



Executive Summary

THE ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS is publishing this toolbox for local jurisdictions to advance racial equity in the regional housing system. The toolbox builds on the racial equity commitments ABAG has made such as the [Equity Platform](#) and [Resolution 4435](#). The toolbox was informed by a Leading With Equity Workgroup (LWE) composed of racial equity driven planners and housing policy staff from 12 Bay Area jurisdictions.¹

The primary audience is racial equity practitioners within local housing and planning agencies with an understanding of racial equity concepts and terminology and a desire to learn more about how to apply those concepts to their work.² The toolbox aims to broaden and deepen practitioners' interest in embedding racial equity in their agencies' structures, policies, and practices. It introduces the conceptual frameworks and the tools and best practices to apply these frameworks in a local government setting.

KEY TERMS

Racial equity practitioners are government employees who have the drive, skills and relationships to lead and implement system changes designed to eliminate racial disparities. They are skilled at motivating others, working across differences, and building relationships within and outside of government.

Housing Justice is the process and outcome of establishing a housing system in which housing is a human right and a public good and therefore everyone has access to affordable and dignified housing. Housing justice is grounded in an understanding of our country's history of systemic racism and its racialized housing system and centers on the lived experiences of people who have been harmed by these systems.

TOOLBOX

Advancing Racial Equity in Housing, Land, and Development

A Toolbox For
Racial Equity
Practitioners In
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¹ Designed and staffed by Ground Works Consulting

² The Government Alliance on Race and Equity's resource guide "[Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government](#)" are recommended resources for readers who want to first learn racial equity concepts and the government's role in advancing racial equity.

A Case And Government Mandate For Housing Justice

In California, access to decent housing is deeply racialized. This toolbox leads with race, but also recognizes that race intersects with class, gender and/or sexuality, and disability, along with other factors, to produce and compound housing inequities. Many of the sources of racialized housing inequality are controlled by local actors in the public and private sectors. The UC Berkeley Othering and Belonging Institute's report "[Roots, Race and Place: A History of Racially Exclusionary Housing in the San Francisco Bay Area](#)" details the historical record of racial exclusion and serial displacement of communities of color. Local governments were responsible for many of these tactics and thus bear responsibility to address their harms.

This history clarifies the need for housing solutions to recognize past historical injustices to address both racial and economic injustices entrenched by generations of segregation and dispossession. It requires transforming housing through systemic change.

Fortunately, a foundation exists from which to build a more just housing system. Black Americans and their allies worked hard to win the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Housing Act (FHA) of 1968, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972. Notably, the FHA imposes a duty on the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and its grantees to take proactive steps to further fair housing and end segregation, known as the duty to "affirmatively further fair housing" (AFFH). The State of California adopted Assembly Bill 686 (2018, Santiago) to codify the 2015 federal AFFH rule as a matter of state law. AB 686 imposes the mandate for every local government must "explicitly address, combat, and relieve disparities resulting from past and current patterns of segregation to foster more inclusive communities."

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SECTION 1 : Leadership

This section includes materials for leaders in planning and housing agencies to lead racial equity conversations and manage change within their organizations and the broader housing system they operate within. This starts with a set of principles to help navigate the day to day challenges³ :

- Hold a shared vision for racial equity steady.
- Step back to take a broad view of the housing system.
- Recognize and understand your adaptive challenges (vs. technical ones).
- Act strategically by finding allies and continue communicating with others.
- Anticipate, manage, and regulate the inherent distress of a change process.
- Surface and manage conflict.
- Continually cultivate more leaders.

Leadership tools exist to help:

- **Establish a vision and plan for advancing racial equity in housing.** [Results Based Accountability](#) is a framework for organizing work around racial equity by first naming the racial equity conditions in housing sought for a community. What is the desired end result and who specifically will benefit? Leaders can then work with staff and community partners to define a pathway to achieve these desired end results with strategies, milestones and action plans; being sure to name race and keep considerations of race and racism at the top of the agenda throughout.
- **Map the system one works within.** In [Leverage point: Places to Intervene in a System](#), Donella Meadows offers a framework for mapping a system and pressure points that can influence change. While there are a multitude of leverage points to affect change, systems change efforts often focus on root causes of the outcomes that are being targeted. Strategies to rearrange the rules, shift the goals and introduce positive housing narratives into the public consciousness will have the greatest impact on the system.
- **Leverage staff's positional power to affect change in that system.** The Person-Role-System Framework helps staff to better understand how to leverage their positional power and the role they play to accelerate change in their agency. The framework's reflective questions can surface the assumptions held by oneself, the system staff work in, and what role staff play in order to identify their strengths and opportuni-

