Equity Framework

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Building an Equitable Economy

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Building an Equitable Economy

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A Letter from the Executive Director

I am pleased to introduce Prosper Portland's Equity Framework, a guiding document designed to be an evolving, usable resource for the organization's collective efforts to achieve its equity objectives.

Advancing racial equity is essential work for each of us. Prosper Portland must continue to transform how we engage, how we partner, how we invest, and how we change our internal culture to ensure we are creating equitable opportunities and impacts through our efforts.

Prosper Portland's **Story and Equity Journey** outlines the organization's strategic priorities, our past and our equity journey. It underscores the reasons racial equity must be at the center of our work. **Concepts and Definitions** defines key concepts and terms to ensure we are using common language. The **Equity Model for Change** articulates how our efforts and engagement position us to achieve our goals.

Prosper Portland's **Cultural Agreements** emerged through all-staff learning sessions centered in racial equity. These agreements are intended to disrupt dominant cultural norms and change how staff members approach each other as colleagues.

Meeting Agreements provides a tool to put anti-racist norms into practice with a set of meeting ground rules and engagement protocols. The use of these tools is not to "call people out" but instead to "call people back in" to agreement.

The Framework prompts critical questions and important conversations; I encourage all of us to listen, read, reflect and have honest discussions about this work.

The Prosper Portland team is working hard to put people first, to be accountable to delivering on our equity objectives, and to changing our culture. Thank you for engaging with the Equity Framework. Here's to creating a more inclusive and equitable culture at Prosper Portland and in our city.

Kimberly Branam
Executive Director

Prosper Portland's Story& Equity Journey

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, Prosper Portland has closely considered its role in the city's successes and failures and embarked on a new path toward shared and equitable prosperity. Its current approach demands that it acknowledges its past, both positive and negative, and uses it to inform the organization's future direction.

During this time, Prosper Portland has expanded the scope and reach of its racial equity work through:

- the **Business & Workforce Equity Policy** (adopted 2007) to ensure construction and contracting investments provide equitable opportunities for contractors and workers, particularly those who are people of color;
- the **Economic Development Strategy** (2009) which focused resources on job growth, neighborhood business vitality, and urban innovation;
- the **Neighborhood Economic Development Strategy** (2011) which instigated the application of a racial equity lens in developing plans, programs, and projects to promote neighborhood vitality and business success;
- the **Equity Policy** (2013, updated 2017 and 2019), which calls for all projects, initiatives and investments to generate equitable outcomes and establishes a multicultural, anti-racist institutional framework for the organization;
- the **2015-2020 Strategic Plan**, which sets an intentional focus on sharing the gains from physical and economic growth to address disparities and ensure equitable benefits and solidifies Prosper Portland's commitment to becoming a multicultural, anti-racist institution;
- a **journey of internal culture changes** to enhance the staff's abilities to further racial equity and be culturally responsive to the communities they serve, which includes adopting Cultural Agreements in 2019.

Prosper Portland's mission, vision and values are centered in racial equity and serve as the foundation for the Equity Framework, guiding the organization's implementation of the Strategic Plan and aligning its equity efforts to deliver on the goal of building an inclusive economy.

MISSION

To create economic growth and opportunity for Portland.

VISION

Portland is one of the most globally competitive, equitable,and healthy cities in the world.

Prosper Portland stimulates job creation, encourages broad economic prosperity, and fosters great places on behalf of the City of Portland.

We are a workplace of choice with passionate staff excelling in an open and empowering environment and sharing a commitment to our collective success.

VALUES

Love Portland
Portland is a great place with great communities that inspire everything we do.

Make a Difference
We get things done and strive to have a marked impact on the lives of all people in Portland.

Do Excellent Work
We bring a high level of knowledge, professionalism, and passion, and always aspire to improve.

Build Partnerships
We are most effective when we work together and hand-in-hand with our public, private, and community partners.

Advance Equity
We recognize historic inequities and work tirelessly for a more equitable Portland and agency.

Honor the Public Trust
We seek financial sustainability and, as stewards of public resources, act for the good of the city with integrity and ethics.

Innovate
We are all entrepreneurs. Creativity, agility, and ingenuity elevate our work.

EQUITY STATEMENT

We acknowledge our past as we move forward to create economic opportunity and prosperity for all communities.

We make racial equity the foundation of our community and economic development work.

We hold ourselves accountable to Portland's communities of color and others our work has negatively impacted.

While racial equity is the primary lens to focus our efforts, we understand the connection between racism and other forms of bias that lead to oppression.

Within our workplace and working with our partners, we embrace values of authentic inclusion, transparency, and collaboration.

We work toward nothing less than an anti-racist Portland that welcomes and serves all communities and perspectives.

We encourage our partners to do the same.

HISTORY

Since its inception, Prosper Portland has played a critical role, through its projects and programs, in the city's coveted reputation for smart urban development and quality of life. Investments in nationally recognized, partnership-driven projects like the Pearl District, Eastbank Esplanade, Pioneer Courthouse Square and the Lan Su Garden put Portland on the urban planning map and drew talent and attention to the city.

