



# Racial Equity Framework and Plan

## Building Capacity for a More Racially Equitable DC



**Since our founding in 2002, Fair Chance has been dedicated to supporting community-based nonprofits working in neighborhoods and areas of DC challenged by generational poverty. Moving forward, we are intentionally using a lens of racial equity to identify outcomes and strategies to enhance and complement our capacity building work.**

Over the past two years, through readings, trainings, surveys, and frequent facilitated conversations, Fair Chance staff and board have been on a journey to examine ourselves and our practices. We have illuminated blind spots and explored the role that bias and inequity have played in ourselves and the communities and nonprofits we serve. We have also looked at critical data such as the Urban Institute study “A Vision for an Equitable DC,” funded by the Meyer and Consumer Health Foundations. The study examined the state of equity among DC’s black, white, and Hispanic residents using ward-level data and contrasts the current reality with a vision for what equity would look like. Below are a few of the findings.

In a racially equitable DC...

- 33,000 more black residents and 12,000 more Hispanic residents would have high school degrees
- Almost 98,000 more black residents would have some college
- 24,000 more black residents and 2,200 more Hispanic residents would be employed, including 17,000 residents of wards 5, 7, and 8
- 970 more black mothers and 190 more Hispanic mothers would receive adequate prenatal care.
- Every resident would have access to safe neighborhoods, secure housing, nutritious food, and adequate health care services.

This vision is our inspiration. We cannot hope to give every child a fair chance to succeed if race-based barriers continue to hinder the fulfillment of Fair Chance's mission.

We are grateful for the insights and perspectives of the partners, alumni, community leaders, government agency representatives, and funders that joined Fair Chance’s board and staff in exploring how capacity building can contribute to a vision of a racially equitable DC. As a result, we created a racial equity framework to inform our path forward. Our core work will continue to be capacity building with community-based nonprofits - but we have now identified ways to improve and build upon the good work we have already been doing. We will hold ourselves accountable for implementing the specific long-term strategies identified in the framework.

The Fair Chance board and staff are pleased to share this document with you and we welcome your comments and feedback. Ongoing honest dialogue is the only way we will truly move as a collective community towards a vision of a more racially equitable DC.



Heather Peeler  
Board Chair



Gretchen Van der Veer  
Executive Director

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# Introduction

**Fair Chance envisions a city where every child succeeds. We strengthen the sustainability and performance of community-based nonprofits to achieve life-changing results for children and youth living in poverty. Since our founding in 2002, we've engaged more than 120 nonprofits serving nearly 100,000 children and youth in Washington, DC's neighborhoods most affected by poverty.**

**The very name Fair Chance acknowledges the existence of inequity in our society. Given the intersection of poverty and race in Washington, over the years Fair Chance has included cultural competency as a requirement for staff proficiency and sought to recruit a board and staff that reflect the diversity of our community.**

Building on these efforts, in 2014, Fair Chance board and staff launched a re-examination of our mission and intended impact. We clarified our mission statement and in 2015, re-affirmed our commitment to community-based nonprofits. At a board and staff retreat in March 2016, we asked ourselves how Fair Chance can better support our partners in “giving every child a fair chance to succeed.” We identified a core list:

- Identifying and improving a broad set of “life-changing” outcomes [1] for children from birth to young adulthood and for their parents.
- Focusing on neighborhoods where systemic forces have created inadequate conditions and opportunities for success.
- Building the capacity of community-based nonprofits working in these neighborhoods that have the trust of, reflect the perspectives of, and are often led and staffed by leaders with a commitment to the neighborhood.
- Supporting, acknowledging, and developing leaders of color from community-based nonprofits who are often from the neighborhood, and under-represented in nonprofit leadership roles across the sector.
- Strengthening and championing these organizations and leaders to funders, policy makers, and the public in general.

