



SOUL FIRE FARM



FOOD SOVEREIGNTY ACTION STEPS

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“If we are not acting to change the system, we are complicit, casting our silent vote to maintain the status quo.” The following food sovereignty action steps were compiled by the Soul Fire Farm community and Northeast Farmers of Color alliance. It is divided into seven sections [#1 Policy Platform](#), [#2 Individual Actions](#), [#3 Reparations](#), [#4 Alliance Building](#), [#5 Internal Organizational Transformation](#), [#6 Grantmaking and Funding](#), and [#7 Self-Reflection and Education](#). This document is designed for anyone who has ever asked, “How can I help make the food system more just?”

Strategy # 1: Policy Platform to End Racism in the Food System

“We will not let their pens write us out of existence!” ~Lindsey Lunsford, Tuskegee University

Please contact your elected officials and encourage them to support the following policies.

1. Dignity for Farm Workers.
 - a. Equalize all labor and wage laws so that farm and food workers have a living wage, a day of rest, health insurance, overtime, workers compensation, and collective bargaining rights. (FLSA, NLRA, Fairness for Farmworkers Act of 2019)
 - b. End penal farms, where incarcerated people are enslaved for food production.
 - c. Create supportive pathways for (migrant, seasonal) farmworkers to become land-owning farmers running their own businesses, owner-operators. Create pathways to legalization for all undocumented people, included pathways to citizenship for all those that want it, and end deportations until a comprehensive policy is in place.
 - d. Support smaller and independent producers so that they can pay a living wage to farmworkers.
 - e. Replace the [indentured servitude](#) of the H2A visa program with the [North American Agricultural Work Visa](#), and uphold all provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
2. Economic Viability for Farmers.
 - a. Use public funds to pay farmers for preserving and enhancing ecosystem services and guarding the public trust (water purification, carbon sequestration, pollination, genetic diversity). This should be paid for by a tax on industrial agriculture which needs to pay for their externalities - dead zones in aquatic ecosystems, aquifer depletion, killing pollinators. Conventional agriculture should need a “certification” for their practices, rather than have that burden placed on organic/regenerative farmers. (EQIP, CRP)
 - b. Offer [price supports](#) and [price parity](#) for farm products to ensure that income from crop sales cover the expenses of producing those crops. Include non-commodity, heritage and cultural crops in these programs.
 - c. End the practice of [unfair contracts](#) siphoning earnings from farmers to enrich corporations. (Producer Protection Act)

- d. Equalize and expand access to crop insurance, technical assistance, non-GMO seed, equipment sharing, low interest credit, and technical assistance for independent producers, particularly producers of color. Include free legal and accounting clinics. Fully fund the Office of Advocacy and Outreach at the USDA. (Minority farmer advisory board, FSA targets for minorities, Land Contract Guarantee Programs, and transition incentives program of USDA)
 - e. Increase access to markets for farmers of color through food hubs, processing centers, farmers markets, and farm to institution programs. Provide funding for BIPOC-led food hubs.
 - f. Set aside a portion of the “Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program” dollars for Black farmers; reduce paperwork burden for grants, increase government staff support of application process, make grants accessible to small farmers who are not incorporated, move application period to winter season, and eliminate matching funds requirements. (USDA 2501)
 - g. Classify farmers as “public servants” making them eligible for loan forgiveness; create an agricultural version of Americorps which pays wages to apprenticing farmers to work and learn on Black-owned farms.
3. Reparations for Stolen Land and Wealth.
- a. Reparations are necessary in the form of land and wealth redistribution to those who had land and wealth stolen from them - African American, Latinxs, Indigenous people. Establish a commission to study reparations and propose a comprehensive redistribution of wealth and land. (HR 40)
 - b. Transform civil rights offices at the USDA into agencies that addresses discrimination rather than cover it up
 - c. Enforce a moratorium on government foreclosures of Black land, halting USDA and Medicaid liens and seizures of land.
 - d. Implement the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act in all states.
 - e. Provide funding for a network of BIPOC-led land trusts that absorb Black farmland and transfer it within the black community. Set aside federal agricultural easement dollars for Black farmers. (Black Land and Power Coalition)
 - f. Create and implement farmer debt forgiveness programs in cases of discrimination. USDA should refinance loans for black farmers.
 - g. End “[tied aid](#)” policies that flood international markets with surplus commodities, and undermine smallholder farmers. End corporate [land grabbing](#) abroad.
 - h. Expand funding for the [Indian Tribal Land Acquisition Loan Program](#) and the [Highly Fractionated Indian Land Loan Program](#)