However, Prosper Portland's projects and investments also caused harm with impacts that reverberate today. Some of the organization's historic development work deemed thriving communities of color "blighted," and vibrant, diverse neighborhoods like South Auditorium and Albina disappeared in the name of progress.

As a learning organization, it is critical for the organization's staff to understand Prosper Portland's past as they engage in the present and co-create its future.

City of Portland voters created the Development and Civic Promotion Department in 1958 to help Portland take advantage of the powerful economic tools allowed by urban renewal authority. Its charter called for it to be administered by a Portland Development Commission as the city's urban renewal and redevelopment agency. The commission's charge was "to address economic disinvestment in communities by providing targeted funds for infrastructure, public spaces, and the renovation or construction of buildings to meet the economic, housing, and social needs of the community, and to sustain or increase the base of property values."

Over the last 60 years, Prosper Portland has managed 25 tax increment finance (TIF) districts and/or programs, including six micro TIF districts, and provided funding for hundreds of projects across the city. The process to create the

redevelopment areas, the economic impact, and the gains from the investments varied widely in inclusiveness – and outcomes have ranged from great triumphs to neighborhood destruction.

According to the 2005 *Brief History of Urban Renewal in Portland*, Oregon by Craig Wollner, John Provo, and Julie Schablisky, "The history of urban renewal in Portland is distinguished by three phases of development. The first period ran roughly from 1958 to the late sixties. It was an era of grand projects, projects that were often undertaken with an urgency suggesting the crises of larger, more racially divided cities. The second lasted from the late sixties to the end of the 1980s and focused urban renewal efforts on the preservation of Portland's neighborhoods and a vital downtown. The third and current phase, which began in the late '80s and early '90s, is characterized by its entrepreneurial spirit, its insistence on citizen involvement, and its adherence to the values of evolving what might be called 'post-modern urban planning theory.'"[1]

"The history should be used as a foundation for doing better at doing good. The space in between what we say and what we do is incredibly important. We can't change yesterday but we can be very intentional in making sure we don't repeat things that have been hurtful and damaging and challenging."

– Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capuia, Prosper Portland board member

Embedded in that history are the discriminatory practices that destabilized communities of color and people who were not land owners – especially in the first two phases from 1958 through the 1980s, exemplified by the Albina neighborhood. Prompted by the 1954 voter approval

1 https://prosperportland.us/50years

of financing for the Memorial Coliseum and its subsequent construction, more than 450 homes and businesses disappeared from the neighborhood. Federal approval of highway construction funds building the Interstate 5 freeway directly through Albina led to the further destruction of more than 1,000 homes. At the time, four out of five people in the Albina community were African American, many of them former Vanport residents driven to the area after the historic Vanport flood of 1948. The African American community was thriving with Black-owned businesses and a rich fabric of culture, activity, and connection. Redlining policies still in effect gave the displaced families no nearby options.

By 1973 Emanuel Hospital's campus expansion development plan and a Portland Development Commission report recommending land clearance to make way for the project drove out another 400 homes and businesses. By the 1980s, after years of systematic disinvestment and neglect, most neighborhoods in North and Northeast Portland were in bad shape. Homes and businesses located close to the city center coupled with a low-income population made the conditions ripe for gentrification.

"Equity work is difficult and slow. We must have the strength to keep going and the wisdom to be mindful, slow down, and give it the respect it deserves."

- Rana Uzzaman, Portland Youth Builders CERE Co-Chair

Despite the creation of the Albina Plan and the subsequent adoption of the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area to target city investment toward affordable housing and commercial revitalization, many residents, particularly the African American community, did not equitably benefit from the changes taking place.

Faced with mistrust and accusations of exclusion and dishonesty, Prosper Portland leadership recognized the need for change and started to review its approach to policies related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In 2007 Prosper Portland adopted the Business & Workforce Equity Policy to ensure construction and contracting investments provided equitable opportunities for contractors and workers, particularly those who are people of color.

In 2009, faced with the worst economic downturn in 60 years, the Prosper Portland board and City Council adopted the Five-Year Economic Development Strategy, noting that continued emphasis on investments in transit, infrastructure, housing, and social service at the expense of economic development would not grow the local economy, and that achieving prosperity for all residents would require explicit investments in retaining and growing businesses, training workers, funding innovation, and developing catalytic projects to realize such benefits.

In 2011, the Prosper Portland board and City Council adopted the Neighborhood Economic Development (NED) Strategy and began to ask explicitly, "who benefits from our work?" The use of an equity lens became an essential tool in developing plans, programs, and projects to promote neighborhood vitality and business success. The NED Strategy also incorporated a different approach to partnership, employing the community-led, community-driven model demonstrated by the formation of the Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative districts.

In 2013, the Prosper Portland board approved a new Equity Policy, which called for an increase in racially equitable outcomes and the use of an equity lens for every project. This led to formation of the internal Equity Council and work

with CrossRoads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training, focusing on institutional racism and how Prosper Portland could work toward racial justice as an organization.

By 2014, the fifth and final year of the Economic Development Strategy, Multnomah County employment had grown by 15,000 jobs, Portland's recession recovery was ranked 17 among 100 largest U.S. metropolitan areas and Prosper Portland had made significant gains in supporting small business, building community capacity, and prioritizing racial equity.

