

# **REI Training & Consultation**

*Our approach and the services we offer*

**The Racial Equity Institute**  
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## Overview of the Racial Equity Institute

The Racial Equity Institute (REI) is an alliance of trainers and organizers, established in 2007, that is committed to bringing awareness and analysis to the root causes of disparities and disproportionality in order to create racially equitable systems. Even 50 years after significant civil rights gains, the impact of race continues to shape the outcomes of all institutions. REI trainers and organizers help individuals and organizations develop tools and processes to challenge patterns of institutional power and to grow institutional equity.

Our work is largely aligned with that of similar anti-racist training programs, with which we collaborate. Our aim is to contribute to a larger movement comprised of many actors formulating actions designed to advance justice and equity. Our approach builds on the work of the larger anti-racist movement and includes refinements and innovations based on our senior trainers' many years of experience in organizing projects, trainings, and consultations across the United States. We always maintain a movement approach and remain focused on organizing toward institutional change with equitable and just outcomes for people of color. We recognize many intersecting oppressions, but our belief is that racism is the glue that connects all oppressions, and thus our focus is on race and the injustices that stem from racialized history and belief systems that are reflected in American culture and institutions.

Our theory of change is based on the following assumptions and observations:

1. Racial inequity in the United States looks the same across systems;
2. Systems contribute significantly to disparities;
3. Poor outcomes are concentrated in particular geographic communities - usually poor communities and communities of color;
4. Systemic interventions and training can work to change thinking, reduce disparities, and improve outcomes for all populations;
5. Change requires commitment.

Our training and consultation services provide:

- An analysis of institutional racism, its cultural and historical roots, and how it reshapes itself to sustain power for those in control;



- Assistance in assessing an organization to determine its progress on the journey to become racially equitable;
- Assistance in developing an anti-racist vision and plan for change;
- Assistance in creating structures that will guide and sustain institutional efforts towards racial equity;
- Instruction in the basic skills of using a movement rather than organizational approach in planning, organizing and taking action for change;
- Assistance in the development of a plan for change, which includes specific analysis, goals, and an action plan to reach those goals;
- Assistance in completing specific analysis to illuminate the causes of inequity and opportunities for intervention;
- Ongoing reflection designed to evaluate the group's progress and document lessons learned as the organization moves through the process; and
- Periodic, mutual evaluation and reflection to insure that your organization is successful in reaching your goals.

## The REI Approach

The Racial Equity Institute's approach is designed to help participants understand that racism has institutional, systemic, and cultural manifestations that do not require the intention of individuals. We see institutionalized racism as the root cause of disparate social and economic outcomes and believe that effective interventions must address the social systems themselves. This particular theory is articulated and clarified in Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's analysis of "racialized social systems."<sup>1</sup>

Bringing this institutional analysis and many years of experience, we believe that the goal of dismantling institutional racism and organizational reform cannot be achieved in one workshop or even a few workshops. It requires a sustained and committed effort and the development of processes and tools to support the work.

Our approach is different from that of traditional organizational consultants. We see ourselves as organizers and advocate a movement approach as described by Parker Palmer.<sup>2</sup> We believe visions of change can grow and become real when organizations create structures for their racial

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<sup>1</sup> Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. "Rethinking racism: Toward a structural interpretation." *American sociological review* (1997): 465-480.

<sup>2</sup> Palmer, Parker J. "Divided no more: A movement approach to educational reform." *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 24.2 (1992): 10-17.



equity work that allow for accountability and responsibility outside of the limits of their present roles and relationships. It is our belief that organizing is central to organizational transformation. Individual problems, when put in an organizing context, can be translated into shared issues; addressing shared issues creates openings for meaningful change. Therefore, REI believes organizations must pursue a movement approach to organizational change rather than an organizational approach. A movement approach creates countervailing structures in the form of caucuses and a core group, called the Equity Team, to hold the work of transformation. It recognizes the interconnectedness of all institutions and the organizations that compose them. It relies on collective wisdom, returning power to communities served, and evaluation.

