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# Race, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (RIDE) Framework

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# Pathways Intermediary Landscape Scan

## Race, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (RIDE) Framework:

*Applying Principles of Equity and Inclusion Along Lines of Racial, Geographic and Socioeconomic Diversity*

### Overview

This document outlines the internal Race, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (RIDE) Framework that the Education First team of researchers used to inform the development and execution of a national landscape scan of pathways intermediaries. Education First used this framework to guide their work by outlining equity-oriented principles and methods of applying those principles to ensure the research methodology was reflective of Education First’s [equity commitment](#). Researchers and stakeholders may use this document as a tool for similar research projects.

Below, we present the overarching principles of equity that guided our work. Beginning on page 4 you can find a detailed table that articulates specific actions we committed to taking during each phase of the research. Beginning on page 8, we have included a glossary of key terms and definitions.

### Project Background

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Ascendium, Education First conducted a national landscape scan in 2022 to better understand intermediary organizations that seek to create stronger transitions between high school, postsecondary and workforce systems. The project placed a particular focus on organizations serving BIPOC students, students experiencing poverty and students in rural communities. Through a literature review, student survey and interviews with proximate leaders across pathways ecosystems, Education First identified key themes across the national intermediary landscape as well as implications for stakeholders who seek to support intermediaries’ pathways efforts. The full report, executive summary, literature review and stakeholder action guide can all be found at the links below.



[CLICK HERE TO EXPLORE THE RESEARCH THIS FRAMEWORK INFORMED:](#)

[Executive Summary](#) | [Full Report](#) | [Literature Review](#) | [Action Guide](#)

## Guiding Principles for Equity

- 1** Make a focus on equity and inclusion an **explicit priority** for inquiry, research, decision-making and recommendation development. Maintain an **asset-based lens** in discussions and in research approaches, with a particular focus on ensuring that an asset-based lens is used as the foundation for talking about rural communities.

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- 2** **Engage stakeholders most proximate to the problem** in the research and dissemination phases of the work. Thoughtfully **support and elevate the power and voices of populations impacted by this work**, including actively elevating the voices and perspectives of BIPOC learners and those experiencing poverty.

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- 3** Gather and analyze **disaggregated data by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, geographic location** and other demographic variables whenever such data are available.

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- 4** Aim to understand **root causes of inequities** and develop more equitable solutions with an orientation toward user-centered design.

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- 5** Examine the potential **impact of recommendations on equity and inclusion**.

## Application of Principles

These guiding principles will apply to each phase of the project process in the following ways:

Project Phases	Principles	Key Considerations and Ways to Apply Guiding Principles
<b>Phase 1:</b> <i>Project Launch</i>	1, 3	a) Agree to and operate with clear and common definitions of diversity, race, equity, inclusion, structural racism, targeted universalism and other important terms (see <a href="#">glossary</a> ).
	1	b) Build awareness of the diverse identities of the Education First project team members and client core team members and the collective assets, experiences, biases and blind spots the teams might bring to the work.
	1	c) Develop a workplan that creates space for periodic synchronous or asynchronous step-back conversations with the internal Education First team and core client team to reflect on how well we have lived into our commitment to equity and inclusion and how we can continuously improve.
	1, 3	d) Scope the research to focus on race, equity, inclusion and diversity using an asset-based approach/desire-based framing. Affirm this approach through discussion with the client core team.
	1, 2, 3	e) Develop a research plan to guide data collection with a lens on race, equity, inclusion and diversity to ensure that analysis and recommendations to funders are grounded in a diverse set of perspectives.
	1, 2, 4	f) Develop a plan to engage stakeholders who are most proximate to the problems this research project will investigate. Ensure engagement with these stakeholders across all future phases of the work and place an emphasis on the importance of the reciprocity of this engagement—the intention is for these relationships and interactions to feel fair and respectful.
	1, 3	g) Develop equity-oriented literature-inclusion criteria for the data, reports and resources that will be incorporated into the literature review and landscape scan, including diverse authorship, inclusion of target groups and whether data were disaggregated and analyzed by race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, geographic location and other demographic variables.
<b>Phase 2:</b> <i>Context Building and Literature Review</i>	1	a) Facilitate periodic synchronous or asynchronous step-back conversations with the internal Education First team and core client team to reflect on how well we have lived into our commitment to equity and how we can continuously improve.
	1	b) Maintain awareness of the diverse identities of the Education First project team members and client core team members and the collective assets, experiences, biases and blind spots the team might bring to the work.
	1, 2	c) Develop criteria for when the project team will provide stipends, gift cards, honoraria or make donations to organizations when engaging stakeholders. This is intended to reinforce the importance of the reciprocity of these engagements and honors the time, knowledge and energy folks are contributing.
	1, 2	d) Adapt project team and core client team processes and workplans to accommodate stakeholder access to technology, time zones and language.

