**Race Equity Organizational Self-Assessment and Transformation**

**Project Overview and Guidance**

REACH Ohio Organizational Committee

**BACKGROUND**

People experiencing homelessness in Ohio are disproportionately Black and People of Color (BIPOC). Recognizing this reality and the need to change it, COHHIO, with the support from all Ohio CoCs, formed the Racial Equity Action Committee on Homelessness in Ohio (REACH Ohio) in 2019.

REACH Ohio mission:

We are committed to achieving racial equity in Ohio homeless systems

* We acknowledge that housing is a right and homelessness is unacceptable
* We are focused on radical anti-racist change in pursuit of justice and equity
* We are data-enlightened and person centered
* We are courageous, inclusive and transparent in support of our mission

We will achieve our mission through the following commitments:

1. All individuals connected to the homeless system have racial equity training.
2. All agencies in the homeless system use a racial equity lens in all decision making.
3. All individuals experiencing homelessness have an equitable experience in our system.
4. All systems interacting with the homeless system work together to promote racial equity.
5. Qualitative and quantitative data about housing and homelessness are collected and analyzed through a racial equity lens.
6. All (advocacy) efforts to prevent and end homelessness are informed by racial equity.

To help REACH Ohio achieve its goals, it has formed three committees to drive the work forward.

The goal of the REACH Organizational Committee is that all agencies in the homeless system use a race equity lens in all decision making, and individuals experiencing homelessness have an equitable experience in our system. This project outline represents the first significant undertaking of the Committee as it seeks to achieve its goals.

**GOALS OF THE PROJECT**

The primary goal of this project is to assist homeless services agencies in Ohio in assessing their level of readiness and progress with race equity initiatives at an organizational level, and to provide tools and resources to help advance the work to benefit Black, Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) experiencing homelessness in our communities.

The secondary goal is to help identify and ultimately create/curate resources and supports that could help guide homeless services agencies as they advance their racial equity work and to make homeless service delivery more equitable and accessible for BIPOC folks experiencing homelessness in Ohio.

**Organizational Self-Assessment** **PROCESS OVERVIEW**

Agencies participating in the Race Equity Organizational Self-Assessment and Transformation Project will be asked to do the following:

* Determine which of the two available self-assessment tools the agency wants to complete, and determine the internal process for completing the tool
  + The Organizational Committee has identified two different tools that an agency may choose from to complete (more details about the tools are below)
  + One tool is intended to be used by agencies that consider themselves to be on the early end of racial equity work, and one is for agencies that have already started taking action steps in the work
* Complete the chosen self-assessment tool by March 31, 2022
* Share the results of the self-assessment with the Organizational Committee
  + Completed self-assessment tools can be shared with the Committee via this form (need link)
  + Your agency may share your results anonymously, if you prefer, or you may decline to share results altogether
  + The REACH Ohio Organizational Committee will not share self-assessment tools with anyone outside of the committee
* Use the results of the self-assessment to create a plan for advancing your organizational race equity work
  + Use the resources identified within the self-assessment tools to help guide development of these plans
  + The REACH Ohio Organizational Committee is also working to build out a race equity resource library in the near future

The Organizational Committee will review the completed tools and responses to help determine what type of resources are still needed to continue to make movement in race equity work across the state.

**COMPLETING ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS**

If this is the first time your agency is completing an organizational race equity self-assessment, following are some things you may want to consider as you plan your internal process.

**Who should be involved in completing the assessment tool?**

Ideally, staff in all levels of the organization will be involved in completing the self-assessment tool. Front line staff, management, directors, CEOs and even Board Members have crucial information that contributes to the overall progress and readiness for change of an organization. It’s also important to ensure that there is equitable representation from staff at various levels, and along racial, ethnic, and gender lines.

**How should my agency complete the assessment tool?**

When involving multiple staff in the completion of the organizational race equity self-assessment, agency leaders need to ensure that all staff feel comfortable in participating and, if needed, may consider allowing for anonymous completion of the tools in order to ensure the most honest responses possible.

Agencies will also want to think about whether they want staff to complete the tools independently and then discuss results as a group and compile responses, or if they want to staff to complete the tools as a group. Different approaches may provide different results.

**Which self-assessment tool should my agency complete?**

If your agency considers itself on the early end of racial equity work, then you should complete the *Racial Equity* tool.

If your agency has already engaged in some organizational self-assessment and has started taking action steps in the work, then you should complete the *Anti-Racist Organizational Development* tool. You may consider your agency more advanced in race equity work if some of the following are true:

* All staff have been trained on foundational race equity issues and there are ongoing training/professional development opportunities
* There is understanding among most/all staff that race equity work is an integral part of the agency and there is an agency-level commitment to the work
* Some agency policies and practices have been revised based on race equity training and work

**How much time will this take?**

Completing the assessment too itself will likely take 1-2 hours, depending on the specific approach to completing the tool your agency takes, and how interactive and conversational your group is (if you complete the tool as a group). However, determining the internal process that will be used to complete the tool may take significantly more time, depending on where your agency is with race equity work currently, the size of your agency, and the relationships between various staff.

Developing a plan to advance your agencies internal and external race equity work is where the most significant amount time will be invested. Developing and implementing race equity plans is a long-term project that involves agency level commitment and staff time dedication.

**DEVELOPING ACTION PLANS BASED ON ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

After completing the Organizational Self-Assessment, agencies should use those results to develop action plans to advance race equity internally and in the provision of programs and services.

In the coming months, the Organizational Committee will provide more detailed guidance, materials, and resources that may help agencies move their race equity work forward. In the meantime, if you have questions or would like support from COHHIO and/or the Committee, please do not hesitate to reach out to [joshjohnson@cohhio.org](mailto:joshjohnson@cohhio.org)