The Racial Equity Institute's phased approach typically includes several workshops followed by consulting and coaching for organizational change. Components of our process include the following:

**1) Phase I Workshop: Foundational Training in Historical and Institutional Racism**

*Workshop philosophy and focus.* Even those who are concerned about racial disparities in all American systems and institutions are challenged in their understanding of how racism remains alive and well, advantaging some while harming others. REI's two-day Phase I training is designed to develop the capacity of participants to understand racism in its institutional and structural forms. Moving the focus from individual bigotry and bias, the Racial Equity Institute's Phase I workshop presents an historical, cultural, structural and institutional analysis of racism. With a clear understanding of how institutions, systems, and culture are producing unjust and inequitable outcomes, participants are better equipped to work for change. Phase I builds the capacity of participants to identify the root causes of disparity and establish goals and strategies based on that deeper understanding. Participants develop an analysis of institutional racism that helps their organization develop a common understanding of the problem and a common language to address it. This paradigm-shifting experience redefines issues of equity as they manifest in systems and institutions today and the attendant actions of individuals who seek to address them.

*Workshop logistics.* This workshop comprises two full days of training and is led by a<sup>4</sup> multiracial training team. Ideally, the workshop would have no more than 40 participants. The training includes presentation, discussion, interactive exercises, and a documentary video on Day 2. We prefer a flip chart that allows us to post key concepts where they can be viewed throughout the two days. The workshop requires a room where chairs can be circled around the flipchart. We also require a projector for the video on Day 2.



## **2) Phase II Workshop: Moving From Analysis to Action**

*Workshop philosophy and focus.* The Phase II workshop is appropriate for individuals or organizations that have mastered the Phase I root cause analysis of systemic racism. These individuals are able to describe how each component of the Phase I workshop relates to how they, and the institutions they are a part of, are creating or perpetuating racial inequities, often without any intent to do so. Participants are required to have attended multiple Phase I workshops (offered to alumni at no additional cost) before registering for Phase II.

The Phase II two-day workshop helps participants and organizations learn to better diagnose equity issues and respond in ways that address power and the history of disempowerment in poor communities and communities of color. It moves participants from processes that “fix” individuals to processes to “fix” systems and institutions.

This workshop builds on the foundations of the Phase I Workshop to continue challenging our socialization about race and racism. Phase II engages participants in an “analysis before action” model and a learning continuum, moving from an individual to an institutional or systemic paradigm in addressing racism. Participants learn how to discern the locus of institutional power and how to return power to those who are being served.

*Workshop logistics.* The logistics of this workshop are similar to Phase I. An LCD projector is required both days for videos and some short PowerPoint presentations.

## **3) Phase III: Taking Action and Gaining Understanding**

*Phase III philosophy and focus.* Phase III work is where an institution, organization, or network puts the analysis and tools from Phase I and Phase II into practice. In Phase III, REI works shoulder-to-shoulder with clients to develop a concrete plan for deeper analysis and change, including specific goals and action plans to reach them. We support organizations in ongoing reflection to deepen understanding of Phase I and Phase II concepts, evaluate progress, document lessons, and adjust go-forward strategy accordingly. We incorporate additional training and research as needed given unique challenges and opportunities, and pay specific attention to identifying and questioning the utility of white organizational culture that may be dominating transactions, policy and practice. Phase III is about that trial, error, and learning that is grounded in analysis. As the Chinese philosopher, Confucius, famously wrote, “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”



*Phase III logistics.* Throughout Phase III, REI will work primarily with an ‘Equity Team’ or ‘Steering Committee,’ which should start as a strategically assembled core, and which will likely grow and change over time, according to the needs and opportunities of the work. In assembling the Equity Team, we should take care to build a team that is open to a movement-building approach, willing to undergo personal transformation through the process, and positioned with authority and responsibility to access information and exert influence needed to cause change in the organization. Team members must be resourced appropriately so they are able to spend time on preparation for and implementation of the equity work, and may include organizational staff, constituents and/or partners.

Phase III typically begins with a one-day ‘kick-off’ workshop for the organization’s Equity Team. The kick-off workshop serves A) to determine the mission, vision, and strategy for the team, B) to provide a review of key concepts from Phases I and II, and C) to build cohesion of the team.

Following the kick-off, REI will gather regularly (cadence adjusted given the needs of the organizing) with the Equity Team for half-day or full-day work-sessions. Between work-sessions, REI and Equity Team members will schedule additional meetings and calls as needed to complete agreed upon activities and deliverables. Regular sessions should continue for anywhere from one to three years, and provide a backbone structure for a larger set of organizing initiatives related to equity. Additional or extended work sessions can be added as needed. At least every six months, REI and client leadership will review the terms and effectiveness of the partnership to determine if work should cease, continue as is, or be adjusted in format or content.

