Coalition
for a Healthy
Greater Worcester

ELIMINATING HEALTH DISPARITIES
IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE
BUILDING COMMUNITY

RACIAL EQUITY TOOLS

A PRODUCT & PROCESS

Version 1.0 2021 - 2022

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Project Vision
Unlike a traditional linear approach for recruitment, an **equitable tool for recruitment is crucial for an organization to uncover equitable clear goals & outcomes.**

The tool will aid internal decision-makers to intentionally and actively be equitable, with the ultimate goal of eliminating racial inequities.

What is the Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester?
The Massachusetts Department of Public Health created Community Health Network Areas (CHNAs) in May 1992. A CHNA is a local coalition of public, non-profit, and private sectors. Continuous improvement of health status is the goal of each partnership between the Department, service providers, local health departments, consumers and residents of the general public in the contiguous towns. The CHIP encompasses the towns of the Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance (CMRPHA); These towns include Grafton, Millbury, Shrewsbury, West Boylston, and Worcester.

The Coalition's mission is "to promote the shared learning, reflection, and broad engagement that improves community decision-making, health, and well-being for residents of Greater Worcester."

Racial Equity Tools is the first priority strategy in the 2021 - 2026 Community Health Improvement Plan. Starting in October 2020, we commenced a 100+ interview process to learn what changes in our community you needed to see to make the Greater Worcester Region a champion of Health Equity. We were excited and challenged by the responses. You told us that a healthy community is one where you feel safe and where you belong. You told us that a healthy community is one where your children can grow up without adverse childhood experiences. And you told us that a healthy community is not only an accepting community but an actively anti-racist community working toward health equity for all. We are proud to present to you this 2021 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which is based on the most up-to-date research and information about the health of our communities, and thousands of hours of input from many of you. This CHIP will be used to guide the work of countless organizations and individuals over the next five years, with the vision of making significant progress toward health equity by 2026. In the CHIP and all our work, we define Health Equity as "Attaining full health potential and wellness as experienced and honored through one's many intersecting identities (race, sex & gender, sexuality, socio-economic status, ability status, immigration status, religion, etc.), and that of their family and communities" (Samantha Calero, Adapted from the Boston Public Health Commission, 2019). We understand this is a lofty goal, but as we know from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, social change requires ambition and perseverance. We do not expect the system to change tomorrow, or for all of these policies to be passed in a year.

Through collaboration, dedication, and care, we are confident the Greater Worcester Community will move toward a future where all citizens have equitable access to supportive systems of social service and health care. The 2021 - 2026 CHIP calls out municipal racial equity strategies, community-wide policy changes, and priority action agendas necessary to enact structural changes geared toward improving health for all. By virtue of being human, every single person in this community deserves access to quality childcare, education, compassionate navigation through the healthcare systems, access to healthy food, and safe streets. Our past, present, and futures matter, and to achieve health justice we must endeavor together to ensure our neighbors have lives that are full, healthy, and valued.

Hope is not a strategy: action is, and we believe our community has the will to make this CHIP a reality. The CHIP is a regional movement; we all are in this together. We are excited to work collaboratively to implement this plan, and urge you to sign up to CHIP in by visiting our website at https://www.healthygreaterworcester.org/.

How these were developed

Various efforts across the coalition including work of the Racism & Discrimination subcommittee and a project of the supporting change agents cohort. This group looked to understand what racial equity tool best practices are and then gathered feedback from practical experiences of patterns to develop this guide. This tool was developed with a group of peers across diverse sectors who shared their own experiences. Ultimately, this is a trauma-informed toolkit. We highly advise the practices of this tool be implemented with the guidance of consultants who have experience utilizing equities tools.

