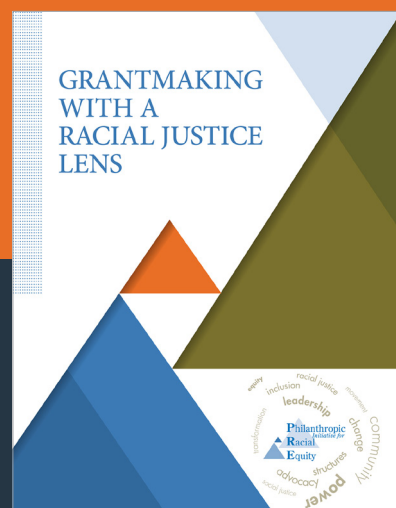


“A racial equity lens separates symptoms from causes, but a **racial justice lens** brings into view the confrontation of power, the redistribution of resources, and the systemic transformation necessary for real change.”

## Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens

centers the perspectives of racial justice activists first, and then funders working on change in their institutions, to identify best practices for driving philanthropy beyond racial equity toward racial justice.

This guide will be most useful to an audience of grantmakers who have already made or are close to making racial equity commitments, and who want to move their work into more ambitious territory.



Through reflections and frameworks built from the direct experience of activists and funders, we offer practical steps and solutions for advancing racial justice grantmaking in any philanthropic setting.

Download your copy of *Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens* at [racialequity.org](http://racialequity.org)

This guide also includes additional resources such as:

- ▲ Elements of Power-Building Strategies
- ▲ Supporting Movement Ecosystems
- ▲ The Difference Between Identity and Analysis
- ▲ Being Accountable to the Racial Justice Field
- ▲ Guidance on Choosing the Right Tools and Resources
- ▲ Tips for tackling anti-Black racism and White supremacy, and supporting leadership of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, AAPI and AMEMSA communities.

Check [racialequity.org](http://racialequity.org) for new tools, tips and resources.



Since its launch in 2003, the goal of the **Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE)** has been to increase the amount and effectiveness of resources aimed at combating institutional and structural racism in communities through capacity building, education, and convening of grantmakers and grantseekers. It is led by an intersectionally diverse board of racial justice activists, researchers, and practitioners.

PRE thanks the activists representing all racial and ethnic groups, genders, gender identities and expressions, and sexual orientations, including grassroots organizers and leaders of local and national organizations working on a broad range of issue and policy areas across the U.S. and globally, who participated in interviews and focus groups that informed the analysis and recommendations in *Grantmaking With a Racial Justice Lens*.

## Are you ready to move beyond racial equity to a racial justice lens?

PRE's **Racial Justice Funders Labs**, one-on-one work with foundation trustees, or partnerships with regional and issue-based funder networks can help get you started! **Contact us today at [info@racialequity.org](mailto:info@racialequity.org).**

[racialequity.org](http://racialequity.org)

[RJGrantmakers](https://twitter.com/RJGrantmakers)

[/PhilanthropicInitiativeForRacialEquity](https://www.facebook.com/PhilanthropicInitiativeForRacialEquity)

How can racial justice activists and funders drive philanthropy beyond racial equity toward racial justice?

## Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens



# Racial Equity

# Racial Justice

**Racial justice** requires fundamental changes in how communities of color are positioned in relation to power and resources, which includes being able to challenge and shape the many institutions that determine a community's conditions.

A racial equity lens has four important features:

Analyzes data and information about race and ethnicity

Understands disparities and the reasons they exist

Looks at structural root causes of problems

Names race explicitly when talking about problems and solutions

A racial justice lens adds four more critical elements:

Understands and acknowledges racial history

Creates a shared affirmative vision of a fair and inclusive society

Focuses explicitly on building civic, cultural, and political power by those most impacted

Emphasizes transformative solutions that impact multiple systems

## Align all your values and operations to your racial justice goals

As a foundation aligns its philosophy and operations to pursue racial justice goals, it is important to communicate all the way through a foundation's alignment process and to make sure that the vocabulary is both clear and shared.

In addition to programs, all parts of a foundation—communications, operations, grants management, finance, development, and others—should engage at the start of the alignment process, rather than at the end. It needs to repeatedly address the following questions:

- ▲ **Why are we focusing on racial justice?**
- ▲ **What impact do we want?**
- ▲ **What processes are we using to learn, develop options, and make decisions?**
- ▲ **Who will be making what decisions?**
- ▲ **What is the timeline for change? Which phase are we in now?**

## Test for shared meaning

Foundation leaders can assess the level of shared understanding of the vocabulary and agreement with key concepts by using the following strategies:

- ▲ **Ask for a repeat-back—find out what people think a word or phrase means.**
- ▲ **Debrief old grants against new concepts to see where they line up or diverge.**
- ▲ **Discuss real-world events, both one-on-one and together, to build shared analysis.**
- ▲ **Observe the positive or negative responses to exposure to movement voices.**
- ▲ **Note reactions to potential grants that seem to indicate mis/understanding of concepts.**

## Respond to resistance

Resistance is bound to arise as a foundation undergoes these explicit, clarifying processes that will determine its grantmaking approach.

Active forms of resistance might include expressing reservations about a racial justice direction or constant deflection of race discussions in favor of class, democracy, or another nonracialized frame. The passive might look like withholding full participation in educational sessions or refusal to adopt a new practice. Diversionary forms of resistance include tactics that appear supportive but actually create obstacles to real racial justice change, such as increasing activity on new kinds of diversity or requiring duplicative landscape reports before approving a grantmaking strategy.

Handling all forms of resistance gracefully, candidly, and constructively is a key task of leadership in aligning a foundation.

### RESISTANCE CLAIM OR SUBTEXT

### SUGGESTED RESPONSE

**STRATEGIC**  
"But is this really our mission?"

- Let the data prove the point.
- Show examples from the field.
- Name and work through scenarios.
- Bring in foundation leaders who have gone through this process to share their stories.

**TACTICAL**  
"Won't that turn some people off?"

- Question assumptions about audience: Is it assumed to be White policymakers, partners, donors, impacted communities, or POC changemakers (and specific racial groups within those audiences)?
- Recognize that supporters may not have the same access to foundation leadership as resisters do.

**WORKLOAD**  
"When will we have time?"

- Recognize existing choice points, and that seemingly deracialized processes are a choice to preserve the status quo.
- Discuss what can be deprioritized.
- Discuss how the process may seem a lot at first, but with time will be integrated into ongoing work and feel less overwhelming.

**FEAR OF DISPLACEMENT**  
"What does that mean for my area or role?"

- Provide space for honest discussion and exploration of concerns.
- Work to recognize and realign roles; provide opportunities for training, development, and repositioning.
- Recognize that transitioning staff or board members may be a necessary requirement if alignment can't be achieved.

**FEAR OF RACIAL CONFLICT**  
"Will I get called out? Will I have to call someone out?"

- Conflict is a natural part of this process.
- Strengthen conflict-resolution muscles.
- Prepare through training and coaching.
- Build strong relationships with the racial justice field.
- Name and work through scenarios.
- Build individual confidence about talking about racial justice, and work toward normalizing the conversation within the organization by creating different opportunities.