Cleveland Neighborhood Progress

Investing for Vibrancy

Dear Friends,

As we think deeply about how the community development field can ensure its efforts have maximum impact-- and as we ever-further explore the idea of "comprehensive community development," it becomes glaringly apparent that we must address racial equity and inclusion. Cleveland's harsh and abiding racial divide is the enduring challenge that we too often fear to talk about. Perhaps no other set of issues has so deeply impacted our efforts to develop Cleveland's real estate, with so little discussion. And too often, when we do discuss racial equity and inclusion, it is hurried and at a moment of collective community panic.

Now we must face our fears, and seize a moment in which we have narrowly avoided an abyss. This is a moment which I believe we cannot let pass without decisive action. We must look soberly at the effects of racial inequality, and work to create a stronger, more inclusive, and more equitable Cleveland. The time is now, and we are the leaders. I look forward to engaging in this work with you.

Sincerely,

Joel Ratner
President/CEO - Cleveland Neighborhood Progress

Applying a Racial Equity & Inclusion Lens to Community Development

REI (Internal) Taskforce: Evelyn Burnett, Vice President of Economic Opportunity; Erika Anthony, Senior Director of Policy & Advocacy; Ulysses Stokes, Economic Opportunity Integration Manager; Mordecai Cargill, Manager of Fund Development

Background

Cleveland's neighborhoods are evolving in new and exciting ways. Recent scholarship has drawn attention to the changing racial composition of communities across the city. West Side neighborhoods that were once almost exclusively white, now count newly-settled African-American, Hispanic, and Asian residents among their growing populations. On the city's east side, neighborhoods that have historically been solidly African-American communities, are now witnessing an influx of white and Asian residents.

Despite our nation's hard-earned social progress, race continues to be an accurate predictor and determinant of an individual's life outcomes. Lasting efforts to improve outcomes for racial and ethnic minorities must begin by addressing the root causes of economic and social inequality. As a result, the community development industry must respond to recent demographic shifts by soberly confronting the effects of racial inequity and inequality. This often complicated issue continues to disadvantage members of the community, and hinders collective efforts to revitalize Cleveland's neighborhoods.

As the city's foremost community development funding intermediary, it is incumbent upon Cleveland Neighborhood Progress to lead the way in addressing structural racism and inequality. In order for us to advance our mission of fostering neighborhoods of choice and opportunity (for all Cleveland residents), we must approach community development using a racial equity and inclusion lens. This paradigm shift will require the effective implementation of tools and strategies designed to intentionally incorporate equity and inclusion as essential components of our work. There are several examples of community development-related issues that necessitate strategic interventions through the lens of racial equity and inclusion. These include (but are not limited to):

- The persistence and exacerbation of wealth inequality (particularly as it relates to communities of color)
- Racial health disparities
- Climate resiliency (minority populations are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of climate change)
- Prevalence of high-poverty neighborhoods
- Deadly police encounters in communities of color (which presents challenges to community and trust building following incidents)
- CDC's with limited ability to adequately serve their rapidly changing communities due to homogeneous boards and staff

Racial Equity and Inclusion Taskforce and Request for Proposal

Cleveland Neighborhood Progress has convened an internal taskforce to develop a framework viewing community development through the lens of race equity and inclusion. This framework is intended to directly address structural barriers that prevent minority residents from accessing opportunities, and to work towards rectifying the disparate impacts of social, economic, political, and climate-related stressors on communities of color. Though very much in the planning stage of development, the RFP is intended to identify a potential local national consulting to team to help the organization and industry accomplish the following goals:

- Increase CDC Staff and Board Diversity
- More effectively articulate the ways in which the lack of racial equity and inclusion impacts public policy; and consequently, how legislation (local, state, and federal) effects the urban core and the urban poor
- Disaggregate data by race in order to empower community stakeholders to make informed decisions regarding strategic interventions through a racial equity and inclusion lens
- Increase the awareness of CDC staff and leadership about the implications of their work on racial equity and inclusion efforts
- Prepare community development practitioners to respond to racial conflicts within their neighborhoods in responsible and substantive ways
- Create clearly defined funding standards that include racial equity and inclusion including a robust framework, tools and best practices to meet stated goals
- Significantly reduce the instances of conscious and unconscious micro aggressions in community development

Outcomes (anticipated/desired)

- Stronger connections between residents and CDCs
- Healthier work environments within CDCs and on their boards
- More effective strategies designed to address root causes of inequality
- Stronger, more equitable, more inclusive communities
- More responsive model for comprehensive community development—thereby increasing our national profile

Conclusion

Cleveland Neighborhood Progress acknowledges that, while encouraging, increased CDC staff and neighborhood diversity is simply a starting point for our collective efforts to create more vibrant communities. We contend that approaching community development through the lens of racial equity and inclusion is not only a moral responsibility, but an economic imperative. In order to truly accomplish our vision for Cleveland's neighborhoods, we must ensure that all residents--especially historically disadvantaged members of the community—feel connected to the fabric of their neighborhoods, have equal access to opportunities, and are engaged in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Glossary/Core Concepts*

Equity is defined as "the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair." The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. It is helpful to think of equity as not simply a desired state of affairs or a lofty value. To be achieved and sustained, equity needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept.