But while Portland continued to compete and thrive in the global economy, the city faced serious challenges that undermined the ability of many Portlanders, particularly people of color, to participate in the gains from economic growth.

"As part of my role of co-chair for the Council on Economic and Racial Equity for Prosper Portland, it is important for me to focus the conversations on macro-progressions instead of micro-aggressions."

- Cole Reed, greenHAUS gallery + boutique CERE Co-Chair

Among those challenges were insufficient job growth to meet the needs of the city's growing population; the consequences of a long history of explicit institutional racism, including wide disparities in employment, income, and wealth between white communities and communities of color in Multnomah County; and lack of affordability in close-in neighborhoods, resulting in gentrification, displacement, and concentrations of poverty in North, Northeast, and increasingly, East Portland.

Propelled by the growing disparity between those who have benefited from economic growth and the diverse communities

who have not, the Prosper Portland board adopted the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan in May 2015, setting a course for the organization for the next five years. The Strategic Plan represents a new model, where the gains from physical and economic growth are intentionally focused to address growing gaps within the city and to ensure that all communities realize equitable benefits.

The Strategic Plan identifies the following goals and ambitions: to more deeply integrate Prosper Portland's job creation, placemaking, and economic opportunity work to realize benefits for all Portlanders, especially communities of color and those historically underserved, and to do so through a focus on healthy, complete neighborhoods, access to employment, equitable wealth creation, and civic networks, institutions and partnerships.

In support of the Strategic Plan, Prosper Portland initiated the development of an Engagement and Communications Strategy in October 2016 to provide a framework for a new, more consistent way to talk about its work and explain its strategic direction in ways that resonate more clearly with the community.

2017 was a milestone year for Prosper Portland. After extensive community outreach and research, the organization changed its name from the Portland Development Commission to Prosper Portland, to better reflect its need and desire to work differently in the community, and to create more transparency for its constituents about its goals and commitments to create a more equitable city.

Prosper Portland's internal Equity Council, guided by an action plan, developed organization-wide diversity and inclusion trainings and the use of tools and

concepts like the Racial Equity Impact Analysis.

Prosper Portland formed the Council for Economic and Racial Equity (CERE), a group of individuals with unique skills, experience, and expertise in the development and implementation of equitable economic development, to advise and guide the organization in achieving its equity goals.

Since 2017, Prosper Portland has embarked on intensive internal diversity training with the Center for Equity and Inclusion; developed staff-driven cultural agreements; took steps to change hiring practices; updated its equity policy and created a public equity statement. A full-time equity and inclusion program manager joined the staff to shepherd the racial equity framework and support staff in equity-related endeavors. A new Financial Sustainability Plan established a framework to guide Prosper Portland's financial and business practices from 2018 through 2027 in support of its strategic priorities. The Plan's new, multipronged approach anticipates more flexible resources that are better suited to help Portland's diverse businesses and residents thrive.

As staff members sharpen their skills and equity training, and as the community is more frequently at the table providing direct feedback, Prosper Portland is shaping the future of its equity work. Each team has decided on its unique, specific equity initiative to enact in the FY 19/20 Equity Priorities and Strategies plan. Additionally, Prosper Portland has developed a model for change through an equity framework that will ground staff in their approach to equity and their service to the community, particularly communities of color.

Timeline: Our Path Toward Equity

1958

1961
Memorial Coliseum

1958 - 1988
South Auditorium URA
Keller Auditorium, High-rise housing, I-405 freeway

Displaced a predominantly Jewish and Italian American neighborhood, relocating 1,573 residents and 289 businesses.

South Auditorium

1966
PSU URA
Model Cities Program, Park Blocks converted to pedestrian mall

1967
Emanuel Hospital URA
City and the Portland Development Commission condemned land in the early 1970s under urban renewal for an expansion of the hospital campus, displacing 171 families, 74 percent of whom were African American.

Hill Block

1974
Downtown Waterfront URA
Tom McCall Waterfront Park, Pioneer Courthouse Square, Pioneer Place, Mercy Corps, Yards at Union Station, Lan Su Chinese Garden, White Stag/UO, 38 Davis, Society Hotel

1980 - 1996
St. Johns URA
Formed to implement a housing development program; closed in 1996.

1985
South Park Blocks URA
Streetcar, Director Park, Museum Place, Affordable Housing

1989
Oregon Convention Center URA
Convention Center, Eastside Streetcar, Lloyd EcoDistrict, Hassalo on Eighth

Pioneer Place

1986
Central Eastside URA
Eastbank Esplanade, Burnside Bridgehead, RiverEast

1986
Airport Way URA
MAX Red Line, Danner/ Lacrosse HQ, Cascade Station, FBI HQ

Created to increase the amount of industrial land in the Columbia River corridor. $7M in loans from Prosper Portland have leveraged more than $100M in private investment.

