

# California Conference of Local Health Officers

## **Growing a National Movement to Advance Equity:**

The Opportunity and Leverage of Public Health

Oct 15, 2015

Muntu Davis,  
Alameda County Health Officer

Julie Nelson,  
Government Alliance on Race and Equity Director

# Objectives

- Increase understanding of the role of government in advancing health equity
- Gain a common understanding of key terms
- Expand the commitment of public health departments to advance health equity



# Government Alliance on Race and Equity

A national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.



# Realize Our Values

- All men are created equal
- With liberty and justice for all
- Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth



# History of government and race

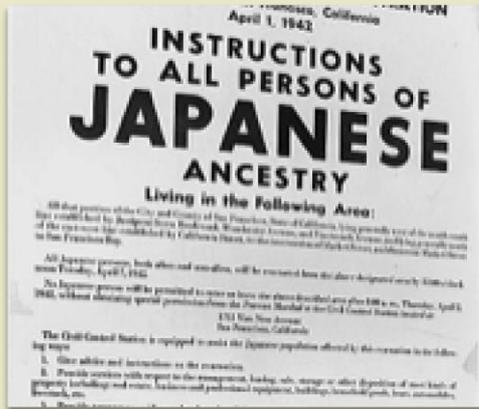
Initially explicit



Became implicit



Government for racial equity



Government explicitly creates and maintains racial inequity

Discrimination illegal, but “race-neutral” policies and practices perpetuate inequity.

Proactive policies, practices and procedures that advance racial equity

10/1/2015



# Current Context of Race



# Laying it on the Line

1. People who participate in public meetings are the ones who care most about the issues.
2. People should be hired or promoted based solely on merit.
3. I believe we can end racial inequity.



Equity?

Equality?

**What's the difference?**



# Racial Inequity in the U.S.



 **100%**

Likelihood that race is a determinant for key health and social indicators in life.

 **10 years**

Difference in life expectancy based on zip code in King County.



# Health equity

- All community members have the opportunity to reach their full health potential.

# Racial equity

- Race cannot be used to predict success. To achieve racial equity, we must target strategies to eliminate racial inequities and advancing success across all groups.

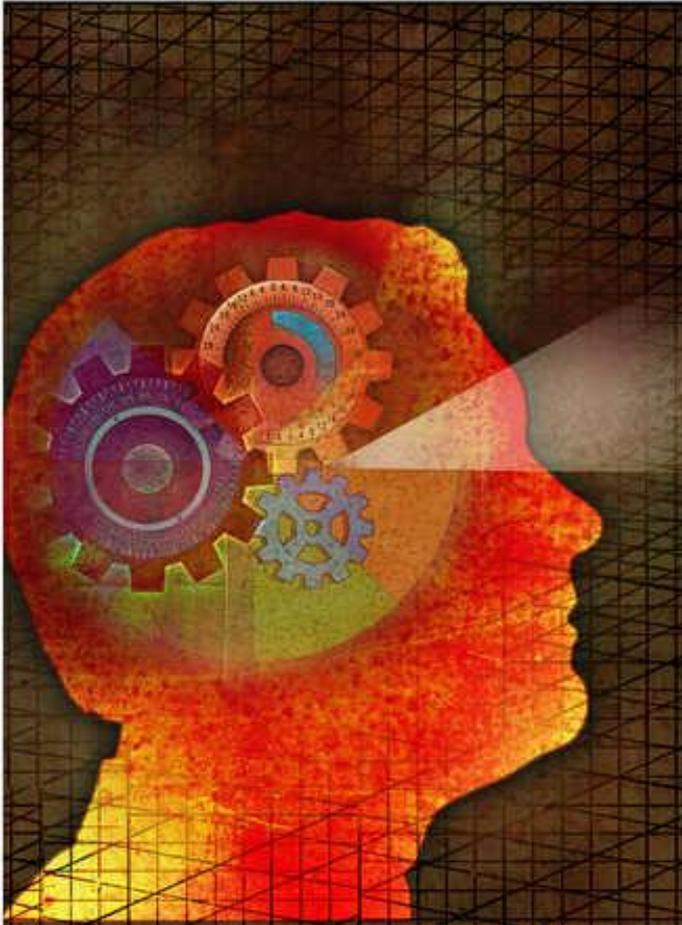


# Achieving equity means...

- “Closing the gaps”, while also improving outcomes for all.
- To do so, have to:
  - Target strategies to close the gaps.
  - Focus on changing policies/practices, institutions and structures to improve conditions, in addition to providing services.

