

DISMANTLING RACISM GOALS ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT CENTER

March 2007

Dismantling racism removes the barrier to power and access for grassroots organizations by building capacity for transformation. The Environmental Support Center helps organizations achieve this by providing them resources. As a result, grassroots organizations can achieve their goals—a clean, healthy environment (clean air, water, and lands) for all.

ESC's overarching goal is to be an anti-racist organization: The following objectives will help us achieve that goal:

- I. To model the pursuit of being an anti-racist organization and have a transparent process that can be shared with other groups, funders, vendors, etc. We propose the following ways of being transparent:**
 - Documenting and making our goals public by way of the website (especially with downloadable items) and hard copies of examples, case studies, model language and documents, etc.;
 - Stating and restating that we are not going to wait until things are perfect before sharing our experiences or before taking action;
 - Addressing critical issues by building time for them into the board meeting agenda and by building into the agenda more time for caucuses;
 - Including the DR statement in all public documents; and
 - Committing money to the DR process on a regular basis and as a core budget/organizational function.

- II. Since the struggles and issues of people of color have been systematically set aside because of racism, ESC should bring attention to these struggles and issues.**
 - When we tell stories of groups with which we work, we will do more than talk about what they do. We will:
 - Describe their work and the context in which it takes place;
 - Describe the assistance ESC provided and how the group became more effective as a result;
 - Discuss why the group confronted this problem in the first place – what role did race play in creating the problem?; and
 - Provide analysis and data so that we do more than present an interesting anecdote.
 - Seek out opportunities to bring the message of why the groups we work with are important.

- We will use our access to funders to influence the funding process and foundation grantmaking to benefit of groups in impacted communities*:
 - Seek out opportunities to collaborate with organizations in impacted communities, perhaps developing joint projects developed based on their needs and interests; and
 - Bring folks from those communities and organizations with us on fundraising visits and give them a chance to make the case for direct funding of their organizations.

*We define impacted communities this way: *Communities served by environmental activist groups that are representative of the community, lead by the community and impacted by the environmental injustice, with a focus on people of color, low income groups and their allies.*

III. To have programs that truly build capacity in, among and for groups in impacted communities. In order to accomplish this, ESC will:

- Insure that our provider pool, outreach and materials meets the needs of groups in impacted communities;
- Develop and use processes that allow easy access to our programs for groups in impacted communities; and
- In order to accomplish this objective and sub-objectives (the manifestations of accountability), ESC should consult with impacted communities (via focus groups and other methods) to find out what their needs are and how ESC can most effectively meet them. This should be an ongoing processes based on regular communication.
- To have our program work support groups in our constituency becoming anti-racist organizations:
 - ESC applicants engaging in dismantling racism work should get priority over other applicants.
 - ESC will make it clear that TOA grants are available for DR work.
 - In LEAP, DR work should be part of the self-assessment tool.
- To facilitate access to non-monetary resources outside of ESC for groups in impacted communities:
 - Providers: important for us to identify more consultants/trainers that are more culturally appropriate;
 - Conferences; and
 - Access to Information.

IV. To intentionally develop the leadership of people of color at all levels of the organization.

- Board
 - Offer to pay for leadership training for board members, especially anyone interested in being the board chair;
 - Intentional transitions – training someone to become the next board chair;
 - Help with barriers, i.e., pay for child care or elderly care and provide other support as necessary;
 - Apprenticing;

- Poll the board to find out what would make it easier for them to participate;
- Review and think of different ways to make the board meetings open to cultural diversity:
 - Encourage people to not talk too much;
 - Provide translation during Board meetings;
 - Slow the meetings down;
 - Allowing more time for silence;
 - Create venues for smaller, group discussions and informal dialogue; and
 - People from the dominant culture should leave space for others to come up with answers – hold off on offering solutions and ideas.
- Staff
 - Provide training opportunities;
 - Mentoring either with an ESC representative (Board and Staff) or someone in another organization;
 - Making time for staff to participate in trainings/coaching opportunities;
 - Leadership training;
 - Create built in mechanisms for professional development check-ins; and
 - Make professional development part of the staff evaluation process.

V. To create an anti-racist environment for all staff and board at ESC.

- Review ESC policies
 - Address any language barriers
 - Review written materials
- Physical space
 - Office location
 - Decorations

VI. To diversify ESC's funding to allow for more accountability to those who are served by our programs.

- Diversify general support
- Membership/dues
- Raise money from communities/individuals with which we work
- Investment strategy
- Raise more money from people of color through our individual donor program
- Contribution from constituents
- Membership Fee
- Application Fee

VII. To follow the leadership of, and be accountable to, groups in impacted communities in all of our work.

- A majority of the Board members should represent and be accountable to impacted communities;
- Give list of potential grantees to some representation of the Board (possibly Program Committee) to review and give feedback (set a deadline for responses);
- Need discussion with those impacted to define accountability;
- Needs discussion about how we balance the interests and needs of all the parties to whom we are accountable (impacted communities, constituents, funders); and
- Post a list of our grantees up on our website and keep it current in order to be more transparent and take a first step in accountability.

VIII. Board and staff should set up a process for regularly evaluating our progress towards these goals. This work should be led by the Change Team.