1991
N. Macadam URA/ South Waterfront
OHSU, MAX Orange Line, Tilikum Crossing, PSU Accelerator, Central District Housing, Riverplace

Oregon Convention Center

Dawson Park

1998
River District URA / Pearl District
Broadway Corridor, Central City Streetcar, MAX Green Line, Brewery Blocks, Bud Clark Commons, Union Station

Over a 20-year period, Prosper Portland invested more than $100 million in the district, leveraging more than $2 billion in private investment.

2000
Interstate Corridor URA
Killingsworth Station, MAX Yellow Line, Dawson Park, Downtown Kenton/ Vanport, Home Repair Program, June Key Delta House, Daimler HQ

1998
Lents Town Center URA
Zenger Farm, Portland Mercado, Earl Boyles Park, Lents Commons, Portland Youth Builders

2001
Gateway Regional Center URA
Streetscape improvements, Oregon Clinic, Gateway Discovery Park

Portland Mercado

2007
Business & Workforce Equity Policy: Board adopted policy to ensure construction and contracting investments provide equitable opportunities for contractors and workers.

2009
Five-Year Economic Development Strategy focuses on growing businesses, training workers, funding innovation, and developing catalytic projects.

City Council creates Portland Housing Bureau (PHB). PHB receives annual funds from Prosper Portland to increase the supply of affordable housing.

2011
Neighborhood Economic Development (NED) Strategy leads to creation of Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative districts, use of an equity lens, new practices that emphasized diversity, equity and inclusion in encouraging growth and opportunity for a broader swath of the community.

2013-15
Equity Policy and Equity Council call for an increase in equitable outcomes in all external and internal Prosper Portland work and initiatives to become an anti-racist organization.

2015
City Council and Prosper Portland Board adopt 2015-2020 Strategic Plan focused on building an equitable economy.

Equity Council

2017
Agency becomes Prosper Portland, reflecting new practices and priorities.

Equity Council develops agency-wide diversity and inclusion trainings

Council for Economic and Racial Equity (CERE) is formed to advise and guide the agency in achieving its equity goals

2018- present
Intensive agency-wide equity and inclusion training

Developed staff-driven Cultural Agreements

Updated Equity Policy

Created Public Equity Statement

Hired a full-time Equity & Inclusion Manager

Created a Financial Stability Plan

Created Equity Priorities and Strategies

Created an Equity Framework

IN THE WORKS:

Update Community Engagement Guidelines

New loan products and access to capital with an equity lens

Tools for culture change for businesses

TODAY

Concepts & Definitions

What is Racism?

In order to understand racism, it is first important to understand that race is a social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, and racial classification to suit the social and economic interests of the dominant group at that time. The U.S. census provides information on how racial designations have changed over time, with white, the socially dominant group, staying constant throughout.

Racism thus refers to a system that provides privileges to those who are in the dominant group over those in the non-dominant group based on race. These privileges result in increased power and are reinforced through racial prejudice.

Racism can therefore be thought of in the following formula[1]:

Racial Power:
The ability to get what you want done, including influence over others and the ability to define and alter the reality for yourself and others, based on race.

+

Racial Privilege:
The unearned set of assets, advantages, and benefits that white people inherit based on their membership in society's dominant group. Generally, those who experience such privilege do so without being aware of it.

+

Racial Prejudice:
An unjustifiable attitude or behavior (whether conscious or unconscious) of an individual or group toward another group and its members, based on race.

1 Western States Center

There are different forms of racism:

1. **Internalized Racial Superiority (IRS).** A complex multi-generational socialization process that teaches white people to believe, accept, and/or live out superior societal definitions of self and to fit into and live out superior societal roles. These behaviors define and normalize the race construct and its outcome: **white supremacy**.

2. **Internalized Racial Oppression (IRO).** A multigenerational socialization process in which people of color believe, accept, and live out negative societal definitions of self, including one's standing in society and one's comparative value. These behaviors support and help maintain the racist construct.

3. **Interpersonal racism.** When we bring our private beliefs on race into our interactions with others, racism becomes interpersonal, whether intended (e.g., racial violence and hate speech) or not (e.g., microaggressions).

4. **Institutional racism.** The collective failure of an organization to effectively serve people because of their race, culture, or ethnic origin through its policies, programs, and services.

5. **Structural Racism.** The interaction of multiple institutions working together to effectively maintain the system of racism.

6. **Systemic racism.** The foundation of individual and institutional racism; refers to a value system that is embedded in a society that creates and perpetuates **discrimination**.

What is Anti-racism?[1]

Antiracism is the identification and elimination of racism by changing oppressive systems, structures, policies, practices, and attitudes so that historic and future harm can be eliminated for people of color. Prosper Portland strives to become an Antiracist Organization.

An Antiracist Organization is an organization that:

1. Has restructured all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of people of color, including their worldview and culture; and the full participation of white people as allies in eliminating racism;

2. Has the ability to diagnose and address different types of racism within the organization in a manner that builds strength, community, and trust;

3. Implements structures, policies, and practices with inclusive decision-making and other forms of power-sharing throughout the institution;

4. Commits to the struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community;

5. Builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities.

What is Equity?

