



HUD Coordinated Entry Equity Demonstration Project Cohort 1 Impact & Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) convened the Coordinated Entry Equity Demonstration Project (Equity Demo), to better understand and address the overrepresentation of people of color among those experiencing homelessness nationwide. Demo communities reimaged how the housing outcomes and experiences of Black, Brown, Indigenous and people of color experiencing homelessness could be improved using an equitable, person-centered lens. The Equity Demo consisted of eight communities who received learning opportunities about racial equity, coaching support, and technical assistance from September 2020 to March 2021. Core components of the Equity Demo included centering the experiences of those with lived expertise of homelessness, beginning and ending with a focus on racial equity, and following the lead of each selected community by facilitating a unique space for communities to do their own strategic planning, goal setting, and group formation. Through the extensive collection of conversations and a mixed methodological analysis framework, this report provides an analysis of the ways in which the Equity Demo centered the voices of participating communities and provided them with a space to interrogate their local homeless response systems. Equity Demo coaches and staff found that every community had its own cultural, political and social factors that attributed to their collective strengths and challenges.

Coaching teams supported communities with a diverse range of expertise rooted in racial equity principles and practices, systems transformation, group facilitation, data analysis, and in HUD programs and tools. With access to multidisciplinary coaching teams and an approach based in equitable practices, community teams were aligned to make meaningful, relevant, and potentially lasting advancements in reimaging their homeless response systems. Additionally, as two coaches described in a publication written after the Equity Demo, “In a departure from what many technical assistance (TA) providers and recipients are used to, we found that the Equity Demo asked both communities and coaches to resist rushing the process, and to take an approach that would require honesty, vulnerability, and collective care.”¹

Equity Demo communities achieved a wide variety of results including forming community-based accountability structures for racial equity work, performing deep inquiries into Coordinated Entry practices and tools that further racial/ethnic inequities, holding space for important conversations about race and power dynamics, building stronger partnerships with groups that serve Black, Brown, Indigenous and people of color, compensation policies that equitably pay people with lived expertise to participate in CoC work, and testing new approaches to assessment questions informed by racial trauma-informed practice.

¹Green, LaMont, & Mainvielle, Cleonie. (2021, March 18). [*Liberated Gatekeepers: Learning to Provide Technical Assistance Rooted in Racial Equity and Social Justice.*](#)

Evaluation Framework

This report provides a mixed-methods analysis and evaluation of the Coordinated Entry Equity Demonstration Project (Equity Demo). It is informed by conversations with members of participating communities about their experiences in the Demo, written feedback gathered from Demo coaches and staff, and quantitative data about racial and ethnic inequities. Broadly speaking, this evaluation aims to examine the following themes:

- *Group Formation & Governance Changes:* Each community’s journey toward creating racial equity-focused Core Teams and the changes to governance structures that provided containers for accountability in racial equity work.
- *Cultural Shifts:* Any organizational or cultural changes made to the CoC that flattened power dynamics and centered the humanity and life experiences of individuals with lived expertise and Black, Brown, Indigenous and all people of color.
- *Racial Equity Strategy Implementation:* Each community’s improvement projects, including broad focus areas and strategy implementation details. Focus areas and strategies were informed by any racial inequities communities identified in their system.
- *Partnership Development:* How communities built relationships with new partners that serve or are affiliated with Black, Brown, Indigenous and other communities of color.
- *Housing Outcomes:* System-level housing outcome data from before each community began their participation in the Demo.

This evaluation draws on several qualitative and quantitative data sources that were collected at different points in the Demo. Each data source is outlined in the table below:

Data Source	Audience	Date Administered
Cohort 1 Current & Ongoing Support for Cohort 1 Equity Demo Communities Form	All Cohort 1 Communities	February 2021
Racial and Ethnic Disparity Data that compares ACS (Census) data to 2019 PIT counts	All Cohort 1 Communities	Throughout the Demo
Community Debrief Discussions	Cohort 1 Communities and Demo Coaches	Summer 2021
System performance data disaggregated by race & ethnicity	Pulled from each Demo community’s LSA/Stella P	Baseline data from FY 2020

Equity Demo Rationale & Overview

“Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.”