- i. Update and pass the 2020 Justice for Black Farmers Act, which would have addressed ongoing discrimination by creating new conservation, credit, and land protection programs for Black farmers, among other necessary steps.
 - j. Reverse the policy that victims of mass incarceration are ineligible for USDA programs - our returning citizens need and deserve support for their farms.
4. Community-Based Farmer Training.
- a. Include urban farmers in the USDA farming census as a unique category and provide technical support to these farmers. (Urban Agriculture Act 2016) Create zoning regulations to permanently protect areas for urban agriculture.
 - b. Provide funding for BIPOC-led farmer training programs that address trauma and history, and offer strategies for navigating in racist food system. These programs should take place in the community but be credit-bearing through partnerships with land grant universities.
 - c. Provide funding for a BIPOC-led land link programs, including an online portal for new POC farmers to find farms run by POC and get training there.
 - d. Secure and protect land access and non-predatory credit and capital for independent producers, particularly producers of color.
 - e. Eliminate Farm Service Agency county committees, which discriminate against poor and Black farmers and funnel funds to local elites with little government or legal oversight.
 - f. Ensure that HBCUs play a role in rebuilding Black land ownership and address higher-education funding disparities by tripling funding for 1890 land grant universities, which are critical to Black farming communities and establish scholarships and dedicated funding streams for predominantly white land grant universities to educate, train, and assist Black farmers in states without 1890 institutions.
5. Nourishing Food for Our People.
- a. Fully fund SNAP and WIC, eliminating barriers to access. Make EBT/SNAP easier for farmers to use by allowing online payment and automatic deduction. Expand nourishing, sustainable, culturally appropriate options within these programs.
 - b. Fund real food access in community institutions like schools, hospitals, day cares, prisons, and senior centers. (CNR)
 - c. Provide capital, credit, tax breaks, and training to worker and community-owned cooperative food enterprises that generate wealth for our people. (HFFI)
 - d. Include agriculture and food systems science in the public school curriculum.
 - e. End corporate marketing of highly processed food and food brands to children, including in schools. End subsidies for processed food marketing by closing the tax loophole that allows corporate write offs for this marketing.

- f. Treat corporate food and beverage companies like tobacco companies: hold companies liable for adverse health impacts on people through taxation and include visible warning labels.

For additional policy ideas, please see the [HEAL Food Alliance](#), [Farmers and Ranchers for A Green New Deal](#), [National Young Farmers Coalition](#), and [this letter to Sen. Elizabeth Warren](#).

Strategy #2: Simple Actions for Individuals to End Racism in the Food System

Take the following steps in your local community.

1. Encourage your school, business, or other institution to sign on to the [Good Food Purchasing Program](#) ([Real Food Challenge](#) for colleges and universities.)
2. Support existing community work led by those directly impacted by the issues, rather than adopting the “savior complex” where outsiders garner resources and “outreach” to the community.
3. Put your skills to work supporting a farmer or food business owner of color. Most importantly, BUY THEIR PRODUCTS. Also, farmers often don’t have enough time to attend to the administrative aspects of their operation, like grant writing, web design, social media, marketing, legal research, and blogging. Reach out to see if you can help.
4. Share the resources of your business or organization. If you have a photocopier, meeting space, grant writer, accountant, lawyer, food, money, or any other good or service - offer that resource to community-led work. Offer no or low cost fiscal sponsorship if you are part of a 501c3.
5. Create good jobs. Hire people who might otherwise be overlooked in the capitalist economy - people of color, formerly incarcerated people, those without documents, elders, those with disabilities. Offer jobs with training built in, a living wage, health care, and job security.
6. White people should consider strongly working with other white people, especially those who voted for “45,” to raise consciousness and build support for these issues - rather than “organizing” people of color.
7. Uplift Black and Brown expertise, both ancestral and current. People of color exist and thrive beyond the oppression narrative. Instead of imagining that the best practices in food, farming, and movement building are ahistorical - find out how people of color created and improved upon them, and celebrate those individuals. Invite Black and Brown experts to teach in your organization/community, and not just about racial issues. Offer fair compensation for their knowledge rather than expecting to “pick their brain” for free.
8. Read the [HEAL Food Alliance](#) and [Movement for Black Lives Policy Platforms](#), which offer pathways for land reparations and a just food system. Take a moment to appreciate the brilliance of the text and then host a discussion group at your congregation or workplace with the goal of having these organizations endorse and implement these platforms.

