EQUITY PLAN

Equity & Inclusion Advocate
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Why Do We Start With Race?

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities represent a rapidly growing share of the region's population. While people of color share similar barriers with other historically marginalized groups, such as low-income communities, people with disabilities, women, and rural communities; BIPOC communities experience worse outcomes in every indicator of social well-being due to the pervasive and systemic nature of racism. By addressing the barriers experienced by BIPOC communities, we will also identify solutions and remove barriers for other minoritized and disadvantaged groups.

Cascade AIDS Project (CAP) is committed to health and social equity for people from communities of color, particularly the Black/African-American, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), Latinx/a/o, and Indigenous communities. We focus on these communities because the HIV/AIDS epidemic disproportionately impacts them, and they experience many other health and social disparities. As the largest HIV-services and LGBTQ+ healthcare provider serving the greater Portland area and southwest Washington, CAP recognizes that it is our responsibility to proactively address the racial disparities in our community—work that begins by addressing the racial inequities within our organization. We believe that meaningful inclusion in our internal and external policies and practices leads to equity in outcomes for our focus communities. This means providing outreach and services that respond to the needs of Black/African American, Latinx/a/o, and Indigenous people who are living with or at high risk of contracting HIV and/or experiencing other health and social disparities.

CAP is committed to the following actions to advance equity for Black/African-American, Latinx/a/o, and Indigenous communities:

- Conducting outreach, testing, and other prevention services developed based on the needs of these communities.
- Providing housing and supportive services developed based on the needs of these communities.
- Working to eliminate disparities in the rates at which people from these communities access housing and supportive services, secure stable housing, and achieve viral suppression.
- Providing affirming and culturally relevant physical and mental healthcare for these communities.
- Striving for these communities to be represented among Prism Health patients in proportion to their representation among Portland-area residents.
- Developing and maintaining a board and staff in which members of these communities are proportionally represented, feel a sense of true belonging, and hold positions of power.

We acknowledge that Cascade AIDS Project has been complicit in upholding systemic racism and other forms of oppression. For much of our history, our organization has primarily catered to white gay men and reinforced the public perception that white gay men are the only and/or the most important population impacted by HIV/AIDS. Our commitment to the Black/African-American community and other communities of color, as well as the transgender and gender non-conforming community, has been inconsistent and incomplete. We are committed to the challenging and imperfect process of continuous learning (and unlearning) that will be necessary to heal the damage we have done, dismantle white supremacy, and build a more equitable future for our organization and our community.
OUR COMMITMENT

CAP Staff, Board of Directors, and Volunteers,

We acknowledge that CAP as an agency needs to address the historical injustice, harm and trauma perpetuated by our country's racist legacy and we need to take an anti-racist stand and fight white supremacy in all its forms.

We acknowledge the pain of racism across our society, our institutions and organizations. We commit to addressing racism as an agency. We will work to reduce and remove this pain where we find it within CAP.

We need to come together in a positive way to confront racism and transform the culture of CAP. We will work to be role models of humility, constructivist listening and radical resilience to each other and to our community.

We acknowledge that we are just at the beginning of this work. The road ahead will be long but we will proceed forward together.

We acknowledge that this work will be hard, however we will be open and accountable to each other in doing this work. We acknowledge that there will be missteps along the way but we will learn from our mistakes and we will continue working.

We acknowledge that this work will require difficult but crucial conversations, as well as training, consistency, and commitment to stay engaged. This will all take time.

We acknowledge that this work must proceed with urgency AND deliberation. We recognize the need to identify and allocate supportive resources for this work while many of us continue to work from home or are in different locations.

We validate the lived experience of our BIPOC staff and people that we serve. We can and will do better in understanding the role we play in systemic oppression and work to dismantle it. We will stand together in solidarity to fight for racial justice and equity.

