



Diversity, Inclusion, & Equity in Community Foundations

Diversity & Equity Scan & SWOT Analysis

It is helpful for leaders who are dealing with diversity and equity concerns within their organizations to broaden their analysis and discussion to include related issues, dynamics, and trends in the environment their organizations seek to make positive impacts in. Often, there is an implicit relationship between the social dynamics in a community or region and the inclusion and equity ideals and objectives their stakeholders feel most strongly about. When these concerns are left unsaid or unexamined, unspoken frustrations can lead to loss of moral or consensus among the stakeholders involved in organizational change efforts. Especially because our peers naturally bring their deepest feelings and aspirations into change work around diversity and equity.

On another level, when little attention is given to agreeing on clearly defined outcomes in terms of community impacts that are desired or hoped for through this work, we can inadvertently undermine even our most sincere efforts. When this happens it is common to hear some folks asking questions like: “Didn’t we figure this out in our last diversity training?” While others might be saying: “We are just getting started and we have a long way to go. Or I am not sure we are all working for the same things?”



Overview Of Exercise:

In Part I of this exercise your team members will get a *lay of land* view of the diversity and equity issues, trends, and dynamics each believes are most urgent for your foundation’s various constituencies and communities. Some these will have to do with demographic changes currently underway; while others are likely to stem from long-standing tensions or issues of systemic inequality. Your task is not to engage in debates about the validity of each person’s concerns. Nor to determine the best strategy for social change to resolve these dilemmas.

Instead, we are asking you to use the data and information that emerges as a resource for a preliminary assessment of foundation’s current strengths and weakness to act as a leader in efforts to address the most urgent diversity and equity your community is encountering. This is Part II of the exercise.

You will find that as you move through this process the issues and concerns you identify—inside and outside the foundation—will continue to reemerge. This exercise will help you to track and respond them more effectively.

Mapping Exercise

Working as a group and focusing at minimum on issues, trends, and dynamics in the economic, political, and social arenas:

- Take the next 20 minutes to identify and chart the diversity and equity issues, trends, and dynamics occurring within your community that present new opportunities to fulfill your foundation's mission.
- Take the next 20 minutes to identify the diversity and equity issues, trends, and dynamics occurring in your community that present threats or challenges to fulfilling your Foundation's mission. If your group has information on the trends that will occur in the near future, these can also be to the chart.

Strengths & Assets/ Weaknesses & Gaps Analysis

Use the next 45 minutes to discuss the strategic implications of the issues, dynamics, and trends your team mapped in the earlier exercise. Consider at least the following:

- Strengths and assets that will allow your foundation to take advantage of opportunities identified; consider also how those strengths and assets would help your foundation respond to the threats identified;
- Gaps and weakness that would make it difficult for your foundation to take advantage of the opportunities you identified; consider also how those gaps and weaknesses would make it difficult to respond to the challenges you identified.

Questions to Consider:

Mission: Are your organization's diversity and equity values, concerns, and intents clearly articulated in the Mission? If yes, does the current articulation respond to all the concerns you identified? If not, what are the implications of this omission?

Governance: Is the composition of your Board reflective of the constituencies that are dealing with the critical diversity and equity issues you identified? If so, are those individuals knowledgeable or active in addressing those concerns in your community? Are there glaring omissions in representation; and if so, what are the implications for your organization?

Asset/Donor Development: Does your foundation recognize the real and potential benefit of targeting donors of color as part of the foundation's asset/donor development strategy? If so, what specific strategies are undertaken to increase your foundation's share of dollars from donors of color?

Administration/Business Practices: Does your current staff composition include individuals with the knowledge, experience, and relationships needed to effectively address those concerns (within the scope of your mission)? Does your foundation provide resources and support to build the capacity of staff to respond to those concerns?

In the main, do your foundation's current business practices deepen or ameliorate many of the economic equity concerns you identified? Do your foundation's investment and purchasing practices seek to address any of those concerns?

Grantmaking (Program): Are your current funding priorities adequately addressing the diversity and equity issues, trends, and dynamics you identified?

Communications/Public Relations: Does your public relations strategy (and materials) clearly communicate your foundation's principles and intents regarding diversity, inclusion, and equity? Does your foundation find ways to highlight important diversity and equity issues in its various communications vehicles? Do you highlight the work of civic and community organizations engaged in diversity & equity work?

Community Leadership: Are your foundation's current community convening or leadership strategies and relationships adequate to respond to the issues, trends, and dynamics you identified earlier?