9. Encourage your local farmers, supermarkets, and the food related not-for-profits you are involved with to join the [Domestic Fair Trade Association](#) and to seek Food Justice Certification through the [Agricultural Justice Project](#). Both groups uphold high standards for fair treatment of workers and care of the environment.
10. Catalyze your community to raise funds to help your local farmer provide affordable produce to the most vulnerable—refugees, incarcerated people, and those living in food deserts. Organizations such as the [Corbin Hill Food Project](#) and [D-Town Farm](#) have models for doing this, using sliding scale pay systems, doorstep delivery, and farmers’ markets near neighborhood schools.
11. Get educated. You can learn more about structural racism in [Rewriting Racial Rules: Building an Inclusive American Economy](#) and in [The U.S. Farm Bill: Corporate Power and Structural Racialization in the United States Food System](#).
12. Individuals representing media and engaging in social media should report events accurately and attend to the dynamics, relationships and nuances articulated by movement actors. You can learn more about accurate reporting on social justice work in [Beyond Heroes: A Guide for the Media](#).
13. Read “Part 1” above and use your sphere of influence over politicians, corporations, and other community-members to advance those aims.

Strategy #3: Reparations to POC-led Projects

Enslaved Africans never received reparations for their unpaid labor or broken families. The promise of “forty acres and a mule” during reconstruction was retracted. In fact, some white plantation owners received reparations for their “lost property.” If African American people were paid \$20 per week for our agricultural labor rather than enslaved, we would have \$6.4 trillion in today’s dollars in the bank today. This figure does not include reparations for denied credit and homeownership opportunities, exclusion from the social safety net and education, or property theft and destruction.¹ There is a reason why the typical white household has 16 times the wealth of a typical black household - 80% of wealth is inherited, often traceable back to slavery times.² Existing policies reinforce and augment the wealth gap.

The most important action that people with resources can take to uproot racism is to enact reparations, to quite literally give back what was stolen. We are not talking about Georgetown

¹ Loeffelholz, Tracy Dunn and Jeff Neumann. 2015. 40 Acres and a Mule Would Be at Least \$6.4 Trillion Today—What the U.S. Really Owes Black America. YES! Magazine
<http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/make-it-right/infographic-40-acres-and-a-mule-would-be-at-least-64-trillion-today>

² Shin, Laura. 2015. The Racial Wealth Gap: Why A Typical White Household Has 16 Times The Wealth Of A Black One
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurashin/2015/03/26/the-racial-wealth-gap-why-a-typical-white-household-has-16-times-the-wealth-of-a-black-one/#b639dab1f45e>

University-style reparations, where the institution gave a formal apology and preferential admission to the descendants of people sold as slaves in 1838, but did not offer scholarships or include the descendants in the reparations committee. We are talking about true reparations, which have the following three characteristics:

1. **“Nothing about us, without us” - Dispossessed people get to define what reparations look like**
2. **“No strings attached” - transfers of land and resources without oversight or conditionality**
3. **“The whole pie” - give the land, money, and jobs away, even and especially when it entails personal and organizational sacrifice**

The first step is to find out what POC-led organizations are working toward liberation in your area and see what you can do to support. An incomplete list of formations working on food, land, and liberation for people of color are listed here.

Black-Indigenous Led Farming Organizations

- [African-American Farmers of California](#), CA
- [Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association \(ALBA\)](#) CA
- [Barbara Norman's Blueberry Patch](#), Covert MI
- [Black Church Food Security Network](#), Baltimore MD
- [Black Dirt Farm Collective](#), Preston, MD
- [Black Earth Farms Collective](#), CA
- [Black Family Land Trust](#), Durham, NC
- [Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association](#), Tillery NC
- [Black Farmers Collective](#), WA
- [Bliss Meadow & Backyard Basecamp](#), Baltimore MD
- [Black Urban Growers](#), NY/National
- [Black Yield Institute](#), Baltimore, MD
- [Bueno Para Todos](#), Villanueva, NM
- [The Black Oaks Center for Sustainable and Renewable Living](#), Pembroke, IL
- [California Farmer Justice Collaborative](#), CA
- [CATA - The Farmworkers Support Committee](#) NJ/PA/MD/National
- [Color of Food](#), NJ
- [Corbin Hill Food Project](#), NY
- [Cosecha](#), National
- [Dream of Wild Health](#), MN



