Equity Workshop
NRPA Innovation Labs

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Today’s objectives

• Increase understanding of the role and responsibility of park and recreation agencies to advance racial equity

• Gain an increased understanding of racial equity terminology, tools and resources, particularly in the field of parks and recreation

• Expand the commitment of Park and Recreation departments to advance racial equity
Why Government?
Realize our Values

- All men are created equal
- With liberty and justice for all
- Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth
History of government and equity

Initially explicit

Government explicitly creates and maintains inequity.

Discrimination illegal, but “neutral” policies and practices perpetuate inequity.

Became implicit

Proactive policies, practices and procedures that advance equity.

Government for racial equity

INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

Living in the Following Area:

April 1, 1942

Proactive policies, practices and procedures that advance equity.

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Government for racial equity

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON RACE & EQUITY

CENTER FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION
Why we lead with race

• Racial inequities deep and pervasive
• Racial anxiety on the rise – race is often an elephant in the room
• Learning an institutional and structural approach can be used with other areas of marginalization
• Specificity matters
Equity

- All community members have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Racial equity

- Race cannot be used to predict success. To achieve racial equity, we must target strategies to eliminate racial inequities and advance success across all groups.
Current context:
Laying it on the Line

1. People who engage in public meetings are the ones who care most about the issues.

2. Hiring and promotion decisions should be based solely on merit.

3. I believe we can end racial inequity.
Why Parks and Recreation Agencies?

Recreation and parks, more than any other public service, is a reflection of the values, attitudes, experiences, and culture of those who planned them.
Park and rec organizations have the unique opportunity to...

- Help people develop the abilities required to live powerfully and civilly in diverse communities

- Break the restrictive cycles of poverty, racism, and low expectations that current limit their career choices and recreation inventories

- Experience their cultural and natural heritage

- Implement inclusive public engagement

- Expand their worlds
Context

History of Parks

1890s through 1950s

United States very homogenous, predominately white citizens with a strong Eastern European and Scandinavian background

National, state and local park movement providing green spaces for outdoor recreation
Why does race matter to park and recreation agencies?

**Unique challenges facing State and Federal agencies**

According to the 2012 Minnesota State Park Visitor Survey

- 97% of state park visitation is from non-Hispanic white population
- Visitation from non-Hispanic white population showed little growth over last 10 years; trend is expected to continue
- Park and recreation agency need to understand changing community demographics to remain relevant

*We can’t use our values to motivate people whose culture lifestyles and choices have emerged from different values system. We have to understand how they experience us and what relevancy we have in their world.*
Responding to Changing Context

*Park and Recreation Agencies need to reinvent themselves*

- Active and meaningful community outreach and engagement
- Utilize racial equity toolkits to evaluate work and change decision making processes
- Staff that reflect community
- Racial equity and cultural awareness training
Paired discussion (5 minutes):

How have changing demographics influenced work in your park and recreation department?
National best practice

**Normalize**
- A shared analysis and definitions
- Urgency / prioritize

**Operationalize**
- Racial equity tools
- Data to develop strategies and drive results

**Organize**
- Internal infrastructure
- Partnerships

**Visualize**
Normalizing
Equity? Equality?  
What’s the difference?
Racial inequity in the U.S.

From infant mortality to life expectancy, race predicts how well you will do...
Racial equity means:

• “Closing the gaps” so that race does not predict one’s success, while also improving outcomes for all

• To do so, have to:
  ✓ Target strategies to focus improvements for those worse off
  ✓ Move beyond “services” and focus on changing policies, institutions and structures
How We Think

Humans need meaning.

- Individual meaning
- Collective meaning

Only 2% of emotional cognition is available consciously

Racial bias tends to reside in the unconscious network
The Unconscious Mind

**Schemas**: the “frames” through which our brains help us understand and navigate the world:

1. Sort into categories
2. Create associations
3. Fill in the gaps
Schemas

Help us organize information into broader categories. They largely reside in the sub-conscious.

✓ Objects
✓ Human beings (e.g., “the elderly”)

Schemas and the unconscious are social. They exist in and are shaped by our environment.
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(The Stroop Test)
Explicit bias

Expressed directly

Aware of bias / operates consciously

Example – Sign in the window of an apartment building – “we don’t rent to _____”

Implicit bias

Expressed indirectly

Unaware of bias / operates sub-consciously

Example – a property manager doing more criminal background checks on African Americans than whites.
Examples of implicit bias

When conductors were placed behind a screen, the percentage of female new hires for orchestral jobs increased 25% – 46%.
Examples of implicit bias

Job search

✓ Identical resumes, apart from names.

