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Introduction

This document is a consolidation of materials produced by NHA staff since 2018.

Like most racial equity related documents, this work is a "living document," meaning it is malleable and ever-changing. As the world changes, as there is a better understanding of people and the needs of people, this work will be updated as needed.

Most of the material in the document are adaptations of works from other organizations. The last page has the sources for the works referenced throughout.

None of the people involved in this project claim to be experts in the field of racial equity and racial justice. We acknowledge that this is not exhaustive of NHA’s journey towards becoming an anti-racist organization. We are always learning along the way.

If you have questions, concerns, or other input, please direct it to a member of the REDI committee.
Equity Policy

Northwest Housing Alternatives’ Equity Policy reflects an intentional commitment to apply an equity lens to our mission of creating opportunity through housing. We recognize that equity is a necessary foundation to achieve the best possible outcomes in our work. Our Equity Policy requires that we promote equity in our leadership and organizational culture, our program design and delivery, and in the economic opportunities created by our agency.

We know that achieving equity requires a continuous learning process of honest and thorough critical assessment, the establishment of meaningful goals, a commitment to learning, and willingness to change the way we do business.

Oregon has a horrific history of racial injustice and discrimination in housing and community development. As a leader in affordable housing and as people who believe in racial justice and fairness, we are called to do this work and active reflection to ensure we are an anti-racist organization. In order to meet the needs of underserved communities, we commit to the goal of dismantling structural racism. Integrating equity and anti-racist work into our everyday roles deepens our community impact. We believe stepping into the work results in the cultivation of the whole person. At NHA, focusing on racial equity is something we embrace and actively affirm. As NHA is a recognized leader in affordable housing development, we desire to evolve into a recognized leader in racial equity and justice.

When we work to enhance racial equity at NHA, we end up addressing the needs of all people regardless of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, or other human characteristics (concept of targeted universalism).
In racial equity work, there is no end. The work we do is aspirational. As such the work is the work, by that we mean it is an ongoing, messy process. We will learn, and then integrate what we learned. From that place, we will make mistakes, regardless of how well-intentioned our actions happened to be. Then we will learn some more. Along the way, our way of being and thinking will shift.

Racial equity work is not easy. It requires commitment and humility towards ourselves and each other. Some may not like the changes happening, preferring instead to maintain the status quo. Yet, this change is what we are committing to, in order to make a more just and equitable world and live into our values and mission at NHA.
Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

We recognize, and do not accept as fair and just, a disgraceful track record of discrimination against people and communities of color across the country and in Oregon. This is specifically relevant in housing and community development, where racism has impeded access to home ownership and affordable rental housing in "opportunity communities." Equitable opportunities for all people remains a priority in our work.

To eliminate racial inequities in housing outcomes, working through our mission, we will focus on:

- Understanding historical discrimination and racism in our field and working to make sure that the impact of the past does not predict the future
- Becoming an anti-racist organization to be more diverse and inclusive, and working for outcomes that are equitable
- Dismantling institutional racism by evaluating and reviewing policy, rules/regulations, and industry practices

“If we don’t examine ourselves within the system, then we can’t eradicate ourselves from it.”

Nichole Watson, Restorative Justice Practitioner
Environmental Sustainability

We also recognize the link between healthy people and a healthy planet, and the historical impacts of environmental degradation, pollution and climate change disproportionally affecting people and communities of color. We will approach our work with an "environmental sustainability lens" that furthers our long standing commitment to green building, the use of renewable energy, and protecting natural resources.

To reduce environmental impacts and be better environmental stewards, we will focus our work on:

- Developing housing that achieves environmental protection goals and standards by measuring outcomes with programs such as Salmon Safe, Energy Star, Net Zero, and/or others
- Increasing user awareness of energy and resource conservation, creating learning opportunities for residents, staff, and board members
- Creating and maintaining healthy living and work environments, using non-toxic and natural supplies and materials
- Building partnerships with organizations and initiatives that focus on preserving natural features and areas, seeking the intersections between racial and environmental justice
HOW WE DO THIS

Equity Lens
An equity lens is a tool to create outcomes that are more equitable. At NHA, we use this equity lens for guiding decision making that centers marginalized/historically disenfranchised peoples and communities, and takes into consideration intersections of gender, race, cultural identity, ability, and class; as well as environmental justice and sustainability.