- Equity vs. Equality: Equity involves trying to understand and give people what they need to enjoy full, healthy lives. Equality, in contrast, aims to ensure that everyone gets the same things in order to enjoy full, healthy lives. Like equity, equality aims to promote fairness and justice, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same things.
- Inclusion is the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure. More than simply diversity and numerical representation, inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation and a true sense of belonging.
- Microaggressions the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership
- Racial Equity is the systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes
for everyone. All people are able to achieve their full potential in life, regardless of race, ethnicity or the community in which they live. Racial equity — or racial justice —goes beyond "anti-racism." It's not just about what we are against, but also what we are for. A "racial equity" framework can move us from a reactive posture to a more powerful, proactive and even preventative approach.
- Structural racism (or structural racialization) is the racial bias across institutions and society. It describes the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color. Since the word "racism" often is understood as a conscious belief, "racialization" may be a better way to describe a process that does not require intentionality. Race equity expert john a. powell writes: "'Racialization' connotes a process rather than a static event. It underscores the fluid and dynamic nature of race... 'Structural racialization' is a set of processes that may generate disparities or depress life outcomes without any racist actors."
- Systemic racialization describes a dynamic system that produces and replicates racial ideologies, identities and inequities. Systemic racialization is the well-institutionalized pattern of discrimination that cuts across major political, economic and social organizations in a society. Public attention to racism is generally focused on the symptoms (such as a racist slur by an individual) rather than the system of racial inequality.

Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Embracing Equity: 7 steps to advance and embed race equity and inclusion within your organization," 2014

Resources

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Embracing Equity: Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide: http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF_EmbracingEquity7Steps-2014.pdf, October 2013

Developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, this resource identifies seven steps to advance and embed race equity and inclusion in organizations.

Organizing Apprenticeship Project, "Leading for Racial Equity: An Emerging Agenda for Minnesota": http://www.oaproject.org/sites/default/files/all_prea_print.pdf

This resource looks at racial equity in job creation and economic policy, education, criminal justice, and health for Minnesota and identifies facts and data as well as policies and practices that advance racial equity.

Sarah Treuhaft, Justin Scoggins, Jennifer Tran "The Equity Solution: Racial Inclusion is Key to Growing a Strong Economy: http://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/Equity_Solution_Brief.pdf, October 2014

Policy Link issued this research brief in October, 2014. In the brief, they calculate what total earnings and economic output would have been for the nation in 2012 if racial differences were eliminated and all groups had similar average income as whites. If People of Color earned similar wages and employment as Whites, Cleveland would experience an estimated 12% increase in GDP.

Ani Turner, "The Business Cases for Racial Equity": http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/The_Business_Case_for_Racial_Equity_FINAL.pdf, October 2013

This report by Altarum Institute and funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation quantifies the economic benefits of racial equity. The report also looks at areas of opportunity. The areas identified are: housing, education, health, and criminal justice.

Diane Yentel, David Griffith, "Ending America's 'architecture of segragation' requires a new approach to housing policy" http://blog.enterprisecommunity.com/2015/09/contributed-segregated-communities, September 2015

Citing a recent NY Times editorial, Enterprise looks at historical policies and practices that have led to segregated communities, the birth of CDCs, and the issues Fair Housing faces today. It goes on to identify policy areas that will be included in a more comprehensive policy agenda for a more balanced and equitable housing policy.

Paul Jargowsky, "The Architecture of Segregation,": http://apps.tcf.org/architecture-of-segregation, August 2015

This report finds that the concentration of poverty has increased substantially across the country. Cleveland has the 7th highest concentration of poverty for the African-Americans and 10th highest for the Hispanic population. The policies created have built a durable architecture of segregation that ensures that racial segregation and the concentration of poverty is entrenched for years to come.

Resources cont.

Angela Glover Blackwell, America's Tomorrow: Race, Place, and the Equity Agenda

This report suggest in the absence of equity-driven policies and investments, programs struggle in isolation, grinding away for funding, recognition, and priority in reform agendas.

http://www.nonprofitinclusiveness.org/files/Inside_Inclusiveness_Full_Report_0.pdf

Report commissioned by the Denver Foundation looks at inclusion (mostly focused on race) in nonprofit organizations.

http://www.factsmatter.info/overview/

Facts Matter is a collaborative effort to facilitate data sharing for collective impact in the Greater Cincinnati Region. This site provides an online gateway to information about the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Region with specific data about how our regional community is doing in the areas of Education, Income, Health, and Quality of Life.

Building Inclusive Communities

Tools for building inclusive communities

Greater Cincinnati Foundation

The Greater Cincinnati Foundation has identified race, equity, and inclusion as one of their leadership initiatives. The initiative was borne out of the riots in 2001 following the police shooting of an unarmed Black man.