



## Shape of Trust Community of Practice Pilot Application

The Shape of Trust Community of Practice is an intensive, multi-racial learning cohort for supervisors, managers and HR advisors being piloted through a partnership between the Department of Human Resources, Office for Civil Rights and Office of Arts & Culture in March through June of 2020.

This learning community was created to help supervisors, managers and HR advisors further develop the knowledge, skills, practices and supportive relationships that enable them to center racial equity, social justice and belonging as a practice throughout their work. The Shape of Trust project is part of the Creative Strategies Initiative, a partnership between Office of Arts & Culture and Office for Civil Rights and a component of the culture shift strategy in the 2019 – 2021 RSJI Strategic Plan.

### **What cohort participants will learn**

Cohort participants will learn ways of understanding, being and doing that help them embody and support interconnection, wellbeing and belonging as the foundation for a racially equitable and socially just work environment. Activities will be grounded in arts, mindfulness and other relational and expressive modalities that help them to lead holistically, connected to mind, body, spirit and community.

Participants will weave together creative learning, knowledge building, skill building and dialogue at the levels of self, spirit and collective to unpack and transform behaviors and decision-making within and between individuals, among teams and across the institution. A video of *The Shape of Trust* performance will be used as one way to explore specific scenarios and workplace dynamics.

### Specific topics

- Racial Equity and Social Justice
- Belonging and Wellbeing
- Relational Culture
- History
- Oppression and Systemic Power
- Trauma
- Healing
- Transformational Leadership
- Contours of Ego and Being in Power
- Vulnerability, Self-Awareness & Growth Mindset
- Navigating Difficult Situations
- Decision-making for Racial Equity, Social Justice and Belonging

## **Community of Practice elements**

The pilot cohort will be 24 participants and will include:

- 6 day-long cohort engagements with assignments to be done apart from in-class time.
- 3 3-hour-long racial caucus sessions.
- 5 buddy group meetings (each 1 – 2 hours) that participants will schedule themselves for in-between day-long sessions to reflect on the learning, support each other with real-time workplace challenges, and work on brief group assignments.
- Readings and videos.
- 5 3-hour follow-up assessment and practice sessions beginning in August/September and occurring every other month. These will be opportunities for cohort participants to come back together to share their learnings, get support and contribute to the pilot assessment being conducted by national racial justice organization Race Forward.

## **Who are the facilitators and guest speakers?**

A multi-racial team of staff from the OCR RSJI Team and the SDHR Learning & Development and Workforce Equity Teams, as well as former government racial equity initiative leader and consultant Sonali Sangeeta Balajee, will co-facilitate the cohort. Guest speakers will include supervisors, managers and HR advisors in different roles who have experience trying out – and learning from – the process to embody transformational leadership for racial equity, social justice and belonging.

## **Accessibility**

We are committed to creating a learning environment that is accessible to all participants. This includes meeting ADA requirements for spaces and bathrooms, working to have a low-fragrance or fragrance-free space, and when providing snacks, meeting all dietary needs. After applicants are selected to participate, they will be invited to share specific access needs.

## **Participant eligibility**

This is a pilot cohort with only 24 spots. To support everyone's learning (including our assessment of this new cohort model), we ask that each applicant be able to meet this criteria:

1. Be a current supervisor, manager and/or HR advisor.
2. Desire growth in their ability to lead with transformational mindsets and practices that support racial equity, social justice and belonging in the workplace.
3. Be able to participate in ALL session dates (both day-long full cohort sessions and three-hour caucus sessions). Facilitators will work with participants on unanticipated absences such as illness or emergency. Participants are expected to manage their workloads and the expectations of those they work with so as not to miss a session due to other City work.
4. Complete assignments during City work hours (separate from in-session cohort time) and attend meetings with buddy groups in-between cohort sessions.
5. Be able to participate in follow-up assessment and practice sessions every other month beginning in August or September.
6. Request and receive express permission from their supervisor to apply and, if accepted, be able to devote the required time and capacity to this experience.

## **Selection criteria**

Participants will include supervisors, managers, and HR advisors from across departments. The cohort will include people at all places in their journeys of practicing racial equity, social justice and belonging. Representatives from the departments leading the project (ARTS, SDHR and OCR) will select applicants based on the following criteria:

- A mix of racial identities.
- A mix of gender identities.

- A mix of levels of experience with racial equity, social justice and belonging as daily practices in the workplace.
- A mix of departments.
- **Please note:** Contributing Partner Departments – those that made 2019 financial contributions to the project – will be guaranteed spots in the cohort for a total allocation of 15 spots; the 9 remaining spots are eligible to applicants from other departments. Contributing partner departments are: Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle City Light, Seattle Center, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, Department of Neighborhoods and Seattle Public Library.

### Cohort dates

It is important that applicants take part in ALL dates before applying. We ask that applicants hold these dates in their calendars as we will not be notifying applicants of their acceptance until one month before the first session.

- **March 16:** Full Cohort, Day 1 (9 am – 5 pm)
- **March 26:** Full Cohort, Day 2 (9 am – 5 pm)
- **April 7:** Racial Caucus #1 (9 am – 12 pm)
- **April 28:** Full Cohort, Day 3 (9 am – 5 pm)
- **May 13:** Racial Caucus #2 (9 am – 12 pm)
- **May 27:** Full Cohort, Day 4 (9 am – 5 pm)
- **June 10:** Full Cohort, Day 5 (9 am – 5 pm)
- **June 17:** Racial Caucus #3 (9 am – 12 pm)
- **June 24:** Full Cohort, Day 6 (9 am – 5 pm)

Pilot cohort participants are required to attend follow-up support and assessment sessions. These 5 sessions, likely to occur every other month, will begin in August/September and will be scheduled after the cohort launch.