10/1/2015

# To achieve equity, bias must be confronted.



The evaluation of one group and its members relative to another.

Bias can be explicit (direct / conscious) or implicit (indirect / sub-conscious).

We all carry bias.



# In business and government, explicit bias is against the law.

## Explicit Bias

- Expressed directly
- Aware of bias
- Operates consciously
- Example: Sign in window of an apartment building, "We don't rent to \_\_\_\_\_."

## Implicit Bias

- Expressed indirectly
- Unaware of bias
- Operates sub-consciously
- Example: A property manager doing more criminal background checks on Latinos than Whites.

# To achieve equity, implicit bias must be identified.

When conductors were placed behind a screen, the percentage of female new hires for orchestral jobs increased 25% – 46%.



10/1/2015

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT  
**ALLIANCE ON  
RACE & EQUITY**



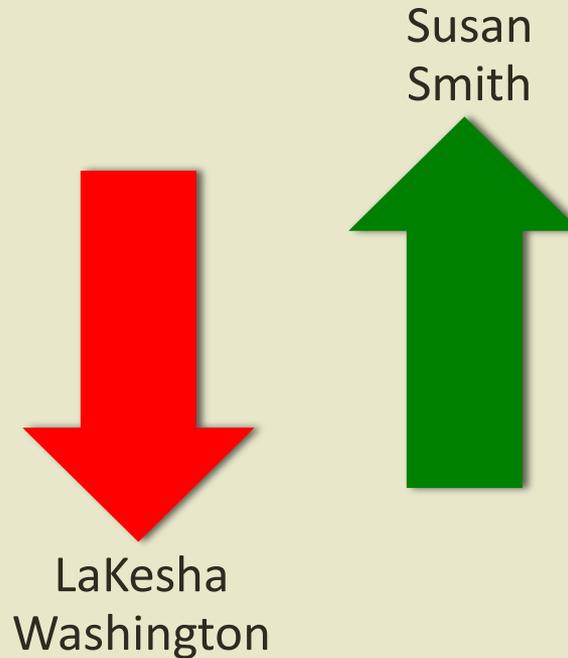
( 14 )

# To achieve equity, implicit bias must be identified.

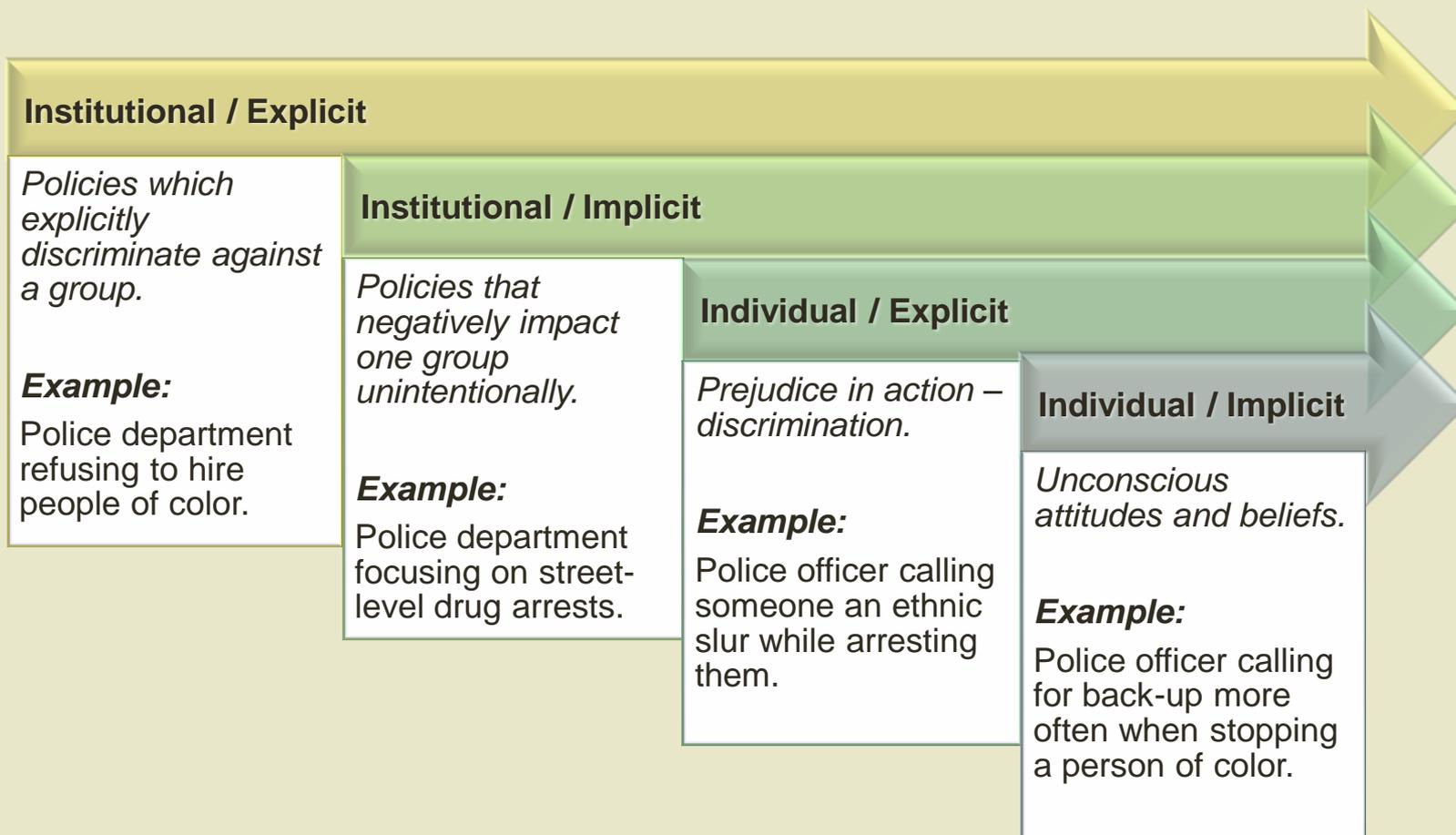
Job search...