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- [D-Town Farm](#), Detroit, MI
- [Earthseed Land Cooperative](#), Durham, NC
- [East New York Farms!](#), Brooklyn, NY
- [Eastern Woodlands Rematriation Collective](#), MA
- [Family. Agriculture. Resource. Management. Services. \(F.A.R.M.S.\)](#), Southeast USA
- [Farm School NYC](#), NY
- [Farmer Mai grain farm](#), CA
- [Farms to Grow, Inc.](#), Oakland, CA
- [Farmworker Association of Florida](#), FL
- [Federation of Southern Cooperatives Rural Training & Research Center](#), AL
- [Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund](#), AL/GA/MS
- [First Nations Development Institute - Native Agriculture & Food Systems Program](#), CA
- [Flats Mentor Farm](#), MA
- [Foot Print Farms](#), Jackson, MI
- [Fresh Future Farm](#), SC
- [Gangstas to Growers](#), GA
- [George Washington Carver Urban/Small Farmers Collective](#), MD
- [Grow Where You Are](#), Atlanta, GA
- [Habesha](#), Atlanta, GA
- [Hilltop Urban Gardens](#), PA
- [La Via Campesina](#), Global
- [Land Loss Prevention Project](#), Durham NC
- [Mayflor Farms](#), Stockbridge, GA
- [Maurice Small](#), NC
- [Movement Ground Farm](#), Tiverton, RI
- [Mudbone Grown Farm](#), Portland, OR
- [National Black Farmers Association Let's Get Growing Program](#), Baskerville, VA
- [National Black Food and Justice Alliance](#), National
- National Hmong American Farmers, Fresno County, CA
- [Natural Choices Botanica](#), TN
- [Oliver's AgroForest](#), Wake County, NC
- [Operation Spring Plant](#), NC
- [Payómkawichum Nation - Pauma Tribal Farms / Tierra Miguel Farm](#), CA
- People's Grocery, CA
- [Restaurant Opportunities Center](#), National
- [RID-ALL Green Partnership](#), Cleveland, OH

- [Rise and Root Farm](#), Chester, NY
- [Rocky Acres Community Farm](#), Freeville, NY
- [Roots Rising](#), CA
- [Scott Family Farms](#), CA
- [Sierra Seeds](#), NY/CA
- [Small Farm Outreach Program](#) & Hen Asem, VA
- [Sogorea Te Land Trust](#), CA
- [Soil Generation](#), PA
- [Soilful City](#), Washington, DC
- [Soul Fire Farm](#), Grafton, NY
- [Soul Flower Farm](#), El Sobrante, CA
- [Source Farm](#), Jamaica
- [Southeastern African American Farmers' Organic Network \(SAAFON\)](#), Decatur, GA
- [Three Part Harmony Farm](#), Washington, DC
- [Three Sisters Garden](#), CA
- [Truly Living Well](#), Atlanta, GA
- [Tuzini Farms](#), Lusaka, Zambia
- [Urban Farm Institute](#), Boston, MA
- [Urban Growers Collective, Chicago](#), IL
- [Urban Tilth](#), Richmond CA
- [We Grow Urban Farm](#), CA
- [Winona's Hemp](#) and the [Anishinaabe Agricultural](#) Institute, MN
- [Yisrael Family Urban Farm](#), Sacramento, CA

Strategy #4 - Alliances and Relationships With Community

Adopting a listener's framework is the first step for white people and white-led organizations who want to form interracial alliances. Rather than trying to "outreach" to people of color and convince them to join your initiative, find out about existing community work that is led by people directly impacted by racism and see how you can engage. Frontlines communities have the long term commitment, strategy, and expertise necessary to transform the system. Nine guidelines for interracial alliance building are provided here.



