

Racial Impact Assessment Tool

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Biases Embedded in Policies and Procedures

Racial Impact Assessment Activity

- *Institutional racism consists of established laws, customs and practices that systematically reflect and produce intentionally and unintentionally racial inequalities in American society. Individuals and institutions apply and create rules, guidelines, standards, procedures and practices that create racist effects. Institutional racism exists when gross and identifiable disparities occur on the basis of group membership, (e.g., identities of race, class and gender). Thus in education, criminal justice, housing, health care, economics and labor force participation, if it can be shown that distinct racial differences exist, then what is observed is institutional racism*
- (Robert Carter in *Off White: Readings on Race, Power, and Society* 1997).

Racial Impact Assessment

- **ASSIGNMENT:** The purpose of this assignment is to conduct a racial-impact assessment that could help reduce disparities. The racial impact assessment will explore discrepancies in the interpretation and application of policies, practices and laws at your particular decision-point (agency, statewide, or county). This assignment will give us as a class, the opportunity to identify and discuss the racial impact of policies at key decision points and strategies that can reduce race and ethnic disparities.
- Racial impact has historically been measured according to blatant and incontrovertible types of discrimination such as lynching cross-burning or the use of racial epithets. Today, most racial disparities result from implicit and unintended biases or micro-aggression that are informed by stereotypes and obscured by colorblindness. As a result, most decision-makers on college/university campuses and in the workplace who believe they are color-blind are unaware of the racial impact of these policies.

(Autumn Valerio and Shalinee Hunter JD, State Inter-Agency Team-California) 2015

Instructions for RIA

- Describe the policy, practice or law you are assessing.
- What disparities or racial impact are associated with this policy, practice or law?
- At what decision point does the disparity occur; admissions, financial aid, student services, classroom, student discipline, hiring?
- Are there any identifiable or observable behaviors that reflect racial bias?
- What is the stated intent of the law or policy?
- Discuss how the policy/practice appears to be race neutral on the surface but is enforced in ways that can result in a racial impact.
- How might implicit bias, stereotyping and colorblindness contribute to the race, ethnic disparities?
- Is there data available to support your assessment.
- Your group should present a brief class presentation based on its findings.