

UWSL Racial Equity Roadmap: Action Commitments

An accounting of our own anti-racist action commitments

Last update: June 2020

Available at uw.org/dismantleracism

Every day, along with many of our neighbors who are underrepresented and unheard, UWSL serves and supports those in our community who are marginalized and harmed by structural racism, and we hold ourselves and our partnerships accountable for closing racial and economic gaps in education, health and financial well-being - but we know we must do more. We know that to achieve equitable outcomes, we must do work every day that is anti-racist and anti-oppressive. Below are some of the steps we are taking and plan to take. This is a living document that we will update as we learn and progress in our shared work.

We recognize that – at present – there are no people of color on our management team and that the demographics and lived experiences of staff and board members do not represent the demographics of the community we work with. We are committed to listening to, taking direction from, and learning from those impacted by racism and people with different experiences than our own.

What is below represents what we believe we have to keep doing and start doing. It represents what we have learned so far in our work and from others. We welcome thoughts, feedback, challenges to any assumptions we are making, and further discussions.

Strategy #1: Embed an equity mindset into our formal policies and procedures, internal and in the community.
Commitments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a racial equity lens for all organizational decisions, using tools that we identify for this purpose.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name equity as one of our core organizational values - one that drives our organizational, team, and individual goals and everything we do as an organization (including our performance management process).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make public our equity workplan (this document). Update our Statement on Diversity, Racial Equity, and Inclusion; and publish a Statement on Racial Justice and Healing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Honor power dynamics by naming how organizational and partnership decisions are made, by whom and with what input. Clarify what kinds of decisions get made by our staff, our board, and our partnerships.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and implement a plan to build equity mindset for everyone on our staff and board. Explore a concept related to systemic racism in every board meeting, supervisor meeting, and all staff meeting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to revisit HR policies and procedures to ensure they reflect what we're learning about centering racial equity (including microaggressions, bias, and actions that intentionally or unintentionally cause harm). Document our expectations in our team member handbook and internal processes.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold inclusive, equitable, accessible meetings that center the voices of people of color and marginalized people in all spaces. Develop working agreements for staff, partnership, and board meetings to create space where all participants can participate fully, feel heard, and participate as their full selves.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide all staff with paid time to read, reflect on, and commit to making progress on their own racial equity journeys. Require all staff to complete foundational education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch and maintain affinity groups based on race – spaces for white people to teach each other about white privilege and allyship and for people of color to share experiences and build community.

<p>Strategy #2: Recruit a board and staff who more closely resemble the demographics of the Promise Partnership region.</p>
<p>Commitments</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively work to recruit staff of color and bring them into an organization that supports them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit our recruitment, hiring, orientation, compensation, capability-building, performance management, and offboarding policies, practices, and tools to ensure they center equity and are applied consistently.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete annual compensation and staff turnover audits, looking at pay gaps, retention, and internal advancement based on gender and race/ethnicity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement succession plans for board members and senior staff that bring more people of color, including youth who have experienced the Promise Partnership educational systems, into our work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work intentionally to fill vacant board and board committee seats with more people of color and people with lived experience of the systems we seek to affect.

<p>Strategy #3: Continue to embed a commitment to equity in all of our external communications and action. Continue to help everyone in our community understand and act on the root / downstream causes of current disparity gaps in ways that invite learning, collaboration, and shared work.</p>
<p>Commitments</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously invite our investors and partners to join us in this commitment and keep us accountable to it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In communicating about key collective impact and 211 partnerships, do so in a way that builds broad understanding about the role of systemic racism and how we might collectively address root causes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use data to spotlight and address disparities based on race, ethnicity, ZIP code, and family income to provide to Utah state leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, track and use data on systems measures that point to where systems need to change (as opposed to measures that speak to individual’s actions).

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop shared, asset-based language for how we talk about racism and poverty and the impact that our systems have on community members most impacted by racism and poverty. Do so in a way that invites learning, collaboration, and shared work. Create templates / content to help staff and board be more active anti-racists in conversations, on social media, and elsewhere. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-design public policy that creates equitable outcomes. Apply a racial equity impact framework to determine which public policies to support and how to develop and implement them and with whom. |

<p>Strategy #4: Create processes that allow us to listen and co-create strategy with people with lived experience and expertise of the systems we’re trying to transform.</p>
<p>Commitments</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-create / participate in a StriveTogether community of practice on the co-creation of community solutions. Share learnings throughout the Promise Partnerships.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement our Community Compensation process, so that community members (i.e., those with lived experience representing “community voice”) who are participating in organizational and partnership activities are doing so with financial compensation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to groups and organizations led by people of color. Assess where we can partner, act in solidarity, and amplify their message.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed liberatory design practice (a design thinking process that centers equity) and SMARTIE (strategic, measurable, ambitious, realistic, time-bound, <i>inclusive, equitable</i>) goals into all of our partnerships.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use our continuum of community engagement to help staff and partners ensure that the voices of people of color are authentically present in every decision-making body of our board and in key organizational decisions.

NOTE: These action commitments are based on input from UWSL staff, board members, and partners over many years. They also reflect recommendations offered via equity-focused focus groups and surveys that were conducted with UWSL staff in Fall 2019. We’ve surely missed some ideas for meaningful action, and we invite staff, partners and board members to reach out to us with additional ideas. Each of these ideas is designed to help us deliver on our commitment to facilitating partnerships accountable to eliminating disparities based on race and income.