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1. **Center Relationships:** There is no shortcut to building relationships. The first step is to “show up.” Spend as much time as possible attending community meetings, getting involved in neighborhood associations, and lending your skills and time to projects that are important to members of the community. When you tangibly demonstrate your commitment to the community, people are more likely to invite you in as a partner in initiatives. When you only reach out to someone because you want their presence at your one-time event, that is tokenizing, not relationship-building.
2. **Pass the Mic:** While you might be savvy with social media, writing, or public speaking, that does not give you permission to control the narrative of other people. Rather than telling or interpreting the stories of people of color, work to amplify the voices of people directly. Offer your technical support so that people can tell their own stories.
3. **Welcome Feedback:** Develop a no-retaliation system for community members to give you feedback on your role in the alliance. Demonstrate your receptivity to feedback by thanking those who have the courage to offer you suggestions and implementing those suggestions in a timely fashion. Circle back with your partners asking if the changes you have made are acceptable.
4. **Cultural Deference:** Because white culture is so ingrained in our society, we can mistakenly assume that work habits like tight deadlines, written communication, and Robert Rules of Order are universal norms. Take time to get to know the communication styles, conflict management strategies, pace, and other characteristics of your partner organization and work to fit into that culture rather than impose your own.
5. **Skills Transfer:** White privilege often affords European-heritage people with the opportunity to learn technical skills, such as bookkeeping, grant writing, web design, legal advocacy, and business management. As you volunteer your time to apply these skills to anti-racism work, invite community members to work side-by-side with you to gain these competencies.
6. **Pay Well:** Leverage your resources so that people of color are paid for their time as they organize for a racially just society. If you are an employer, hire people who might otherwise be overlooked in the capitalist economy - people of color, formerly incarcerated people, those without documents, elders, those with disabilities. Offer jobs with training built in, a living wage, health care, and job security. Fundraise so that people of color can be paid for their time as consultants, speakers, and organizers. Never assume that Black and Brown people should volunteer their time as part of alliance work.
7. **Make It Easy:** Limit or eliminate the number of hoops that community members need to jump through to access the resources that you control. In the case of grantmaking, provide video/audio application processes instead of exclusively written applications. Offer multi year grants for general operating expenses, rather than requiring innovating special projects each cycle. Coordinate with other funders to have a universal application and reporting process, and minimize the demands you make on people’s time. Organizers should not have to feel obligated

to show up at your events because you donated money or other resources to their project. Include community members in the committees and boards that guide grant-making and resources allocation.

8. **Pass the Oars:** At all times, people of color should be setting the agenda and determining the priorities in your alliance work. Check and recheck that you are not dominating the space or steering the ship. Because we have all internalized white supremacy to some degree, it is easy to collude in the “white expert” narrative and defer to white people’s ideas. White folks need to be proactive to interrupt this pattern.
9. **Ask Why You Want to Work with People of Color:** When organizations have the “diversity conversation,” it invariably goes to the seemingly intractable problem of “attracting people of color to our organization.” Perhaps a better initial question is, “How can we work with other white people to raise consciousness and shift policies that are causing the harm?” In response to an influx of white progressives travelling to work with the Zapatistas in Mexico, they issued a statement that read, “If you can remove the boot from our neck by stopping your society from funding our government who is doing [the harm] directly to us, then boy, wouldn’t that be a big relief?... Then, please go home and organize... not just against imperialism and massive military expenditures going down to support the war in Mexico, but against the shit that you need to reorganize as your own problems. Stop letting us distract you from the fact that your cities have third worlds in them, that racism and sexism, things that we are really beginning to get a grip on here, are rampant in your home. Go home and take care of that.”³
10. **Create multilingual spaces.** Creating multilingual spaces where everyone can communicate in the language they feel comfortable in is an integral part of bringing an end to injustice in the food system. It is also just as important to make space for the discomfort that comes from engaging colonial tongues - the discomfort the farmworker may feel in speaking Spanish in a predominantly English-speaking space, or the discomfort and complexity a second- or third-generation Latinx person carries when speaking in their grandmother’s tongue. See our [Language Justice Guide](#).

Strategy #5: Internal Organizational Transformation

Uplift: Haymarket Fund

The Haymarket Fund was founded in 1974 to honor the Haymarket affair, a working people’s uprising in 1886 that paved the way for the 8-hour workday. The Haymarket fund has donated money to

³ Starr, Amory. 2013. *Global Revolt: A Guide to the Movements against Globalization*. Zed Books Ltd.

almost every major social justice movement in New England. However, for decades they were a white-led organization distributing money to mostly white-led organizations. In 1998, they embarked on a deliberate journey to uproot the racism ingrained in every aspect of the organization. With the guidance of the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, they updated their mission, changed organizational policies, hired new leadership, and shifted organizational culture. While they will always be in a learning process, Haymarket Fund is now led by people of color at all levels of the organization. People work together across racial lines to build relationships rooted in trust and accountability. Haymarket Fund published a manual detailing their transformation process, called Courage to Change.