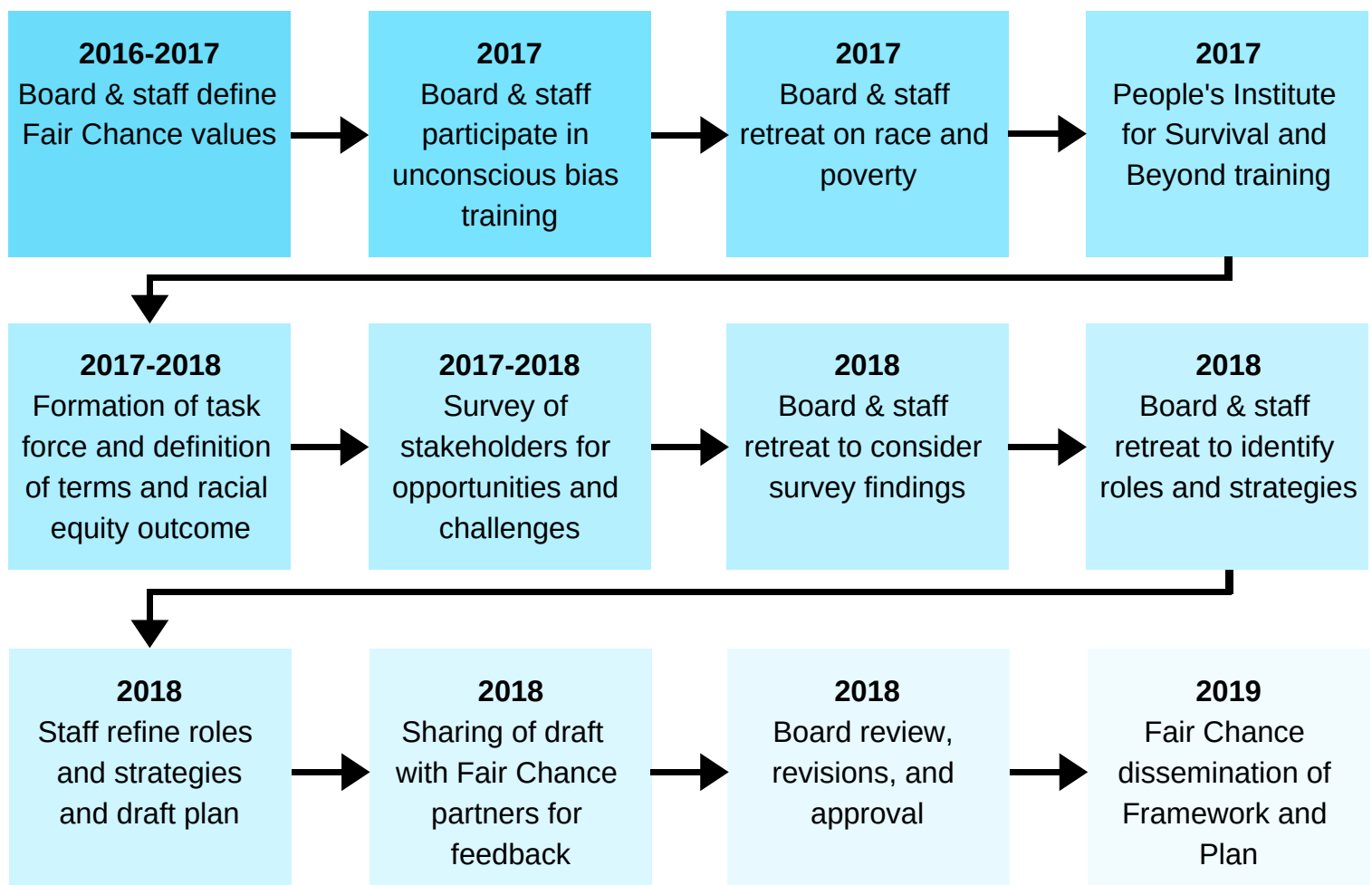
[1] In 2015, Fair Chance identified a set of predictive indicators by age-level and across four outcome domains: education achievement, health and well-being, housing and income, and community strengthening. Based on the extensive research of the Social Genome Project these indicators or milestones correlated significantly with an individual's prospects for “beating poverty”. We believe that by working with community-based nonprofits to ensure programs help children and youth achieve these predictive indicators, Fair Chance is helping children succeed. Therefore, these indicators on our “life-changing outcomes framework” are proxy indicators for giving children “a fair chance to succeed”.

# Developing the Framework

Fair Chance's development of a racial equity "lens" has evolved over the past two years into this document, a Racial Equity Framework (REF) – or plan – that we will use to examine our current efforts, guide our future work, and hold us accountable.

Our own journey at Fair Chance coincided with a growing awareness within the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors of the role of structural racism and racial inequity in perpetuating poverty. This inspired us and helped us recognize the urgency of addressing this as an organization, as well as exploring how individual and collective bias might be interfering with our ability to achieve our goals. Beginning in late 2016, we went through a season of collective conversations and trainings. Through this process, our board and staff committed to developing a deeper understanding of systemic racism and considering systemic issues as we design and deliver our work.

In the summer of 2017, Fair Chance formed a Racial Equity Task Force led by Capacity Building Specialist Reginald Grant. The Task Force laid out a timeline and process for developing the REF, with key activities illustrated below:



# Developing the Framework

## Values

We began our process by affirming Fair Chance's values and commitment to equity. We see these values as foundational to our organization and strive to balance all eight through our culture and practices because they reinforce each other. Our shared values are:

- **Accountability:** We hold ourselves accountable for the impact of our actions and regularly improve our work through analyzing key indicators of success.
- **Diversity:** We are people of multiple ethnicities, identities, perspectives, and life experiences. We respect how our diversity strengthens our work.
- **Equity:** We work to remove the structural barriers of racism and discrimination that continue to be historical drivers of poverty.
- **Innovation:** We build upon research and shared ideas to create ethical, forward-thinking solutions.
- **Impact:** We use data to continuously improve programs and operations to achieve life-changing results for children and youth living in poverty.
- **Leadership:** We model the effective nonprofit practices we teach and champion the role of community-based nonprofits.
- **Partnership:** We invest in developing long-term relationships of trust with leaders and organizations who work with children, youth, and families.
- **Sustainability:** We work with leaders to build strong, resilient, results-orientated community-based nonprofits.

# Developing the Framework

## Trainings

From our list of organizational values, we developed a group contract, a list of agreements for how we will “show up” and participate in group discussions in a manner respectful of our individual and collective experiences. Between Fall 2016 and Summer 2017, Board and staff also participated in the following trainings:

- Unconscious Bias Training facilitated by Cook Ross
- Undoing Racism Workshop guided by People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond
- An Education Session led by Equity in the Center and designed specifically for Fair Chance board members.

In Fall 2017, Fair Chance also took a preliminary step in engaging partner organizations in racial equity work, with Cook Ross providing a pro bono, day-long workshop on Unconscious Bias for the nonprofits participating in Impact Academy, Fair Chance’s two year capacity-building program.

# Developing the Framework

## Definitions[2]

To ensure that staff and board used common language when discussing matters of race, we identified and defined key terms to communicate concepts, share personal insights and reflections, and unpack each other's perspectives. While reading this Framework document, please refer to this list of common terms and definitions that have been a reference guide in our communication with each other throughout this process.

