

# Apply an Equity Lens

## Gathering perspectives

- Have members of the impacted communities been involved in the process?
- If the population(s) being served or discussed was (were) present, would they feel respected?
- What judgments or assumptions might we have that are influencing our thinking?

to

## Advance EDI

- What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? How can we address them?
- Does this decision improve conditions for underserved and underrepresented populations?
- What might be the unintended consequences of this decision?

## WHY AN EQUITY LENS?

Building a culture of equity requires asking questions through an equity lens and creating meaningful space for dialogue to ensure more equitable outcomes. An equity lens is designed to intentionally practice slowing down and reflecting upon inclusive decision-making that will lead to more equitable outcomes. It also becomes part of our learning process and supports the work we are doing.

An equity lens *should be* used in making decisions, reviewing processes and policies and developing solutions or programs. When philanthropy doesn't apply an equity lens in our work, we run the risk of funding and perpetuating the same systems that allow inequities to prevail.

The mission of The Oregon Community Foundation is to improve lives for all Oregonians through the power of philanthropy. OCF aspires to pursue its mission across all Oregon communities and populations. OCF believes that persistent disparities based on such characteristics as race, gender, national origin, ethnicity, culture, disability, age, faith, gender identity and sexual orientation, together with barriers imposed by poverty, prevent OCF's vision of a healthy, thriving, sustainable Oregon from being fully realized. In order to be a responsive grantmaker, OCF believes that we need to ensure that we have diverse perspectives and equitable outcomes.

Oregon, and our nation as a whole, is experiencing widening disparities along racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other lines, and now more than any time in the past several generations do the circumstances of one's birth determine the opportunities that are available and the life paths that are achievable. Oregon's low income communities, communities of color and rural communities do not receive the same opportunities available to other Oregonians, and this opportunity gap has far-reaching implications for personal achievement and well-being as well as for community vitality. OCF cannot meet its mission of improving life for all Oregonians if the foundation does not address this opportunity gap.

OCF's overarching theory of change is that in order to improve life for all Oregonians, we need to close the opportunity gap in education, arts & culture, economic vitality, health & well-being, livability and community engagement.