Given that fewer than 20% of nonprofit leaders are people of color, it is very likely that you will find yourself working in a white-led organization on social justice issues. There are several inherent problems with this arrangement, from the moral fallacy of the “white savior complex” to the exploitation inherent in “poverty pimping” to keep white do-gooders employed. Existential questions should also arise for predominantly white organizations as to whether the resources going into the organization could be allocated more effectively and justly by investing in Black-led projects. Even with these sticky and challenging questions, many white-led organizations take the courageous step toward internal transformation. For example, both the National Young Farmers Coalition and the Groundswell Center for Food and Agriculture developed equity statements and corresponding equity practices as first steps toward uprooting racism in their organizations.

Equity Statements by Predominantly White Farming Organizations

National Young Farmers Coalition

“Ending Violence Against People of Color in Food and Farming”

<http://www.youngfarmers.org/ending-violence-against-people-of-color-in-food-and-farming/>

Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming

“Equity Statement”

<http://groundswellcenter.org/equity-statement/>

Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

“Statement of Intent on Race and Equity”

<http://nesawg.org/node/230882>

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

“Statement on Race and Equity”

<http://sustainableagriculture.net/about-us/mission-goals/nsac-statement-on-racial-equity/>

In order to transform your organization from one that is complicit in white supremacy to one that actively resists white supremacy, there are a number of actions you can take:

Decision Making and Power: Organizations working to end racism should have people of color in leadership at all levels - on the staff, board, trustees, and volunteer leadership. Transforming an organization toward power-sharing means first ensuring that everyone in the organization understands how power is distributed, how decisions are made, and how they can increase their decision-making power. Make training and mentorship available, along with clear steps for advancement open to everyone in the organization, including program participants. Too often, those with the most power in an organization or business are white, while those with the least decision-making influence are people of color. White people are responsible for making space so that people of color can lead.

Budget and Finances: Implement a cap on the wage and benefits gap between the highest and lowest paid person in the organization, so that there is equitable distribution of resources for everyone involved. Everyone in the organization should be able to see the budget and balance sheet at any time and have input on budget priorities. White-led organizations can work to actively transfer their resources to frontlines organizations, by contributing money, meeting space, customers, and staff time as well as making introductions to press and funders.

Accessibility: Work to increase accessibility of your programs and events to people of color. Provide transportation, childcare, food, wheelchair accessibility, all gender bathrooms, and interpretation services. In some cases, it is also appropriate to provide stipends for attendance. Review whether your decorations, music, and menu selections reflect a white dominant culture. Consider hiring a DJ, caterer, or guest speaker from the community you “serve” to bring their expertise to your events.

Culture and Commitment: Implement an equity statement and safer space practices that explicitly address racism, sexism, transphobia, ableism, classism, and other oppressions. Invest organizational resources into transforming the culture from white-dominant to culturally inclusive. This may mean devoting more time for self-care, reflection, and collaboration, shifting work pace, updating definitions of success, and investing in more time in training and support. Make space for people to bring elements of our cultures - music, stories, food, dance - to the organization. Be willing to name racism and directly address oppressive behavior.

Programs: Your organization’s programs should be designed to build and share power with people of color, not to “serve” or “save” us. Address the root cause of problems, recognizing that this will eventually mean your project becomes obsolete. The people directly affected by oppressions should be the

people involved in planning and designing those initiatives, and should have a pathway to take on leadership roles in the organization. Provide anti-racism training to all of your staff and infuse anti-racism topics into your community programs. If you are unsure what race has to do with your mission or goals, hire an anti-racism consultant to help you develop that equity lens.

Narrative: Update the narratives you tell about the work to uplift the contributions of people of color in the field. For example, many farming and food organizations omit the contributions of Booker T. Whatley, George Washington Carver, Fannie Lou Hamer and the other visionaries. Actively participate in regional and national networks that are led by people of color. Use your social media, newsletter, and press platforms to promote the campaigns and stated priorities of people of color.