The City of Portland defines equity in the following way:

"Equity is when everyone has access to the opportunity necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential. We have a shared fate as individuals within a community, and communities within a society. All communities need the ability to shape their own present and future. Equity is both the means to healthy communities and an end that benefits us all."[2]

1 Crossroads Antiracism
2 http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/

Advancing **equity** at Prosper Portland means the following:

1. Because opportunities currently do not exist for everyone, equity is a restorative measure of redistributing benefits and burdens.

2. Because as individuals we operate within systems that create inequities, equity requires both individual and systems-level change.

3. Because "business as usual" will not change by itself, equity requires transforming the culture that produces different outcomes of the organization.

Equity and equality are not the same thing. Equality is treating everyone the same, while equity is ensuring everyone has what they need to be successful. While equality aims to promote fairness, it can only work if everyone is similar (starts from the same place) and has the same needs and goals.

Why does equity lead with race in Portland?

- Race is consistently the indicator of greatest disparity in our city

- Race may be ignored as a factor if not intentionally addressed

- Our economy is built on a racist past (slavery, Native American genocide, and racial exclusion)

The term "leading with race" does not mean "only race." It is a practice of starting with a racial equity analysis, inclusive of analysis of other marginalized groups, in order to understand how race dynamics impact outcomes.

Targeted Universalism[3] is an analysis that alters the usual approach of universal strategies (policies that make no distinctions among people's status, such as universal health care) to achieve universal goals (improved health), and instead suggests we use targeted strategies to reach universal goals.

How do Diversity and Inclusion relate to Equity?

The practices to achieve **diversity** and **inclusion** within organizations are positive signs of cultural and systems change but require continuous evaluation to understand if they are helping to advance real institutional and systemic change to advance equitable outcomes.

Terms to know:

1. **Diversity.** The collection of differences within a group. Diversity includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender, but also age, national origin, religion, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, education, and language. Diversity also encompasses cultural values, ideas, and perspectives.

2. **Inclusion.** The authentic engagement of underserved or traditionally excluded groups into activities and policy/decision-making. Inclusion can also mean creating an environment where all can show up as their authentic selves.

3. **Intersectionality.** The idea that various biological, social, and cultural categories – including race, gender, class, and ethnicity – compound and overlap with each other to create a truly unique experience for those multiple identities. These experiences are inseparable and contribute to systemic social injustice.

3 https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/targeteduniversalism

4. **Microaggression.** A comment or action that subtly expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group, including people of color, whether intentional or not.[4]

5. **Discrimination.** The unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on their race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion, etc. Non-discrimination policies are set by federal law, which all government agencies are bound to.[5]

6. **Affinity Group**. A group of people with common identities, interests, background, and experience that come together to support each other.

7. **Whiteness OR Dominant Culture.** A term to capture all dynamics that go into being defined and/or perceived as white in society. The unspoken values of whiteness / dominant culture can dictate concepts of success and worth in American society. These values include obsession with the written word, perfectionism, rigid concepts of time, competition, either/or thinking, individualism, and materialism. Whiteness grants material and psychological advantages (see white privilege) that are often invisible and taken for granted by people who are white.

4 List of sample microaggressions: https://sph.umn.edu/site/docs/hewg/microaggressions.pdf
5 https://www.justice.gov/crt/fcs/TitleVI-Overview

How do we refer to groups of people we serve?

1. **Person/People of Color (PoC).** A person, or people, who experience systemic forms of oppression or discrimination based on their race and/or ethnic heritage and do not identify as white.[6] The term generally includes people who identify as Asian, African American, African, Latino[7], Native American, and Pacific Islander.

2. **Black, Indigenous and all People of Color (BIPOC):** PoC is a movement-building term to align the struggles and resiliency of all people of color. However, it doesn't get at the specific and unique struggles that different communities of color face based on their race. BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and all People of Color. It is a term to make visible the unique and specific experiences of racism and resilience that the Black/African Diaspora and Indigenous communities have faced in the structure of race within the United States. BIPOC is a term that both honors all people of color and creates opportunity to lift up the voices particularly of those communities.[8]

3. **English Language Learners (ELL).** Refers to people whose first language is not English and may need translation/interpretation assistance.[9]

6 Adapted from the Office of Equity and Human Rights Glossary of terms: https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/581458
7 The use of Latino here is consistent with the Coalition of Communities of Color definition. https://allhandsraised.org/content/uploads/2012/10/AN20UNSETTLING20PROFILE.pdf
8 Adapted from The BIPOC Project. https://www.thebipocproject.org/
9 City of Portland Civil Rights Title VI Program. https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/521971

4. **Certified Firms.** Refers to minority-owned (MBE), women-owned (WBE), disadvantaged (DBE), and emerging small businesses (ESB) certified by the State of Oregon's Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID).[10]

5. **Underserved.** People and places that historically and currently do not have equitable resources, access to infrastructure, healthy environments, housing choice, etc. Disparities may exist both in services and outcomes.[11]

6. **Underrepresented**. People and communities that historically and currently do not have an equal voice in institutions and policy/decision-making and have not been served equitably by programs and services.[12]

7. **Priority populations:** For housing, a program implementation approach designed to improve access and outcomes and eliminate disparities based on race and ethnicity for those who currently are and have historically been under-served.[13]

8. **Priority Neighborhoods**: Geographic areas that are either: (1) experiencing lagging commercial investment and increased or persistent poverty; or (2) experiencing gentrification pressures.