The Pandemic is Portal – by Arundhati Roy

Anecdotal accounts from communities nationwide have raised the issue of inequities within current Coordinated Entry System tools and processes. Furthermore, recent research by [C4 Innovations](#) has [documented](#)² what housing and homeless services providers have long known – that current tools commonly used to assess housing needs do not ensure equity across diverse populations. As a result, Coordinated Entry Systems have used policies and processes to assess, score, prioritize, and house people in ways that perpetuate racism, discrimination, and disparities in service and housing access and outcomes.

The crisis of COVID-19 further highlighted the urgent need to center equity, especially racial equity in homeless response systems. The disproportionate numbers of Black, Brown, Indigenous, and all people of color contracting and dying from COVID-19 is staggering. As every Continuum of Care (CoC) continues the process of rehousing individuals and families from non-congregate settings, it is imperative that they use equitable processes to ensure that those most impacted by COVID-19 are able to access housing resources. Equitable processes are crucial because racial/ethnic disparities in homelessness are our national reality. In the 2019 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), for example, “African Americans accounted for 40 percent of all people experiencing homelessness, and 52 percent of people experiencing homelessness as members of families with children, despite being only 13 percent of the U.S. population.”³ As an unprecedented level of resources were distributed to communities as pandemic relief funding, it was and continues to be important that communities better understand and address the overrepresentation of people of color among those experiencing homelessness.

Communities in Cohort 1 were invited to join the Demo based on expressed interest and/or present racial equity work. At the beginning of Cohort 1, the team predicted that communities could receive up to 6 months of technical assistance across two project phases. It was originally thought that each community would build a Core Team made up of a representative from each Continuum of Care (CoCs) Coordinated Entry team, people with lived expertise of homelessness, a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or data lead, and Black, Brown, Indigenous, and people of color. In addition, the Equity Demo delivered quarterly All-Cohort Calls with all participating Demo communities to promote peer sharing and group learning opportunities. Finally, the Demo provided a series of learning sessions called

² Wilkey, C., Donegan, R., Yampolskaya, S., & Cannon, R. (October 2019). Coordinated Entry Systems Racial Equity Analysis. *C4 Innovations*.

³ Henry, M., Watt, R., Mahathey, A., Ouellette, J., & Sitler, A. (January 2020). The 2019 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*.

Knowledge Bites to build community competence in the skills and content necessary to engage in dismantling racial and ethnic disparities. Knowledge Bite topics included implicit/explicit biases, racial equity “101”, cultural humility, centering the voices of individuals with lived expertise and more.

Equity Demo Project Goal

Before the Demo launch, the first iteration of the project goal was focused on supporting communities in developing more equitable assessment tools. As the coaching and Demo staff convened, it was decided to ease the focus off of tool-building as a direct outcome of Cohort 1. Instead, it was decided to explore what foundational elements of transformational racial equity work were needed to improve the housing outcomes and experiences of Black, Brown, Indigenous, and all people of color who experience disproportionate rates of homelessness nationally. As of the Kickoff Call in October 2020, Cohort 1’s original project goal was as follows:

“In partnership with Black, Indigenous and people of color, as well as people with lived expertise, 8 CoCs will identify system disparities through local data, agree upon focus area(s) and engage in an improvement project to test racially equitable assessment processes.”

Demo coaches and staff made early predictions that it would be necessary to reimagine Coordinated Entry processes in service of this goal, and that communities would need to develop Core Teams as accountability structures to perform transformational racial equity work. Moreover, Core Teams needed to have real decision-making power, and include Black, Brown, Indigenous and people of color and people with lived expertise of homelessness.