- **DIVERSITY:** refers to the varied social and cultural composition of a group along a range of dimensions such as race, ethnicity, class, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and many others. Because a group is diverse does not necessarily mean it is inclusive or practices equity.
- **RACE:** is a socially constructed concept categorizing groups of people based on physical characteristics (e.g. hair type, skin color, facial features). It has no biological basis in fact or scientific validity. It serves as a marker of historical and cultural marginalization and exploitation.
- **RACISM:** is a system and systemic process that operates at multiple levels (internal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural/structural) to benefit and privilege the dominant group and discriminate against and oppress people of color (in US society, white or Caucasian people are the dominant group).
- **RACIAL IDENTITY:** is an individual's or group's sense of who they are based on belonging to one or more racial or ethnic groups that are socially defined and set aside by socially-constructed boundaries. The strength of such identity is dependent on how much they have processed and internalized the historical, sociological, political and economic factors that impact people who perceive themselves, or are perceived, as being members of the group(s).
- **RACIAL EQUITY:** is the just and fair act of inclusion and access to power, resources, positive rewards or opportunities among all members of a society or a diverse group of people regardless of race or ethnicity. It includes paying attention to the need for redress for racial groups traditionally marginalized and discriminated against or historically disenfranchised.

[2] ADAPTED FROM WORKSHOP MATERIALS DEVELOPED BY JEFFREY BRANCH, CURDINA HILL, AND NANCY ZANE FOR THE WORKSHOP "DEVELOPING AND EQUITY LENS: INTEGRATING RACIAL EQUITY INTO YOUR CAPACITY BUILDING PRACTICE FACILITATION TEAM," PRESENTED AT THE ALLIANCE FOR NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT'S 2017 ANNUAL CAPACITY BUILDERS CONFERENCE



# Developing the Framework

## Definitions

- **IMPLICIT BIAS:** refers to the attitudes or stereotypes held about people of specific racial, ethnic or social groups that affect our understanding, actions or decisions in an unconscious manner.
- **INCLUSION:** describes the process and practice of bringing and engaging traditionally excluded or marginalized individuals and/or groups into organizational or institutional processes, activities, decision-making and/or policy-making.
- **INTERSECTIONALITY:** describes the interconnected nature of social categories like race, class, gender as applied to individuals and groups that create and reinforce overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantages.
- **WHITE SUPREMACY:** is a system and process of economic exploitation and dehumanization based on the belief and ideology that people of color are intellectually inferior to white people (within U.S. society and beyond).
- **DOMINANT-GROUP PRIVILEGE:** refers to the unearned and unquestioned set of advantages, entitlements, rewards or benefits which dominant group members (whites, Christians, males, heterosexuals) receive without having to earn or ask for them based on the social structure or system. They are bestowed automatically and unconsciously via this structure or system. Often these privileges are invisible to the receiver at an individual and group level.
- **RACIAL EQUITY LENS:** Using a racial equity lens means paying disciplined attention to race and ethnicity in examining and analyzing problems, looking for solutions, and defining success. It leads to increasing individual and a groups' skills and capacity to see patterns related to inequities, separating symptoms from causes, seeking effective strategies and solutions, and creating pathways for improving life chances, outcomes and success for all groups.

# Community Feedback

In late 2017, we began engaging our community to explore how Fair Chance is perceived in the Greater Washington Region. With the support of an external facilitator, Fair Chance conducted interviews with key stakeholders to elicit reactions from the following questions:

- How is Fair Chance viewed in the community in the context of racism and racial equity?
- How can Fair Chance be most effective in advancing racial equity with DC's nonprofit community serving children, youth, and families in poverty?
- What efforts, strategies, and initiatives already exist to advance racial equity with DC's nonprofit community serving children, youth, and families in poverty that Fair Chance should know about and could amplify?

The consultant conducted interviews, collected surveys, and facilitated focus groups with 33 individuals across all internal and external stakeholder groups (e.g., Fair Chance board members, Fair Chance partner and alumni organizations, institutional funders, individual donors and public-sector officials.) In early 2018, a recommendations report (see appendices) was submitted and a facilitator was hired to develop and lead two joint retreats of Fair Chance board and staff members. Fair Chance staff then used recommendations from the report and retreats to develop our racial equity outcome as well as our strategies for the future, which were reviewed and revised by board, staff, and the facilitator.

# Racial Equity Outcome

Informed by conversations with board and staff, the Task Force crafted the racial equity outcome Fair Chance ultimately aims to achieve through our mission and work:

A racially equitable DC is where every child succeeds. This condition is possible only when all children, youth, and families- regardless of zip code or Ward- have access to and benefit from:

- High-quality and equitable services such as (but not limited to) pre-natal care, school-readiness, out-of-school time programs, nutritious food, health care, affordable housing, employment credentialing, and job opportunities;
- Power in decision-making through leadership of and inclusion in the process when the above services are created, changed, or discussed; and
- Policies that promote equity in accessing or receiving services.

Our society relies on nonprofits to provide the bulk of these services as well as advocate for policy change. Fair Chance aims to achieve our racial equity outcome through our mission – strengthening the sustainability and performance of community-based nonprofits to achieve life-changing results for more children and youth – and through additional roles we can play.

Of course – because of the magnitude of historic and current systemic racism – success for every child requires more than the efforts of a single organization.