In addition to the three phases of work described above, REI has workshop modules and expert partners that focus on special populations. Additional modules include:

### **Understanding Racial Inequity: A Groundwater Approach**

In this lively and participatory presentation, REI organizers use stories and data to present a perspective that racism is fundamentally structural in nature. By examining characteristics of modern-day racial inequity, the presentation introduces participants to an analysis that most find immediately helpful and relevant. A typical Groundwater Presentation is a 3-hour introduction to Racial Equity, and we can adjust to accommodate a shorter time slot or to dive deeper if you are able to allocate up to a full day. The Groundwater Presentation dovetails with REI’s Phase I workshop, is recommended as an introduction or follow-up to a full two-day workshop, and may be tailored to focus on a particular content area as needed for a particular client.



### **Implicit Bias and Its Role in Systemic and Institutional Racism**

Institutions and organizations across the United States are challenged by inadequate progress in achieving diversity and equitable racial outcomes. This training program examines how our socialization impacts our thinking and actions often without our explicit knowledge and intent.. Specifically, participants learn how our unconscious associations work to ensure cycles of disadvantage as well as advantage based on race. The training assists participants in asking the questions necessary to bring unconscious thinking into the conscious mind where it can be scrutinized and challenged. We discuss the development of practices and tools that can aid in checking and reducing implicit bias and its harmful impacts. Implicit bias training can be condensed to a half-day presentation or up to a two-day workshop with interactive exercises and practice.

### **Latino Challenges in the Struggle Toward Racial Justice**

The Latino Challenges in the Struggle Toward Racial Equity workshop is a two-day workshop for people who work with and in Latino communities. It is designed to engage participants in a critical analysis of racism and the negative impact it has on the local community and specifically Latino communities across the US. Most importantly, this workshop seeks to bring together Latinos and Latinas with other People of Color and whites to work to eliminate racial disparities in our institutions, generate positive outcomes in our communities and create racial equity throughout our society. In this workshop, we examine race and racism, and explore the relationship between institutional racism, cultural racism, classism and other forms of oppression. We look through history at how people of Latin American origin have been racialized and how they “have come” to the United States. We examine how our educational, healthcare and other systems disproportionately impact Latinos and Latinas today. Additionally, we take a close look at the current process in the US to, once again, redefine racial categories and the devastating effects this process will have on Latinos and on this country’s long-term efforts toward racial equity if not interrupted now. The workshop is led by trainer Dr. Raúl Quiñones-Rosado with María I. Reinat-Pumarejo of Colectivo Ilé . Both are Latino community educators and antiracism organizers for over 25 years.

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### **Racial Equity Leadership Institute for Youth**

The Racial Equity Institute provides a two-day Racial Equity Leadership Institute for Youth for high school students to raise awareness of the role of young people in a movement for systems transformation and social justice. This workshop parallels the Phase I workshop but includes more videos and interactive exercises designed to educate about how racialized history,



institutions and bias impact contemporary culture and experience and, most importantly, how young people can organize to create an equitable world.

### **Debriefs**

Debrief sessions can be arranged for groups to further process content from workshops to support participants in digesting and internalizing the new frameworks for understanding. The willingness and ability of organizational leaders (at all levels) to digest and internalize the learnings from the workshops is critical for deeper institutional change.

### **Consulting/Coaching**

REI staff are available to support organizations in an ongoing racial equity process that fits the organization's equity goals and specific needs for consultation and/or coaching. This phase occurs after initial training (specifically Phase I) or includes Phase I training, because our consultation is grounded in the racial equity analysis that we teach in our our trainings. Consultation contracts are customized according to client need and resources as well as REI's conceptual framework for organizational analysis and a movement approach to change. During consultation organizations are supported in ongoing reflection designed to both evaluate the group's progress and document lessons learned as the organization moves through the process. The consultation process is designed to support organization leaders and "equity team" members (as well as any others in the organization who want to participate) to construct a plan to help dismantle racism in the organization and in the organization's programs, and manage the implementation of that plan.

### **Key Personnel**

**Deena Hayes-Greene, Suzanne Plihcik, Bayard Love, and Raul Quinones-Rosado** serve as the core trainers and advisors for special projects. They have been training together for over nine years, are considered among the best in the business, and are in demand for racial equity training all over the United States. In 2007, Deena and Suzanne launched the Racial Equity Institute that builds on traditions of anti-racist organizing while adding content and framing that increases applicability for institutional and community groups, as well as phased follow-up work that guides institutions and organizations in establishing a racial equity praxis.

