



# Racial Equity Pledge

The CDC field began in the 1960s as an offspring of the civil rights movement with many communities of color organizing to save their neighborhoods from urban renewal, disinvestment, and speculative development. During the ensuing decades dozens of more CDCs were formed under varying circumstances and contexts and some non-profits joined the CDC field as their priorities and programs evolved. Throughout, racial justice has been a core value for the movement and for MACDC itself. At the same time, the community development field itself has struggled with the same issues that impact our larger society and our reality has yet to match our aspirations, even as we continue the work.

In the summer of 2020, when there was a surge in civil rights actions because of the killing of George Floyd and other people of color, CDCs, individually and collectively, joined with others to speak out against injustice and to reflect on their own practices and culture. Community organizers from CDCs across the state came together to push for more racial equity within the CDC movement. They asked MACDC's leadership to embrace a racial equity pledge to be shared with its members. MACDC's board voted to establish a committee to work with the organizers to develop this pledge and a plan for implementation. MACDC hired All Aces, a racial equity consulting firm, to assist with this process. The MACDC Board of Directors encourages its members to discuss the pledge with board members and staff and sign the pledge as a step toward our collective effort to make our movement and our organizations more diverse, inclusive, and equitable.

Racial inequities are systemic, complex, and deeply entrenched in the communities we work. There are four levels of racism that afflict our organizations and society:

- Internalized racism lies within individuals.
- Interpersonal racism (personally mediated) occurs between individuals.
- Institutional racism occurs within institutions and systems of power.
- Structural racism is racial bias among institutions and across society.



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Member organizations across Massachusetts serve diverse populations, hold a variety of roles within their communities, and represent a range of experience with racial equity work. The intention of this pledge is to disrupt systems within the community development field that produce racial inequity. It provides a roadmap for MACDC member organizations to identify and commit to the values articulated below and to take specific, actionable steps toward racial equity within the context of their community and mission. We expect organizations to hold each other accountable to the commitments made in this pledge and to report on their progress toward accomplishing their goals. MACDC will work with its members to develop mechanisms to do this, including data collection and regular convenings.

By signing this pledge, Valley Community Development (organization name) agrees to embrace the four values listed below and commits to implementing at least one specific action toward advancing each of these values within the next year. Signatories are also committing to participate in our collective efforts to support each other and hold each other accountable in this work.

1. We commit to learning and addressing the different levels of racism so we can take action to dismantle those inequities.
2. We believe that our staff should be diverse, equitable, inclusive, and representative of the communities we serve.
3. We believe that our board should be diverse, equitable, inclusive, and representative of the communities we serve.
4. We believe in authentic representation in our programming/services.



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## **Strategic Actions**

To support CDCs in implementing the pledge, we have developed a list of possible action steps that we think can help advance these values. This is a living document, and more ideas will be added as CDCs and others bring us new ideas. The suggestions here can also be modified and tweaked to reflect local and organizational context. While we have listed ideas in the context of specific value statements, some of these actions listed below can advance two or more of the values.

### **I. Root Causes**

**We commit to learning and addressing the different levels of racism so we can take action to dismantle those inequities:**

- Hold regular (quarterly, annually, etc.) anti-racist trainings for both staff and board members.
- Make anti-racist training part of on-boarding new staff members.
- Regularly read or view materials that enhance individual and shared understanding of DEI concepts, past and present racial discrimination, and other systems of oppression.
- Establish an active racial equity team or committee which includes board members, and/or an Equity Officer position, to look at all the work the organization does through a racial-equity lens. This work should not be an “add on” to staff members' regular responsibilities but should be considered part of their regular job responsibilities.



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## II. Representation: Staff

**We believe that our staff should be diverse, equitable, inclusive, and representative of the communities we serve:**

- Gather and analyze disaggregated data about the racial make-up of your organization and its community and make a commitment to ensuring that staff, at all levels, and their contractors reflect the racial and ethnic makeup of the communities they serve.
- Update job descriptions by incorporating DEI work and non-traditional skill sets.
- Provide mentoring and professional development opportunities to staff members and look for opportunities to promote from within.
- Create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive leadership team by examining and updating recruitment, hiring and promotion practices.
- Include a salary range on all job postings in order to signal a commitment to equity, trust, transparency, and respect.
- Set ambitious supplier diversity goals for consultants, construction, property management and all outside vendors and establish specific strategies for achieving those goals.



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## III. Representation: Board

**We believe that our board should be diverse, equitable, inclusive, and representative of the communities we serve:**

- Set specific goals for diversity and inclusion on the board and building a pipeline of potential board members to achieve those goals over time.
- Recruit tenants, residents, and other community members to serve on the board and provide them with the training and support to ensure their full participation and avoid tokenism.
- Hold regular (quarterly, annually, etc.) anti-racist trainings for board members.
- Make anti-racist training part of on-boarding new board members.
- Regularly read or view materials that enhance individual and shared understanding of DEI concepts, past and present racial discrimination, and other systems of oppression.



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## IV. Representation: Our Work

**We believe in authentic representation in our policies, programs, and services:**

- Use a racial equity checklist to evaluate our policies and programs.
- Directly engage a diverse group of community members in assessing the needs of the community and determining programming - be open to new ideas that come from the community even if they are outside the CDC's traditional role.
- Establish a structure (such as a community advisory council) to ensure that community members have a voice in program planning, planning, implementation, and evaluation.