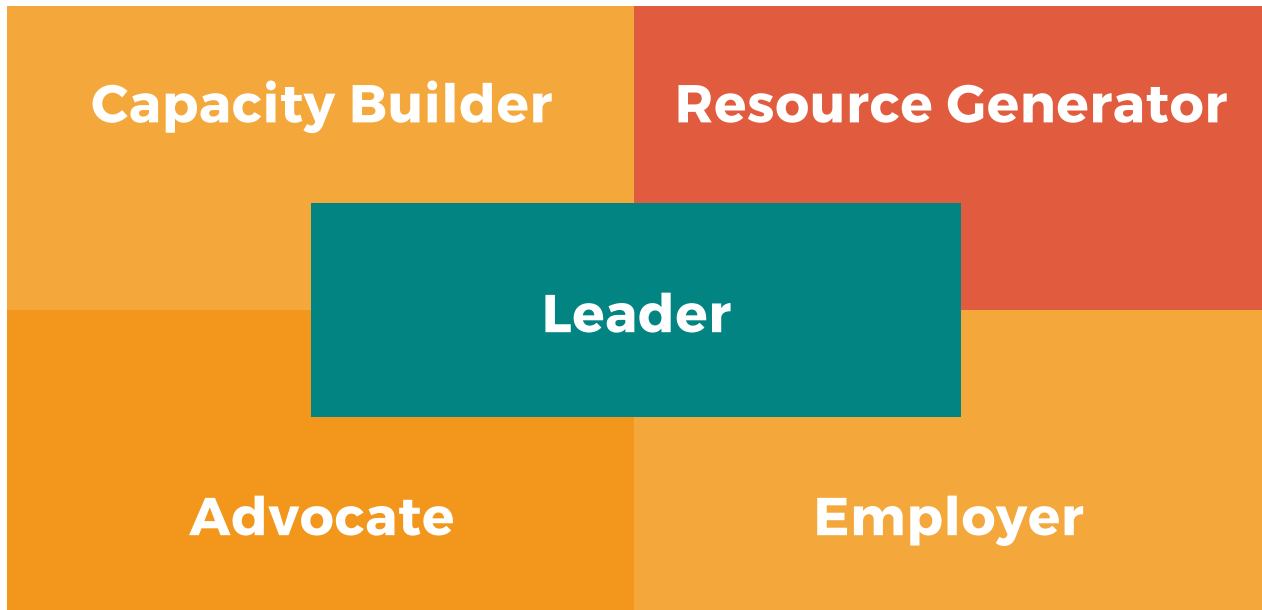
We exist within a larger eco-system of individuals, institutions, and forces in Washington, DC. We will actively seek to partner with – and amplify the good work of – others towards this outcome, as we advance our own efforts with commitment and humility.

The next section describes the roles and strategies we have identified to contribute to the outcome of a racially equitable DC, a city where every child succeeds.

We hold ourselves accountable to contributing to the racial equity outcome at an organizational and strategic level, with tactical accountability mechanisms assigned to each role. We will also utilize our Theory of Change, a graphic illustrating how and why our organization and programs create impact. Our Theory of Change (see appendices) includes high-level metrics which we monitor for a clear picture of our overall impact. It also illustrates the levers of change that Fair Chance uses in our work and is updated periodically to ensure the optimal combination of levers. We will also continue to update this document with a racial equity lens and with our racial equity outcome in mind.

# Racial Equity Outcome Strategies

Fair Chance will pursue our Racial Equity Outcome through the execution of five roles:



Within each of these roles are strategies we will embed within the organization and to which we will hold ourselves accountable. The strategies will inform our annual work planning including goals, activities, and deadlines. In addition:

- Accountability for each role will be assigned to specific organizational leaders.
- All board and staff members will be involved in some way in executing each role.
- Strategies defined in the core Leader role will provide a touchstone for other roles.



# Leader Role

**As a Leader** | We are committed to racial equity. We use our voice and influence to change inequitable systems and promote and implement equitable practices. We share our resources, achievements, and setbacks with the community and welcome our stakeholders to hold us accountable as we strive to achieve our racial equity strategies and outcome. Our visibility is a reflection of our authenticity. We fund and support internal and external activities that will advance this agenda and model racial equity in our own internal and external practices.

## STRATEGIES:

- Continue to increase staff and board knowledge of racial inequities and work on our own self-awareness.
- Be visible in our efforts and transparent in our actions to promote racial equity.
- Review our racial equity strategies on a regular basis and hold ourselves accountable.
- Apply a racial equity lens to our internal and external practices.
- Intentionally seek to include all voices/perspectives and experiences as we do our work.
- Recruit a diverse board that includes expertise on and experience with the nonprofit sector, racial equity, and poverty issues.

# Capacity Builder Role

**As a Capacity Builder** | We strengthen the sustainability and performance of individual nonprofits in ways that also increase their ability to address racial inequity. We consistently work to strengthen the nonprofit sectors' ability to address racial inequity and the structural barriers of racism.

## STRATEGIES:

- Continue to learn and expand our expertise, to find and create tools, techniques and approaches to address racial equity at the micro and macro level in our capacity building.
- Design and refine our programs, including our selection process, to foster racial equity.
- Build, develop and support the program team to deepen its capacity for doing racial equity work.
- Foster a team culture with intentional program team development to support bringing full self to capacity building work and the team.
- Expand our community engagement and build relationships to foster racial equity.

# Resource Generator and Connector Role

**As a Resource Generator and Connector** | Due to historic and current systemic racism that has created and sustained wealth and poverty in this country, community-based organizations and their leaders have not received equitable support and access. A growing body of research [3] reports nonprofits operating in neighborhoods of Color are smaller (budget, staff and program size) and more vulnerable to failure in their service delivery efforts. Therefore, we engage and educate institutional and individual donors, the general public, and partners on the critical role that community-based nonprofits play in fostering a more equitable society for children, youth and families.

## STRATEGIES:

- Educate funders regarding the need for unrestricted operational support and racially equitable grant making policies so smaller community-based nonprofits, embedded in neighborhoods of high concentrated poverty, have access to sustainable resources.
- Host, convene, and connect diverse funders, resources, and skilled volunteers to our partners and alumni.
- Support a network of youth- and child-serving nonprofit partners through shared services.
- Create and connect a diverse community of friends, advocates, and donors who are advancing racial equity.
- Share ideas, information, and research with partners and community.

[3] Yeheskel, Z., Hasenfeld, M., Garrow, E., Parent, B., and Guihama, J. Spread thin: human services organizations in poor neighborhoods: State of the Nonprofit Sector in Los Angeles Report. Center for Civil Society: UCLA, 2013.

How African-American-Led Organizations Differ from White-Led Organizations: Research report on African-American non-profit organizations in Philadelphia; study commissioned by the Philadelphia African-American Leadership Forum, 2016.