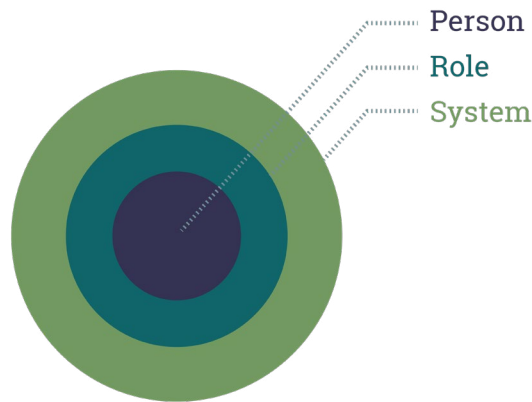
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3 Adapted from Adaptive Leadership Principles from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

ties to affect change. While self-awareness enables you to be a better racial equity practitioner, changing organizational practices has the strongest influence on individual behavior of people in the organization, and the process of changing behaviors results in changing individual beliefs.



- **Overcome resistance to change including staff hesitancy.**

Early communication describing a racial equity initiative is the best preventative measure for resistance. [GARE's Communications Guide](#) can help agencies craft explanatory materials in ways proven to bring more people along. The guide offers sample answers to many of the common questions that arise in conversations with staff about housing justice and the agency's role in dismantling systemic racism. Questions such as, "Isn't this just about income, why are we talking about race?" or "I just treat people like people, why are you bringing up race?" These conversations can help determine whether resistance is coming from a place of active opposition to the initiative or just reasonable skepticism. On balance, it is more effective to prioritize attention on cultivating willing staff to be champions over responding to every act of opposition.

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SECTION 2: Racial Equity in Governments

This section provides two frameworks for shifting the culture and practices of housing and planning agencies (organizational change) and networking across those agencies (systemic change).

KEY TERMS

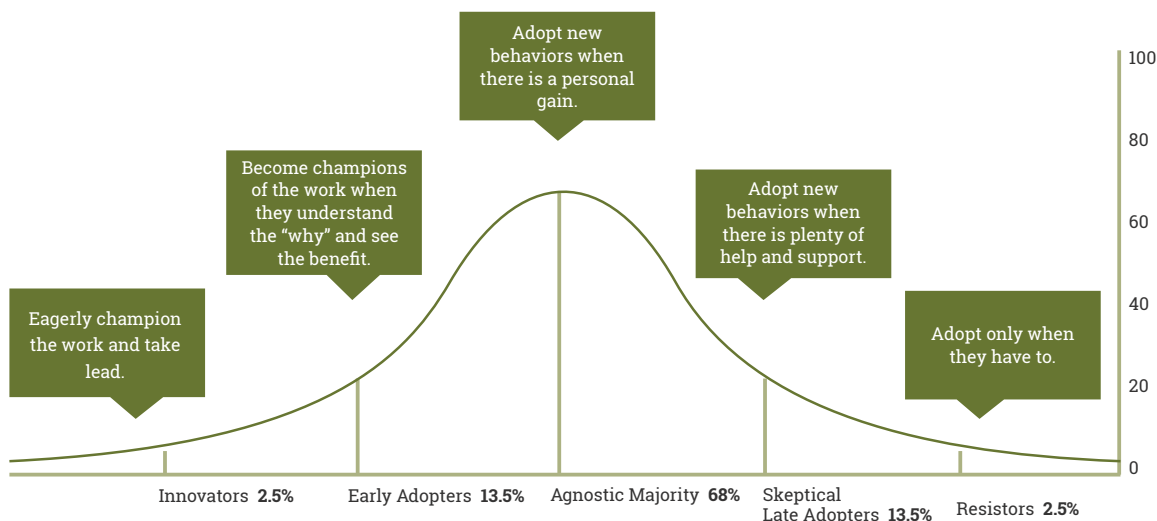
Organizational Capacity

The degree of effectiveness of an agency to manage its organizational change process and advance a racial equity initiative.

Systemic capacity

The breadth and depth of a racial equity initiative across the whole of a field, supported by a network of structures across all organizations in the field.

Race Forward has found the [“Tipping Point”](#) framework to be a useful organizing construct to effect organization-wide change. It is an approach to building organizational capacity amongst early and willing adopters of the initiative to operationalize new racial equity practices until a new organizational culture and infrastructure ensures these practices will continue.