Behavior: Examine the behaviors exhibited by you and others in your organization that may uphold inequity. Racist structures are perpetuated through the accrual of seemingly minor exclusive and biased acts. Here are some common white supremacist patterns to challenge:

- Speaking first, more often, or interrupting
- Unilaterally setting the agenda
- Assuming white people are more capable
- Trivializing the experience of others
- Dismissing the content of what people of color say, because of disliking the “tone” or “attitude”
- Speaking on behalf of others
- Assuming one person of color speaks for the group
- Unilaterally controlling the organization’s resources
- Reducing power struggles to personality conflicts
- Assuming that misunderstandings are the root of problems in organization
- Demanding proof or justification for perspectives of people of color
- Appropriating cultural elements of people of color
- Preventing people of color from meeting in caucus groups
- Expecting gratitude and praise
- Defending mistakes because of “good intentions”
- Assumption that everyone has the same options and access to resources
- Expecting people of color to educate white people about oppressions
- Expecting to be trusted
- Assuming that high-performing people of color are exceptional
- Expecting comfort

Strategy #6: Grantmaking and Funding

Donors and foundations, make resources more accessible to frontlines organizations using these guidelines.

1. **Racial Equity:** Work together with the grantmaking community to conduct a racial justice assessment of where donors are currently investing and what kind of disparities exist, publicly share the results, and create strategies for correcting those inequities. We ask that all foundations dedicate a percentage of their giving towards explicit “reparations” for organizations led by and serving people of color. Note the Grantmakers for Effective Organizations has an [equity statement](#) to guide this process.
2. **Geographic and Class Equity:** Prioritize funding for the [Deep South](#), focused on organizations led by the communities they serve. Look beyond “academic speak” when reviewing applications, prioritizing instead people’s deep lived experience in movement work. Provide video/audio application processes instead of exclusively written applications. Provide translation services to applicants to overcome language barriers in the application process.
3. **Funding What Counts:** Grantmakers, please fund general operating expenses, “overhead,” salaries, insurance, as well as the tangibles - seeds, greenhouse plastic, and shovels. It takes both people making a living wage and infrastructure. Enough with the deference toward “projects”, “innovation” and “direct costs.” Look around to see who is doing the real work and fund those people, letting us decide exactly how to allocate resources. All grants should be multi-year and renewable. Consider a donor advised fund which would be managed or directed by farmer groups to rotate loans and credit- tangible resources our folks need. Provide a “matching grant promise” fund for organizations to use for USDA grant programs.
4. **Streamline Applications and Reporting:** Donors, organize in your giving community and create a common application and common reporting format. Set up *one* online portal where we can put all of our information *one* time. Donors can work together to figure out how to make sure frontlines organizations are funded. This will increase the amount of time frontlines groups have to do the work on the ground.
5. **Respect:** Donors, please hold your privilege consciously. Much of the wealth being distributed was accumulated on the backs of exploited people, often the ancestors and relatives of these grassroots organizations. It is an honor for donors to get to be in relationship with frontlines organizers. Please do not pressure organizers to spend social time with funders, please respect personal boundaries, and do not use patronizing language referring to organizers. Remember that people on the frontlines are “experts” in their community and should be treated with respect and deference, never with an air of paternalism or entitlement. From the first moment of contact, please offer detailed transparency about who you are, what you are offering, and what you are requesting of the organizers so they can make a fully informed decision about investing time into the relationship.