# Advocate Role

**As an Advocate** | We are committed to educating funders and policy makers about the important role that community-based nonprofits play in addressing the needs of children, youth, and families in the city's neighborhoods most challenged by poverty. We tell stories about how these organizations, often disenfranchised because of institutional and systemic biases in funding policies and practices, have deep trust in and knowledge of the communities they serve and are therefore, best positioned to achieve innovations and lasting change. We also support these organizations in advocating for themselves.

## STRATEGIES:

- Develop an advocacy agenda specifying issues we care about, such as quality direct services, sustainable nonprofits and equitable policies.
- Collaborate with our partners and pool resources to advance our shared advocacy platform.
- Create intentional relationships and more deeply engage with our community.
- Educate policymakers on issues facing community-based nonprofits.
- Engage in coalitions dealing with youth issues in DC.



# Employer Role

**As an Employer** | We recruit, select, and on-board a diverse workforce. We create and maintain a culture and work environment of excellence, where all employees are respected, heard, willing to lean in to self-awareness of their own privileges and biases, and reflect on how those might impact their work and collaboration with the team.

## STRATEGIES:

- Develop hiring goals and recruitment plans that include specific efforts to recruit candidates of color.
- Introduce new and potential staff to our Racial Equity Framework roles and strategies through our onboarding process and provide ongoing, staff-wide trainings/professional development on racial equity.
- Create and monitor Human Resources policies that promote racial equity.

# Going Forward

In June of 2018, Fair Chance shared the consultant recommendations from the stakeholder conversations along with our preliminary thinking on the above strategies with a focus group of 12 Fair Chance current partners and alumni. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive with particular interest around resource connection, advocacy (particularly around the value of community-based nonprofits), and the role that Fair Chance might play in helping nonprofit Executive Directors have conversations with their boards around the impact of structural racism on the communities they serve.

These strategies are long-term with a horizon of 3-5 years, however, we will thoughtfully prioritize and sequence specific strategies through our annual planning processes dependent on ongoing stakeholder feedback and funders/donors willing to fund this important work.

Moving forward, we commit to regular consultation with stakeholders regarding our progress. Accountability is one of Fair Chance's values and we will intentionally seek feedback and track measures against our outcome. With the approval of this Racial Equity Framework Plan, we will disseminate our intentions and communicate our desired outcomes and strategies to our stakeholders. The above strategies are long-term. Given our resources, Fair Chance will monitor areas of our plan; giving priority on critical emerging issues. We will track progress quarterly and review our work on an annual basis.

# Acknowledgements

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**And to:**

Our nonprofit partners, funders, friends and the entire staff and board of Fair Chance, who dedicated nearly two years to critical conversations that produced this work and who are committed to continuing the journey.

**We could not have produced this work without you.**



**Fair Chance**  
EVERY CHILD SUCCEEDS

## Appendix A

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# Introduction

## Background

Fair Chance is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to strengthen the sustainability and performance of community-based nonprofits to achieve life-changing results for children and youth living in poverty in Washington, DC. Since 2002, it has provided customized capacity-building services and supports for more than 100 small-medium sized (as measured by budget) nonprofit organizations to ensure that every child gets the fair chance to succeed that she/he deserves. As a responsive capacity-builder, Fair Chance has iterated its offerings throughout the years to meet the myriad and dynamic needs of its core constituents (Fair Chance Partner Organizations). Recently, the Board of Directors and staff of the organization adopted the understanding that systemic racism is a significant factor in perpetuating poverty. Thus, Fair Chance has embarked on the development of a racial equity lens through which the organization will examine its work. An initial step in building the racial equity lens centers around Fair Chance's staff and board learning more about how the organization is perceived in the Greater Washington Region. Stakeholders including DC youth, Fair Chance board members, Fair Chance Partner Organizations (current and alumni), institutional funders, individual donors and public-sector officials were consulted. To assist the Fair Chance staff with this process, Fair Chance contracted with Emergent Pathways, LLC, a management consulting firm that works to increase positive life outcomes for all children, youth and families by building and implementing strategies for racial equity, gender equity and social justice with its partners, to engage with a set of external stakeholders to build an understanding of the following queries:

- How is Fair Chance experienced in the community in the context of racism and racial equity?
- How can Fair Chance be most effective in advancing racial equity with DC's nonprofit community serving children, youth, and families in poverty?
- What efforts, strategies, and initiatives are already being used to advance racial equity with DC's nonprofit community serving children, youth, and families in poverty?

Emergent Pathways' work was conducted by its founder and principal, E. Bomani Johnson. In addition to having a 15-year career working in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors in Greater Washington, Johnson has more than 10 years of additional professional experience as a philanthropic advisor and strategist, community organizer, youth development practitioner and program designer focused on stewarding and effectively shepherding resources to communities of color for local, national and international organizations.

The following document provides a summary of the process and key findings from the stakeholder engagement activities conducted between December 2017 and February 2018. Information was gathered utilizing survey, individual interview and focus group methodologies.

## Interview Process

Fair Chance provided a list of interview questions and made initial contact with 33 external stakeholders for individual interviews. Johnson was able to schedule and conduct 13 interviews with 14 stakeholders, and one focus group with seven stakeholders between December 18, 2017 and February 23, 2018. Data was collected to adequately answer the questions about how Fair Chance is perceived, and how Fair Chance can contribute to building a racially equitable Washington, DC. Limited information about current efforts, strategies and initiatives to advance racial equity amongst the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors in Washington, DC is included as well. Additional details about nonprofit and philanthropic efforts to explicitly address systemic racism in Washington, DC will be provided.