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Organizational change best practices:

- **Establishing Racial Equity Core Teams to guide the work.** GARE's resource "[Racial Equity Core Teams](#)" has guidance for bringing racial equity practitioners together to form a leadership team responsible for stewarding racial equity plans and coordinating equity activities across the agency. Creating space for these early adopters of the agency's racial equity work allows them to build their skills together and use their collective positional power to maintain the agency's attention on its commitments to racial equity.
- **Securing a leadership mandate and resources.** Local government legislation and executive orders can serve as mandates that guide agencies to implement changes unique to the local environment such as embedding racial equity priorities in strategic plans and major programs. Racial equity mandates must be accompanied by a professional development and training plan, ongoing funding for full time staff, and support from experts.
- **Use [Collective Impact](#) to build systemic capacity.** It provides a structured way for "a network of community members, organizations, and institutions to advance equity by learning together, aligning, and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems level change⁴". This framework is most effective when a centralized convener of a network of racial equity practitioners across the region is established to:
 - Collaboratively work toward a common agenda, including establishing a vision for housing justice, strategies for systems change, and targeted solutions,
 - Coordinate mutually reinforcing activities and share learnings and best practices across the network,
 - Continuously communicate and build relationships across jurisdictions and with communities most impacted, and
 - Develop and maintain a shared measurement system, including using racially disaggregated data and qualitative data from communities.

4 Collective Impact Forum, 2022

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SECTION 3 : Racial Equity in Housing and Planning Policy

This section provides a framework for equitable policy making, a framework for accounting for race in policy making and planning processes, and examples of housing policy frameworks that center racial equity. Best practices are described for analysis, policy design, and accountability during implementation.

KEY TERMS

Race-blind/neutral

A policy designed to have universal impact though it still may exacerbate a racial disparity, intended or not.

Race-conscious

A policy using a proxy for race and/or extending benefits or protections to everyone but with a reasonable basis to address a racial disparity while improving outcomes for all.

Race-based

A policy designed to be race-specific or race-targeted in its intent and impact to address a racial disparity.

Jurisdictions can adopt high level housing policy frameworks to address housing solutions comprehensively, ensuring a balanced approach. Adopting a policy framework can give agencies permission to address racial equity head on and provide a blueprint to develop agencies' strategic plans, budgets, and work plans.

[Race Forward and eight other national racial justice organizations](#)

created the following five principles to help policy makers craft:

1. Fix systems; not people.
2. Create racially equitable solutions that benefit all.
3. Ensure that solutions emerge from the experience of communities of color:
4. Commit to collecting race/ethnicity data.
5. Set measurable, results-based equity goals.

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Targeted Universalism is a promising approach to apply these principles to policy making by setting universal goals or outcomes that benefit all of society, then developing targeted strategies for different groups to reach these outcomes. TU is a “race-conscious” approach rather than “race-based,” resulting in policies to pass legal muster because they do not classify groups based on race. TU may help housing and planning agencies increase their legal risk tolerance. The five steps using this approach are:

1. Establish a universal goal based upon a broadly shared recognition of a societal problem and collective aspirations.
2. Assess general population performance relative to the universal goal.
3. Identify groups and places that are performing differently with respect to the goal. Groups should be disaggregated.
4. Assess and understand the structures that support or impede each group or community from achieving the universal goal.
5. Develop and implement targeted strategies for each group to reach the universal goal.

Public agencies and communities working for housing justice have recently designed (or redesigned) housing policy frameworks centering racial equity:

- **People + Place.** Used by local governments and community advocates, this framework focuses on both the built environment and social impacts of growth. It functions as a guide for local government’s to eliminate racial segregation and serial displacement of communities of color. GARE’s report [“Equitable Development as a Tool to Advance Racial Equity”](#) presents a version of this framework.
- **Near-term housing crisis + long-term systems change.** Community advocates use this framework to mitigate harm today and transform systems over the long-term. It starts with a vision of housing as a public good and human right, not an investment commodity. Policy solutions are informed by an analysis of race and the commodification of housing supported by the housing system’s network of laws and regulations. Solutions change the legal and regulatory framework that undergirds the housing system so that it centers racial equity.
- **The Ps: Protections, Preservation, Production +.** This framework focuses solutions on both the housing needs and rights of existing residents as well as future residents. Some advocates have also emphasized (community) power and participation for more equitable and democratic decision making processes and solutions prioritized by communities impacted by systemic racism that address the root causes of housing injustice, not just the symptoms.