Equity Policy Inquiry
The Equity Policy Inquiry Team is a subcommittee of the REDI committee. Their purpose is reviewing NHA’s internal and external policies with NHA’s Equity Lens, and making recommendations to the Leadership Team/Directors and Board of Directors about making our policies more inclusive of folks from historically disenfranchised communities.

REDI Committee
The REDI Committee is an actively engaged and diverse collection of 6-12 NHA staff serving as an advisory body to the NHA directors. They work to create an organizational culture that responds to the needs of diverse perspectives and hold the staff and board accountable for pursuing racial equity, diversity and inclusion. The focus is on building the groundwork for a multicultural, anti-racist organization through an equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplace culture.

Racial equity, diversity, and inclusion are core values for which NHA stands. We are committed to diversity, inclusion, and racial equity by actively developing processes and policies – inside our organization and across the state of Oregon – that hold us to this commitment.
Looking Back: 2019

2019 was a year of laying foundation for our organization. It was about preparing ourselves for our new strategic plan and embracing our commitment of racial equity. Much of this preparation was internally focused and building off of the work done by the equity committee in years leading up to 2019.

Highlights:

- Changed the name of the equity committee to REDI (Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) to better fit the nature of the committee and commitment to racial equity
- Revised the organizational Equity Policy and REDI charter to better reflect where the organization is at and where it is headed
- Worked with Kenya Budd, a consultant, through a grant from Meyer Memorial Trust, to review our recruitment and hiring processes with an equity lens
- Four staff attended a 2.5 day training on "Understanding and analyzing systemic racism" at the Gates Foundation--this training had great impact on the direction of the organization and affirmed our commitment to becoming antiracist
- Developed and implemented an organizational equity glossary and equity lens tool
- Held an all staff training on the foundations of systemic racism
- Developed new strategic plan leading with racial equity
- Expanded and strengthened staff committees: Sustainability, REDI, and Resiliency
- Incorporated equity work into all position descriptions and explicitly stated in job descriptions/postings
- Established Resident Advisory Council--consisting of residents from our affordable housing properties to provide input and recommendations into programming and help guide the board
In order to do this work we agree to:

- Give and receive welcome
- Be present as fully as possible
- What is offered is by invitation, not demand
- Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth
- No fixing, saving, advising, or correcting
- Learn to respond to others with open, honest questions
- When the going gets rough, turn to wonder
- Trust and learn from the silence
- Attend to your own inner teacher
- Observe deep confidentiality: share the lessons, not the story
- Know that it's possible
- Expect and accept non-closure
- Move forward, move back

Adapted from Parker Palmer, "Circle of Trust Touchstones" Adopted by NHA staff 10.2019
Oregon Historical Timeline

This timeline is not an exhaustive history, but a broad summary of historical events and policies in Oregon history. It is meant to highlight how deeply rooted and pervasive racist systems and structures are in the United States.

There are policies and practices done at all levels of government and in many implicit and explicit ways to create the disparities and inequities that exist today.

Understanding the development of the systems and structures in place grounds us in the work of racial equity and directs us in how and where to spend our energy in working to create a more just and equitable organization.

Excerpts from the Oregon Black History Timeline, Walidah Imarisha

1859
Oregon became the only state in the union with a racially exclusive law written into its constitution. It banned any “free negro, mulatto, not residing in the State at the time” from living, holding real estate and making contracts within the state. This law was repealed in 1926, but the language was not removed from the constitution until 2001.

1862
Interracial marriages were banned in Oregon. It was illegal for white people to marry anyone with more than one grandparent who was Black. In 1866, the law expanded to include Chinese, Hawaiian, and Native peoples. This law was repealed in 1951.