The communities that participated in Cohort 1 were as follows:

- Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care (TX-503)
- Charlottesville Continuum of Care (VA-504)
- Chicago Continuum of Care (IL-510)
- Connecticut Statewide:
 - Bridgeport, Stamford, Norwalk/Fairfield County CoC (CT-503)
 - Connecticut Balance of State CoC (CT-505)
- Minneapolis/Hennepin County Continuum of Care (MN-500)
- Nashville-Davidson County Continuum of Care (TN-504)
- Omaha, Council Bluffs Continuum of Care (NE-501)
- Tacoma, Lakewood/Pierce County Continuum of Care (WA-503)

Original Demo Project Values

One of the first exercises that Equity Demo coaches and community Core Teams undertook was to co-develop the following guiding statements to ground and communicate our work:

- Center Black, Brown, Indigenous, and all people of color in all homeless response system processes.
- Recognize and honor that Black, Brown, Indigenous, and all people of color have always had autonomy and agency over their own liberation.
- Commit to one another to heal internalized racial oppression, whether inferiority or superiority, by creating spaces for others to unpack.
- Do not stay quiet anymore; silence perpetuates suffering and oppression.
- Bring every single piece of ourselves into discussion spaces. “Take me all, or leave me all.” Openness and acceptance of full self.

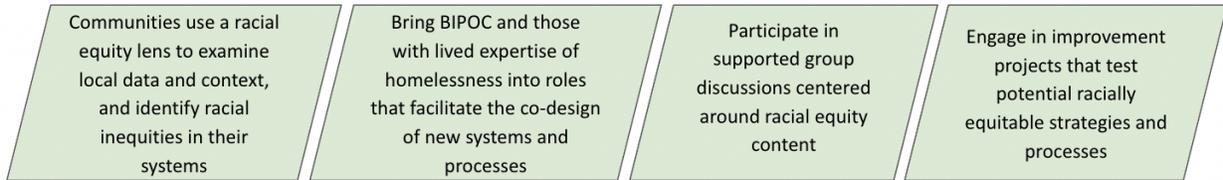
These value statements were communicated to community participants during coaching calls and in group calls with the Demo coaches and support staff members. Members of participating CoCs were encouraged to consider these values in the context of their own local racial equity work. The group felt it was important to establish project values to build a shared understanding of the work, to articulate foundational goals and establish language around how coaches and communities might show up to do transformational racial equity work. Coaches and communities also explored the nuances of white dominant cultural norms, such as having a sense of urgency. To quote Equity Demo coach Michele Williams, *“Urgency does not have to be in conflict with equity. If we incorporate people with lived experience and diverse partners into the planning process; engage them in execution of our vision, and honor new and different approaches, we can save lives and house people at the same time.”*

Equity Demo Theory of Change

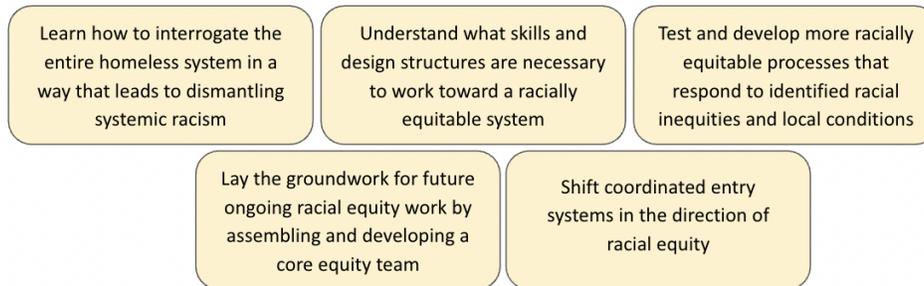
The Equity Demo team developed an overall Theory of Change that defined the desired transformations and outcomes for the project according to our best collective thinking at the time. Beginning with an overall desired result of “Improving housing outcomes for Black, Brown, Indigenous, and all people of color engaging with the homeless response system,” the theory of change is framed in an “If, then” hypothesis-style format. It outlines the major lanes of work we hoped communities would undertake during Cohort 1, and our predictions about the overall impact this work could produce. The Theory of Change was developed in the midst of Cohort 1, and was shaped by the experiences of developing projects in different types of communities with unique perspectives.