**Deena Hayes-Greene** is the founder and Managing Director of the Racial Equity Institute. With her long-time partner, Suzanne Plihcik, she serves as the senior trainer and consultant for REI. Deena has worked for more than 15 years as a racial equity consultant, trainer, and community/institutional organizer whose work focuses on the impacts of race and racism on



systems, institutions, organizations and individuals. In her training and consulting she brings an examination of the impact of race on systemic outcomes to include the broader environmental and social determinants of well-being and opportunity. She also brings a power analysis that guides institutions and organizations in a change process designed to dismantle racism. She has presented keynote speeches, workshops, and seminars across the nation to organizations interested in addressing and eliminating racial and ethnic inequities.

Deena is a former Human Relations Commissioner for the City of Greensboro. She has been elected to the Guilford County Board of Education for four terms and has served since 2002. As a school board member her advocacy has challenged the district to investigate the structural causes of the disparate outcomes of African American and other students of color. She also chairs the Achievement Gap Committee, the Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Advisory Committee and the School Safety/Gang Education Committee. As chair of the HUB Advisory Committee, she has illuminated the disparities in school construction and goods and services data and initiated efforts to examine institutional practices and systemic barriers.

Deena also serves on the board of the International Civil Rights Center & Museum, The Guilford Gang Commission, and the Ole Asheboro Street Neighborhood Association. As part of her engagement in local community organizing, she is a member of the Guilford Anti-Racist Alliance and a leader of the People of Color Caucus.

In September 2013 Deena was honored at the Minority Enterprise Development Conference with the Diversity Advocate of the Year award.

**Suzanne Plihcik** is the Associate Director of the Racial Equity Institute and with Ms. Hayes-Greene a senior trainer, consultant and organizer. She works locally and across the nation with communities and organizations that aim to strengthen grassroots and institutional relationships through an increased understanding of systemic racism. Suzanne has been an anti-racism trainer and organizer for over 20 years, serving as a core trainer with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, ChangeWorks and dRWorks.

She was executive director of the National Alliance for Non-Violent Programming, a coalition of national organizations seeking to reduce violence in entertainment through media-literacy. Her community experience includes extensive work organizing for changes in public schools and city government, as well as service on the Commission on the Needs of Children. She is a founding



member of the Greensboro Public School Fund, rewarding innovation in Aing and Dance on Tour, a professional dance experience for children in poor communities.

Suzanne has served on the national boards of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the National Assembly of Health and Human Service Organizations and the Association of Junior Leagues International, where she served as President. Locally, she has served as a member of many boards of directors, including the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro, the Greensboro Children's Museum, the Greensboro Community Initiative, the YWCA, the Greensboro Civic Entrepreneur Initiative, and Uplift, Inc. As part of her engagement in local anti-racism community organizing, Suzanne is a member of the Guilford Anti-Racism Alliance and the White Caucus.

Suzanne is a past recipient of the Kathleen Price Bryan Award for community service, the YWCA Women of Color Committee Community Service Award, and was the Greensboro Woman of the Year in 1994. She is the co-recipient of the Nancy Susan Reynolds Award for race relations given by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

**Raúl Quiñones-Rosado** is an organizer and senior trainer with REI. He has developed and conducted numerous Latino empowerment, leadership development and organizational transformation efforts with low-income community members, college students and educators, government workers and administrators, as well as in corporate settings. For close to twenty-five years, Raúl has designed and organized anti-oppression strategies, and provided Latino leadership development opportunities in the US and in Puerto Rico. During this time, he has been part of a large network of anti-oppression educators and organizers in struggles against racism, sexism, colonialism, militarism and other forms of oppression. A social psychologist, he is author of *Consciousness-in-Action: Toward an Integral Psychology of Liberation & Transformation*. Raúl is founder of c-Integral through which he teaches the consciousness-in-action approach. He established the Institute for Latino Empowerment (ILE) in Northampton, MA, and was a founding member of Ilé: Organizers for Consciousness-in-Action in Puerto Rico. As someone deeply committed to social justice, racial equity and cultural transformation, Raúl is also a part of liberation spirituality, transpersonal psychology and integral development movements, seeking to create greater awareness and effective praxis that integrates self-development and contemplative practice with social, economic, political and cultural transformation.