1866-68
Oregon legislators ratified and then de-ratified the 14th amendment, which guarantees universal citizenship rights. Although the 14th amendment became national policy in 1868, it was not ratified by Oregon legislators again until 1973.

1870
The 15th Amendment, which outlawed voting discrimination based on race, was added to the U.S. Constitution, although it failed to pass in Oregon. Oregon did not ratify the 15th Amendment until 1959.
The Portland Real Estate Board required real estate agents not to sell to Black and Asian people except in small segregated areas of the city, a practice referred to as redlining.

The Ku Klux Klan comes to Oregon. It is believed that Oregon had the highest per capita membership in the country.

The KKK used its power to elect Walter Pierce, a KKK member, as the state’s governor.

The Alien Land Bill prevented Asian immigrants and other immigrants of color from owning or leasing land in Oregon. This purposely stymied the growth of the Japantown and Chinatown neighborhoods in downtown Portland.

Nationally, Executive Order 9066 sent nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans to internment camps.

Portland City Council rescinded all business licenses to Japanese and Japanese-American residents after Pearl Harbor. Japanese and Japanese-American citizens were gathered and sent to internment camps. Many spent more than three years in these concentration camps in the desert.
1948
The Columbia River flooded and the dike protecting the largely-Black populated city of Vanport was destroyed. Because of the hasty construction of the city, residents were particularly vulnerable. Fifteen people were killed and 17,000 lost their homes.

1950’s
The U.S. government terminated treaty relationships with Native American Tribes. This gave millions of acres across the U.S. of old-growth Tribal lands to the timber industry. 62 tribes in Oregon were terminated, and only 6 have been restored to federal status.

1953
The Urban League of Portland lobbied the legislature to pass Oregon’s Civil Rights Bill (AKA the Public Accommodations Act.)

1956
After the Vanport flood, many African-Americans moved into the Albina neighborhood. Voters approved the construction of Memorial Coliseum in this neighborhood, forcing the destruction of more than 450 homes and businesses. Federal officials also approved plans to pave Interstates 5 and 99 through this neighborhood, destroying over 1,100 homes in Albina.

1957
Oregon passed the state’s fair housing law.
1970

Protests began against the expansion of Emanuel Hospital in the Albina neighborhood, which destroyed thousands more homes in this neighborhood. The expansion stalled after the destruction of the homes and the expansion took decades more to complete. Some blocks slated for the expansion still sit empty to this day.

1988

Mulugeta Seraw, an Ethiopian student, was beaten to death in a hate crime committed by three racist skinheads in SE Portland. Seraw’s brutal death spurred a flurry of rallies, educational events, and anti-racist organizations in Portland.

1994

Measure 11 was passed by voters to establish mandatory minimum sentencing for a variety of crimes. The measure also required juveniles over 15 to be tried as adults, disproportionately sending Black men and youth to prison.

2011

An audit performed by the Fair Housing Council of Oregon found that landlords and leasing agents in the Portland area discriminate against black and Latino renters. 64% of the time, citing them higher rents, higher deposit amounts, and additional fees to access rental housing opportunities.

Why is it important to revisit and review this history?
The simple answer: the past is not really in the past.

What has been done years ago still impacts us today. It is seen in our structures, our laws, our policies, our practices and procedures. We build on what's come before us.