<b>Project Phases</b>	<b>Principles</b>	<b>Key Considerations and Ways to Apply Guiding Principles</b>
<b>Phase 2: Context Building and Literature Review (continued)</b>	<b>1, 4, 5</b>	e) Ask interviewees in initial interviews with staff members from client organizations to reflect on how we can identify areas of “greatest pathways need” while attending to issues of race, inclusion, diversity and equity.
	<b>1, 3</b>	f) Use equity-oriented inclusion criteria developed in Phase 1 to identify data, reports and resources to synthesize and analyze. Criteria include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incorporate literature that highlights qualitative data collection and analysis focused on the experiences of BIPOC students, students experiencing poverty and students from rural communities.</li> <li>▪ Evaluate whether the data included in the work was disaggregated and analyzed by race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, geographic location and other demographic variables when considering literature that focuses on quantitative research</li> <li>▪ Emphasize that including data on BIPOC students and students experiencing poverty is important to gauging the success and impact of these organizations when establishing an understanding of how to determine the effectiveness of intermediaries.</li> <li>▪ Seek out documents for literature review that consider local, state and regional diversity/differentiation.</li> <li>▪ Seek out documents for literature review that use a lens of equity and inclusion when defining intermediary success.</li> </ul>
	<b>2, 3</b>	g) Keep a tracker documenting, as possible, what demographic categories noted above are represented in the compiled documents and identify gaps. Use that information regarding gaps in representation to prioritize seeking out specific interviews that will help address those gaps during Phase 3 of the project.
	<b>1, 4</b>	h) Seek to clarify through desk research the key causes or contributing factors to identified problems, and identify strategies that could result in <b>systemic change and advance more equitable solutions.</b>
	<b>1</b>	i) Maintain awareness of potential racial, geographic or socioeconomic bias we may bring to the work and seek to counteract those biases when synthesizing desk research
	<b>1</b>	j) Maintain awareness of potential racial, geographic or socioeconomic bias we may bring to the work and seek to counteract those biases when analyzing desk research.
	<b>Phase 3: Landscape Scan</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1</b>		b) Maintain awareness of the diverse identities of the Education First project team members and client core team members and the collective assets, experiences, biases and blind spots the team might bring to the work.
<b>1, 2</b>		c) Ensure that interviewees and focus group participants bring diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, proximity to the problems the research is investigating, experience and role. Consider placing a focus on 1:1 interviews with leaders who have a strong systems-level perspective from a variety of geographies, funders and practitioners (representing state education agencies, local education agencies and/or higher education institutions) who are invested in the success of

<b>Project Phases</b>	<b>Principles</b>	<b>Key Considerations and Ways to Apply Guiding Principles</b>
		intermediary organizations. Additionally, consider convening focus groups specifically with leaders of intermediaries and workforce development entities.
	<b>1, 2</b>	d) Engage leaders who are proximate to the needs and challenges of BIPOC students, students experiencing poverty and students from rural communities.
	<b>2, 4</b>	e) Gather and use personal stories of BIPOC students, students experiencing poverty and students from rural communities to illustrate systemic patterns of inequities impacted populations have experienced and to articulation the impact of intermediaries' work within communities
<b>Phase 3: Landscape Scan (continued)</b>	<b>2, 4</b>	f) Gather insights on their understanding of the root causes of inequities in interviews/focus groups with representatives from intermediaries, BIPOC students, students experiencing poverty and other stakeholders proximate to the problem.
	<b>2, 4, 5</b>	g) In interviews/focus groups with stakeholders, gather insights from those most proximate to the problem on what key environmental factors influence intermediary success and the influence that funders can have on those factors.
	<b>2, 4</b>	h) Partner in interviews with intermediaries to identify key causes of or contributing factors to current problems with strategies tied to the investments they receive and explore strategies that could result in <u>systemic change and advance equitable solutions</u> .
	<b>1, 2</b>	i) Consider access to technology, time zones and language when engaging stakeholders.
	<b>1, 2</b>	j) Provide stipends, gift cards or honoraria or make donations to organizations when engaging stakeholders, following criteria set in Phase 2. This is intended to reinforce the importance of the reciprocity of these engagements and honors the time, knowledge and energy folks are contributing.
	<b>1, 2</b>	k) Consider selecting a set of reviewers from key stakeholder groups (intermediary organization leaders, other practitioners, funders, BIPOC students, students experiencing poverty, families, parents and guardians) that review findings and offer feedback on sections of the research. Ensure these reviewers are compensated with a stipend in recognition and appreciation of their feedback and time contributed.
	<b>2, 4</b>	l) Consider conducting a learner-experience survey that captures the experience and opinions of learners who are receiving supports from intermediary organizations that are already receiving support from the funder community. Provide compensation for learners who complete the survey.
	<b>1, 3</b>	m) Maintain awareness of potential racial, geographic or socioeconomic biases we may bring to synthesizing data across multiple sources and seek to counteract those biases.
	<b>1, 3</b>	n) Build space into the project plan of analyzing data for recommendations to reflect on proposed recommendations and reflect on whether they are being influenced by any racial, geographic or socioeconomic biases.
	<b>1, 3, 4</b>	o) Ensure that recommendations consider and are reflective of local, state and regional diversity/differentiation.

