

P4C Organizational statement: Anti-racism commitments, action steps and accountability

At Partners for Our Children, we commit to working to dismantle institutional and structural racism as individuals and as an organization. As a Center within the School of Social Work, we support the School's social justice mission and join the social work discipline's grand challenge of eliminating racism. As an organization, our first work is to look inward and critically examine our roles in those institutional structures that perpetuate anti-Blackness and that reinforce racism, oppression, and inequities.

This is a historical moment in a centuries-long struggle for equity and justice for Black people in this country. We at Partners for Our Children share in the national and global outrage regarding the continued systemic anti-Black and anti-indigenous violence by a militarized and state-sponsored police. We recognize that anti-Black racism is deeply structural and embedded in all major institutions and systems in the country. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged and was overlaid on the existing pandemic of institutional racism and police brutality, highlighting the disproportionate burden of both on BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color). We hope that this point in time represents a tipping point in the fight for social justice, and we commit to do our part to keep forward momentum and not let this moment pass us by.

We are an organization which aims to eliminate inequities in child and family well-being by advancing research and evidence-informed policies, programs, and practices that promote healthy child development. Using research and evidence that elevates lived experience, we must examine critically the child welfare system and how it has institutionalized and perpetuated anti-BIPOC racism, policing, and disproportionality.

We recognize the trauma and long-term consequences of children's separation from their families and we will do our part to support policies and practices that prevent unnecessary policing and separation of families in the context of child welfare, the criminal legal system, and immigration. P4C stands firmly against the over-policing of and lack of investment in BIPOC communities. Mass incarceration and the detention and deportation of immigrant families stand in the way of our mission to ensure all children are able to develop safely at home with the resources and support they and their families need to thrive. We will also work collaboratively towards eliminating poverty so that no children are separated from their families due to a lack of material resources.

Concomitantly, we will partner with others and work to advance decolonizing practices nationally and globally, to honor Indigenous communities, land, ways of knowing, and Indigenous sovereignty and to support the process of recovery and restoration from the effects of colonization. We will work in solidarity with oppressed communities of immigrants and refugees, with women and children living in poverty, and others with marginalized and oppressed social identities towards equity and social justice.

As an organization, we have come together to express our shared goal of being an anti-racist, anti-oppressive and de-colonizing organization and to specify our commitments and action steps towards improving diversity, equity and inclusion in our workplace as well as working to effect change at the institutional and structural levels. We will achieve this through changes in organizational culture and practices, ongoing training and development, and by approaching our work from an anti-racist perspective and applying racial equity assessment tools in our programs and activities.

P4C commitments, actions, and accountability

Organizational culture and practices

- Commit to centering an anti-racist, anti-oppression, and de-colonizing perspective as an organization and commit to reflecting internally as individuals and as an organization about our role in institutional racism and how we can dismantle institutionalized racism and promote diversity, equity and inclusion
- Identify and remedy organizational climate issues to support diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace; promote inclusive workplace policies and practices and processes for employees and students to raise concerns; require identification of personal and professional goals related to equity and anti-racism work in annual performance evaluations and review progress annually
- Remedy internal hiring practices to support diversity, equity and inclusion; follow the UW DEI best practices and staff diversity hiring toolkits in preparing for a search; require all staff involved in search committees to do implicit bias training prior to launching a search for new staff or student interns
- Continually assess our organization's programs and activities from an anti-racism and equity perspective; assess within projects, and across programs and priority areas
- Create inclusive space for and culture of ongoing discussion and learning as individuals and as an organization; institutionalize forums for sharing internally what we've learned from anti-racism, anti-oppression, de-colonizing sessions we've attended

Training and Development

- Require ongoing staff training for all employees on institutional racism, white supremacy, privilege and oppression, intersectionality, and implicit bias at minimum annually

- Promote trainings offered at the SSW, UW or in the broader community and foster a culture of sharing resources and materials that advance anti-racism and racial equity goals
- Require in-service training to prepare staff to engage in CBPR (community-based participatory research) and to support collaboration with Tribes and tribal groups with a de-colonizing approach

Racial equity and institutional change

- Critically examine and work to dismantle institutionalized racism in child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral health, social welfare, criminal legal, and other systems in which we work
- Approach our research, systems assessment, and policy work with an anti-racist and racial equity lens; the goal of racial equity is central to our mission
- Adapt a racial equity assessment tool and apply this tool as a required step in the development, implementation and evaluation of programs and activities and to help prioritize our work
- Partner with allies to strategize about and advance anti-racist and anti-white supremacist messages, especially with regard to youth-serving institutions of child welfare, juvenile justice, early learning and education