In order to create a better tomorrow, we must know what we were working with and building from. Then we can decide what to carry on and what to leave behind.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Term</strong></th>
<th><strong>Definition</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communities of Color</td>
<td>Term used to describe a group or groups of people who do not identify as white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>The range of differences and similarities in a group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Sustainability</td>
<td>Practices and policies that enable the current generation to meet their environmental needs without compromising the environmental needs and resources of future generations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Justice</td>
<td>A concept that all people and communities have the right to live, work, and play in safe, healthy communities that are free from life-threatening environmental conditions; and have the right to equal environmental protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>A concept that all people have the same rights, opportunities, protections and access regardless of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>A concept that each person is provided the needed resources, access, and supports to reach a similar outcome, recognizing the need varies from person to person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit Bias</td>
<td>Social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside of their own conscious awareness Implicit bias is far more prevalent than explicit bias and is often incompatible with one's values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>Intentionally bringing in historically excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in an authentic way that shares power</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Intersectionality           | The interconnected nature of social categories such as race, gender, ability, class, sexuality, and more, which creates a unique experience of discrimination or disadvantage for people with multiple marginalized identities.  
<pre><code>                          | Example: an African-American Trans woman faces many layers of oppression and discrimination                                                                                                                  |
</code></pre>
<p>| Marginalized Communities    | Groups of people who are not a part of the dominant culture or narrative (in the US, the dominant culture is white people). This marginalization is reinforced by systems, practices, policies, and behaviors that maintain the status quo |
| Power                       | The ability to influence others, the future, and to define the reality for oneself and potentially for others. Having power includes access to resources and decision makers to get what you want done or prevent outcomes that are undesirable to you |
| White Privilege             | A set of advantages and benefits assumed by white people due to the family and circumstances a person is born into                                                                                           |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microaggressions</td>
<td>Behavior committed by a white person towards a person of color that describes brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignity, whether intentional or not, that the receiver feels is a hostile, derogatory, or negative slight or insult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Racism               | Racial prejudice and misuse of power by an individual white person and/or through the collective actions of white people  
Different types of racism: internalized, interpersonal, institutional, systemic, historic |
| Institutional Racism | Racism embedded in our institutions: while the policies created by the white dominant group may not mention race explicitly, the outcomes of the policies, practices, and implementation create disadvantages for people of color and advantages for white people |
| Systemic Racism      | The normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics (historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal) that routinely advantage white people while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color |
| Targeted Universalism| Inclusive of the needs of both the dominant and marginalized groups but pays particular attention to the situation of the marginalized groups |
| Anti-Racism          | A way of being that seeks liberation of all beings informed by a power analysis, sustained by a set of practices, and grounded in accountability to anti-racist people of color |
What is an equity lens?
An equity lens is a tool to create more equitable outcomes.

Why?
At NHA, we use this equity lens for guiding decision making that centers marginalized/historically disenfranchised peoples and communities, and takes into consideration intersections of gender, race, cultural identity, ability, and class; as well as environmental justice and sustainability.

How to use it:
When we are in discussion and for discernment to make decisions, at any level of the organization. We will use these reflection questions for individual and group considerations.
**Initial questions:**
- Where is this decision/proposal/idea coming from?
  - Is there implicit bias?
  - Identify it; shine a bright light on it
- Is there a need for this decision right now? What is the priority? Can the timeline for decision-making accommodate gathering more information if needed?
- Is this the best time/place for this decision? Can parts of this decision be made at another time?
- Is it in line with our mission?
- Who are the stakeholders? How will you engage them?
- Do we have the resources or the capacity (budget, time, energy, skills, etc.) to carry out this decision?
- What do we hope the outcome will be?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Plan Category</th>
<th>Power Sharing and Inclusivity</th>
<th>Racial Equity and Anti-Racism</th>
<th>Environmental Justice &amp; Sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>People</strong></td>
<td>How does this empower marginalized communities?</td>
<td>How does this impact people of color?</td>
<td>Is it easy for people to participate in environmental activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are people able to maintain their own personal autonomy?</td>
<td>Are people of color at the table giving input and part of the decision-making?</td>
<td>How does this impact people in terms of environmental safety and sustainability?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are biases/privileges are we bringing to this decision?</td>
<td>Who benefits and who is being burdened?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How are people who are impacted included in the decision-making?</td>
<td>Is there a disparate impact?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place</strong></td>
<td>What is the history of the place?</td>
<td>What geographic areas are impacted?</td>
<td>What geographic areas are impacted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What's the impact on the place?</td>
<td>Whose land are we on?</td>
<td>What is the degree of sustainability for each property?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are we furthering historical disparities?</td>
<td>Are we supporting people in their communities?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are we adding value?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partners</strong></td>
<td>How does this empower marginalized communities?</td>
<td>Who benefits?</td>
<td>Do they align with our values/mission/sustainability goals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there an alignment of values/mission/equity goals?</td>
<td>Are companies and firms owned by people of color?</td>
<td>Do they add value to environmental sustainability?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Who's not at the table?</td>
<td>Can they make accommodations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Are they adding a new perspective?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process</strong></td>
<td>Who holds the ultimate decision-making authority?</td>
<td>How are people of color involved in the process?</td>
<td>What is the impact assessment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How is the decision being made?</td>
<td>Where's the proposal coming from?</td>
<td>What is our carbon footprint?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is it transparent?</td>
<td>Who is most impacted by this issue? Are we asking the right questions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Are the right people at the table?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How do our biases/privileges impact this process?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Equity Lens: How to