Signed,
CAP Directors’ Team
OUR GOALS

- Building Organizational DEI Capacity & Institutionalizing Equity Throughout the Organization
- Create Alternative Systems for Feedback, Accountability & Conflict Resolution
- Foster A Culture of Communication, Empathy, Inclusivity, and Learning
- Assess & Improve Employment Systems & Processes
- Strengthen Community Engagement & Advocacy
GOAL 1

Building Organizational DEI Capacity & Institutionalizing Equity Throughout the Organization

- Our Commitments
  - Organization:
    - Improve Onboarding by:
      - Including CAP’s History of Challenges and Successes with Equity Work
      - Including Our Future Direction For Equity Work (with clear expectations for new employees)
    - Formalizing the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
      - Appointing Departmental Liaisons
      - Increasing Meeting Frequency
      - Curating Opportunities for Community Engagement
    - Offer Consistent Training for All Company Supervisors Related To:
      - Cultural Agility
      - Inclusion and Belonging
      - Communication Across Difference
      - Conflict Resolution within Restorative Justice Framework
    - Assess Challenges Related to Language Equity
    - Institutionalize and Develop Affinity Groups
    - Develop and Disseminate a Collection of Resources: Podcasts, Books, Videos, Articles, Etc.
  - Department:
    - All Departments Will Create KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) Relevant To Equity
      - All KPIs will have benchmarks and avenues for assessment
    - Embed Equity Expectations Within Job Descriptions and Performance Evaluations
GOAL 2

Create Alternative Systems for Feedback, Accountability & Conflict Resolution

- Our Commitments
  - Organization:
    - Create and Implement Bias Incident Reporting Process
      - Incorporating Restorative Justice, Education, and Accountability within Bias Incident Response Meetings
    - Create and Implement Alternative Feedback and Conflict Resolution System Based in Restorative Justice
      - Consider Partnerships with HR, Union Executive Committee, and Executive Leadership
  - Department:
    - Human Resources will receive Ombuds Training to Better Advocate for Staff
GOAL 3

Foster A Culture of Communication, Empathy, Inclusivity, and Learning

- Our Commitments
  - Organization:
    - Engage Supervisors Within New Framework of Supervision
    - Collaborate with the Union Executive Committee to Encourage a Culture of Communication, Empathy, and Learning
    - Develop Speaker Series, Video Dialogue Series, and Book Review Activities
    - Require All Supervisors to Undergo IDI & Improvement Plans
      - Offer IDI Opportunity to All Staff
    - Facilitate Annual CAP Company Culture Survey (mandatory for all employees)
    - Create Annual Culture Improvement Plans
  - Department:
    - Human Resources will receive Ombuds Training to Better Advocate for Staff
GOAL 4
Assess & Improve Employment Systems & Processes

- Our Commitments
  - Organization:
    - Facilitate Pay Equity Audit and Improve Compensation Model
    - Review and Improve Recruitment and Hiring Practices
      - Create and Maintain Recruitment Pipelines to Employ More Diverse Staff
    - Review and Improve Retention Practices
    - Review and Improve Professional Development Opportunities
    - Assess Challenges Related to Language Equity
    - Assess "Other Duties As Assigned" Workload Equity Within Teams
GOAL 5

Strengthen Community Engagement & Advocacy

Our Commitments

- Organization:
  - Develop Community Engagement Committee
  - Create and Maintain Community Event Calendar
  - Consistently Engage with Community through:
    - Assessing Job Positions for Specific-Responsibilities with Community Engagement
  - Revamp Community Advisory Committee that includes staff, community members, and (if possible) board representation
  - Implement Language Translation for Website and Train Staff to Use 3rd Party Translation Service
DO have patience with yourself. Understand this is an on-going, lifelong learning & unlearning process - there are no shortcuts.
DON'T judge (yourself or others). Everyone is at different stages of learning.
DO listen to learn, not to respond (Constructivist Listening).
DON'T expect or ask BIPOC folks to educate you on the topic.
DO reflect before you act, asking yourself “Who am I trying to make feel better?” When we are doing this work, it is common to feel uncomfortable. It is not the role of BIPOC to ease those feelings.
DON'T avoid discomfort. Discomfort is at the root of growth & learning.
DO work on your own defensiveness. Be aware of the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing comfort, losing privilege, losing power).
DON'T expect to get things perfect. You will make mistakes. Acknowledge mistakes & harms they may have caused. Accept responsibility, outline steps to address mistakes & actively work to change behavior.
DO educate yourself. Learn how race & racism has and continues to impact our community in Portland & the greater PNW. Resources for getting started, going deeper, and building skills provided on the following pages.