

**Strategic Capacity Building Series
for Key RSJI Leaders**
October 2020 – February 2021

We are excited to invite you, a key leader who is part of existing structures within the Citywide Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) Network, to participate in this series designed to build our capacity to engage in transformational, anti-racist organizing at the City. Beginning with an introduction and overview series the week of October 12 – 16, participants will join in group learning opportunities and voluntary racial caucus sessions (from which no one will be turned away). We'll also incorporate readings, videos and websites to help deepen our collective thinking on transformational, anti-racist organizing. Activities will take place online and will, as much as possible, integrate arts, culture, mindfulness and other relational and expressive modalities to help us lead holistically, connected to mind, body, spirit, community and planet.

For the purposes of this series, which is intended to align existing structures within the Citywide RSJI Network, and because we have limited capacity, we are identifying key leaders as those who hold one or more of the following roles as members of these structures:

- Members of the Change Team Co-Leads and up to 2 additional change team members from each department. (Change Teams should decide collectively which two members, in addition to their co-leads, will participate.)
- Members of CORE Teams 1- 5.
- Members of the Equity Leads Interdepartmental Team.
- Members of the Workforce Equity Planning and Advisory Committee (WEPAC).
- Members of the Anti-Racist Educators Cohort.
- Staff of the Office for Civil Rights, members of the Learning & Development and Workforce Equity Teams at the Seattle Department of Human Resources and staff of the Office of the Employee Ombud.
- Anyone serving as a lead facilitator of a caucus or affinity group within a department.

As someone who holds one or more of these positions, you are an influential member of the Race and Social Justice Network and a key partner in the strategic alignment of RSJI across City departments. We hope that this learning will build upon the critical work you're already doing in the key group or groups that you are part of. And that together, we can expand upon and practice applying the learning in the context of the specific roles/functions you hold within the RSJI Network.

Register here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KeyLeaders2020>

Transformational, anti-racist organizing within government

Over the last two decades, Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative has put significant effort into building and supporting the necessary infrastructure to create meaningful institutional changes, to develop the capacity and skill of racial equity leaders, and build durable, continuous relationships with departments and with the community. In the last few years, RSJI has begun moving toward embodying a transformational approach to anti-racist organizing. This approach supports anti-racism as a lived practice, one that strives to lift up interconnection, creativity, collective health, wellbeing and belonging, all of which are central to the ways of being and knowing of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. These relational, creative and mindful ways serve as antidotes to the culture of

white supremacy that dominates all institutions and organizations within the United States. This transformational, anti-racist approach emphasizes a whole body and soul approach, one that takes into account the wholeness of our living systems. It integrates all four levels of racism (internalized, interpersonal, institutional, structural) and recognizes how other oppressions intersect with racism; the centrality of relationships and culture (in addition to policies, practices and procedures) in institutional and structural change; and the importance of repair and healing. We have begun to reflect this transformational approach to anti-racist organizing across RSJI structures, trainings, Racial Equity Toolkit processes, policy work, group dialogues and more. While this year has been increasingly taxing, the influence of the RSJI Network across the City has proven that City employees have built practices of resiliency, strategic collaboration, collective leadership and policy impact.

And still, there is more change that we need to create together. Despite the many positive impacts of these growing shifts, widespread change has been slow coming. The urgency and constraints brought on by COVID-19 have exposed how effortlessly our institution can slip back into well-honed and often unconscious patterns. The pandemic has revealed that when uncertainty and anxiety are high, analysis, culture-setting and decision-making remain in the hands of a few. Despite our best intentions, when we are not aligned and clear about what a transformative, anti-racist approach to change looks and feels like, we often move from assumptions and old tropes, using opaque communication, reinforcing silos and creating new ones, increasing disconnection and disregarding history. We engage more superficially with those most impacted by systemic racism and other intersecting forms of oppression. We design programs and make decisions without clear and explicit racial equity goals guiding and threaded throughout our work. We revert to questions of diversification and increased access, skipping the north star of structural change.

It is in these times – the times we are in right now – that we become even more aware of how vital a transformational, anti-racist approach is. The pandemic has laid bare the ways that the system of white supremacy impacts our human and planetary health, including that of our economy, with massively disproportionate harms to our BIPOC communities, including our very own City workers. We no longer can afford to do our work in ways that consciously or unconsciously put business interests and political cover before the needs of our communities. The RSJI Network holds an essential and pivotal role by supporting a government response that is anti-racist, rooted in interconnection, creativity, collective health and wellbeing. As key leaders moving racial justice work across departments and areas of work, we must be aligned and in close relationship, so that we can replace individualist, fracturing norms with the full and beautiful potential of our collective power.