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Best practices in implementing these frameworks include:

- **Document historical harm done by housing and planning agencies.** This entails an historical research of planning and housing practices to identify if a causal connection between the actions of the government and the disparate outcomes experienced by different racial groups today. The research often enriches analysis of existing conditions required by most planning projects.
- **Collaborate with community housing justice initiatives.** When communities most impacted by housing injustices identify solutions, they are more likely to address root causes and have racially equitable outcomes even if the solutions are not race-based. Local government support of these solutions starts by implementing the organizational change strategies in [Section 2: Racial Equity in Government](#) and then using the practices to form long-term accountable relationship with communities described in [Section 5: Community Partnership](#).
- **Use racial equity tools for policy design and analysis.** Tools exist to integrate consideration of racial equity in housing policy and planning processes including:
 - **Policy Design.** [GARE's Racial Equity Toolkit \(RET\)](#) lays out a process to answer [worksheet](#) questions that center racial equity throughout the policy development process. The worksheet's six steps can be completed using other tools found in this toolbox. The RET is most effective during an agency's visioning or priority setting process or used by project managers when first scoping projects and allocating budgets.
 - **Data Analysis.** A growing set of data tools help housing and planning agencies identify population-specific racial disparities in housing. The [National Equity Atlas](#) is an example of a comprehensive data support system tracking trends in the state of equity over time, geography, and by policy area. [ESRI's GIS Racial Equity Hub](#) is another resource hub of data layers, maps, and examples of applying a racial equity lens to geospatial analysis including their new [Social Equity Analysis Tool](#).
 - **Root Causes.** After collecting data sets showing racial disparities in housing it is important to uncover the root causes behind the data patterns and trends. Analysts can start to identify root causes by facilitating a conversation with their team by first asking, "why does the trend look like this?" For each answer, ask "why" three to five more times to move past superficial understandings of inequity and get to the underlying causes.

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- **Build accountability tools to measure progress and outcomes.**

An agency's accountability tools can take the form of online data dashboards, public facing progress reports, or externally conducted audits. The [Results Based Accountability framework](#) is useful for designing externally facing accountability mechanisms that measure and communicate an agency's progress in improving results in communities. Data is used for accountability at two levels to measure improvements in a population and the government's performance.

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SECTION 4 : Narrative and Communications.

This section includes frameworks for staff to effectively engage supporters of housing justice while also reframing dominant negative narratives about housing for audiences who are skeptical or opposed to housing solutions. It helps address the central issue of racism in housing by framing communications in a way that everyone sees their stake in an equitable future.

KEY TERMS

Narratives

An array of related stories and messages that highlight values, frame the problem/causes and determine the solutions/actions. Some narratives have been repeated and reproduced over time to produce deeply and widely held values.

Communications

Using stories, words, images, and/or sounds that convey an idea or belief.

Replacing Negative Housing Narratives with New Ones

Negative racialized narratives⁵ about housing are dominant throughout society and constrain public support for housing solutions. Racial bias is hidden within these narratives to trigger critiques about “who” is worthy of good housing and the wealth-building opportunities of homeownership. Housing opportunity should not be viewed as a “zero-sum” game, whereby, if low-income or marginalized communities stand to gain, wealthier or more privileged residents lose.

Research found a strong majority of Americans view housing insecurity as a top issue and see a role for government to intervene to address the housing crisis⁶. Replacing harmful narratives with new narratives is essential.⁷ Local governments must offer new research-tested housing narratives such as:

⁵ See the [GARE Communications Guide](#) for “Common Myths about Race and Racism”

⁶ [“Housing Justice Narrative Project, 2021”](#)

⁷ See [PolicyLink’s Housing Justice Narrative Toolkit](#)

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- The shared fate of a community is dependent on everyone have safe and stable housing.
- Housing is a basic human need and public good.
- Low-income households and households of color are positive contributors to society and the economy.
- Everyone should be able to live in a neighborhood with good schools, grocery stores, parks, and libraries. Being denied where to live based on race, family status or disability is discrimination.

Research-informed Communications Framework

Effective communications with the public start with developing a strong case for housing solutions. Public opinion and behavioral science research⁸ found that without an intentional approach, communications may even cause harm by repeating the criticisms of housing solutions and reinforcing the racialized stereotypes about housing prevalent throughout society. It is not a matter of whether to address race and racism in housing but how.

[Communications research](#) has found housing messaging are most effective when addressing issues of inequality and racism using a universal frame, meaning all community members' have a stake in an equitable future. Using a universally beneficial frame addressing issues of race –rather than avoidance – moves people toward progressive housing solutions.