### How to apply and when applicants will be notified:

- Fill out the online application before 12 noon on Monday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SoTCmtyofPracticeApp2020>. This is the preferred method for applying, however if you are unable to complete the application online, you may submit a Word.doc or hand-written document with responses to the application questions. Please send this to Diana Falchuk ([diana.falchuk@seattle.gov](mailto:diana.falchuk@seattle.gov) or to the Office of Arts & Culture at King Street Station).
- Make sure to mark ALL program dates and racial caucus sessions on your calendar as you're submitting your application so you don't accidentally schedule something else at those times and are able to participate in all sessions if you are selected.
- Make sure you've spoken with your supervisor and have express permission to devote the time and capacity needed to this experience.
- Applicants will be notified by Tuesday, February 18, 2020.
- Selected applicants should expect to save 2 work hours for preparatory reading and videos in the week before the first full day cohort session on March 16<sup>th</sup>. Selected applicants that have not yet participated in the City's required RSJI training, Race: The Power of an Illusion, will be assigned the three videos and reflective questions, totaling an additional 3.5 hours of preparation.

### Questions?

If you're interested in applying to the cohort and have any questions about it or application process, please reach out to OCR/ARTS team member Diana Falchuk: [diana.falchuk@seattle.gov](mailto:diana.falchuk@seattle.gov). Email is

best as the first way to reach out and then a phone conversation or meeting can be scheduled as needed.

## The Shape of Trust Project Background

How can we develop an *embodied practice* of racial equity and social justice in the workplace, one that promotes interconnection, wellbeing, and belonging for ourselves, the employees we support and the communities we serve?

Supervisors, Managers, and HR advisors are invited to apply to be part of The Shape of Trust Community of Practice, an intensive, multi-racial learning cohort being piloted through a partnership between the Department of Human Resources, Office for Civil Rights and Office of Arts & Culture in March through June, 2020. Cohort participants will learn ways of understanding, being and doing that help them begin to embody and support interconnection, wellbeing and belonging as the foundation for a racially equitable and socially just work environment. Activities will be grounded in arts, mindfulness and other relational and expressive modalities that help us lead holistically, connected to mind, body, spirit and community.

The Community of Practice is the next phase in The Shape of Trust, a project that began with the development of an original theater production based on City employees' stories of racism, sexism, resilience and belonging in the workplace. Stories were collected via Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) surveys, focus groups, the Citywide Workforce Equity Planning and Advisory Committee (WEPAC), Anti-Harassment Interdepartmental Team, Coalition of Affinity Groups Against Racial Harassment, Seattle Silence Breakers, RSJI Strategy Team, other City employee groups and news media. Acclaimed playwright and director Sara Porkalob wrote the script and worked with a team of actors to perform it in June 2019. As one of the cohort activities, participants will use scenarios from the video of the performance to explore approaches to addressing dynamics of race and gender in the workplace.

The Shape of Trust emerged from more than a decade of organizing for racial equity within the City of Seattle workforce. Much of that organizing has been led by employees who are most impacted by racism, sexism, and other intersecting forms of oppression. Their stories reveal patterns of pain and resilience, struggle and strategy, disconnection, collaboration, leadership and change. They show how what's real and what's possible depend on our institutional culture – the ways of being, norms and practices that uphold our decision-making and policy processes. We either consciously work together to create a culture of racial equity, social justice and belonging that supports policies and procedures designed to build racial equity, or we reinforce – consciously or unconsciously – the culture that maintains the system of white supremacy in which we all live.

Race Forward, a national racial justice organization, is collaborating with the three partner departments to provide an assessment of the Community of Practice and its impacts on participants over time.

The Shape of Trust is sponsored by the Citywide Workforce Equity Planning and Advisory Committee (WEPAC). Departments that have made financial contributions to the project include Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle City Light, Seattle Center, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, Department of Neighborhoods and Seattle Public Library. Efforts to improve workforce equity at the City began in 2008; more recently, they have included the creation of

a dedicated workforce equity director and staff within the Department of Human Resources, internal organizing and advocacy by employee groups.

The theater portion of the project was inspired by Real Talk, an original performance based on the experiences of people of color working in Seattle area arts organizations. Real Talk was written and directed by Porkalob and produced by Elisheba Johnson, Jenny Crooks and Kathy Hsieh with the Seattle Arts Leadership Team (SALT) through the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture in 2017 and was inspired by a similar project by Arts Workers for Equity (AWE) in Portland, Oregon.

The Shape of Trust is part of the Creative Strategies Initiative (CSI), a component of the Race and Social Justice Initiative's culture shift strategy in its 2019 – 2021 Strategic Plan and the outgrowth of more than six years of partnership between the Office for Civil Rights and Office of Arts & Culture. CSI uses arts- and culture-based approaches to build racial equity in non-arts areas like the environment, housing, workforce, and community development. CSI aims to shift the culture of government by focusing both on racial equity outcomes – what harm is eliminated, or opportunity increased for those who are most impacted by structural racism – and process – how the City does racial equity work.