The purpose of this series

Through this series, key RSJI leaders from across departments will:

- Develop a shared, basic foundation (frameworks, language, understanding, skills and practices) for transformational, anti-racist organizing within and through the City, and what this means based on their social positionality, positioning with the institutional hierarchy, and specific job functions.
- Experience alignment with other key leaders and develop skills to better align their departments with an overall vision and practice of transformational, anti-racist organizing.
- Feel more able to move their departments toward transformational anti-racist practices and outcomes based on an understanding of their roles within the collective that is the Citywide RSJI Network and in accordance with the [Anti-Racist Principles and RSJI Strategic Plan](#).
- Understand how the SOCR RSJI Team historically has been and remains charged with designing RSJI strategy and content, and with supporting RSJI efforts across the City.

- Experience interconnection, health, wellbeing, arts, culture, mindfulness and embodiment as fundamental aspects of transformational, anti-racist organizing and feel better able to weave these into their RSJI work.

The development of this series also will support the continued growth of a transformational, anti-racist organizing approach by:

- Offering transformational, anti-racist organizing content to embed throughout RSJI capacity building efforts offered to all City employees.
- Deepening our understanding of the approach and honing our collective skills to apply it, through feedback from key leaders who participate in the series.
- Providing content that can be used to onboard future key leaders.

Specific topics

- What is transformational, anti-racist organizing?
- RSJI Truths
- Anti-Racist Principles and how we apply them as government
- 4 types of racism, power and both social and hierarchical positionality
- Racial hierarchy and internalized racial oppression
- Understanding interconnection, collective health and wellbeing
- Understanding and applying the [Our Bodhi Project](#) Embodying Belonging & Co-liberation Frame
- Building Relational Culture (vs. white supremacy culture)
- RSJI Spheres of Influence and accountability
- Collective vs. individual movement
- Vulnerability, self-awareness and growth mindset
- Contours of ego and being in power
- Decision-making for racial equity, social justice and belonging
- Navigating resistance, difficult situations and institutional barriers

Series time commitment

In addition to modules and caucuses described below, please set aside roughly 90 minutes to 2 hours for preparatory work before each module and about 1 hour for reflection following each module. We expect full participation – from modules to prep work to reflection work and periodic caucuses – to take between 7 – 10 hours per 4 – 6-week period.

Dates

Below are the dates for modules and caucuses currently calendared. Later dates will be shared soon. When you register for the series, you will be asked to choose which modules you will attend and asked to hold those times on your calendar. Calendar appointments will be sent before each session.

Module 1

This module is 3 hours and being offered 3 times:

- Module 1 (#1): Tuesday 10/13 from 9 - 12 pm
- Module 1 (#2): Wednesday 10/14 from 12 - 3 pm
- Module 1 (#3): Friday 10/16 from 12 - 3 pm

Modules 2 & 3

These modules will be for you to take in on your own time before Module 4. Please hold about an hour in your calendar for these.

Module 4

This module is 4 hours and will be offered 2 times:

- Module 4 (#1): Tuesday 10/20 from 1 pm - 5 pm
- Module 4 (#2): Friday 10/30 from 10 am - 2 pm

Module 5

This module is 4 hours and will be offered 2 times:

- Module 5 (#1) Thursday 11/12 from 1 - 5 pm
- Module 5 (#2) Tuesday 11/17 from 9 am - 1 pm

Caucus #1

All caucuses will take place at the same time. Caucuses are completely voluntary and no one will be turned away. Caucuses are intended to deepen our understanding of our racialized experiences. City employees may choose to attend the caucus that aligns with how they identify racially. Please put a hold on your calendar if you plan to attend. Calendar appointments will be sent in the future.

- Monday 11/9 from 2:30 – 4:00 pm

Module 6

This module is 2.5 hours and will be offered 2 times:

- Module 6 (#1) Tuesday 12/1 from 9:30-noon
- Module 6 (#2) Thursday 12/3 from 2-4:30pm

More voluntary caucuses and Modules 7 & 8 will be scheduled in the future.

Facilitators

This series will be led by the SOCR RSJI Team in accountability to communities most impacted and in alignment with the RSJI Strategic Plan. Former government racial equity initiative leader and artist-facilitator Sonali Sangeeta Balajee, will support content development and facilitation as part of her work on *The Shape of Trust* project.

Accessibility

We are committed to creating a learning environment that is accessible to all participants. This includes meeting ADA requirements for online learning. The series registration form invites you to share any access needs you may have.

Questions?

If you have questions, please reach out to SOCR RSJI Team members Kyana Wheeler and/or Diana Falchuk: kyana.wheeler@seattle.gov and diana.falchuk@seattle.gov.