Desired Overall Outcome: Improve housing outcomes for Black, Indigenous and People of Color engaging with the Homeless Response System

We believe that **IF** communities:



THEN we believe that communities will:



The theory of change states that **IF**:

- Communities use a racial equity lens to examine their local data and context to identify racial inequities and disproportionalities in their systems
- Communities bring Black, Brown, Indigenous and all people of color and those with lived expertise of homelessness into roles that facilitate the co-design of new systems and processes
- Communities participate in supported group discussions centered around racial equity content (such as cultural humility and implicit bias)
- Communities engage in improvement projects that test potential racially equitable strategies and processes

THEN, we believe that communities will:

- Learn how to interrogate the entire homeless system in a way that leads to dismantling systemic racism
- Understand what skills and design structures are necessary to work toward a racially equitable system
- Test and develop more racially equitable processes that respond to identified racial inequities and local conditions
- Lay the groundwork for future ongoing racial equity work by assembling and developing a core equity team
- Shift Coordinated Entry systems in the direction of racial equity

Modeling Accountability and Pivots

“Our humanity is worth a little discomfort, it’s actually worth a lot of discomfort.” - Ijeoma Oluo

Communities that participate in transformational racial equity work unravel complex issues and require different types of solutions that go beyond traditional technical assistance. In an effort to model the accountability, transparency and authentic communication required for racial equity work, Demo coaches and CoC Core Team members normalized making changes to the Demo in real-time, and publicly acknowledged missteps along the way. For example, the first iteration of the Equity Demo Data Team was composed of three white individuals and did not include anyone with lived expertise of homelessness. In addition, along the lines of traditional technical assistance, this original team developed a Landscape Assessment tool prior to the start of the Demo. Demo community members provided feedback that there should be more racial/ethnic diversity on the Data Team, and that the Landscape Assessment should have been developed by a more diverse group that was inclusive of individuals with lived expertise of homelessness. On a subsequent All-Cohort call, Demo leaders publicly reported this feedback out to all communities, and described the steps they were taking to pivot quickly and change course. The original Landscape Assessment tool was shelved, the Data Team was expanded to include non-white individuals, and data coaching roles were re-balanced to ensure more racial and ethnic diversity in each community coaching team. This pivot was cited by Demo community members and coaches as motivating and impactful, as communities worked to address similar dynamics in their local contexts. This is an example of how the Demo meaningfully informed how racial equity technical assistance could be delivered: with a transparent, authentic approach where feedback is not only encouraged but critical to the process, and actions are made in real-time to address racial/ethnic imbalances and inequities.

Multidisciplinary Coaching Team

Communities that participated in Cohort 1 of the Equity Demo received intensive coaching from teams of up to four technical assistance providers. Equity Demo coaches had expertise in data collection and analysis, systems/culture change management, group facilitation, activism and community organizing, and lived expertise of homelessness. Throughout the Cohort, the group was able to pivot and expand coaching teams to be inclusive of each community's specific needs. Because equity work is complex and sensitive, having a variety of coaches with different types of backgrounds and experiences was essential. Coaches were called on to provide specific technical solutions, train/educate on racial equity concepts, and have a flexible facilitation style that modeled accountability, transparency and authentic communication. Having a coaching team with a wide range of experience and knowledge also allowed the Equity Demo team to more finely tune and support specific community needs, which could vary widely based on the community’s racial equity history, cultural context, as well as the broader community environment. See the tables below for a list of Cohort 1 community coaches and data coaches and a list of internal and community-facing Demo calls and presentations:

Community Name	Coaching Teams
Austin, Texas	Coaches: LaMont Green and Jamerson Watson Data Coaches: Greg Barchuk and Joan Domenech
Charlottesville, Virginia	Coaches: Aly Ainscough and Mary Frances Kenion Data Coaches: Stacey Matthews and Shercole King
Chicago, Illinois	Coaches: Michelle Valdez and LaMont Green Data Coach: Stacey Matthews
Connecticut Statewide	Coaches: Michele Williams and Aly Ainscough Data Coaches: Brian Roccapriore and Shercole King
Hennepin County, Minnesota	Coach: Michele Williams Data Coaches: Joan Domenech and Lindsey Giblin
Omaha, Nebraska	Coaches: Jamerson Watson and Kira Zylstra Data Coaches: Lindsey Giblin and Shercole King
Nashville, Tennessee	Coaches: Kira Zylstra and Cleonie Mainvielle Data Coaches: Joan Domenech and Greg Barchuk
Tacoma / Pierce County, Washington	Coaches: Michelle Valdez and Mary Frances Kenion Data Coach: Stacey Matthews