## Interviews/Stakeholder Summary

A total of 13 interviews with 14 stakeholders were conducted between December 18, 2017 and February 23, 2018. The interviewees included 6 people from the philanthropic sector (staff/board of institutional funders and individual donors); 2 people from the public sector; and 6 people from the nonprofit sector (3 staff of current/alumni Fair Chance Partner Organizations, and 3 from strategic partners/other nonprofits). Combined, this group of people represented entities that have 238 total years of experience serving children, youth and families of the DC area in various capacities. The stakeholders' lengths of service to this population ranged from less than one year to more than 37 years. Thirteen of the 14 stakeholders interviewed were women, and their respective roles included executive directors/CEOs of nonprofits, senior staff of nonprofits, program officers and program directors of philanthropies, trustees/donors of philanthropies, and program directors of government agencies. The interviews were conducted via telephone, using a conference call service. Each interview was recorded and transcribed by the same conference call service. **Given the sensitive nature of the content shared during the interviews, the actual recordings and transcripts will not be made available to Fair Chance to honor the privacy of the stakeholders.** Some direct quotes from the interviews will be shared with Fair Chance to provide additional clarity of the feedback and recommendations, if needed. The actual time of the interviews ranged from 39 minutes to 68 minutes, with most being concluded in approximately 50 minutes from beginning to end.

In order to gauge the range of knowledge and understanding of the interviewees, a short survey was conducted at the beginning of each interview. The table indicates the stakeholders' self-reported levels of knowledge of four areas relevant to this process. Interviewees were asked to assign a numeric value according to the following scale:

On a scale of 1 - 4,

- 1 - no knowledge;
- 2 - little knowledge;
- 3 - somewhat knowledgeable (basic/introductory knowledge);
- 4 - very knowledgeable

Knowledge of:	Median Score	High Score	Low Score	Most Common Score
Community of NPOs serving Black children youth and families who are low-income in DC	3.083	4	2	3 (4) 3.5 (4)
Fair Chance	2.883	3.6	2	3 (6)
Racism in general	3.125	4	2	3 (8)
How racism impacts the lives of Black children youth and families that are low-income in DC	3.020	4	2	3 (4)

The following questions were asked of all the interviewees:

#### Identifier Questions

1. How long has your organization been supporting children, youth and families in Washington, DC?

For questions 2 - 5, please give a numeric response based on the following scale:

1 - no knowledge; 2 - little knowledge; 3 - somewhat knowledgeable; or 4 - very knowledgeable

2. How would you describe your level of knowledge about the community of nonprofit organizations that serve Black children, Black youth and Black families that are low-income in Washington, DC?
3. How would you describe your level of knowledge about Fair Chance?
4. How would you describe your level of knowledge about racism in general?
5. How would you describe your level of knowledge about how racism impacts the lives of Black children, Black youth and Black families that are low-income in Washington, DC?

#### Content Questions

1. How do you define racism?
2. What do you believe the role of racism is in the perpetuation of poverty in DC, for children, youth and families?
3. How would you describe Fair Chance's mission in your own words?
4. What do you see as the current role(s) of Fair Chance with DC's nonprofit community serving children, youth, and families in poverty? What impact is Fair Chance having?
5. How would you define racial equity in the context of DC's nonprofit community serving children, youth, and families in poverty?
6. How does Fair Chance help or hinder in the creation of a more racially equitable DC?
7. What should Fair Chance's future role or roles be with DC's nonprofit community serving children, youth, and families in poverty?
8. What are the top 2-3 things Fair Chance can do to better advance racial equity with DC's nonprofit community serving children, youth, and families in poverty?
9. What do you believe would be the most **desirable** outcome of racial equity work engaged in and/or facilitated by Fair Chance?

10. What do you believe would be the most **realistic** outcome of racial equity work engaged in and/or facilitated by Fair Chance, if different from the most desirable?

Information from the interviews is included in the Summary of Key Findings section of this report.

### **Adult Focus Group Summary**

On January 10, 2018 a focus group was conducted with 7 people who are members of Fair Chance's current Executive Directors Leadership Community cohort. Four members participated in person; three members participated via conference call. Four of the seven participants were women, three were men. The focus group lasted for approximately 54 minutes, and the following questions were asked:

1. How do you define racism?
2. What do you believe the role of racism is in the perpetuation of poverty in DC?
3. How would you describe Fair Chance's mission in your own words?
4. How does Fair Chance help or hinder in the building of a more racially equitable DC?
5. What are the top two - three things Fair Chance can do to better advance racial equity in Washington, DC?
6. What do you believe would be the most desirable outcome of racial equity work engaged in or led-by Fair Chance?

Information gathered during the Focus Group is included in the Summary of Major Findings section of this report.

### **Youth Focus Group Summary**

A focus group that included three youth participants from two Fair Chance Partner nonprofits was conducted. The Youth Focus Group was facilitated by a Fair Chance staff member. The following questions were asked during the focus group:

1. What unique role do youth currently have in advancing racial equity? What role could youth play?
2. What should older generations understand about racism or racial equity that they do not appear to understand?
3. Do you experience racism from other children and youth? If so, please explain.
4. Do you feel there is a constructive role for community-based nonprofits to play in reducing or eliminating racism among children and youth? If so, please explain. (This question was changed during the focus group to - How can [your organization] help address racism that is targeted to youth?)
5. What assets, strategies, or initiatives exist within youth leaders, organizations, networks, or community to advance racial equity?

6. Are there any ways in which youth would like to partner with older generations to help improve DC's nonprofit community serving children, youth, and families in poverty?

Information from the Youth Focus Group is included in the Summary of Major Findings section of this report.

### **Board Survey Summary**

A survey was given to the 13-member Board of Directors. Seven responses were received. The following four questions were asked in the survey:

1. How would you define racial equity in the context of DC's nonprofit community serving children, youth and families in poverty?
2. Does Fair Chance help or hinder racial equity with DC's nonprofit community serving children, youth and families in poverty? Or does both -- helps and hinders. Please explain.
3. What are the top 2-3 things Fair Chance can do to better advance racial equity with DC's nonprofit community serving children, youth and families in poverty? In other words, what should Fair Chance do differently, in terms of mission, strategy, governance, operations, programs or communication (or anything else) either internally or externally?
4. What do you believe would be the most realistic outcome of racial equity work engaged in and/or facilitated by Fair Chance?