As a general practice, Prosper Portland aims to be as specific as possible when referring to different groups of people in order to be more specific in its equity analysis.

10 https://www.oregon4biz.com/How-We-Can-Help/COBID/
11 City of Portland Comprehensive Plan Glossary. https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/579141
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.

Equity Model for Change

Prosper Portland's Equity Model for Change identifies the organization's goals, its work and the alignment and influence of its equity efforts to achieve the goal of building an inclusive economy. It clarifies roles and staff contributions to both internal change and external outcomes.

Prosper Portland strives to create a culture of putting people first, collaboration, inclusion, learning, excellence, and innovation.

In keeping with the organization's mission, vision and values and to ensure that it builds an equitable economy that makes concrete improvement in the lives of people of color and those historically underserved, Prosper Portland is delivering on the five main efforts of its 2020 Strategic Plan:

1. **Growing quality jobs**, by providing Portland companies with access to new markets, technical assistance, and loans so they can grow and hire, by connecting Portlanders with better access to job training and job opportunities and supporting companies in a range of high-growth sectors that create quality jobs.

2. **Advancing opportunities for prosperity,** by supporting property ownership and real estate projects that build wealth in historically underserved neighborhoods and communities of color, and by focusing on growing small and promising businesses, including businesses owned by women and people of color and those in low-income communities.

3. **Collaborating with partners for an equitable city.** Collaborations with community organizations and the private sector is central to Prosper Portland's job creation, place-making and economic opportunity work. Prosper Portland secures the gains from economic growth and development to benefit all communities, including communities of color and those historically underserved.

4. **Creating vibrant neighborhoods and communities** by helping Portland build and increase access to healthy, complete neighborhoods—those with essential goods and services, connected to jobs, with transportation options and access to open spaces— throughout the city. Prosper Portland supports innovative civic solutions that promote mixed-income neighborhoods with both affordable and workforce housing, and that evolve in ways that honor cultural diversity.

5. **Operating as an equitable and effective steward of public resources.** Prosper Portland understands that delivering on its equity-centered 2020 Strategic Plan calls for focus on its staff, the people within the organization working to deliver organizational goals. Staff are an integral part of this work, and the organization needs to create an environment in which cultural contexts are considered, and where staff feels included and acknowledged as valued contributors.

Prosper Portland delivers its work primarily through programs and investments with a focus on inclusive growth and addressing persistent gaps. Staff asks, "who benefits?" The organization leads with race as the primary factor in determining outcomes for the community. Prosper Portland prioritizes its resources accordingly.

Internally, staff are key to carrying out the work. Their commitment to equity receives support from an overall focus on building staff competency on racial equity, increasing staff diversity, and providing clarity through internal governance and shared expectations and accountability. Prosper Portland strives to model a culture of learning where it can reflect on its efforts and strive for continuous improvement.

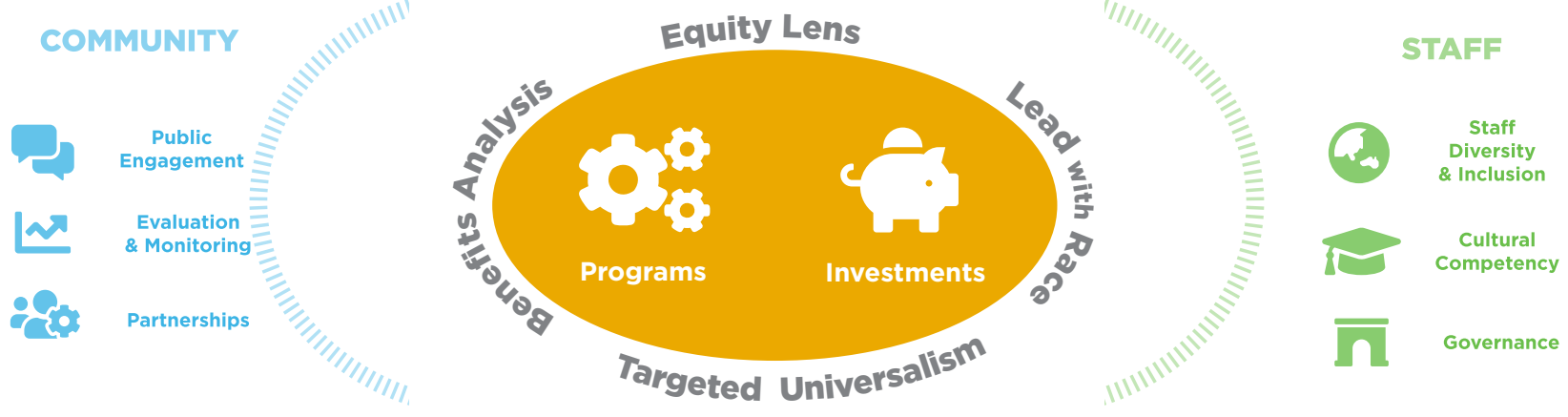
Externally, the organization focuses on increasing its accountability and creating strong collaborations and partnerships with the communities it serves. Prosper Portland seeks to center racial equity in its community engagement practices and to apply evaluation and monitoring mechanisms that provide timely information to improve its efforts.