The tools included here seek to eliminate racial inequities by

- ☐ Identifying clear goals & outcomes
- ☐ Involving the community in crucial decision making
- ☐ Identifying "who is affected and who will benefit?"
- ☐ Examining the potential consequences of decisions, intended and unintended
- ☐ Mitigating unintended negative consequences
- ☐ Developing strategies to advance racial equity

Using the tool requires a process that

- ☐ Normalizes (or explicitly considers) conversations of race
- ☐ Understands broad visions of systems in government
- ☐ Organizes & operationalize new behaviors

Proposal	Data	Community Engagement
Analysis & Strategies	Implementation	Accountability & Communication

Tracking Community Outcomes vs. Evaluating Outcomes of Change

Tracking Community Outcomes	**Evaluating Outcomes of Change**

• Gathering information about community outcomes • Community report card- data collected from outcome tracking (display trends) • Statistical Significance • Report card tips=measuring outcomes of specific strategies/activities for specific people.	• Desired Conditions - Outcomes of Change • Specific changes that are a result of the implementation of particular strategies. (particular person, people, group or organization) • Change strategies- Mainly target organizations, not individuals, because the organizations have control of the resources and opportunities that affect and reach individuals

BIAS CHECKLIST example from Google. To learn more, check out this link.

Google's unbiasing hiring checklists

Know Your Bias: checklist and talking points

At key decision points, like who to hire into your organization, it's important to recognize and address how potential biases can influence the decision-making process. Below are some ways unconscious bias can affect your decisions, as well as steps you and your teams can take to start removing bias from interviews and the hiring process.

Here are some unconscious bias triggers to be aware of during the hiring process:

Stereotype incongruency (not the expected fit)	Sometimes we have a certain profile of a candidate that we expect will succeed at a role; this may lead us to overlook qualified candidates who don't necessarily fit within that profile.

The numbers (priming a minority group)	Similar to the above, if a group is in the minority, suddenly all the stereotypes and assumptions we have about that particular group are primed, potentially leading us to apply them to the candidate regardless of their validity.
Clarity of information (lack of clear criteria)	If there's a lack of clear information or criteria, we're more likely to fill in the blanks with assumptions and biases.
The perceiver (time pressure and stress)	When someone is feeling threatened or stressed, they use all of their available cognitive resources to calm themselves and manage stress, leaving less to gather additional data.

Tool # 1 Hiring and Recruiting

Background to Using Equity Tools in Hiring and Recruitment

The purpose of this guide/manual is to provide guidance to [list out audiences] seeking to achieve more racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion (DEI) in their hiring processes, not for the sole purpose of DEI, but to retain and sustain a broader range of backgrounds and experiences in the workplace.

It's well founded that governmental institutions are structurally deficient at recruiting, hiring, and retaining employees of color. This deficiency can be due to a variety of systemic factors including 1) Challenged access and/or exclusion from social and professional networks 2) As well as implicit and explicit racial bias in hiring processes.

As our nation, counties, and cities become more diverse and as the challenges that departments face in addressing equity issues increase, municipal governments must strive to build cadres of professionals that can understand how to work with, support, and galvanize action through and across diverse communities.

When considering implementing an equity tool, it is important to consider the capacity your organization has to streamline "formal" and "informal" processes. Time, personnel, and resources all determine the length of time and style an organization can take to approach the hiring to onboarding to offboarding processes. The Equity Tool Framework offers techniques and processes that any organization can adopt and integrate. The better integrated, the better the outcomes of hiring and retaining quality candidates. Ultimately Equity Tools are a means to upholding value systems and accountability within an organization. The more investment there is up front, the greater the value of the return down the road.

When considering, starting a hiring and recruitment process here are prompting questions to use across steps in…

Hiring Committee

When considering the hiring committee, it's important to acknowledge who is prioritized, and who the Ideal 'talent' is. Questions and reflections that can help eliminate tendency toward bias include:

- [ ] Removing ‘like me’ bias. When considering candidates, it’s important to reflect on how a person compliments the team and the working environment they would be entering. Often, we can fall into a ‘like me’ bias where we tend to positively favor individuals who remind us of ourselves. While this isn’t always completely negative, it can alter the objectivity of scoring and also bias hiring people who share certain characteristics that aren’t always complimentary to the priorities of the team.
- [ ] Another important aspect of creating a hiring committee is including people from different levels within an organization, or key community partners in the process.
- [ ] The hiring committee should reflect the community that it is serving
- [ ] Considering the level of experience of those in the hiring committee is important when assessing candidates and their skills, particularly around the skills needed to successfully fill the position.
- [ ] The candidate should have exposure to diverse perspectives

