

Are We on a Path Toward Racial Equity?

Dean Larry Davis Social Justice Fund
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Purpose and Goals

- ❖ The proposed project sought to advance awareness and progress toward racial equity through strategic collaboration with Forward Through Ferguson (FTF).
 - FTF is a 501c3 nonprofit developed to lead the St. Louis region toward racial equity following the release of the “Forward Through Ferguson: A Path Toward Racial Equity”
- ❖ FTF subsequently developed a framework entitled “A Path to Racial Equity” to assess progress toward racial equity.

Intended Outcomes

- Anticipated outcomes of this project align closely with NADD priorities:
 - Increased awareness of experience and perspective of social work practitioners regarding racial equity
 - Evaluate progress toward racial equity from systems perspectives
 - Policy recommendations to advance racial equity on a systems level.

A PATH TO RACIAL EQUITY

Awareness
of Inequity

Understanding
of Why Inequity Exists

Transforming
Towards Equity

Regional

Institutional

Individual



Awareness

Understanding

Transforming

Working On

Awareness
Education
"Lifting the veil"

Uncomfortable:
• Learnings • Explorations
• Considerations
History

Focus on data and outcomes
New and intentional:
• Habits • Policies
• Choices • Behavior

Common
Language

Diversity, Inclusion,
Tolerance,
Cultural Competency,
Race as a social construct

Institutional racism,
Intersectionality,
Internalized oppression,
Internalized superiority

Disaggregated data,
Racial Equity Lens,
Structural Racism,
Equity-driven strategy,
Liberation

TOWARD EQUITY

A Path Toward Racial Equity Project

- ❖ Utilized framework to assess progress toward racial equity to see if we were on a path within organizations that serve as the training ground for future practitioners.
- ❖ Conducted assessments of social work stakeholders regarding racial equity and utilize their to frame organizational and personal progress toward racial equity in the St. Louis region.
- ❖ McDermott, C., Stafford, J.D. & Johnson, S.D. Racial Equity as a Human Rights Issue: Field Agency Practices and Field Instructors' Knowledge and Attitudes. *J. Hum. Rights Soc. Work* (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-020-00155-9>

Methodology

- ❖ Recruitment utilizing email addresses of MSW level field instructors within the St. Louis Field Collaborative
- ❖ Online anonymous survey
- ❖ Survey items regarding perspectives on racial equity
- ❖ Open-ended questions
 - How would you define racial equity in your own words?
 - If your organization has a commitment to diversity, inclusion and/or racial equity, please provide information on initiatives being taken by your organization to address racial equity....

Results

- 170 unique individuals accessing & providing data
- The agencies' primary fields of service included: direct practice (n=108), clinical (n=82), non-profit management (n=24); community capacity building (n=25); health (n=39) and other (n=48) which is inclusive of education, criminal justice, housing, and advocacy.
- There was overwhelming (95.4%) agreement that racial equity is a human rights issue.

Individual Progress

- Less than half (46%) of the respondents agreed they had a great deal of knowledge about racial equity
- Progress assessment (definitions of racial equity)
 - 78 qualitative responses provided:
 - 37% (n=29) classified as **Awareness**
 - 45% (n=35) classified as **Understanding**
 - 8% (n=6) classified as **Transforming**

Individual Progress

Awareness Of inequity	Understanding of why Inequity exists	Transforming Towards Equity
<p>“Everyone is given a fair shot and treated the same regardless of how they look or their cultural differences.”</p>	<p>“the ability for all persons to access the same resources, advancement opportunities, responsibilities, and benefits”</p>	<p>“You cannot have racial equity by justifying that you treat everyone equally. What is equal is not equitable. Equity is the creation and implementation of policy and practices that are systematically fair regardless of someone's race or ethnicity”</p>

Institutional Progress

- ❖ 59% reported racial equity is an important part of the agency's work
- ❖ Barriers:
 - Time or resources to implement a racial equity lens to their work agency, bureaucracy, lack of expertise, and prioritizing the importance of racial equity.
- ❖ Progress Assessment (what is being done?)
 - 59 Responses
 - ❖ 47% (n=28) classified as **Awareness**
 - ❖ 14% (n=8) classified as **Understanding**
 - ❖ 12% (n=7) classified as **Transforming**

Institutional Progress

Awareness Of inequity	Understanding of why Inequity exists	Transforming Towards Equity
<p>“Our organization supports diversity, inclusion, and racial equity; and is committed to increased cultural sensitivity and awareness”</p>	<p>“Drafted an 'equity statement' which is then approved by the Board. In the process of forming an Equity Committee to lead the process”</p>	<p>“Our agency collects data on the racial background of our population, as well as in relation to specific grants to ensure we are capturing an accurate picture of St. Louis's homeless population, uninsured, those in need of mental health services, substance use services, etc.”</p>

Conclusion

- ❖ Results reveal that field instructors and agencies are in various stages of their progression to racial equity
- ❖ Field instructors have **awareness/understanding** but agency barriers likely hinder how they are able to capitalize on this progress.
- ❖ More has to be done in field education training and we have to find creative ways to enhance understanding of racial equity in order to move more agencies and individuals toward transforming principles of race equity work.

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