Cohort 1 Internal Calls, Community Facing Calls and Knowledge Bite Schedule

	Name	Date / Frequency	Facilitators/ Participants
Internal Calls	All-Team Call	Weekly Friday Meetings	All Race Equity Demo Team Members
	Project Management Team Meeting	Weekly	Equity Demo Co-Leads and Coordinator
	Data Team Meeting	Weekly	Data Team members
	Coach Coordination Calls	As needed	Small group of coaches assigned to each particular community
	Quantitative / Qualitative Informational Team Call	September 30, 2020	Data Coaches
	Core Team Meetings with Communities	Weekly or Bi-weekly	Coaches, Data coaches and community members
	Cultural Humility	October 15th, 2020	Chloe Green and Michele

Community Calls	Knowledge Bite		Williams
	Centering People with Lived Expertise	October 21st, 2020	LaMont, Kira, John, and people with lived expertise
	Racial Equity 101 Discussion Session 1	October 28th, 2020	LaMont, Evan Smith, Regina
	Kick Off Call	October 30th, 2020	Equity Demo team
	Racial Equity 101 Discussion Session 2	November 6th, 2020	LaMont, Evan Smith, Regina
	All-Cohort Calls	Quarterly	Equity Demo team and community members

Cohort 1 Original Coaching Activities Roadmap

The table below represents Cohort 1’s original articulation of coaching activities, which were focused largely on Core Team development, supporting community decision-making in structural transformation, data support, and improvement project planning and implementation. There were key pivots and changes made to this map of activities as the Demo adopted an iterative, flexible approach to technical assistance.

Timeframe	Activities
Weeks 1-4 Mid-Sept - Mid Oct.	Coaching: Introductions and relationship building; role and project clarity; Core Team discussions and development; Knowledge Bite participation (Centering People with Lived Expertise, Data, Cultural Humility)
	Data: Introductions and relationship building; digging into Landscape Assessment to determine what’s feasible in each community, begin quantitative data gathering; secure SMEs in qualitative data to support Equity Demo team.
Weeks 4-6 Mid Oct - Early Nov.	Coaching: Core Team development continued, focused on transforming how the work is approached; Cohort 1 Kick Off Call, Knowledge Bite participation (Racial Equity 101 sessions); initial goal setting with communities focused on the short term
	Data: Support with quantitative data pull and packaging, beginning discussions about qualitative data; use the Landscape Assessment process to identify key questions of qualitative and quantitative data.
Weeks 6-9 Early - Late Nov.	Coaching: Analyzing data, broader community discussions re: what data is indicating, getting closer to a focus area for testing. Support of core team - foundation building, team building, decision making structure testing. Internal support from an expert focused on community-based research.

	Data: Use the Landscape Assessment to identify key questions of qualitative and quantitative data; support discussions identifying data gaps and action planning to use community-based research. Continuous revisiting of data.
Weeks 10-13 December 2020	Coaching: Narrowing in on focus area(s) for testing; focus on community-based researching / building those muscles. Identify others who need to be at the table and get them there, ready for testing.
	Data: Provide support with the development of a community’s learning questions; Support a tracking mechanism of chosen strategies/measures for the improvement cycle.