Identical resumes, apart  
from names.

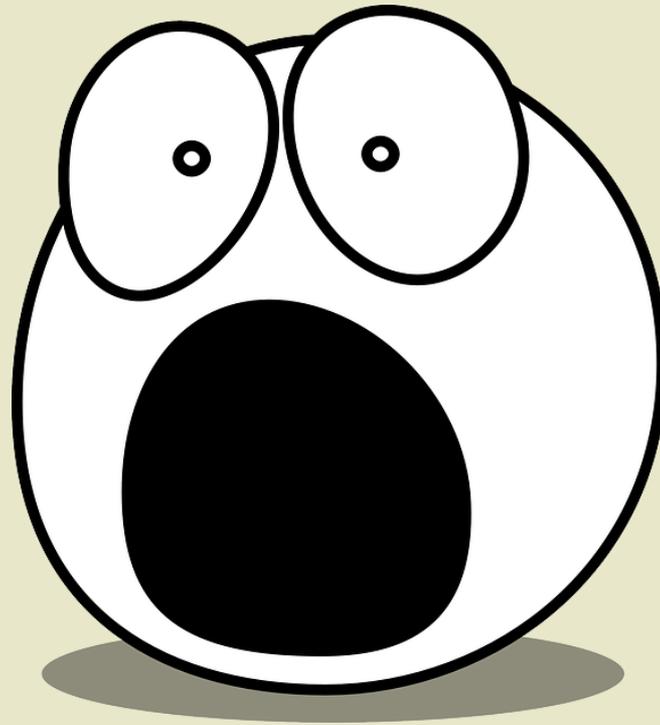
Caucasian-sounding names  
received 50% more  
callbacks than African-  
American sounding names.