Information from the survey responses is included in the Summary of Major Findings section of this report.

## Summary of Major Findings

### 2.1 How is Fair Chance experienced in the community?

The information from the stakeholders was overwhelmingly positive. Many lauded the invaluable services that Fair Chance has provided as a capacity builder for smaller nonprofits since its inception. Several comments were repeated by multiple stakeholders when describing the past and current impact of Fair Chance. The most commonly repeated responses are as follows:

- The focus on building the capacity of nonprofits - mostly smaller, neighborhood-based nonprofits that are often overlooked for support by the public and philanthropic sectors;
- Improving the operational and administrative capacity of nonprofits serving children youth and families living in poverty, thus having a positive impact on their lives;
- Serving as an advocate for the nonprofit sector - as it relates to raising funds from the public sector.

Stakeholders also believed that Fair Chance can leverage its unique position as an organization with numerous relationships in the nonprofit, philanthropic and public sectors to do the following:

- Amplify the voice of small nonprofits - promoting their value as integral to the effectiveness of public and philanthropic sector efforts;
- Amplify the need for racial equity to be central to the values and approaches of entities and people in the nonprofit, public and philanthropic sectors;
- Help with creating a multi-sector, working definition of racial equity, and
- Help with advocating for legislative changes to create a more racially equitable DC.

#### ***Clarity on Fair Chance's Mission***

All of the stakeholders who participated in the interviews, adult focus group and Board survey understand that Fair Chance's mission is to build the capacity of nonprofits in Washington, DC. While I believe that each of the people interviewed understand that Fair Chance contributes to uplifting impoverished children, youth and families through the work of building the capacity and effectiveness of the nonprofits serving them, not all of them stated this when asked to restate the mission in their own words. All of the stakeholders interviewed mentioned Fair Chance Partner Organizations' respective work with children, youth and families, and how Fair Chance enhances this work via its services. Therefore, I am confident that anyone familiar with the organization knows that its mission centers on building the capacity of nonprofits serving children, youth and families in Washington, DC.

#### ***Fair Chance's Impact***

Stakeholders mentioned a variety of contributions that Fair Chance has made to the nonprofit sector in Washington, DC. The major value-add came as a result of the following:

- The building of nonprofit capacity (most impactful);
- The strength of the customized approach and subsequent variety of supports provided. Specific supports mentioned included executive director support through formal and informal coaching, the Executive Directors Leadership Community for helping to build relationships and networks amongst leaders and the Fair Chance Partner Organizations more broadly;
- The “seal of approval” resulting from participation and completion of Fair Chance’s program was mentioned by philanthropic sector representatives;
- The support provided to nonprofits that are not Fair Chance Partner Organizations (e.g. work with DC Alliance of Youth Advocates and Teaching for Change);
- Serving as an advocate for nonprofits - ranging from speaking for increased funding for the small nonprofits, specifically, and the nonprofit sector to broadening the perspectives and understandings of policy makers and funders about the importance and value of small nonprofits; and
- Supporting nonprofit collaboration (facilitating processes for collective action around funding) and other issues.

### **Fair Chance and Racial Equity - Help or Hinder?**

During the interviews and the Adult Focus Group the question, “How does Fair Chance help or hinder in the building of a more racially equitable DC?” was asked. Stakeholders shared that Fair Chance does both. The following summarizes the most commonly shared responses from the stakeholders.

#### **Help with Building of Racial Equity**

Stakeholders felt that Fair Chance builds a more racially equitable DC by:

- Focusing on building capacity for small, people of color-led nonprofits that are usually overlooked and/or not considered for support from the public and philanthropic sectors;
- Helping to build strong, diverse leadership in the nonprofit sector;
- Raising the issue/need to focus on racial equity;
- The fact that the partner organizations support children, youth and families of color was mentioned by several respondents. This point was mentioned by two people interviewed and was alluded to in four of the Board surveys. **Emergent Pathways sees these statements as indication of the need for training on understanding the existence and impacts of systemic racism is highlighted by these responses.**

#### **Hinders the Building of Racial Equity**

Stakeholders mentioned that Fair Chance hinders the building of a more racially equitable DC because:

- It is a White-led organization, serving a relatively large number of organizations that are White-led and primarily serving communities of color and the number of White-led organizations serving communities and people of color is an issue. \*White-led in this



case is defined as an organization with staff leadership (president, CEO, executive director, etc.) who racially identifies as White.

- It lacks an advocacy agenda and lack of focus on supporting organizations that focus on organizing and addressing systems change. The percentage of direct service groups being supported by Fair Chance, far outweighs the percentage of advocacy/organizing organizations being supported;
- The selection process for choosing Partners privileges organizations that are better-resourced than many small, neighborhood-based organizations with indigenous leadership
- More than one stakeholder mentioned that Fair Chance must be aware and “stop boosting the “White savior” narrative. The use of participants of Partner Organizations during the gala was cited.

## **2.2 How can Fair Chance be most effective in advancing racial equity in Washington, DC?**

A large majority of the stakeholders (25 of 29) who provided information believe that Fair Chance could be instrumental in building a more racially equitable DC, serving as a leader within the nonprofit sector; helping to broker strong nonprofit sector and cross-sector partnerships; and as a thought leader in the nonprofit, philanthropic and public sectors. Fair Chance’s numerous nonprofit relationships, emerging partnerships in the public sector, and the respect it has built with local philanthropic entities was highlighted as a major strength and resource. A clarion call was made for Fair Chance to use its platform to amplify the voices of nonprofits (individually and as a sector) in defining racial equity, designing and implementing strategies thru a racial equity lens.