Here are some examples of what can happen when there are no representative members of your team relating to the community being served:

- Hire candidates that may not understand the needs of the community they are working with
- Hire candidates that don’t understand the barriers that come with that community
- Hire candidates that have challenges being trusted by that community

The hiring committee should be involved with the writing of the job description, developing the interview process, and the interview itself. With consistent membership being part of this process from start to finish, it offers an opportunity to reflect on the job description prior to interviewing to ask “does this job description still meet the needs of the role today?” Understandably, the needs of a team can change over the course of recruitment and interviewing, and candidate interviews themselves can alter the notion of what a team discovers that they need.

Pre-posting

Pre-posting describes the process of articulating your goals, intended outcomes process, and accountability measures for the hire in the aim to better orient and align your next steps. **Pre-posting may include:**

- ☐ An initial discussion building shared understanding of where the position fits within your organizational chart including:
  - ☐ 1) who supervises the person,
  - ☐ 2) who they supervise,
  - ☐ 3) consideration of power dynamics, and
  - ☐ 4) impact of how the person's identity might impact these dynamics.
- ☐ A hiring committee can help maintain accountability by tracking the demographics of the candidate pool, and assessing if the pool reflects the population that person will serve.
- ☐ Naming equity principals that are core to the organization and team and what principals will be part of the position.

Posting

When posting requirements, it is important to reflect on who the requirements are including, and who they might inadvertently be excluding. Before posting, consider:

- ☐ Education requirements:
  - ☐ Education v. skills- what can be learned on the job vs. what is foundational for position
- ☐ Qualifications:
  - ☐ Minimum v. preferred qualifications. Including lived experience and the values that it brings to the role.
- ☐ Questions to consider:
  - ☐ What training would candidates have access to in this role that builds skills in subject area?
  - ☐ What skills/ talent does the candidate bring through their lived experiences that cannot be learned?
- ☐ Licensure/Certifications:
  - ☐ What trainings do you need to come in with v. ones you can get along the way

- ☐ Language:
  Culturally and gender inclusive
- ☐ Job Description:
  - ☐ Clear descriptions of roles and responsibilities on a "routine" basis. Including outcomes of roles & impact.

Sourcing

Have you considered where you are launching your recruitment process?

Typically the recruitment process considers *how* to implement promotion and messaging. Sourcing is a deeper way of thinking about recruitment, with a specific focus on *where* online and offline recruitment is happening, and how this impacts whose resume lands on the hiring manager's desk. When we are thinking about sourcing for a position, it is important to consider promoting the role to a wide range of networks and places online and offline.

- ☐ Determine if there is a need to allocate funding toward recruitment tools, like specific online affinity spaces (i.e., Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition, Showing Up For Racial Justice - www.surj.org) that provide access to spaces and groups beyond mainstream recruitment systems, as a means of intentionally connecting with wider and more diverse audiences

- ☐ Outreach: Intentional outreach will be an imperative part of the recruitment process. This looks like identifying people in your network bubble who are the focal point between your bubble and others beyond your immediate reach

  One way to identify these nuclei is by *asset mapping* or *social network mapping.* A team can do this collaboratively by writing out a list of individuals within each person's network. From there, duplicate individuals can be identified by team members and marked as "bridges." "Bridges" can be contacted for a deeper assessment of who is in their network extensions. When mapping out your network, make sure those you would contact to help with recruitment are in roles that align with the job values you seek and the community you serve.

Ultimately, sourcing is part of a bigger picture of *relationship building* within your organization and community at large.

Scoring

When scoring, utilizing an equity lens includes defining the guidelines of what is a “quality” answer. This will help ensure a consistent and equitable assessment of each candidate.
Preconceived notions can harm candidates and the entire hiring process. When commencing the interview process, to avoid influencing your opinion of a candidate over your colleagues, be it positive or negative, it is key to avoid discussing candidates ahead of the interview process. In the same regard, to offer candidates fair judgment, interviewers can be most considerate and least biased by *not researching candidates ahead of the interview process*. Looking candidates up on a professional network search engine is perfectly acceptable, but highly recommended to do *after the interview* is complete and scores are calculated. **Bottom line**, if recruitment and hiring is to be done in a fair and equitable manner, candidates should be offered the most unbiased space prior to their interview.