Dr. Tiffany Manuel's "[10 Core Principles of Strategic Case-making](#)" guides staff using a communications framework centering racial equity:

1. Connect to people's aspirations.
2. Naming the urgency of this moment to make a better future.
3. Telling people what they (and all of us) will lose if they sit on the sidelines.
4. Navigating the dominant narratives and replacing them with positive ones.
5. Anchoring and validating solutions that are future oriented.
6. Make inequitable systems the villain rather than blaming individuals.
7. Tell the story of "us" by using the power of storytelling.
8. Foster collective ownership.
9. Clarify your value proposition.
10. Share your roadmap and metrics for success.

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8 [Housing Justice Narrative Playbook for the Bay Area](#), Nonprofit Housing, 2020

SECTION 5: Community Partnership.

This section provides an equitable community engagement framework to set agencies up for the long-term work of building accountable working partnerships with communities impacted by an unjust housing system. Best practices are taken from a scan of current community housing initiatives.

KEY TERMS

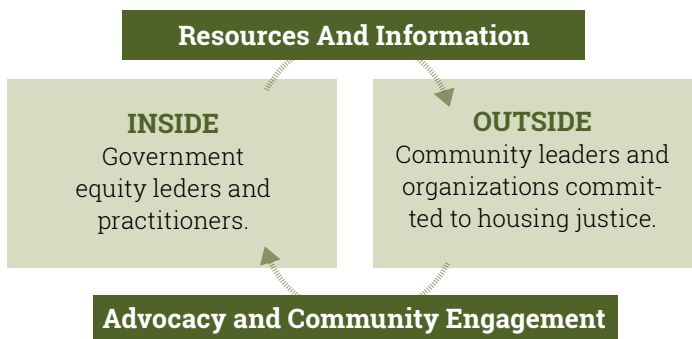
Inside/Outside

Establishing partnerships between equity practitioners in government and communities experiencing systemic racism to guide and accelerate the process of transforming housing and planning agencies to advance racial equity.

source: GARE training materials

The Government Alliance on Race and Equity has found local governments using an Inside/Outside strategy to be the most effective in raising the visibility of racial equity issues and creating a productive tension that motivates government action. It requires external attention from communities coupled with internal capacity of equity practitioners—as well as open lines of communication between the two. At a minimum this means governments providing resources and information while communities provide advocacy and engagement.

Inside / Outside strategies create productive tension and accountability.



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Best practices of this approach include:

- **Offer community partners the best inhouse resources government has to offer.** In-house resources can be made available to outside partners such as racially disaggregated data, research on community-identified research questions, communications materials, administrative support for accessing funding and participating in policy processes, access to decision makers. Honest information about how government operates is another low-cost resource to provide.
- **Direct funding to organizations building community capacity.** Funding leaders accountable to communities of color for their expertise is a minimum standard for participation in a government process. However, for community partners to deeply engage over a long period of time, the government should provide sustained funding for organizations.
- **Cultivate relationships with housing justice organizations.** Staff can initiate dialogue with local, state and national organizations working on housing justice issues to better appreciate the perspective, expertise and assets they can bring to an agency's work.

Engagement tools exist to help:

- **Design equitable community engagement processes.** Rosa Gonzalez and Facilitating Power's "[Spectrum of Community Engagement to Empowerment](#)" is a tool to help stakeholders define the purpose of engagement and role of community by categorizing the different stances that the government can take toward a community. It provides inspiration and activities staff can use to align a process and resources with the needs of impacted communities.
- **Co-create principles for equitable engagement with impacted communities.** More collaborative processes should use principles of engagement to guide how staff will build relationships and foster mutual accountability. The Kirwan Institute developed [The Principles for Equitable and Inclusive Civic Engagement: A Guide to Transformative Change](#) as a starting point for crafting a set of principles.
- **Map power dynamics for equitable relationships.** Power mapping is a process to identify which groups have more or less influence to define which changes are most desired, and which groups are more or less impacted by the desired changes. The Minnesota Campus Compact's facilitation guide for power mapping is a resource for racial equity practitioners to adapt and use.

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LOCAL AND REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON
RACE & EQUITY

Across the country, governmental jurisdictions are:

Making a
commitment
to achieving
racial equity

Focusing on
the power
and influence
of their own
institutions

Working in
partnership
with others

**When this occurs, significant leverage
and expansion opportunities emerge,
setting the stage for the achievement of
racial equity in our communities.**