# Biases show up in different ways...



# Understanding “racism” when it comes up in discussions about achieving equity...



10/1/2015

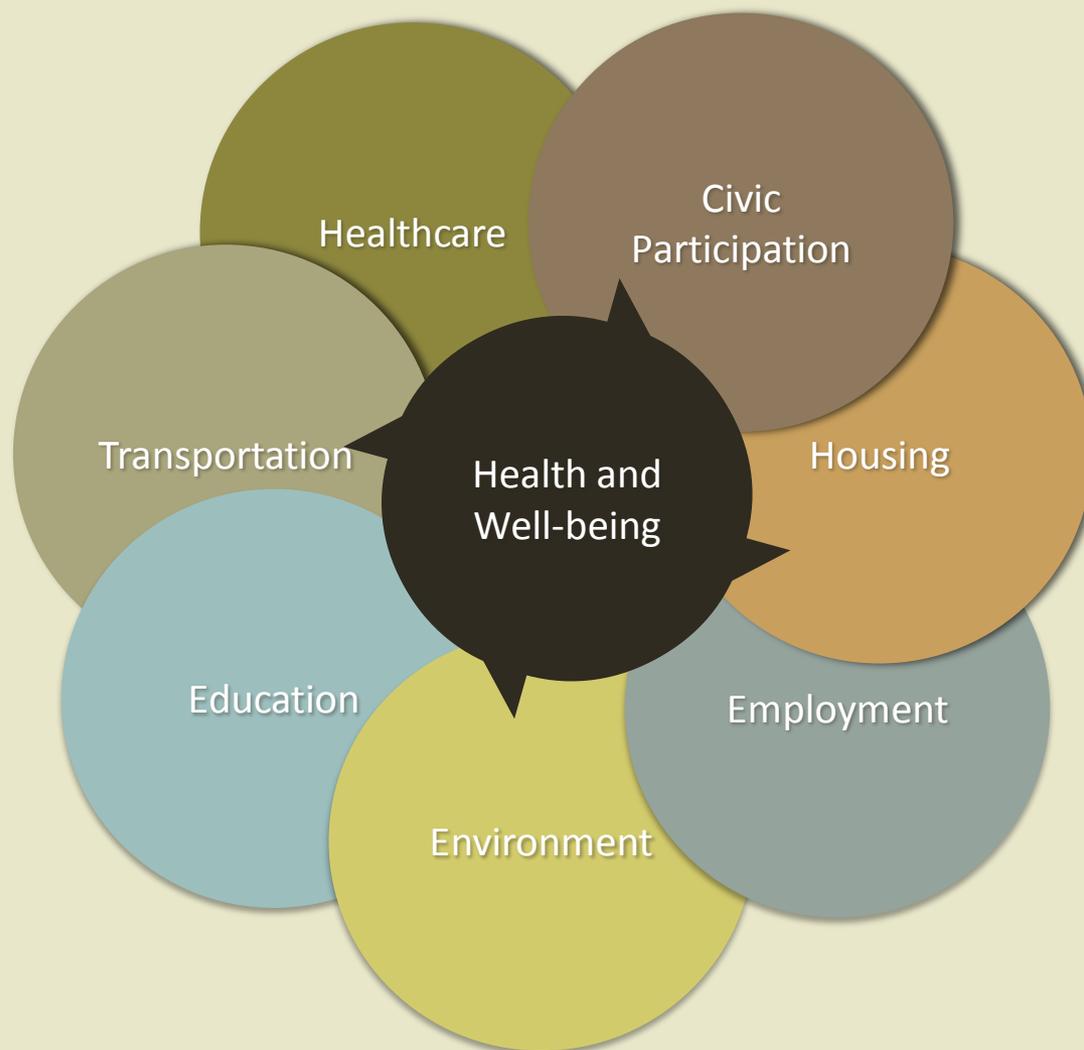
LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT  
**ALLIANCE ON  
RACE & EQUITY**



{ 17 }

# Intent to discriminate is irrelevant...

Systems just do what they do, often invisibly, and reinforce both disparities and inequities.



10/1/2015

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT  
**ALLIANCE ON  
RACE & EQUITY**



