

Generate Health Racial Equity Audit

Executive Summary



Generate
Health

Introduction

This report was written by members of Generate Health's Racial Equity Audit Team.

Generate Health has always had a racially diverse staff and board. We have a long history of disaggregating infant mortality data by race and presenting/reporting on the disparity. There has also been an awareness and intention to address racial and socio-economic disparities, but lacking the analysis, knowledge, culture, and courage to take the next step to be bold.



As one effort to bring awareness to the context in which families are living, Generate Health developed the Social Determinants of Health Tour, an experiential learning tour that provides to health care providers and others insight into the historic, social, and economic factors that have shaped parts of the St. Louis region. The goal of the tour is to increase participants' understanding of and sensitivity to the lives and perspectives of patients and families from these communities and others like them in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of care. The tour guide provides information about health, housing, environmental, economic, and educational policies (the social determinants of health) that impact the health of those living in these communities. Racism and racial disparities are discussed as critical elements contributing to health disparities in St. Louis.

After the death of Michael Brown Jr., the Ferguson Commission and Forward through Ferguson's organizing work were very influential on our staff and board in 2015 - 2017 when we began deliberate work to center racial equity - under leadership of Board Chair Rebeccah Bennett.

Generate Health committed in early 2017 to adopt a racial equity lens in its strategic planning process. The Board of Directors embarked on a period of learning about racial equity to inform its planning process. In August 2017, the Board of Directors unanimously adopted a racial equity North Star (Zero Racial Disparities in Infant Mortality and Maternal Health) that reflected the establishment of a deeper commitment.

Board, staff, and community leaders attended a training facilitated by Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training: "Understanding and Analyzing Systemic Racism" in October 2017. This experience prompted the Board of Directors with staff to refine and finalize the organization's new vision, mission, and guiding approach. Throughout 2018, staff and board communicated the mission change with key stakeholders, explored the requirements and

competencies needed to successfully catalyze systems change, evaluated the alignment of initiatives with the new mission, and crafted a two-year plan comprising primary outcomes and indicators, goals, objectives, strategies, and deliverables. The two-year period was selected due to the degree of change and learning anticipated in the first two years of the new mission. Generate Health decided to engage Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training's expertise in conducting a racial equity audit of our organization.

The purpose of embarking on the institutional racial equity audit with Crossroads was to assess how our organizations' programs, constituent relationships, organizational structure and policies create and/or maintain systemic racism. The racial equity audit objectives were to build understanding and analysis of systemic oppression, assess our organization's culture to learn where systemic racism thrives despite our stated commitments, and to identify and recommend changes to our organizational culture and structures that will set us on path to becoming a fully inclusive, multicultural and antiracist institution. According to Racial Equity Tools, it is fundamental for organizations working on racial equity issues to assess and improve their own practices – governance, decision-making, resource allocation, hiring, and promotion on a regular basis. This is to ensure that the organizations' practices and policies reflect the just and inclusive system being created rather than the unjust and discriminatory one being dismantled.

While engaging in the audit work, Generate Health staff participated in other racial equity learning and reflection. The executive director participated in a year-long peer learning cohort of white executive directors facilitated by Gladiator Consulting. The cohort was based upon racial identity caucusing strategies and was designed as one avenue for white executive directors to develop capacity to lead their organizations in becoming more anti-racist. Two staff representing leadership participated in Forward Through Ferguson's (FTF) Racial Equity Roundtable. Staff met monthly from July 2020 - March 2021 with other institutions committed to equity to problem-solve, build relationships, and deepen our understanding of how to apply racial equity organizationally. Finally, Generate Health engaged Emerging Wisdom to facilitate a series of Healing Salons to create and implement an equity-centered staff culture that.

A Racial Equity Audit Team comprised of five staff and three Board members was established to conduct the audit with two Crossroads facilitators. Staff were selected to represent different perspectives (program, administration, evaluation) and levels of responsibility in the organization. Board members volunteered for the audit team. All members of the audit team had previously participated in Crossroads' Understanding and Analyzing Systemic Racism workshop and they received an in-depth orientation at the outset of the audit.

