

# REAL Cities and Towns Action Model

Racial disparities have been driven and maintained by public- and private-sector policies. REAL is designed to empower mayors and other local elected officials to adequately address these challenges. REAL acknowledges that every city is different; therefore, NLC developed an action model (Documents/REAL/REAL Action Model Draft(0).pdf) to guide REAL's work to help local leaders address issues of race and equity. These actions are not meant to be taken in a particular order, rather all of the actions will be pursued simultaneously.

## **ACTION AREA 1: STRENGTHEN LOCAL LEADERS' KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF RACE AND EQUITY**

This action area seeks to strengthen local leader's knowledge and capacity to address issues of race and equity. Discussing issues around race and equity can be difficult. Local leaders sometimes may not know exactly where to start. Through structured trainings and learning opportunities, REAL will equip members with the skills

needed to navigate and lead challenging discussions. The ability to lead these discussions is contingent upon having an understanding about the systemic and historical policies which have created racial disparities. For example, New Orleans is one city taking the lead in this space. Since 2004, Mitch Landrieu, former Lt. Governor of Louisiana and now Mayor of New Orleans, has worked to address racial reconciliation and community building in New Orleans. His leadership has been critical to the sustainability and seriousness of this work. Due to his leadership, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation funded a multi-year initiative which intends to foster racial reconciliation within the city.

## **ACTION AREA 2: CHANGE THE NARRATIVE AROUND RACE AND EQUITY**

This action area seeks to create a positive narrative around race and equity. The face of America has changed. Between 2000 and 2010, racial and ethnic minorities attributed to 91.7% of the nation's population growth. Yet, most conversations around race are often viewed as divisive and negative. Changing the narrative to a positive tone that celebrates our diversity is essential to the goal of achieving Inclusive, Thriving and Healthy Communities. Diversity must be seen as an asset for communities, not a liability. Creating this narrative will lead to changed hearts and minds. Narrative informs our perceptions of one another and ultimately how we interact. Narrative is also deeply rooted in stigmas which have been established over time. To achieve Inclusive, Thriving and Healthy Communities, we must create a society that allows everyone to achieve his or her potential regardless of race. REAL will empower local leaders to launch productive conversations around race and replace negative narratives with positive ones.

### **ACTION AREA 3: SHOWCASE BEST PRACTICES AND LEADING SOLUTIONS**

This action area seeks to showcase the best practices and leading solutions that are being adopted by communities across the country. Local elected officials are encouraged to use and share lessons learned so others may replicate. Approaches and processes highlighting real-time efforts will be shared. While we will seek to share evidence-based solutions, we will share promising discoveries as well.

### **ACTION AREA 4: PRIORITIZE NEEDED SYSTEMS AND POLICY CHANGES**

This action area focuses on improving and changing systems and policies which have contributed to racial inequities. Systemic, institutional racism and bias have had negative impacts on public policies. To create Inclusive, Thriving and Healthy Communities, historical, systemic and structural barriers that further inequity and racism in our nation's cities must be addressed. Local elected officials are encouraged to follow the steps outlined in the Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity, which was developed by the Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE). The toolkit details six questions local elected officials should consider when pursuing equity in local policies and programs.

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