✓ White-sounding names – 50% more callbacks than African-American sounding names.
What to do with bias?

- Suppressing or denying biased thoughts can actually increase prejudice rather than eradicate it.

- Openly acknowledging and challenging biases allows us to develop strategic interventions.
What creates different outcomes?
Institutional Explicit

Institutional Implicit

Individual Explicit

Individual Implicit
Institutional / Explicit

Policies which explicitly discriminate against a group.

Example:
Segregated swimming pools

Institutional / Implicit

Policies that negatively impact one group unintentionally.

Example:
Recreational programming that is more responsive to some communities.

Individual / Explicit

Prejudice in action – discrimination.

Example:
A Parks and Rec staff person refusing to rent space to a group based on racial bias.

Individual / Implicit

Unconscious attitudes and beliefs.

Example:
Staff person limiting access to a swimming pool because of “inappropriate attire”
**Individual racism:**
• Pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race.

**Institutional racism:**
• Policies, practices and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color, often unintentionally or inadvertently.

**Structural racism:**
• A history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.
**Structural Racism** involves multiple institutions
Public and private institutions interact to produce racial inequities.

Intent to cause harm is irrelevant
With structural racism, systems operate, often inadvertently, to create benefit for White people at the expense of people of color.
Operationalizing
What is a Racial Equity Tool?

Actively inserts racial equity into decision making processes
Race in governmental policies

Federal Housing Administration

Location of city facilities

Streetlighting

DC Trash Transfer Stations

Percent Black (2010 Census)
- 2.5 - 26.4
- 26.5 - 43.7
- 44.7 - 66.4
- 66.5 - 85.5
- 86.2 - 99.2

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON RACE & EQUITY

CENTER FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION
What is a Racial Equity Tool process?

1. Desired results
2. Analysis of data
3. Community engagement
4. Strategies for racial equity
5. Implementation plan
6. Communications and accountability

http://racialequityalliance.org/2015/10/30/racial-equity-toolkit/
Who should use a Racial Equity Tool?

- Elected officials
- Government staff
- Community
Racial Equity Action Plans – Key Measurement Principles

- What you hope to see in the community
- Community indicators
- What you aim to achieve with a program or policy
- Quantity
- Quality
- Impact

Vision / results

Data

Performance measures

Data
Definitions

RESULT
A condition of well-being.
i.e. Babies Born Healthy, Economically Self-Sufficient Communities, Safe Communities, Clean Environment

INDICATOR
A measure which helps quantify the achievement of a result – always disaggregated by race
i.e. Rate of low-birth weight babies, unemployment rate, crime rate, air quality index

PERFORMANCE MEASURE
A measure of how well a program, policy, agency, or service system is working.
1. Quantity How much did we do?
2. Quality How well did we do it?
3. Impact Is anyone better off?

= Participant Results
Ask yourself “WHY?” 3-5 times

Why are there racial disproportionalities?
  Why else?
    Why else?
      Why else?
        Why else?

Example – obesity rates
  What are the explanations at an individual, institutional and structural level?
Example

**Result** – Increase healthy life outcomes

- **Indicator** – Overall rate of obesity decreases from 18% to 5% in ten years, and the disproportionality by race is eliminated (currently ranges from 11.6% of Asians to 22% of Latinos)
- **Indicator** – Disproportionality in life expectancy is eliminated (current gap – is 10 years)

**Strategies** – what you are going to do to achieve the result

- Increase access to healthy foods, parks and open space in neighborhoods where access is lacking

**Performance measurements** – how you measure your success

- Pass “healthy retail” legislation
- Increase “safe routes to school” % of students walking to school
# Racial Equity Action Plans: Dane County