When used properly and consistently, *interview scorecards* can help level the playing field for candidates by creating a quantitative basis for comparison and validation, and enable you and your organization to improve hiring decisions over time.
An interview scorecard provides a quantitative basis for comparison between interviewers to more transparently validate your perceptions with your colleagues and learn where your ratings may lie outside of the average opinion, while providing a basis for comparison across candidates.

By correlating your predictions with candidates’ actual performance on the job, you can also get quantitative feedback about your accuracy at assessing various job criteria. Only by developing awareness of our own evaluative interview biases is it then possible to course-correct.

Sometimes, two rounds of scoring will be necessary to gain more clarity and make a decision on a candidate. This offers the opportunity to find consensus amongst a team when consensus is not achieved in one round.

Thinking about minimum v. essential skills, and considering a candidate’s potential to learn: when we score based on the skills a candidate would have coming into a position, it can be easy to fall into a misguided calculation bias of counting what they have in contrast to what they do not. It is useful to differentiate skills between minimal and essential skills when scoring. It is also important to think about a person’s potential to learn particular skills. For example, if someone already knows how to code, they have potential to learn how to build a website. As opposed to scoring against them for not having website design, they could earn points for having a foundation to learn more advanced skills.

Onboarding

Onboarding is when a new hire in an organization is strategically introduced to the company and its culture, and by which the new hire is given adequate tools to ensure their longevity in the company. Experts judge that this period is essential to retention and therefore deserves time and attention. Many experts support a one-year onboarding period but whether it is done accurately, depends on the organizational structure, size of the organization, commitment, culture, and resources available in the company.

Organizations can select for their onboarding process to be informal or formal. **Formal onboarding is highly suggested for high retention of new hires of all backgrounds, while keeping talent, and committed hires in the company.** See direct definition from the (Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 2010).

Elements of well-balanced onboarding include:
Onboarding is important because it helps set equal footing (IDEALLY!) for newly hired candidates. The expectation of quality onboarding is that people are holistically prepared for the SOP and culture of a space.

- Preparing candidates with a list of the criteria they will be evaluated on, and how their performance will be evaluated
- Learning policies and practices
- Standard operating procedures
- How to use tools
- Ethics trainings
- Organizational structure

Informal onboarding refers to the process by which an employee learns about his or her new job without an explicit organizational plan.

o Formal onboarding refers to a written set of coordinated policies and procedures that assist an employee in adjusting to his or her new job in terms of both tasks and socialization.

Onboarding has four distinct levels, the Four C's, that can happen all in tandem. While one might have more immediate priority over the other, we want to be clear the Four C's do not have to happen in silos, but can be occurring concurrently.

Compliance is the lowest level and includes teaching employees basic legal and policy-related rules and regulations.

Clarification refers to ensuring that employees understand their new jobs and all related expectations.

Culture is a broad category that includes providing employees with a sense of organizational norms— both formal and informal.

Connection refers to the vital interpersonal relationships and information networks that new employees must establish.

(Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 2010).

The explanation below focuses on Formal onboarding

Firstly, onboarding benefits from the structure of the team or leadership who oversees the process. Typically, this team is led by the HR staff, managers, or supervisors. The team can also be led by the direct report or supervisors/ managers, with check-ins from HR.

Pre-Onboarding Checklist

This is a good opportunity to plan onboarding around the skill sets in which people are entering the role. Onboarding should meet people where they are at -- this is where the equity lens can help to ensure the person is getting the right onboarding experience for them and efficiently using the organization's time.

- ☐ Invest in an online onboarding portal; this allows an organized setup for onboarding materials. Also, HR or supervisors can always keep track of the online onboarding process to track and monitor progress. Online onboarding portal may consist of the following:
- ☐ First-day information from the CEO, managers, and new teammates
- ☐ Glossary of the company acronyms
- ☐ A virtual copy of the employee handbook
- ☐ Job responsibilities
- ☐ Company’s culture

- [ ] Electronically versions of W-4 or I-9, benefits, and payroll forms

The automated online portal is also vital for Remote and Hybrid work conditions.

