as trauma-informed approaches and creating conditions for change that go beyond structural improvements (i.e., policies, procedures); and
- ✓ must integrate a sense of purpose, meaning, and hope.

The logic model was first created using staff's best thinking and experiential knowledge, and available racial equity and culturally responsive tools such as the Protocol for Culturally Responsive Services and the Equity Roadmap (*already mentioned in Footnote 1*). It was then initially cross-walked by trauma researchers from the Trauma-Informed Care group at Portland State University, research from the Center for Investigating Healthy Minds in Madison, Wisconsin, and key leaders and accompanying research associated with the Relational Worldview in our region. Although representative of many promising practices from these various disciplines, this is simply a start of an evaluation strategy. Further research, sourcing, and creation of evaluation methods are coming.

### **How You Can Engage With These Materials:**

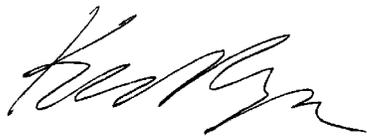
- ✓ Read through the Foundational Assumptions, and use components in key messaging.
- ✓ Scan the logic model and identify what you / your organization are already engaging in, and where the work could be improved. Pay particular attention to any psycho-social-emotional dimensions that are lacking. Utilize key components when advocating for policy.
- ✓ Review the outcomes; begin to develop evaluation methods to support tracking progress.
- ✓ Be aware of components in the model that alarm you or cause discomfort. Ask yourself why that might be, and what underlying assumptions might be linked to those areas.
- ✓ Use the logic model as a conversation starter with other practitioners applying such principles and practices.
- ✓ Engage in defining your purpose in this work, and that of your organization using the Purpose handout.
- ✓ Apply the 5P's document to a program, policy, practice, or procedure.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts around these materials, and are so honored to be walking along this path with you and your organizations.

In solidarity,



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