Lessons Learned and Ongoing Support Form

In Spring 2021, the Demo team distributed a Feedback Form regarding current and ongoing community support needs, and conducted lessons learned feedback discussions with communities. The purpose of gathering this information at this stage was to learn about how the Demo Team could best continue to support community racial equity work both in the remainder of their time within the Demo and in an ongoing capacity after Cohort 1 was complete. Areas of inquiry included:

- Systems-level changes each community implemented
- Emergent needs and ongoing barriers
- Individual learnings and take-aways from each community
- Which aspects of the Demo were most helpful

The following list is a broad overview of the feedback the Demo received from communities, including what worked well during the Demo as well as any opportunities for growth:

What Worked

- Knowledge Bites and peer sharing/learning opportunities were very impactful.
 - Knowledge Bites were provided by Demo Team coaches and community members in participating CoCs. Topics included bias, basic racial equity concepts, power mapping, centering the voices of individuals with lived expertise, and more.
- Respondents with lived expertise expressed appreciation for being in a space with others who had similar experiences of homelessness. Others were deeply impacted by Knowledge Bites that centered the voices of individuals with lived expertise of homelessness.
- The Equity Demo was different from “typical” HUD technical assistance in that coaches facilitated a unique space for communities to do their own strategic planning, goal setting, and group formation.

Opportunities for Growth

- More clarity on the Demo’s overall focus, direction, and the role of Demo coaches.
- A need for more focus on testing equitable strategies, improvement project focus areas, and action-oriented planning.
- Respondents asked for examples of racially equitable assessment questions and prioritization criteria.
- Some Demo communities were able to easily access system-level data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, and in other communities this access took a very long time to obtain. Delays in access to data were a barrier to some communities fully exploring racial/ethnic inequities and trends.

A [full write up](#) of lessons learned from the Cohort 1 feedback form can be found as an Appendix to this report.

Community Debrief Discussion Results

Key debrief discussions were conducted with coaches and community members from each Equity Demo Core Team about 3 months after the completion of Cohort 1. The discussions explored each community’s experience including all activities that communities undertook to support their chosen outcomes and goals, such as forming Core Teams, developing improvement projects, accessing and analyzing ethnoracial disparities, and the development of any tools or materials that were helpful in executing transformational racial equity work. The full version of the Community Debrief Discussion Question Guide can be found at the end of this report.

Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care (CoC)

Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care (CoC) showed several racial and ethnic disparities in homelessness in their community. When comparing the racial and ethnic population distributions across the geography of their county to their Point-in-Time (PIT) count, the greatest disparities exist among Black and Native American/Alaskan households. Black individuals made up 34% of the PIT count in 2019, whereas they only account for 8% of the general population in Austin. Similarly, Native American/Alaskan individuals made up 1.6% of the PIT count and 0.47% of the general population at large. This means that Black individuals are 4.3 times more likely to show up in the PIT count as homeless than in the general population, and Native American/Alaskans were 3.4 times more likely to show up in the PIT count as homeless.

The following table represents Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care (CoC) data from the [HUD Continuum of Care \(CoC\) Racial Equity Analysis Tool](#):

Race/Ethnicity	American Community Survey Census Data	Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Data - 2019	Size of Disparity between Census and PIT
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White	75%	59%	1.2 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Black	8%	34%	4.3 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Native American/Alaskan	0.47%	1.6%	3.4 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Asian/Pacific Islander	7%	1%	7 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Other/Multi-Racial	10%	4%	2.5 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Hispanic	33%	30%	Slightly <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Non-Hispanic	67%	70%	Slightly <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT

Austin/Travis County Demo Debrief Discussion Results

According to several debrief discussions with members of Austin’s Core Team, Austin’s team quickly met the need of developing a Core Team that added more voices of persons with lived expertise (PWLE). When asked about the structure, composition, and development of working relationships and important conversations, the Core Team emphasized their routine engagement strategy. The team met regularly every other week internally, while Demo coaches and community leads met to provide one-on-one coaching, build out facilitation frameworks, and center conversations on power-sharing. Demo coaches played a key support role in organizing ideas and prioritizing initiatives developed by the Core Team. One interview respondent stated,

“Our coaches were very good at balancing letting them lead the work and taking a support role to avoid paternalistic attitudes. We introduced a charter process asking, what’s your mission statement, what are your scopes of work, etc. Did work on what is the current state, where they want to be, and how to get there. Helped interrogate different parts of the system.”