6. **Calendaring:** There is a current trend for donors to be in relationship with grassroots organizers and to move beyond “transactional” relationships into something more meaningful. While this is laudable, it also means that organizers are expected to spend more and more time with donors. In many cases, this becomes a full time job and little time is left for the mission work. Please request, not demand, time from organizers, giving months of advance notice. Please be conscious of non-Christian holidays and pre-existing community commitments in your scheduling.
7. **Incentivize Sanity:** Donors, please work to change culture where grantmakers demand “over-promising” and constant “innovation.” Offer grants specifically for grassroots organizations to pay a living wage and offer benefits to their employees. Celebrate depth over breadth, quality over quantity, seventh generation thinking over instant “results.” Fund reflection and planning. Invest in metrics that get at transformation beyond what we can quantify. Real change is not simply a result of “numbers of people served.”
8. **“Partnering:”** Larger nonprofits should apply for the big government and other challenging grants and write emerging organizations into the grants - transferring wealth to frontlines, take little for themselves, transfer most. Large nonprofits and government should donate administrative resources - grantwriter, accountant, bookkeeper, database subscription, data entry, blog writer, web development, videography, graphic design, etc. so frontlines communities can “do the work” and not get bogged down with administration. Large nonprofits should offer no or low cost fiscal sponsorship to grassroots organizations without 501c3 status.
9. **Technical Assistance:** Support grassroots organizations in accessing culturally responsive technical assistance, including project management, fundraising, development planning, budgeting, strategic planning, board development, proposal writing, website development, marketing, consulting, legal, networking, accounting, and reporting. Provide samples of model grant applications and budgets so that grassroots organizations can learn from these examples.
10. **Be the First and Biggest Dollar:** Rather than wait for others in the funding community to validate the legitimacy of a grassroots effort by putting the first dollar on the table, tune in to who community members say they trust. Take the “risk” to put real dollars toward grassroots projects. Give fewer grants at larger amounts. Organizations should not have to maintain relationships with more than 5 funders in a given year. Plan to fund 20% or more of their operating expenses.

Further Reading on Equity

- [A Funders Resource Guide on POC-Led Projects](#). By InDeep
- [We Need a New Definition of Effectiveness](#), Kathleen Enright CEO at GEO
- [Policies, Practices, and Programs for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) by D5
- [Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide](#) by Annie E. Casey Foundation
- [SAFSF Diversity Resources](#)
- [Breaking Bad Philanthropic Habits](#) by Justice Funders

- [Young Farmers Racial Equity Toolkit](#)

Strategy #7: Self-Reflection and Education

Almost all of us embody a complex matrix of identities, including some that provide social advantage and others that limit access. Explore the “Matrix of Intersectionality” and record your identities in the appropriate categories. Then, share stories related to the identities that are most difficult for you to claim. For example, as an able bodied person, it is easy for me to take that identity for granted as “normal” and ignore the ways that this privilege opens doors for me that are closed for others. I do not bristle when sidewalks are crusted over with snow or bathrooms are not accessible, because I can effortlessly navigate. I ask myself, “How can I have the same urgency around disability rights as I do about race and gender equality?” Individuals comprise the system, so this work of challenging our limited perspectives on identity can transform institutions and power structures. What action can you catalyze by bringing your privileged identities into awareness?

Questions for Reflection

1. What identities do you hold that society treats as normal/fully human?
2. What identities do you hold that society treats as deviant/not fully human?
3. What stories can you share about identities that are difficult for you to claim?
4. Where are your areas of ignorance around identity? What do you need to learn?

Matrix of Intersectionality

Race	Ethnicity	Color	Settler Status
Sex	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Class
Ability	Religion	Age	Education

Documentation	Body Size		
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For further learning, please see the recommended readings and training programs below:

Recommended Reading on Racial Justice

- White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack by Peggy McIntosh
- Dismantling Racism: A Resource Book by Western States Center
- Examining Whiteness: An Anti-Racism Curriculum by Reverend Doctor William J. Gardiner
- The Case for Reparations Coates by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander
- Rewriting the Racial Rules: Building an Inclusive American Economy by Andrea Flynn et al.
- Opportunities for White People in the Fight for Racial Justice by Jonathan Osler
- Curriculum for White Americans to Educate Themselves on Race and Racism—from Ferguson to Charleston by Jon Greenberg

Recommended Training Programs for Dismantling Racism

- Opening Doors <http://diversity-project.org/national-facilitation-team/eduardo-gonzalez-jr>
- People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond <http://www.pisab.org>
- AORTA Collective <http://aorta.coop>
- Catalyst Project <https://collectiveliberation.org>
- Training for Change <https://www.trainingforchange.org>
- Beyond Diversity 101 <http://www.beyonddiversity101.org>
- White Noise Collective <http://www.conspireforchange.org>
- Center for Study of White American Culture <http://www.euroamerican.org>
- Interaction Institute for Social Change www.interactioninstitute.org
- Soul Fire Farm’s Uprooting Racism in the Food System www.soulfirefarm.org



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Maya Angelou said, “History, despite its wrenching pain cannot be unlived. But if faced with courage, we need not live it again.” We are never finished with the work of facing our history with courage. Continue to educate yourself, engage in conversations, and catalyze action toward a racially just world.