Dane County Template for 2016 Departmental Racial Equity Action Plans

**Department:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes and Actions</th>
<th>Department Performance Measure</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Person responsible</th>
<th>Progress report</th>
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| A. Dane County employees understand and are committed to, and have the infrastructure needed to advance racial equity.  
  1) Leadership – Department director or designee assigned to participate on the Countywide Racial Equity Strategic Leadership Team. | Assignment made                | Dec 2015  |                    |                 |
| 2) Racial Equity Plan – Plan is developed and progress reports take place twice a year. | Plan developed                 | Dec 2015  |                    |                 |
|                                                                     | Progress reported              | July 2016 |                    |                 |
| 3) Racial Equity Team – Team is convened and assists departmental leadership with the development and implementation of the Action Plan. | Team is convened               | Dec 2015  |                    |                 |
| 4) Training leads – Identify employees to lead Introductory Racial Equity Training for their colleagues. Participate in a countywide “train-the-trainer” session. | Trainers identified and participate in train-the-trainer session | Q1         |                    |                 |
| 5) Training for all employees – Conduct Introductory Racial Equity Training for all employees. | Percent of departmental employees who have | 2016       |                    |                 |
Organizing
Late 1990’s - community pressure, some departments initiate racial equity efforts

2004 - Mayor Nickels launches City-wide racial equity initiative focused internally

2009 – Expanded partnerships with community; City Council legislation passes unanimously; plans and tools institutionalized.

2015 - New plan providing expanded focus on community outcomes
Racial Equity Leadership Team – senior leadership

- Accountability agreements
- Departmental work plans
- Performance reviews
- Racial Equity Tools
- Institution-wide work plans
Changing minds

• Most importantly, the best way to change attitudes is to change behavior.
• Attitudinal change tends to follow behavior change.
• Requires both short and long-term approaches.
Assessing your organization

Normalize
• Do you have a shared understanding of equity?

Organize
• Do you have mechanisms to address equity?
• Do you partner with community and institutions to advance equity?

Operationalize
• Do you include equity in decision making?
• Do you use data to develop strategies and measure progress?

Visualize
• Have you worked with community to develop an equity vision?
• Are you structured to be responsive to community?
• Are you resourced to implement the vision?
Using the Racial Equity Tool
What is a Racial Equity Tool process?

1. Desired results
2. Analysis of data
3. Community engagement
4. Strategies for racial equity
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http://racialequityalliance.org/2015/10/30/racial-equity-toolkit/
What is your proposal and what are the desired results and outcomes?
What’s the community and performance data? What does the data tell us?
How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?
Who will benefit from or be burdened? How are you advancing racial equity or mitigating unintended consequences?
What is your plan for implementation?
How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results?
Use of a Racial Equity Tool: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board case study
Case Study: Minneapolis - Bossen Field Master Plan

Background:
• $3+ million for ‘Athletic field, playground and site improvements’ from 2012-2017
• Two main user groups: neighbors and athletic league participants (mostly adults)

Why this project?
• Small-scale
• Immediate impacts
• Opportunity to better serve neighborhood
• Critical relationships already in place
**Step 1: What is your proposal and what are the desired results and outcomes?**

Goal: Develop a master plan that balances city-wide athletic and neighborhood needs

**Step 2: What does the data tell us?**

- Neighborhood demographics
- Athletic user demographics
- Field use data (including policies that impact use)
- Expenses (operations) and revenue (athletic leagues)

**Step 3: How have communities (stakeholders) been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?**

- Different tools to reach different groups
- Balancing qualitative and quantitative feedback
Step 4: Who will benefit from or be burdened? How are you advancing racial equity or mitigating unintended consequences?

**Athletics users**

Concept B was strongly preferred.
Thought on location was “where it impacted people less.”

**Neighborhood**

Concept C was strongly preferred.
Location of open field space close to residents was key.
Also desired walkways through park, two basketball courts, location of picnic shelter.
BOSSEN Master Plan

COMMUNITY
- COMMUNITY CORRIDOR
- OPEN FIELD SPACE
- NEW PLAYAREA
- RENOVATED RESTROOMS
- GROUP PICNIC SHELTER

ATHLETIC FIELDS
- 6 SOFTBALL FIELDS
- CONCESSIONS/RESTROOM
- LIGHTING

NORTHEAST CORNER
- PICNIC AREA
- GARDENS
- BENCH SWINGS
- SUNSET VIEWING
- PATHS
Why authentic engagement matters

2015 Community-based design concept

2007 Concept without neighborhood input
Step 5: What is your plan for implementation?
Communication about phasing and impacts
Ongoing community engagement
Programming considerations

Step 6: How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results
Developing plan to hold ourselves accountable
Data to evaluate impacts over time
Incorporating lessons learned into future projects
Contact information

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Resources:
www.centerforsocialinclusion.org
www.racialequityalliance.org