We began the audit process with an orientation facilitated by Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training in March 2020 two weeks before the world shut down due to the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic did not

hinder our commitment and we began to meet virtually. This report seeks to share the learnings of the audit team and recommendations for where Generate Health should focus its work. It is a living document and is another step on the journey to becoming antiracist.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the partners who guided us and devoted their labor to our learning and growth. We want to acknowledge the numerous Black women and men who helped us along the way.

Executive Summary Report

Crossroads' Institutional Racial Equity Audit has three (3) objectives:

(1) Build understanding and analysis of systemic oppression.

(2) Assess how our organization's programs, services, relationships, structure and policies, and history create and maintain a culture where systemic racism thrives despite our stated commitments.

(3) Identify and recommend changes to our organizational culture and structures that will set us on path to becoming a fully inclusive, multicultural, and antiracist institution. The audit process has taken many hours of challenging and emotional work deeply questioning how inequities exist within our organization and the work we do. The audit team needed to better understand and address the ways that our institution, policies, and systems create, contribute to, and perpetuate this current inequity.

Crossroads provided and guided the Audit Team through 3 assessments aimed at analyzing specific situations, policies, and practices to uncover areas of racial inequity and white racial advantage within Generate Health. Each of the assessment tools used – the Continuum, the Power Matrix, and the Survey - provided analysis of ways systemic oppression are embedded in the culture, structures, programs, policies, and identity of the institution.



The findings from the Continuum and the Power Matrix tools drove the questions on the survey. The survey was distributed to four groups: Generate Health staff members, partners, community members, and the board of directors. The survey was administered in November and December of 2021. Results from the survey were then analyzed by the Racial Audit Team. The results were synthesized with the other assessments to identify the top themes and make recommendations for interrupting the patterns and practices that are holding White Supremacy culture in place at Generate Health.

The process took over two years in part due to the pandemic. More importantly the team took a respectable amount of time to come together to assure a successful and unbiased result. They drove themselves to obtain a level of objectivity that can be challenging when members work so closely in an organization. The team-built trust and learned how to carry out a level of analysis that hasn't been applied at Generate Health previously.

Summary Findings and Recommendations

Information shared in this report outlines the audit methodology, themes, final analysis, and audit team recommendations for Generate Health to become a more anti-racist and transforming organization.

1. Clear and Bold Identity: Since changing its mission, Generate Health has experienced rapid changes and learning. During so much change there has been a lack of clarity and confidence about how to define and describe our anti-racism commitment. At the same time, our commitment to become more anti-racist requires clearer and more explicit communication about who we are, what we stand for, and how we will be in relationship with stakeholders. The Racial Equity Audit Team recommends Generate Health clarify and convey an intentional anti-racist identity that prioritizes Black women and birthing people in St. Louis. This will be done by revising our mission, vision, and values statements and implementing a plan to communicate our commitments with stakeholders.



2. Undivided Accountability: As a coalition Generate Health historically centered institutions in its structure, not community members impacted by racial inequities. Attempting to center Black families while also being accountable to organizations hinders trust, diminishes effectiveness, and leads to unclear decision-making roles and power. Generate Health's primary accountability will be to the Black community of women, birthing people, and families. This will be done by restructuring who holds membership power, co-create community decision making roles and define partnership principles to guide how we engage with institutions.

3. Prioritize Staff Culture: Generate Health will need to prioritize its internal culture to ensure its anti-racism commitment is experienced inside and outside the organization. We will create and implement an equity-centered staff culture that a) increases clarity, transparency and inclusion in decision making, b) promotes multi-directional communication and feedback loops, and c) increases sense of belonging and value. This will be done using reflections/recommendations from Staff Healing Salons.

4. Assign Responsibility: The audit report is not the end of the work, rather it is a milestone. More stakeholders are needed in the next phase to spread the findings and make them last. Progress will require monitoring, steering and mechanisms for feedback. Generate Health will establish a racial equity transformation team to oversee the implementation of the audit team's recommendations and hold the organization accountable.





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