Prior to working with the Demo, Austin developed an equity team that was critical of the VI-SPDAT. This team was diverse, made up of members from Black, Brown, Indigenous and other communities of color and the LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and ally or asexual) community. During the Demo, a new Equity Demo Team was formed. Community coaches stated the importance of amplifying the original equity team’s capacity by helping them build tighter relationships internally and with the new Equity Demo team. The new Equity Demo team was central to starting the process of bridging both the original and the new equity groups together. The new Equity Demo team (Core Team) helped to deepen conversations around equitable decision-making bodies, processes, and representation that not only raise awareness of racism but elevate anti-racism work. One coach stated,

“There is a group of directly impacted folks which have an open invitation to all committee groups. Since we’ve had conversations around agencies not compensating folx for their expertise, the team has created a different structure for the membership council (much smaller) who figures out how to get people paid. Another important conversation we had was around tokenism and how placing the burden of deciding how much to pay persons with lived experience is laborious.”

According to Demo coaches who participated in the debrief discussion for this report, Austin’s Demo team exhibited authentic engagement and capacity, was very conscious of the work they were doing; and had great self-awareness to pivot based on feedback. Throughout the Demo, Austin’s Core Team did a really good job of applying a data-informed, racial equity lens and as such, took the Demo as an opportunity to deeply analyze their homelessness system to develop comprehensive strategies.

Austin’s coaches and community leads stated that Austin thoroughly analyzed their data and found disparities in outreach to members of the Black community throughout the Coordinated Entry (CE) system. They also found disparate outcomes for people of color in Rapid Rehousing (RRH). In response to the findings regarding disparities in outreach to members of the Black community, Austin focused much of its performance improvement plan on getting more Black individuals and households to go through CE. Moreover, the community developed a series of more equitable and inclusive questions to add to their coordinated assessment tool (VI-SPDAT). One member of the team stated,

“We changed health questions to be more specific to ask about particular diseases, and we added more gender-inclusive options to the assessment. We operated from the shared understanding that the VI-SPDAT was terrible and we spent much of our time conducting an analysis of their entire system. The community leveraged the work and training during the Equity Demo to dismantle inequitable aspects of their Continuum of Care (CoC)’s infrastructure...A lot of the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and other programs were not housing as many Black folx even though we found this population to make up 40% of the people who don’t have homes.”

Austin’s Core Team dedicated a lot of their improvement plan to not only pinpointing disparate housing outcomes and touch points within the CE, but also to engaging in critical, equity-shifting conversations that exposed the inequitable system-wide structures leading to homelessness. Topics ranged from stark inequitable and discriminatory practices in housing initiatives and service provision, to non-representative County funding decision-making bodies. When asked about the tools, frameworks, or materials that were applied or developed as a result of the Demo, Austin coaches lifted up a variety of community-based participatory evaluation approaches. One Demo Coach said,

“We used current-state and transform-state mapping to walk through the process of identifying the drivers of disproportionate housing outcomes for Austin’s Black, Brown, Indigenous and other people of color. We engaged in reflective listening and mirrored their thoughts back to them. Power-mapping was used to examine how drivers and systems are acting as fields of oppression. Coaches really helped with the planning phase, now they are in the “doing” phase.”

While data collection efforts (both qualitative and quantitative) were just beginning when the Demo ended, Community Leads stated their use of HMIS data and zip code data allowed them to uncover the connection between gentrification and housing displacement. For example, the team stated that,

“Zip code was connected to folx who are about to become homeless, and gentrification is connected to housing displacement. Thus, when you look at people of color in the system, their last known addresses were in the most gentrified areas of the city.”

This was a critical connection made during the Demo that is and will continue to be employed as an approach to uncover and dismantle ethnoracial disparities within Austin’s Coordinated Entry system. A transformative outcome from the Austin’s Demo project was the creation of Austin’s Prioritization Index (API). The API is a new assessment tool that was created in the context of Austin’s ongoing racial equity work. A published [blog](#)⁴ authored by one of Austin’s Community Leads discusses the diligent efforts from the community throughout the Demo to unpack how Austin prioritizes individuals and households for housing interventions given the vulnerability to death on the streets due to unmet housing needs for their unsheltered community. The creation and implementation of the API exemplifies what it means for the persons most impacted to not only inform the work but to construct a new approach. As the blog author and Community Lead stated, “Having all these voices made it possible to not just be at the table, but to build it. And when we get the opportunity to build our own tables, we see more sustainable outcomes, and we ask the right questions, and we understand the answers. And that is how we begin the shift of culture towards one that focuses on equitable outcomes.”

