CHANGING THE FUTURE: The Work of Associated Black Charities...  

Associated Black Charities is determined to change the future. We seek – through policy-related education and advocacy, collaborations, and incubation and testing of strategic intervention models – to strengthen Maryland’s economy by focusing on the economic growth, economic inclusion, and economic influence of African Americans.

In Maryland, ABC is a champion for economic transformation for African Americans and other marginalized communities in areas related to our organizational mission – to advocate and facilitate the creation of measurably healthier and more prosperous communities through responsible leadership and philanthropic investment throughout the State of Maryland.

Supporting good policy is an essential component of our work. Because policy is not “race neutral,” we work with policy makers, civic and institutional leaders, advocates, and others to build greater understanding of why using a racial equity lens matters and how to use it effectively in policy design. A shared understanding of this lens by Maryland leaders increases the potential for advancing policies that ensure that economic opportunities advance all Marylanders as we move into the 21st Century.

To contact Associated Black Charities about research or technical assistance regarding use of Policy Applications of a Racial Equity Framework / Lens, please contact A. Adar Ayira, Project Manager, in the Middle Initiative, aayira@abc-md.org, 443.334.7792.

A special thanks to Associated Black Charities’ Board of Directors.

Thanks to our partners Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, Baltimore Aspen Workgroup, Baltimore Community Foundation, Baltimore Racial Justice Action, and to all who have informed this work.

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Ten Essential Questions for Policy Development, Review and Evaluation

Universa et universali partibus (founded) universal equity framework, which has historically been white, male, and Anglo-identified. Recently received research programs are more likely to co-opt achieve inequity, even if intending to. SOURCES: (just a partial). The Importance of Targeting Universalism, Poverty, and Race. March, April 2007


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CHANGING THE FUTURE: Stepping Toward Equity...

The City of Seattle introduced its Race and Social Justice Initiative in 2005. In doing so, it was the first city that had ever undertaken a specific initiative focused explicitly on improving community well-being by addressing institutional racism and eliminating racial inequity.

Public policy has played a pivotal role in both creating and dismantling the structural and institutional barriers that have disproportionately affected marginalized groups, including racial groups, in America. Although the most obvious racially discriminatory policies have been overturned or mitigated, factors that disadvantage communities of color—intended and unintended alike—continue to operate in American society and in public policy.

ABC and our partner organizations consistently receive questions from policy-makers and other leaders regarding practical applications of a racial equity framework in assessing the racial impacts of policies, practices, and programs. These questions represent a larger shared vision of fairness that is far more likely to be achieved if we can increase effectiveness in evaluating the impact of policies on all groups of Maryland residents. This shared vision places Maryland firmly in the forefront of high caliber policy development. Using a racial equity lens in developing policy puts Maryland at the forefront of cities and states that directly address racial equity. Removing structural and institutional barriers that have racially disproportionate impacts on residents increases Maryland’s reputation as a livable state and strengthens its economic vibrancy.

This pocket guide is a concrete educational tool for policy leaders and others wanting to translate their commitment to justice and equity to practical applications.

Leading With Race…

Race has thus far maintained an intractable role in American society. Specifically addressing this issue—both from a personal and interpersonal perspective, and from the often invisible structural and institutional perspective—is essential. As we developed this pocket guide we learned that some are concerned that use of an equity lens benefits some groups and not others. Research has shown, though, that inequity is damaging to the economic well-being of communities, regions and nations alike. Using a framework that carefully acknowledges the detrimental economic and social impact of racism from a structural and institutional framework is not beneficial only to particular groups—it benefits the entire state. By using a racial equity framework, decision-makers signal that they recognize that challenges faced by some groups ultimately and adversely affect everyone. Intentional and consistent use of a racial equity framework prepares our state for the demographic changes to come by expanding pathways to opportunities that advance the overall interests of as many Maryland residents as possible.

1. How is an equity lens incorporated within the policy?
2. Does the policy explicitly account for potential racially disparate outcomes? If so, how? If not, how can it be incorporated?
3. How is an equity lens incorporated in tracking policy outcomes?
4. Will the policy increase access and opportunity for communities of color? How?
5. Will the policy have a positive impact on racial / ethnic equity, inclusion, and economic influence of African Americans?
6. Will the policy protect against racial violence, racial profiling and discrimination? How?
7. What are the mechanisms in place to ensure accountability (such as equity-focused benchmarks or indicators)?
8. Do the lens and tools for accountability incorporate a racial equity framework? How?
9. Are there changes that could be made to make the policy more equitable and inclusive?
10. What are the economic and social benefits of incorporating an equity lens in this policy?