



Making Racial Equity Real in Research

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Problem

- Despite more funding for research related to equity, the research field needs more equity training and expertise
- Research practices can be nonreciprocal, tokenizing, extractive, and culturally insensitive
- Community partners are often uncompensated as advisors and power dynamics do not allow them meaningfully shape the research
- Lack of capacity of community partners

Five Steps to Equitable, Partnership-Based Research

Step 1: Understand the context of racism in research in the past and present

Step 2: Review the challenges, best practices, and opportunities for centering racial equity in research

Step 3: Conduct an equity assessment of your research institution, department, or team

Step 4: Partner with and pay a community partner

Step 5: Co-create the research questions and scope of work with a community partner

Step 2: Review the challenges & best practices for centering racial equity in research

- **Research institutions and funders** should understand how funding structures can undercut community engagement and involvement, and how lack of diversity and cultural competency can create blinders.
- **Researchers** should establish long-term trust with the communities they wish to study rather than seeking a superficial “equity stamp of approval.” They should give community partners a meaningful role in the design and conduct of the research.
- **Community partners** need their capacity and expertise built up in order to lead their own research, collaborate on research partnerships, and to hold researchers accountable and monitor for inequitable practices.

Step 3: Conduct an equity assessment of your research institution, department, or team

- What is your team or organization's understanding of institutional racism, power and systems change?
- What is the unique role of your organization in the larger equity field, and how can your position advance, rather than duplicate, the work of others?
- Does your team have existing relationships with community partners? If so, which partners and whom do they represent?
- Does your team or organization sufficiently budget for engagement activities, such as ability to pay interviewees for their time and expertise?

Step 4: Partner with and pay a community partner

- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding that describes the:
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Transparent decision-making process
 - Financial relationships of all of the partners

Step 5: Co-create the research questions and scope of work with a community partner

- How will your research align with and support existing community priorities?
- How will you design a process to collaborate with the target populations that engages and empowers them in a meaningful way?
- How will you work to bring an equity lens to data analysis?
- How will you integrate accountability checkpoints to measure outcomes throughout the research project?

Implementation

- UC Berkeley
- University of Oregon
- Transportation Equity & Environmental Justice Advisory Group for a series of University of California research projects

Case Study: UC Berkeley

- Co-developed a scope a work
- Greenlining and other community partners brought on as paid equity advisors
- Greenlining conducted an internal equity assessment of the research team
- Coordination with existing Greenlining research
- Co-defining “equity” in the context of the research project.

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