Do's of Onboarding

- Onboarding should not be confused with orientation, the process by which new hires are tasked to complete vital paperwork but with limited opportunity for training new hires.

Day 1 Onboarding:

- Provide the candidate an itinerary of key topics and details they will be thoroughly trained on. This offers the foresight and also the opportunity to identify topics they would like to be trained on not included in the itinerary.
- Building rapport entails making new hire introductions to existing staff members. Clarify job responsibilities and make sure rules and responsibilities are clear and outlined in how the new hire should behave and relate to current, existing staffers. Clarify the positions of other team members to prevent disdain between new and existing staff members.
- For diversity, inclusion, and equity as a whole, it is imperative for the onboarding team to foster an environment where new hires feel and know that their input matters and will be heard and engaged in decision-making.
  - Action steps to achieve this may include creating space for new hires to offer thoughts and feedback and transparently explain how that information will go into decision-making.

1-month check-in-

- Onboarding team to conduct check-in with the new hire. A direct report or supervisor/ manager along with HR may conduct the first month's check-in.
- Clear and open communication is key, this could determine the success or failure of new hire competency on the job.
- Selection of Mentor- New hire to make a selection of a coach or mentor. Studies find that fifty-six percent of respondents in an HR study reported that having a mentor at work was essential in the initial stages of the job. Such a strategy reduces lower-performing employers and increases high-performing talent. High-performing

organizations are two-and-a-half times more likely to assign a mentor or coach during the onboarding process.

Three to Six Months

- Onboarding Team or HR check-in and may follow up with the staff based on the employee and their role they serve in. Study shows that about 90% of employees decide whether to stay or go within the first six months. This process is crucial.

First Year

- Employee Performance Assessment- At the end of the first year, conduct an assessment with the employee. Then, begin to transition them into retention and employee satisfaction.
- Make a switch from on-the-job training to conversations about ongoing professional development.
- Seek professional development goals and methods from the employee, and build a plan tailored into the next assessment process that is attainable.

Retention

Retention is all about capacity and working within the capacity that you have to offer the highest potential of support to new, and existing, staff.

Professional Development Opportunities Based on Identity/ Job Responsibility - Creating support for professionals based on shared lived experiences & community while also providing opportunities for growth in job roles.

Creation of affinity spaces/identity groups based on:

- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- Culture
- Professional development
- Skills, interests, passions
- Job Role
- And other areas that might be sources of unity and connection

Affinity spaces provide access to groups you have something in common with but also offer access to individuals you might otherwise not interface with often if at all.

It is up to leadership to model such participation in these affinity spaces. It is important for leadership to be there to create an infrastructure for these conversations and connections to happen institutionally and not just informally "over lunch."

Evaluation process of current position & initiatives to promote
Mentorship Program

Addressing the hiring ladder. What degrees/education
Mentoring

Offboarding
Definition: "Offboarding is the process that leads to the formal separation between an employee and a company through resignation, termination, or retirement. It encompasses all the decisions and processes that take place when an employee leaves. This may include:

- Transferring that employee's job responsibilities
- Deactivating access rights and passwords
- Turning in equipment
- Conducting exit interviews to gather feedback

The interview process to gather feedback from the exiting employee is often an overlooked and undervalued part of the staffing transition, whether or not the employee is leaving on positive terms. It should be an opportunity for the organization to ask "how can we improve as a whole as we proceed?"

Exit interviews can be a space in which power dynamics can be at play, especially depending on the nature of the person's exit. Despite whether the person is leaving on good or bad terms, these interviews should be a neutral space to acquire feedback. Think to yourself "what is my relationship with this individual? Do I have a bias based on the nature of their departure? Based on that bias, is it appropriate for me to engage in the interivew? Will my bias hinder that outcome?"

Prior to the interview, if applicable, the person should submit their transition work plan and an edited version of their job description reflective of how they think the role should adjust. It could also be useful to suggest the person bring these materials with them to the interview for discussion.

