



Equity In Grants Administration and Strategic Planning: An Introduction

Overview

With support from BJA, NCJA's new Equity in Grants Administration and Strategic Planning Program has developed this document to introduce language, findings and important information learned through numerous interviews with State Administering Agencies (SAAs), partner organizations and subject matter experts. This document will serve as the first in a series focusing on equity in grants administration and strategic planning.

NCJA's Equity in Grants Administration and Strategic Planning Program is designed to support SAAs in identifying opportunities to center equity in their planning processes, funding priorities and grants administration as they reexamine their policies and practices to improve fairness in their justice systems.

As part of this program, NCJA is creating resources and TTA opportunities to assist SAAs in diversifying their stakeholders and subawards in order to support historically under-resourced organizations, communities and programs. These programs, with directed support and resources, may be best able to achieve the goals established in the state's strategic plan while simultaneously supporting the reduction of racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system.



Key Definitions

Equality: Each individual or group of people is given the same resources, access or opportunities.

Equity: A process of identifying and eliminating disparities and a commitment to the shifting of power and removing barriers that perpetuate inequity.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED): Significant differences based on race and ethnicity.

Bias: Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person or group compared with another, in a way considered to be unfair.

Intersections: The overlap of identity that contributes to disparities and the marginalization of communities.

Culturally-sensitive programming: Programs that take into consideration cultural differences and similarities between people that have an effect on values, learning and behavior without assigning them a value, whether positive or negative, better or worse, or right or wrong.



Shared Language

Equity is the intentional practice of change to actualize fair treatment, advancement, access and opportunity for all to thrive.

Core practices, as well as critical components and considerations, are needed to ensure equity is integrated within grants administration and strategic planning efforts at the federal, state and local levels and when defining and practicing equity across the grantmaking continuum—from concept to final grant reporting.

The administration of federal grants is complex and requires both **expertise and capacity**. Paths to more equitable grants administration exist along the spectrum from small incremental changes to large and robust programing, and all SAAs are beginning from different places.

The SAAs that have begun this journey have identified **four key principles**:

- 1) This work takes time, intentionality, and resources.
- 2) Preventing the unintentional consequences of an organization's "failure" by ensuring the grants administration process considers and plans for potential capacity challenges for new organizations.
- 3) Developing partnerships and investing in the work supporting these efforts is worth it.
- 4) Including diverse stakeholders in the strategic planning process brings a diverse set of experiences, perspectives and backgrounds and only enhances the strategic plan. It is crucial to ensure historically underrepresented and under-resourced communities have a role in the process.



Equity vs. Equality

Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources, access and opportunities while equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the necessary resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. Working to achieve equity involves identifying the individualized needs of specific populations, or organizations, and implementing steps and assistance to help meet those needs.

SAAs practicing **equality** provide the same support and reporting requirements (for example), to a large metropolitan police department as a small grassroots organization. SAAs practicing **equity**, in the above example, work more closely with the grassroots organization, recognizing capacity limitations to provide required reporting, while allowing the large metropolitan police department to rely on its own grants department for reporting.

There is no one-size-fits-all support when working with subawardees who have different strengths and challenges; however, there is a right-size solution for meeting the needs of each individual or organization. This is just one example of how an SAA can begin to think about equity versus equality in their grants administration and strategic planning processes.

When practicing equity, equality is not the process, but the outcome.



Principles for Promoting Equity in Grants Administration and Strategic Planning

Intentionality: Examine how things have always been done and think outside institutionalized processes as equitable changes will not happen organically but only through consciously recognizing and valuing diversity.

Reflection: Consider personal and social bias to better understand how entities show up as an individual, as an institution, as a community.

Change: Openness to continuously growing and layering equity in all aspects of your agencies policies and practices.

Trust Building: Build and sustain relationships with underrepresented individuals and programs that are rooted in communication, transparency and a commitment to accountability.



Changing the Bar

Many times, when agencies create new ways to engage those on the margins it is referred to as “lowering the bar.” However, to decrease disparities and barriers, grantmakers and administrators should change the bar, honoring the ways that various cultural and social approaches to systems change.

Equity is a process of change.

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