PROSPER PORTLAND

AN EQUITABLE ECONOMY

NEIGHBORHOODS ○ JOBS ○ PROSPERITY ○ PARTNERSHIP

Our Work



Our Cultural Agreements

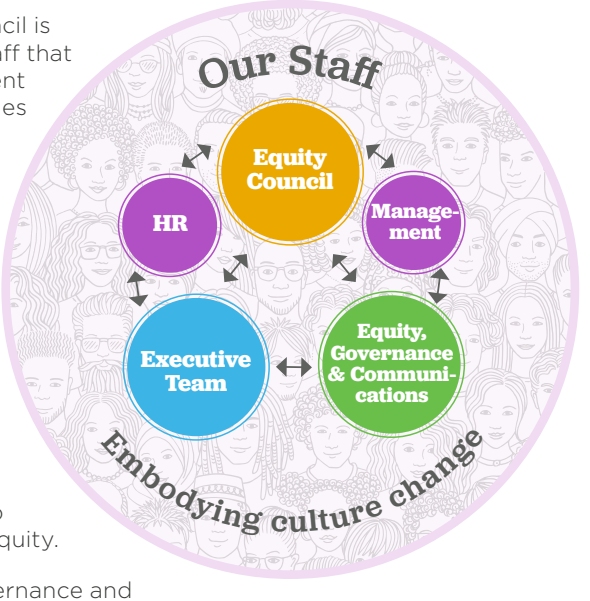
Innovation · Learning · People 1st · Excellence · Collaboration · Inclusion

Internal Equity Roles

Prosper Portland centers its staff in embodying culture change. It recognizes different roles and types of accountability. It creates a shared approach to advance equity in the organization. The following teams support the staff in equity practices:

The Equity Council is composed of staff that represent different departments, roles and functions. It helps advance culture change efforts.

The Executive team is primarily focused on modeling the culture Prosper Portland wants to experience and sharing accountability to advance racial equity.



The Equity, Governance and Communications Department primarily leads internal culture change efforts and provides opportunities to build staff capacity on racial equity.

The Human Resources Department is focused on equitable staff hiring and retention practices.

The Management Team is responsible for providing racial equity-centered support to staff in the implementation of day-to-day operations.

Everyone at Prosper Portland plays a role in dismantling racism. They share responsibility for implementing racial equity practices and strategies that advance the work. Each staff member has the opportunity and responsibility to create their individual equity journey by participating in diversity and inclusion trainings, understanding and using meeting agreements, following cultural agreements, and implementing their own team's equity priorities and strategies.

Cultural Agreements

Cultural Agreements

Given Prosper Portland's commitment to racial equity, it understands that it has to apply a racial justice lens to these cultural agreements. Prosper Portland must dismantle the ways in which dominant culture creates expected behaviors rooted in the exclusion of people of color.

Putting People First

- Compassion, empathy and humility
- Forgiveness and understanding: acknowledge the past and have the ability to move on
- The time and space to be patient
- Presence of laughter and ability to have fun
- Generosity and kindness
- Mutual respect
- Mindfulness
- Relationship-based vs. transaction-based interaction
- Acknowledge personal lives (e.g., families, passions – work/life balance)

Learning

- Continuous improvement
- Sharing knowledge
- Leaving space for mistakes to occur and recognize mistakes as learning opportunities (not punitive)
- Listening to discover and understand (vs. listening to solve problems)
- Post-mortems / lessons learned at key milestones
- Understudying / mentoring (formal and informal)
- Accept the occasional failure and move on

Inclusion

- Being welcome and open to different people, ideas, and world-views
- Thoughtful engagement with each other and the community
- Honor differing perspectives, strengths, and styles
- Understand people have different ways of communicating and processing information
- Intentionally communicate to bring everyone along
- Work intentionally across the power structure to facilitate clarity at all levels of the organization

Collaboration

- Proactive creation of project teams based on clarity of roles and purpose
- Operating as if on the same team
- Transparency in intentions
- Trust staff to act, create, and decide (within job scope)

Excellence

- Be driven by the mission and vision
- Excellence ≠ perfection
- Quality of work over quantity
- Setting realistic expectations
- Grace under pressure
- Transparency around what success looks like
- Recognize employees for advancing values and tenets through their work

Innovation

- Learn from "the best" workplaces and see if/how applicable at Prosper Portland
- Creative problem-solving
- Reward new approaches for doing things

Meeting Agreements

Background

Prosper Portland's culture change work includes an internal focus on empowering staff, particularly staff of color, by improving the ways in which staff connects, communicates and makes decisions.

Much of the organization's work takes place at community events or through team meetings that call for coordination and collective progress. For some, meetings are an invigorating marketplace of ideas and inclusion. But for others, meetings may feel competitive, repetitive and not very empowering.

Some simple methods can facilitate meetings that create deep, positive impact on people's perceptions of the gathering. Often body movement and energy communicate more than the words written on the board or in personal notes.

Overall, how can we center race in our conversations and consider the impact on communities of color?

