

Programs & activities

Programs that focus on equity can drive positive change by centering equity in the design, structure, messaging and implementation.

Introduction

Equity work is grounded in an effective program strategy and bolstered by collaboration with partners and community members. Each program and initiative that an organization develops needs to be highly integrated with the organization's mission, intended impacts and overall strategy, in line with the needs of the intended beneficiaries and community members.

Tools for equity

An equitable program strategy framework contains three components:

1. Program and portfolio strategy development

In developing programs for your organization, consider how these programs as a whole fit the equity work and the mission of the organization.

Key Questions

- How does our overall program strategy match our mission, vision and equity goals?
- Will our portfolio of programs realistically meet our population-level impact goals?
- Have we built the program strategy with our stakeholders, partners and the community in mind? Have we utilized both community input and self-reflection to choose programs and partners? (When community members are engaged in the planning, it is more likely that you will serve their needs.)

- How do our programs fit together to serve our mission? How will the portfolio further our equity work, and how do the programs connect to fit into our larger equity goals?
- Have we used the right information (disaggregated data, field research, community input, etc.) to develop our program strategy?

2. Program Development

As each new program is developed, and each existing program is refined, consider each element of the program through an equity lens:

Ask of your own organization

- Who will we serve & how will the program provide equity to those served?
- What specific goals and outcomes do we desire? How will we measure success and how will we decide whether to continue or discontinue the program?
- Who will deliver the services? (Each person who delivers your services represents your organization.) Does each person fully understand our organization's equity stance and imperative? If not, what training and support do they need?
- If we are partnering with others to deliver the program, how can we ensure alignment of mission, values and equity?

3. Program monitoring & assessment

Programs are likely to shift and evolve over time. Regular monitoring and returning to strategic intent is important.

Key questions

- Is the program serving our intended audience & are we reaching our desired goals and outcomes? How is this program continuing to provide equitable outcomes?
- Do those who deliver the services fully understand the strategy and the equity stance for the work? Are they comfortable interrupting inequities if they observe them?

- If we are partnering with others to deliver the program, are we fully aligned on mission, values and equity?
- Have we made the right ongoing changes that reflect the realities of changing public policies, and social and institutional practices?