<b>Project Phases</b>	<b>Principles</b>	<b>Key Considerations and Ways to Apply Guiding Principles</b>
	<b>1, 4</b>	p) Build space into the project plan of creating the landscape can to reflect on the document and whether the summary presented is influenced by racial, geographic or socioeconomic biases.
	<b>1, 4, 5</b>	q) Create an action guide document that focuses on recommendations for funders and articulates the impact those recommendations can have on equity and inclusion.
	<b>1, 2, 4</b>	r) Create an action guide that focuses on recommendations for practitioners at intermediary organizations and articulates the impact those recommendations can have on equity and inclusion.
<b>Phase 4: Dissemination Plan</b>	<b>1</b>	a) Facilitate periodic synchronous or asynchronous step-back conversations with the internal Education First team and core client team to reflect on how well we have lived into our commitment to equity and how we can continuously improve.
	<b>1</b>	b) Maintain awareness of the diverse identities of the Education First project team members and client core team members and the collective assets, experiences, biases and blind spots the team might bring to the work.
	<b>1, 2, 4</b>	c) Identify multiple communication channels to share landscape scan findings and recommendations so that diverse stakeholder groups can access them, including digital deployment (websites, digital documents, social media channels, email communication).
	<b>1, 2, 4</b>	d) Consider methods for staying engaged with stakeholder groups for ongoing awareness, feedback and input (social media, <a href="#">microsite</a> , etc.) in construction of the dissemination plan.
	<b>1, 2, 4</b>	e) Share final deliverables directly with stakeholders who were partners in the context building and landscape scan phases of this work.

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Asset-based approach:** Approach that focuses on youth and community strengths (also related to a strengths-based approach) and is in contrast with a deficit-based approach, which focuses on “problems” or “deficiencies” located within the individual or community. Taking an asset-based approach means seeking to deeply understand the hopes, dreams and desires of individuals and communities as well as the unique strengths they bring. Asset-based approaches to measurement and assessment often require co-construction of concepts and indicators with those who are most impacted by/closest to the work.  
*Source: de Andrade, Marisa, and Angelova, Nikolina, “Evaluating and evidencing asset-based approaches and co-production in health inequalities: measuring the unmeasurable?” *Critical Public Health*, 30 (2), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09581596.2018.1541229?scroll=top&needAccess=true> (2018).*
- **Desire-based framing:** Centers the complexity, contradiction and self-determination of lived lives. As contrasted with exclusively damage-centered framing that narrowly tells a single story about communities, desire-based framing accounts for the loss and despair but also the hope, the visions and wisdom of lived lives and communities. Such desire-based framing can yield analyses that upend commonly held assumptions of responsibility, cohesiveness, ignorance and paralysis within dispossessed and disenfranchised communities.  
*Source: Tuck, Eve, “Suspending Damage: A letter to communities,” *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(3), [https://pages.ucsd.edu/~rfrank/class\\_web/ES-114A/Week%204/TuckHEdR79-3.pdf](https://pages.ucsd.edu/~rfrank/class_web/ES-114A/Week%204/TuckHEdR79-3.pdf) (2009).*
- **Diversity:** Understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs or other ideologies. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.  
*Sources: Adapted from [Equity in the Center](#) (2020) and [Baltimore Racial Justice Action](#) (2016).*
- **Equity:** Defined as “the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair.” The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. It is helpful to think of equity as not simply a desired state of affairs or a lofty value but as a structural and systemic concept.  
*Sources: Adapted from the [Race, Equity and Inclusion Action Guide from the Annie E Casey Foundation](#) (2014) and/or the [“Diversity Terms” glossary from The National Multicultural Institute](#) (2003).*
- **Inclusion:** The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued to fully participate and bring their full, authentic selves to work.