How can we ensure a space that is less competitive and more inclusionary?

Before the Meeting:

Establish the meeting's purpose and make that transparent to everyone so they can prepare what they would like to say and know where to focus their attention. Try using the **POP** format:

Purpose:
What is the purpose of the meeting?

Outcome:
What do you want to accomplish by the end of the meeting?

Process:
How would you like to go about reaching your outcomes?

Try to schedule meetings of less than an hour when possible (20, 30 or 45 minutes).

Determine who needs to be there. Some folks may start the conversation with others consulted afterward. Consider gathering input outside of a meeting format. For visionary conversations it will be important to invite members of another team or department to get a truly unique take and dismantle silos. ***Take a moment to think of who is not in the room, the voices not represented, and how the decision will impact them.***

Make the meeting accessible regarding location, parking, and timing (do some attendees have kids they need to pick up or drop off?) Check others' calendars before scheduling.

Share the agenda in advance. Especially with a lot of content, give participants ample time to read the documents and process the information. Everyone learns differently; allow enough time for folks to prepare their thoughts.

Prep the meeting: Respect people's time by having everything you need in place.

During the Meeting:

Who's on First? Choose someone to be responsible for conducting the meeting and holding the space. It's not about giving one person all the power, but rather one person ensuring that meeting outcomes and group needs are met. Feel free to rotate facilitators.

Expectations: Communicate the Purpose, Outcome, and Process for the meeting at the start so participants understand and can work toward the collective meeting goals.

Check-Ins: If time allows, use a check-in or icebreaker to get a sense of your colleagues' day or mood. Make sure the questions are inclusive. If you are expecting a deep discussion, ask folks what their internal weather system would be (for example: rainy, sunny, cloudy) to gauge what kind of space people are in before starting the conversation.

Stay Present: Be on time to the meeting and make sure cell phones are put away.

Be clear on decision items, action items and follow up: Don't assume folks are on the same page. Clarify expectations as you wrap up.

Check Out/Appreciations: Use your last 5 minutes to check in with the group and bring the meeting to a satisfactory conclusion. Offering appreciations or observations you had for the group work that was accomplished creates a culture of camaraderie.

Meeting Norms & Culture:

Brave space: Are you creating a space where folks feel brave enough to share their full selves and be heard?

Active and reflective listening: Are you listening just to respond, or are you clearing your mind to really hear and reflect on the points folks are making?

Move up, move back: If you usually dominate air time, give others a chance to think, process, and be heard. If you usually don't participate in the discussion, push yourself to contribute to the overall goal of the meeting.

Be courageous: Particularly around equity, moments will arise when it will take courage to call in an equity approach or ensure there is shared voice in the space. Are you mindful of those who will be impacted, particularly folks of color?

Assume the best: Be sure to operate first from a place that assumes folks are capable and open to collective goals.

Honor confidentiality and trust: Some meetings will be confidential or make people feel vulnerable. Don't contribute to gossip; create an atmosphere where everyone feels safe to be direct and open.

Work collaboratively to bring out the best ideas of the group.

Challenge ourselves in our learning and understanding.

After the Meeting:

Communicate actions, notes and follow-up to attendees and absent colleagues so everyone can track the conversation.

Facilitator Tip Sheet:

Facilitators can take the following steps to foster better meetings:

Reflect – Give back the content and the feeling of what was said; this helps provide focus and gets at the core elements of discussion.

"Let me see if I've heard you correctly..."

Paraphrase – Restate the idea or thought in a different way to make it clear. Paraphrasing can help others understand what a given comment means in the context of the larger situation.

"What I believe you are saying is..."

Summarize – State the main ideas or thoughts concisely to move the conversation forward or to make a link to another idea. (This is often a list of the main points.)

"It sounds to me as if we have been talking about a few major themes..."

Shift focus – Open the discussion wider or encourage a different person to speak.

"Thank you, Devon. Do you have anything to add, Pat?"

"We've been talking about... does anyone have different feelings or opinions about this?"

Use silences – Become comfortable with allowing time and space for reflection by pausing between comments and letting people respond to each other. This can bring out new ideas.

Use non-verbal cues – Use eye contact to encourage or discourage behaviors in the group. Be aware of cultural differences. Raise your eyebrows, smile, or tilt your head.

Pitfalls:

- **Relying on the same or one person to bring all the energy**
- **Interrupting**
- **Straying off topic**
- **Repeating yourself unnecessarily**
- **Not giving enough time for the topic**
- **Not needing the meeting**
- **Creating a space where folks don't feel heard or feel too rushed**

Acknowledgments

This work would not be possible without the cooperation and determination of staff and community leaders who have stood by us in our journey to become an anti-racist organization. In particular, we extend our most sincere appreciation to Prosper Portland staff for participating in the challenging and introspective work of advancing racial equity within ourselves and the organization.

Thank you to our Council for Economic & Racial Equity for their hard work and emotional labor to shape us into a better agency for racial justice and for their support as we strive to always involve community stakeholders in this critical work.

Most importantly, thank you to our Board of Commissioners for their commitment to re-shaping Prosper Portland into a more equitable and inclusive place of work.