

PRINCIPLES FOR RACIALLY EQUITABLE POLICY PLATFORMS

At a time when our country faces multiple threats our major political parties are developing their policy platforms in the lead up to the 2020 presidential elections. Regardless of issue or challenge, we have a deep and enduring need to be united in order to confront what is to come. Yet, our policy landscape is rife with racial inequities, and as such fails to create structures that would ensure the well-being of all our people.

We the undersigned call for racial equity to be a key principle across all of the issue areas and every policy in these platforms.

We believe that racial equity requires willful eradication of policies and practices in our government that deepen the ongoing harm from the legacies of slavery, genocide, segregation and the myriad of racialized and often deadly oppression woven into our institutions across society. Our history requires those seeking elected office to make clear commitments to meaningful reparations for communities that have been harmed. Without an intentional dismantling of structural racism we continue to live in a culture and system of white supremacy that threatens our democracy and is ultimately divisive and detrimental for all. To that end, we offer the following principles to guide the policy development of this platform:

1. **Fix systems; not people:** Understand that policies and institutions are at the root of the inequities we see across all indicators of success – whether by race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. Instead of fixing people, which often manifests in policy solutions that criminalize communities of color, fix systems by creating policy that allows us all to live healthy lives – affordable housing, quality K-12 education, healthcare for all, a just immigration system, respect for the inherent sovereign rights of tribal nations, climate justice decarceration and more.

2. **Create racially equitable solutions that benefit all:** When we create family-friendly policies to address the needs of women in the workplace, parents of all genders benefit. When the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1991 created curb cuts in sidewalks across the United States, it also benefited people with strollers and carts, elders, and others. When we protect low-wage workers of color who are disproportionately essential workers on the frontlines of the pandemic – the farmworkers, grocery store clerks, factory workers, deliverers – we protect the country as a whole. Ensuring racial equity in all policies will benefit everyone.
3. **Ensure that solutions are grounded in and emerge from the experience of communities of color, by engaging leaders of color who are accountable to those communities:** Engaging community and national leaders of color who are working in and accountable to communities most harshly impacted by the issue at hand can ensure that policies will have an effective and racially equitable impact. It will also ensure that the wide range of innovative and creative solutions emerging from community efforts are incorporated into the policy platforms.
4. **Commit to collecting race/ethnicity data and use it to track and target the greatest needs:** All policies should include a commitment to track and disaggregate data with a race explicit, but not race exclusive approach. Data should be collected across lines of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, immigration status, and more – with regard to the impacts of that policy. We cannot solve inequities without understanding who is most negatively impacted and why. Tracking and disaggregating data allows us to craft policy solutions that target resources, investments, and programs to the communities that are most impacted by a particular problem. Data should be disaggregated to include information on subpopulations and subgroups that are usually obscured in the “other” category and that follow accepted practices for handling small numbers and counts.
5. **Set measurable, results-based equity goals with specific attention to racial impacts:** Each policy area should set measurable equity goals that outline how communities of color most negatively impacted by a particular issue will be better off as a result. This requires always asking how a proposed solution will directly impact people of color and other oppressed communities, assessing for unintended consequences, preventing harms and maximizing equity.

By incorporating racial equity across the policy platforms of our political parties, we can set a path for multiracial inclusive democracy that realizes our highest ideals.

These Principles were developed by Race Forward, People’s Action (<https://peoplesaction.org/>), the National Congress of American Indians (<http://www.ncai.org/>), PolicyLink (<https://www.policylink.org/>), the National Urban League

(<https://nul.org/>), Demos (<https://www.demos.org/>), UnidosUS (<https://www.unidosus.org/>), Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (<https://www.apiahf.org/>), and Rights & Democracy (<https://www.rights-democracy.org/>).