Questions/content to be considered in an exit interview:

- Consider the physical environment in which the conversation takes place
- Consider how the exit interview is proposed
- Consider the questions being asked, and importantly, getting the questions to the individual ahead of the interview
- Is there room for the option of having an in person interview or can you submit your responses in writing
- Feedback on the job description. Did the description match reality?
- Questions about the culture of the workplace. What did working here feel like? What was cohesive? Where were there tensions? Were there avoidable issues and how could they be reconciled moving forward?
- Was the environment you were in conducive to risk taking, collaboration, problem solving, etc.?
- Did the person feel they had an opportunity to professionally develop? Did you feel stuck? Did you outgrow the role?
- What was your experience like in being managed? What was cohesive? Where were their tensions, and do you know what the roots of those tensions might be?
- Were you supported enough at the beginning to actively start your work?
- If you could go back in time, what kind of training do you wish you had? What training worked? What wasn't effective?

Who is the appropriate person to conduct the exit interview?

- Ideally, an HR representative would conduct the interview
- But what if you don't have that kind of resource? Who else in your organization doesn't have power of influence and could act as a relatively neutral party to conduct the interview? The objective is candor
- Asking the person who they would like to have the exit interview with is also an effective way to obtain candor
- Permitting the person to have an emotional support person (or pet!) with them is also an effective way to obtain candor

Now that the interview is over, how should this feedback be utilized?

- Whoever conducted the interview should bring the feedback back to the manager. It could be helpful to have a neutral individual to go through the feedback with the manager.
- Now that you have the revised version of the job description, those details should go out in the posting for the role

- Their feedback should also inform the onboarding plan of the new hire - training, process, etc.
- Circling back with the team about professional development

Succession planning

Succession planning is the process of keeping talent in the pipeline. "Keeping talent" can be inclusive of lateral and vertical internal hiring, but also identifying external talent to enter vacant positions. Succession planning is a great opportunity to lean on networks to identify talent within the community and expand the potential candidate pool to meet the needs of tomorrow.

Succession plans should be based on the reality that timelines and transitions may not occur in ideal circumstances. Oftentimes, succession comes in lieu of an employee transitioning without much notice. Therefore it is key to consider how your organization can have a ready-to-go contingency plan in the wake of a vacant role. Having up to date job descriptions and work plans should be prioritized when a position needs to be temporarily filled by an internal employee, and while the recruitment process for a new hire takes place simultaneously. This is a critical time to assess the position and reflect if the intention of the position and the job description is meeting the needs of the entire organization. This is a valuable time to evaluate needs and affect change. Be aware of a false sense of urgency to fill the position, and promote an environment of slow reflection. Get collective feedback from a wide range of colleagues who would be coming into contact with the positions - be they managers, peers, or people they have supervised - on the role and how it could be updated. The goal of succession planning is to make change as smooth as possible for all stakeholders. One step toward a smooth transition is to consider internal candidates with the skills, institutional knowledge, and ability to fill the role before looking outside the organization. Of course there will be times the latter is necessary but taking inventory of existing talent can be motivating for a team and build on pre-existing dynamics and relationships.

Recommended Steps for Internal Candidates

1. Introduce internal candidates to the role.
2. Explain what's involved and also offer an opportunity to share what their vision for the role is

Recommended Steps for External Candidates

1. Encourage colleagues to cast the position out to their networks
2. In doing so, encourage colleagues to reflect on their values in the context of the role and consider who might best align with those values in addition to experience. These are potential candidates who should be prioritized.

Selection

1. Go back to the Bias Checklist and the suggested steps in the hiring process.

2. Upon hiring, return to the onboarding process.

Transition

1. This will only occur when the person transitioning out has overlap with the person transitioning in. This most likely is going to happen when the job role is still occupied by the impending predecessor, and happens most often if the successor is an internal candidate. There is opportunity in this instance for mentoringship and direct training to happen.

Resource/Referrals – to be completed

- Frequently Asked Questions and Sources:
- Page, Kira. COCo. (March 2, 2020). “18 Ways We’ve Improved Our Hiring Process”. https://coco-net.org/18-ways-weve-improved-our-hiring-process.