Source: Taken from [Equity in the Center](#) (2020).

- **Intermediary:** The nonprofit organization, initiative within a larger organization or other entity that provides leadership and management capacity to enable sector partners to execute their individual and collective roles in pathways programming. Pathways intermediaries sit at the center of an education and employment ecosystem, brokering partnerships and coordinating activities between K12, postsecondary and employers to increase equitable access to opportunities and paths to upward mobility for Black, Latino/a/x and young people experiencing poverty.  
Source: *Equitable Pathways Intermediary Framework (Equal Measure), Forthcoming.*
- **Pathways:** Sets of integrated structures and supports for helping learners, regardless of their starting point, successfully navigate from high school to a career with upward mobility.  
Source: *Equitable Pathways Intermediary Framework (Equal Measure), Forthcoming.*
- **Pathways ecosystem:** The network of learners, frontline staff, system leaders, intermediary organizations and sector partners who interact to advance their individual and collective interests.  
Source: *Equitable Pathways Intermediary Framework (Equal Measure), Forthcoming.*
- **Pathways programming:** The range of educational and career-related activities and supports that learners access and/or complete to obtain credentials and quality jobs.  
Source: *Equitable Pathways Intermediary Framework (Equal Measure), Forthcoming.*
- **People proximate to the problem:** A term used to identify those folks who are currently experiencing the problem whose lived experience must be leveraged in the design process, who must engage as co-designers in the process, and to whom decision-making power must be ceded in the process.  
Source: Taken from [Just Design: The equityXdesign Book](#) (2020).
- **Racial equity:** The systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. All people are able to achieve their full potential in life, regardless of race, ethnicity or the community in which they live. Working toward racial equity means actively supporting efforts to dismantle racial and structural inequities that limit opportunities so that people from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities can participate, prosper and reach their full potential.  
Source: Taken from the [Race, Equity and Inclusion Action Guide from the Annie E Casey Foundation](#) (2014).
- **Sector partner:** A sector-specific (e.g., K12, postsecondary, workforce development, human services) individual, organization or institution that works with the intermediary on pathway programming.  
Source: *Equitable Pathways Intermediary Framework (Equal Measure), Forthcoming.*

- **Socioeconomic equity:** The systematic fair treatment of people of all socioeconomic backgrounds that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. It is important to consider the intersectionality of class and race, particularly for lower income students.  
*Source: Adapted from [edglossary.org/equity](http://edglossary.org/equity) (2016).*
- **Structural racism (or structural racialization):** The arrangement of institutional, interpersonal, historical, and cultural dynamics in a way that consistently produces advantage for White people and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. It illuminates that racism exists without the presence of individual actors because it is systemically embedded. When the United States was founded, racist principles were codified in governance structures and policies. As a result, racism is embedded in institutions, structures, and social relations across American society. Today, structural racism is composed of intersecting, overlapping, and codependent racist institutions, policies, practices, ideas, and behaviors that give an unjust amount of resources, rights, and power to White people while denying them to people of color.  
*Source: Taken from [Equity in the Center](#) (2020).*
- **Systems change:** Shifts among the conditions—including structures, practices, policies, resource and communication flows, power dynamics, and mindsets—that produce educational and employment inequity.  
*Source: [Equitable Pathways Intermediary Framework \(Equal Measure\)](#), Forthcoming.*
- **Targeted universalism:** As defined by John Powell, it “rejects a blanket universal which is likely to be indifferent to the reality that different groups are situated differently relative to the institutions and resources of society.” Further, “a targeted universal strategy is one that is inclusive of the needs of both the dominant and the marginal groups, but pays particular attention to the situation of the marginal group.”  
*Source: excerpted from [Post-Racialism or Targeted Universalism](#)*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

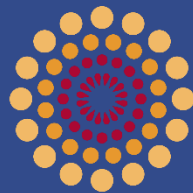
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## LEARN MORE

To learn more about the research this framework guided or building equitable pathways, reach out to [Kelly Kovacic Duran](#).

## ABOUT EDUCATION FIRST

Education First is a national, mission-driven strategy and policy organization with unique and deep expertise in education improvement. Our mission is to deliver exceptional ideas, experience-based solutions and results so all students—and particularly Black, Indigenous and other students of color and students living in low-income communities—are prepared for success in college, career and life. We envision a world in which every student is prepared to succeed—a world in which income and race no longer determine the quality of education. We work closely with policymakers, practitioners, funders and advocates to design and accelerate policies and plans that support strong systems, outstanding educators, engaged students and effective investments.



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