Start with the initial questions before you bring your idea/proposal to the group.

Can you answer the questions fully?

If no, reassess the proposal.

If yes, bring the proposal/idea to the group.

Using the equity lens matrix, identify a strategic plan category that the proposal fits. Start with those questions, working across. If relevant, identify additional categories.

Did you answer at least two questions from each box for that category?

If no, revisit the questions.

If yes, congrats! You're almost there.

Final step, revisit the initial questions as a group. Compare how the answers changed.

Congrats! You have now gone through the equity lens process.
Equity Frame Image:
Management Assistance Group, "Building Movement Project."

Shared Agreements:
Parker Palmer, "Circle of Trust Touchstones." Center for Courage and Renewal.

Oregon Historical Timeline:

Glossary:
Office of Equity and Human Rights, City of Portland, "Shared city-wide definitions of racial equity terms."
Open Source Leadership Strategies, "The Dynamic System of Power, Privilege, and Oppression."
CrossRoads Antiracism Organizing & Training, "Understanding and Analyzing Systemic Racism."
Clackamas Workforce Partnership, "Equity Lens 2018."

Equity Lens:
Office of Diversity and Equity, Multnomah County, "Equity and Empowerment Lens."
Clackamas Workforce Partnership, "Equity Lens 2018."
Sisters of the Road, "Decision Making Filters."

Other sources:
City of Madison, Wisconsin, Racial Equity & Social Justice Initiative, "Equitable Hiring Tool."
Our mission is to create opportunity through housing.

Background
Northwest Housing Alternatives was founded in 1982 in Clackamas County to provide shelter for homeless families and develop affordable housing.

NHA became a statewide housing development organization during the 90’s by acquiring "expiring" properties from private developers who used HUD funds in the 70’s and 80’s to build and operate projects.

Today, NHA operates:
- Nearly 2,000 affordable units in 16 counties across Oregon
- Half for seniors, half for families
- 53 group homes for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities

NHA Programs

Resident Services
Resident Services creates strong and health communities.
- Eviction prevention and housing stability
- Connection with community resources such as energy assistance, Individual Development Accounts, healthcare resources, and more
- Initiatives for further outcomes in specific communities such as Senior Health and Housing and Supporting Oregon's Kids

Homeless Intervention Services
Homeless Intervention Services aims to end homelessness and prevent it before it begins.
- HomeBase: works with households to prevent evictions before they happen or provide rapid re-housing services to households currently experiencing homelessness
- Pathways: a partnership with the Oregon Health Authority and Clackamas Behavioral Health to provide housing support to individuals impacted by severe and persistent mental illness
- Annie Ross House: the only emergency shelter for families with children in Clackamas County. The shelter re-opened in 2019 with increased capacity and privacy for families

Development Pipeline
NHA maintains a robust development pipeline with over 500 units in various stages of development including application for funding, pre-development, construction, and lease-up.