



Advancing racial equity at Irvine

The following statement articulates the Irvine Foundation's commitments to advance racial equity.¹ Our board will use this statement to help guide our governance decisions and enable us to be accountable for delivering on our commitments to help address structural racism.²

This statement is explicitly about race and racial equity as it relates to economic opportunity for low-income workers in California. We also recognize that other factors impact economic opportunity, such as gender, sexual orientation, disability, parental education/income, and geography.

The James Irvine Foundation has a singular goal that focuses on low-income workers in California, 75% of whom are workers of color,³ and we have a long history of supporting organizations led by and/or serving people of color. However, until recently, we have not framed our priorities in terms of addressing the impact of structural racism on economic opportunity for low-income California workers, and by doing so, advancing racial equity. We now seek to do that by making our beliefs and commitments clear to all our partners.

What we believe

1

Structural racism has historic and ongoing impact on economic opportunity for Asian American, Black, Indigenous, Latino/a, Pacific Islander, and other people of color.

2

Barriers to economic opportunity for workers of color have included, but are not limited, to:

- political and economic marginalization, exploitation, and exclusion
- housing segregation and restrictions
- discrimination in education, employment, and the criminal justice system
- underinvestment in communities of color
- unequal access to capital and support

3

Removing and replacing policies, systems, and structures that perpetuate racial inequity is necessary to improve economic outcomes for everyone.

Irvine will **intentionally address structural racism and embed racial equity** in our grantmaking and across our organization because:

- Irvine's North Star goal, "a California where all low-income workers have the power to advance economically," requires us to understand, reckon with, and support solutions that eliminate and repair the harm of systemic barriers resulting from historic and present-day racism. We must account for this context in setting priorities for our work.
- Each community of color in California has experienced a unique history of racism and continues to experience distinct barriers to economic opportunity. We must pursue strategies that address these distinct barriers, rooted in the wisdom and leadership of low-wage workers of color.
- Our ability to be effective is tied to our organizational culture and how we work. We must align our internal policies, practices, and systems with our racial equity aspirations.

¹ **Racial equity** refers to a process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone. ([Race Forward](#))

² **Structural racism** refers to racial inequities across institutions, policies, social structures, history, and culture. ([Race Forward](#))

³ See [Low-Wage Work in California Data Explorer](#) (UC Berkeley Labor Center, 2017) for more demographic data.



Our commitments to advance racial equity

The following commitments to action represent the board's overall aspirations and will guide our decisions over the near term (e.g., three years) as we work to become an organization demonstrably committed to racial equity. We will use our Portfolio Review, staff and grantee surveys, and other tools to track our progress, be transparent, and hold ourselves accountable.

Our impact

- Learn from the lived experience of communities of color and use that knowledge to guide our governance decisions.
- Ensure that our grantmaking programs, approaches, policies, and practices effectively serve communities of color.
- More intentionally and robustly support transformative economic justice efforts that are led by workers, leaders, and allies of color.

Our endowment

- Seek to remove racial biases, including implicit biases, in the selection of external investment managers.
- Regularly review the diversity of our investment managers.

Our organization

- Foster an environment in which racial equity is better embodied and embedded in our organizational culture, talent recruitment and advancement, and professional development.
- Regularly review our organizational structures and policies for racial equity.

Our board

- Assess the racial equity impacts of major board decisions.
- Use this statement to inform the work of board committees and board recruitment.