{ 18 }

# Understanding “racism” when it comes up in discussions about achieving equity...

## Individual racism:

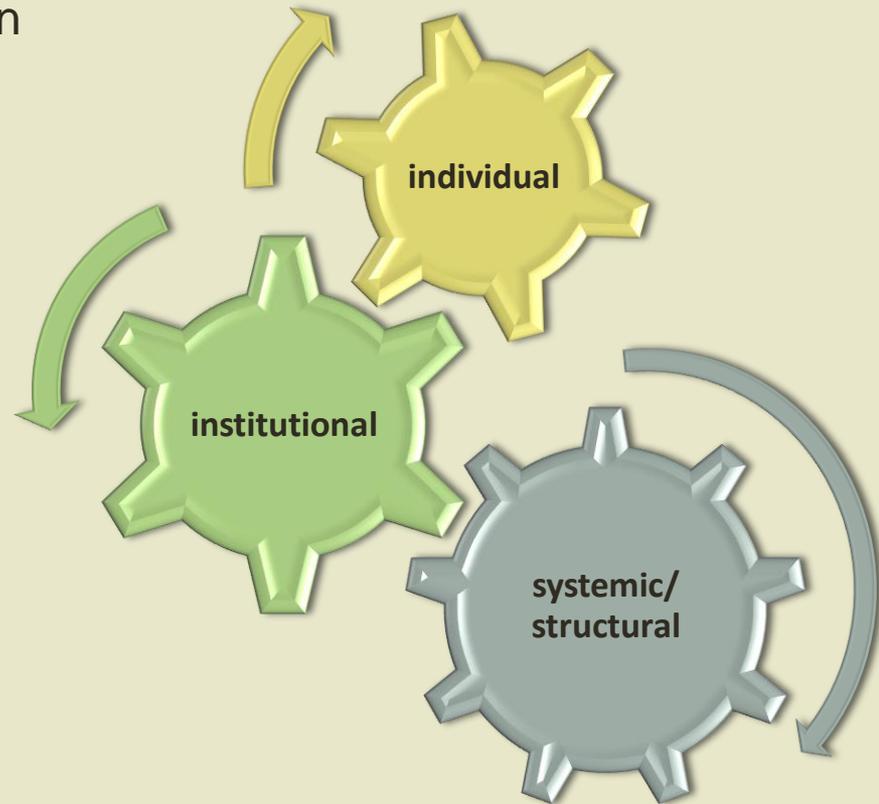
Pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race.

## Institutional racism:

An institution’s policies, practices and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color, often unintentionally or inadvertently.

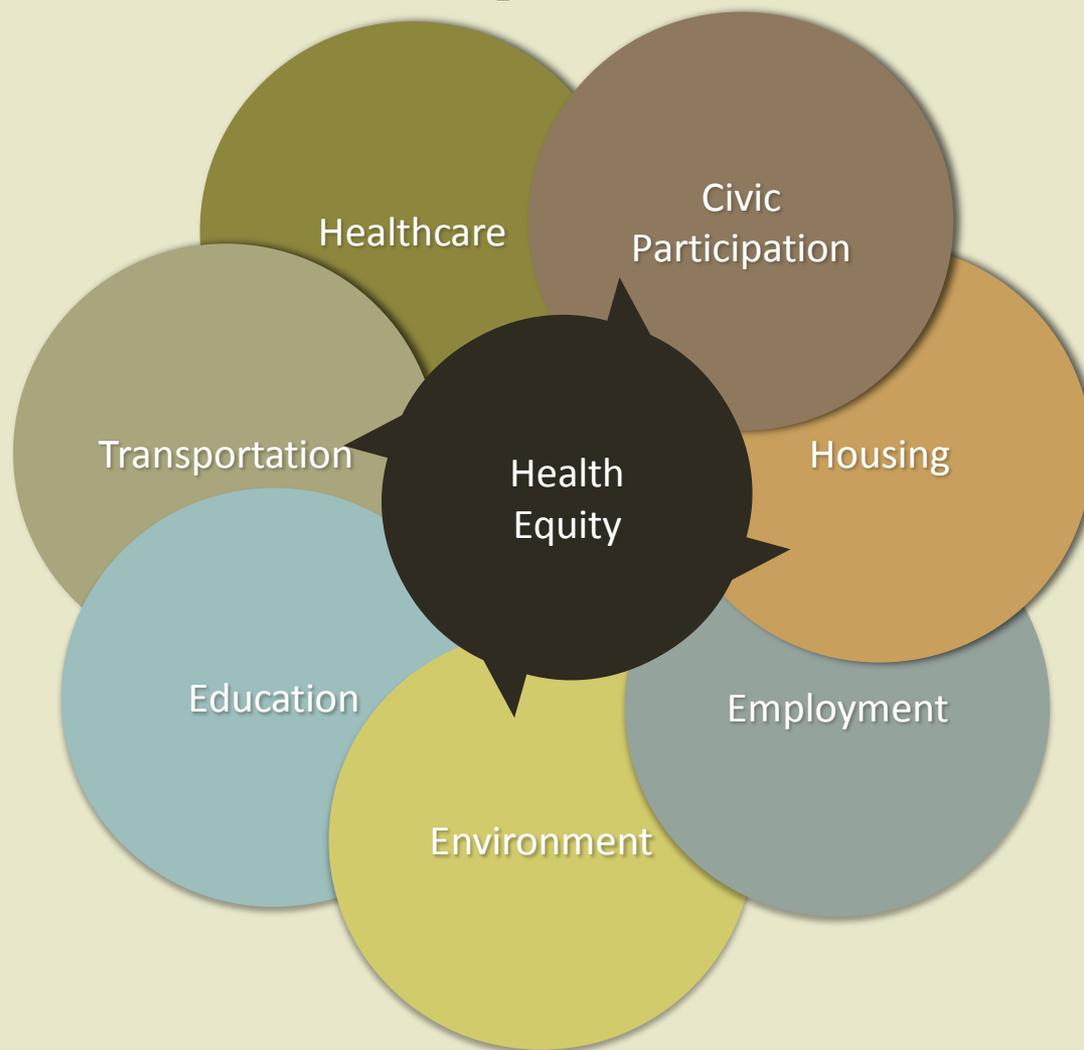
## Structural/Systemic racism:

The ways our public and private institutions interact, combining to create a System, that produces barriers that perpetuate racial disparities.



# Public Health can show health outcomes in relationship to...

... social determinants of health and/or neighborhood conditions impacting health status.



10/1/2015

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT  
**ALLIANCE ON  
RACE & EQUITY**



{ 20 }

# Approaches to Improving Health

## Transactional

- Individual-based efforts
- Help individuals negotiate existing structures
- Solutions “transact” with institutions to get a short-term gain for communities
- Leave the existing structure in place

## Transformative

- Policy or practice efforts that cross multiple institutions
- Shift efforts towards proactive solutions
- Solutions alter the ways institutions and existing structures operate
- Shift cultural values and political will to create health equity

# Approaches to Improving Health

| Technical Problems / Transact   | Adaptive Problem / Transform   |
|---|--|
| <p>Invite Women and Minority Business Enterprises (WMBE) contractors to apply for contracts.</p>  | <p>Educate and encourage prime contractors to subcontract with WMBE firms.</p> <p>Change policies to drive to the result.</p>  |
| <p>Translate documents for limited English speaking public.</p>   | <p>Meet with and develop relationships with immigrant and refugee communities.</p>   |
| <p>Educate about and identify household triggers for asthma.</p> <p>Help tenants know their rights and request repairs from their landlord.</p> | <p>Work with the City to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. pass a Tenant Protection Ordinance (TPO) and</li> <li>b. design and implement a “Proactive Rental Inspection” program.</li> </ul> |

10/1/2015



# What do you need to advance equity?

1. Tools for looking at equity in policy and budget.
2. Inside-outside strategies
3. Strategies for more inclusive engagement
4. Strategies for communicating about equity, in particular, about race and equity.

10/1/2015



# 1. Equity Tools

- Proactively seek to eliminate inequities and advance equity
- Identify clear goals and objectives, measurable outcomes
- Develop mechanisms for successful implementation and analysis related to “closing the gaps”



# What is Equitable Development?

- Improving an area without displacement
- Making it possible for existing communities to benefit from investments and change
- Making sure that one group does not bear the burden while another benefits

10/1/2015

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT  
**ALLIANCE ON  
RACE & EQUITY**



( 25 )

# Equity Tools

- 1 • *Clarify the purpose and key outcomes*
- 2 • *Involve stakeholders and analyze data*
- 3 • *Determine benefit and/or burden*
- 4 • *Advance opportunity or minimize harm*
- 5 • *Raise awareness, be accountable*
- 6 • *Report back*



# An Equity Toolkit can be used in budget, policy and program decisions.

## Examples:

- Proactive rental inspections
- Contracting policies and procedures
- Healthy development guidelines



## 2a. Inside game

- Where reason meets action
- Elected officials, paid lobbyists, party operatives, staff members at legislative and bureaucratic levels
- People who have enough power, standing, access or influence to impact the behavior of the decision makers
- Natural home of the deal maker- cold blooded maneuver and necessary compromise

## 2b. Outside game

- Where emotion and action meet
- Activists, organizers and volunteers
- Action not based on their immediate, rational self interest, but on what feels right- what moves their heart



# 3. Strategies for Inclusive Engagement

- Build relationships with target population
- Create a welcoming atmosphere
- Increase accessibility
- Develop alternative methods for engagement
- Maintain a presence within the community
- Partner with diverse organizations and agencies

10/1/2015

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT  
ALLIANCE ON  
RACE & EQUITY



( 30 )

# 4. Strategies for Communicating Equity

To be covered by your next presenters,  
Simran and Kathi.