Responses to queries to solicit suggestions for Fair Chance’s way forward are categorized as External and Internal. External refers to actions that will impact Fair Chance’s communications, programming and other activities designed to have an impact outside of the organization. Internal refers to actions that will impact Fair Chance’s vision, mission, goals, policies, procedures and structure.

### **External**

Stakeholders believed that Fair Chance should use its unique positioning to broker stronger relationships between small nonprofits led by People of Color and the philanthropic and/or public sectors. The aforementioned was shared in eleven of the thirteen interviews. These sentiments were echoed by 5 people in the Adult Focus Group and reflected in 4 of the Board surveys. Seven of the thirteen interviews and several in the Adult Focus Group mentioned that Fair Chance could be instrumental in helping to develop a definition for racial equity that can then be applied to the specific issues and populations being served by the nonprofits in planning, implementing and measuring their respective work. Several stakeholders said that Fair Chance should retool all of its services/offerings to center on racial equity so that alumni, current and future Partners can build racial equity into their respective organizations. A few also mentioned that Fair Chance should train or provide access to anti-racism or racial equity training for all of its Partners.

## **Internal**

Five interviewees, the Adult Focus Group and four of the Board surveys alluded to internal development that Fair Chance must do to address its own shortcomings with regard to racial equity. Points included increasing the diversity of the Board of Directors; building an advocacy agenda aimed at eliminating systemic racism; and having a more equitable Partner Selection Process (that does not inadvertently disadvantage organizations led by People of Color); and having on-going training for staff and Board members. A few partners encouraged Fair Chance to go deep, and to not settle for “box-checking” forms of racial equity (i.e. one day trainings that do not result in actions; being satisfied with having conversations, but not implementing real changes in the organization).

## **2.3 What efforts, strategies, and initiatives are already being used to advance racial equity with DC’s nonprofit community serving children, youth, and families in poverty?**

All of the following lists were compiled using minimal research methods. Emergent Pathways recommends that mapping the landscape of DC organizations explicitly working to advance racial equity be considered.

### DC area nonprofits working to advance racial equity

Black Lives Matter DC

Bread for The City

Fair Chance

Jews United for Justice

One DC

Philanthropies explicitly working via racial equity lens

### Local/regionally focused foundations

Consumer Health Foundation

Meyer Foundation

Horning Family Fund

Weissberg Foundation

\*WRAG Racial Equity Working Group

\*Foundation that has yet to announce its work publicly

### Locally-based, nation/international foundations

Hill-Snowdon Foundation

\*Open Society Foundations

\*Public Welfare Foundation

\*Casey Family Programs (DC Office)

\* - foundations with anti-racism or racial equity initiative(s)

# Recommendations

Stakeholders shared numerous ideas for ways that Fair Chance could best contribute to the building of a more racially equitable DC. The following recommendations were developed by Emergent Pathways based on conversations with members of the Fair Chance Racial Equity Task Force and analyzing the information received from numerous external stakeholders.

## 3.1 Internal Development

- Fair Chance staff and Board of Directors should engage in training on understanding the existence and impacts of systemic racism (Responsive Philanthropy in Black Communities (ABFE), Building Racial Equity (Race Forward) Undoing Racism (PISAB)).
- Conduct a racial equity audit of organizational vision, values, mission, goals, policies and practices to set benchmarks, short-term and long-term plans to advance and operationalize racial equity within Fair Chance;
- Select Racial Equity Impact Assessment Tool(s) to be used - suggestion that you modify existing tools to create the assessment that works for Fair Chance instead of creating a new assessment;
- Select an outside partner to lead/support the organization throughout the process; but most immediately in creating a basic roadmap (activities, learnings, timelines, resources) for making concrete and doable changes that will move the organization toward racial equity, while building new and maintaining (potentially modifying) existing relationships with key stakeholders (primarily Partner Organizations and funders/supporters);
- Provide regular updates to external stakeholders who have participated in the process - using existing communications resources (monthly newsletter, social media pages/sites, etc.);
- Create/ solidify internal Racial Equity Task Force for the Fair Chance Staff - empowered by (or including) the executive director - to assign work and authorize use of resources, facilitate the forward progress of these efforts, and serve as liaison with outside partner.

## 3.2 External Offerings

### Existing Offerings

- Current programmatic offerings should remain in place for the current cohort of Fair Chance Partner Organizations; future offerings should focus on capacity building within a racial equity framework
- The Racial Equity Task Force should lead the racial equity audit process for the existing programs and offerings, and make recommendations for modifications;
- Fair Chance should develop a strategic communications plan for the public and for stakeholders (nuanced based on commitments and existing relationships);
- Map current and future racial equity efforts happening in the local nonprofit sector - potentially serving as a convener for nonprofits and liaison with other sectors.

### **3.2 External Offerings (continued)**

New Offerings to consider

- Fair Chance Advocacy Agenda - to amplify the voices of the nonprofit sector; advocate for policies and systems changes that will benefit children, youth and families and the nonprofits that serve them; being a vocal proponent of racial equity in the city
- Racial Equity Gatherings - lead/co-sponsor series of cross-sector meetings, in varying formats, to create working definitions of racial equity that are informed by those most impacted by systemic racism, and co-created with representatives from the nonprofit, philanthropic and public sectors;
- Racial Equity Literacy - Support racial equity, undoing racism, and community organizing trainings for Partners and the broader nonprofit sector.

### **Conclusion**

Stakeholders gave generously of their time for the interviews and the focus group for this phase of the Fair Chance Racial Equity Framing Process. A great deal of information was gathered, which will be valuable in further analysis of Fair Chance's current contributions to its Partners and the nonprofit sector more broadly. This information will also help Fair Chance to develop a plan for internal growth and external effectiveness by operationalizing racial equity.

Emergent Pathways LLC looks forward to Fair Chance's feedback on this document and is available to support Fair Chance in future phases of this critical undertaking.