**Bayard Love** is an organizer, trainer and projects manager with REI. He holds a BA in Latin American Studies from Wesleyan University, an MBA from the University of North Carolina, and a Master's in Public Policy from Duke University.

Bay spent the first part of his career founding and building a health clinic in post-Katrina New Orleans, where he was part of a 3-person leadership team and involved in a number of rebuilding and community development initiatives. He left New Orleans to complete his graduate studies in North Carolina and then began the second stage of his career as a consultant at a premier corporate strategy firm from 2014 – 2015. Bay moved to Greensboro, NC to invest more fully in racial equity work and to serve as COO / Director of Development at the International Civil Rights Center & Museum, where he worked closely with the CEO and board until February of 2016, when he transitioned to more full-time work with the Racial Equity Institute.

Since 2006, Bay has provided training and consulting services to organizations working to incorporate racial equity principles. He has worked in over 12 states and 2 countries. He served as treasurer for the board of the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center, has had his research published in local and national media, and co-authored work on racial inequity in policing that will be published in a leading political science journal this year.

**Craig S. “Pete” Davis** is a 27-year veteran of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD). He retired from the department in May 2014 at the rank of captain and is currently working part-time as the Equity Liaison Captain in the Community Engagement Bureau. Pete serves on the Race Matters for Juvenile Justice (RMJJ) leadership team in Mecklenburg County. RMJJ is a collaborative leadership group which brings together community stakeholders who partner with the Juvenile Court's effort to reduce disproportionality and disparities.

Pete attended his first REI workshop in 2011 in Greensboro with RMJJ members. The workshop profoundly affected him. As a result, Pete encouraged the police chief to attend the workshop along with his command staff. He became the CMPD's liaison with RMJJ and REI which entailed coordinating workshop registrations of CMPD personnel. Pete attended portions of over 20 workshops prior to retiring, and his involvement afforded him the opportunity to obtain<sup>11</sup> a good understanding of the analysis.

Pete joined REI in June 2015. He holds a Bachelors of Science degree in Criminal Justice from Pfeiffer University, and Master's degrees in Public Administration from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and Theological Studies from Liberty University.



**Matthew Bell** is an organizer and trainer with REI. He is a resident of Greensboro, NC and began attending and coordinating racial equity trainings as a middle school student. Over the past few years he has worked with other younger anti-racist advocates to raise awareness of the role of young people in a movement for systems transformation and social justice. His experience working and volunteering locally gave Matthew experience in challenging young adults to examine how racism impacts their lives, personally and systemically. Matt joined REI in 2012 as a trainer and is helping to coordinate youth organizing efforts that can empower young adults to create lasting change through racial equity and collective redress. He is a graduate of Fayetteville State University and attended the Young Adult Leadership Training through the Children's Defense Fund.

**Amy Burtaine** an organizer and trainer recently moved to Seattle, Washington. Amy is trained as a social justice educator, specializing in theatre for social change. She has worked nationally and internationally in theatre and education for over 20 years, including training with Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed in Brazil. She recently completed work as the director of Interactive Theatre Carolina at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – a program which uses theatre to address health, wellness, and social justice issues. She received an MFA in Theatre from the University of Texas at Austin. Amy believes that the arts can help us envision a world that is socially just, equitable, and free of oppression. Amy was recognized with the 2015 UNC Staff Diversity Award, which recognizes significant contribution to the enhancement, support and/or furtherance of diversity on the campus and in the community.

**Wanda Hunter** has worked as a core organizer with REI since 2011. She is also a trainer and a community organizer in her home town of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Before coming to REI, Wanda had a 30-year career at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she was on the faculty of the Department of Social Medicine and the Deputy Director of the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. Her research focused on family violence, vulnerable communities, and bringing community-based approaches to research. Wanda has a long history of volunteering in the community and has been awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine for service to the State of North Carolina and the Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP President's Award<sup>12</sup> for Community Service.

**Megan Hayes-Bell** is an organizer and contracts administrator with REI. Formally trained as a health equity researcher, she has interned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA and currently holds a research position at the Institute for Global Health and



Infectious Diseases at UNC. Megan brings over 10 year of experience working with youth, young adults and community leaders around racial justice issues. She is one of the youngest<sup>13</sup> members on the NC Governor's Crime Commission on Disproportionate Minority Contact, which examines the impact of race and juvenile contact with the criminal justice system. Megan is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