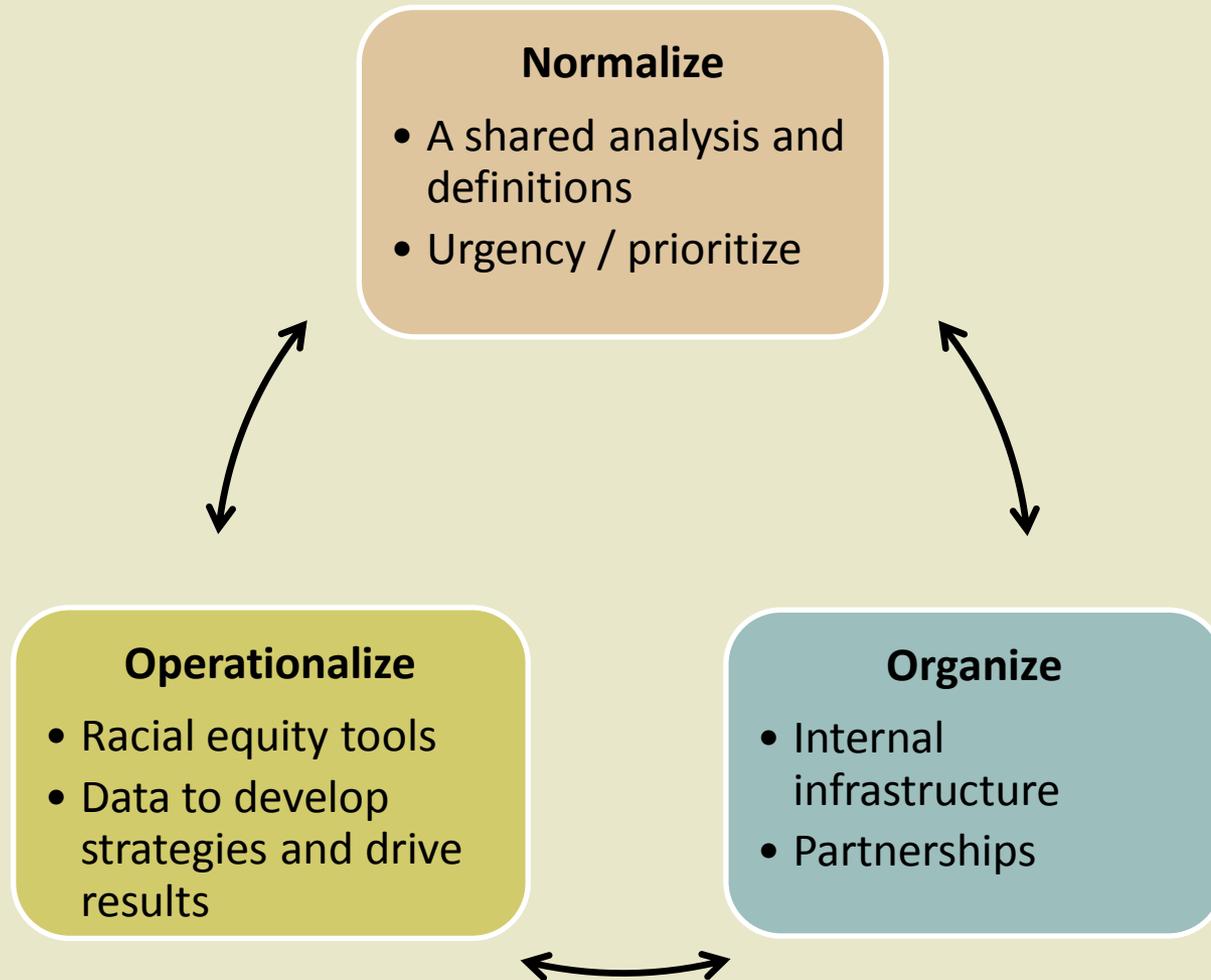
10/1/2015

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT  
**ALLIANCE ON  
RACE & EQUITY**



( 31 )

# Advancing equity and transforming government



# Thank you!

Muntu Davis, MD MPH  
muntu.davis@acgov.org