Largely, the Core Team expressed that the Demo was key to uncovering inequities in accessibility to the CE system because, at first glance, Austin did not appear to have racial disparities for those who were already in the homeless response system. The Equity Demo helped to critically interrogate those who are and are not entered in the system and start to understand why some populations might not be as well served as others. Finally, the Core Team stated that Demo Knowledge Bites were very helpful in pinpointing racial/ethnic disparities in

⁴Azzam Morris, Rhie. (2021, September 8). *Anti-Racism, Homelessness, Race Equity: A Journey to the Precipice*.

Austin’s homeless response system and aided in checking personal biases ingrained in white supremacist culture.

Charlottesville Continuum of Care (CoC)

Charlottesville experiences several racial and ethnic disparities in homelessness in their community. When comparing the racial and ethnic population distributions across the geography of their county to their Point-in-Time (PIT) count, the greatest disparities exist among Black and Native American/Alaskan households. Black individuals made up 38% of the PIT count in 2019, whereas they only account for 12% of the general population in Charlottesville. Similarly, Native American/Alaskan individuals made up 1.8% of the PIT count and 0.23% of the general population at large. This means that Black individuals are over three times more likely to show up in the PIT count as homeless than in the general population, and Native American/Alaskans were 7.8 times more likely to show up in the PIT count as homeless than in the population at large.

The following table represents Charlottesville Continuum of Care (CoC) data from the [HUD Continuum of Care \(CoC\) Racial Equity Analysis Tool](#):

Race/Ethnicity	American Community Survey Census Data	Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Data - 2019	Size of Disparity between Census and PIT
White	79%	53%	1.5 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Black	12%	38%	3.2 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Native American/Alaskan	0.23%	1.8%	7.8 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	1%	4 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Other/Multi-Racial	4%	7%	1.8 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Hispanic	5%	7%	1.4 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Non-Hispanic	95%	93%	Slightly less likely to show up in PIT

Charlottesville Demo Debrief Discussion Results

Charlottesville debrief discussions for this report consisted of a mix of Continuum of Care (CoC) leadership, Core Team members and Demo coaches. According to a debrief discussion with a member of the Charlottesville Core Team, the group set up a Demo Core Team and designed an improvement plan that was based on making changes to Coordinated Entry practices in ways that were informed by people with lived expertise. Charlottesville’s performance improvement plan

stated: “To create a committee of people with lived experience, called the People’s Caucus, to co-create Continuum of Care (CoC) policy.” The People’s Caucus, along with the Core Team, planned to overhaul CoC governance processes to be more equitable and inclusive across all communities within the CoC.

A major issue that came up several times with participants was the need to strengthen the working relationships between Core Team members and holding space for conversations on race and equity. Charlottesville had successfully developed a strong Core Team, but the team lost momentum towards the end after experiencing staff capacity issues. Furthermore, the Core Team faced several external factors that hindered movement forward during the Demo, including:

- Broader community-wide racial tension
- Past inter-organizational racial tensions
- COVID-related issues

Debrief discussion participants identified that the Charlottesville community, as a whole, hadn’t fully healed from the racial trauma experienced in 2017 from the deadly Unite The Right Rally. In addition, members of the Core Team had safety concerns resulting from an increase in local shootings. An additional set of variables the CoC experienced during the Demo were the aftereffects of racial tension among groups within the CoC. A Core Team member stated that many staff were burned out from previous equity initiatives that didn’t really go anywhere, which made team members feel a lack of comfort with Demo work. According to team members, because of these factors and others, the group did not feel wholly safe about having conversations about race and appropriate racial/ethnic representation among decision-making roles in the CoC.

Some participants in the debrief discussions reported that racial/ethnic representation among decision-making roles impacted progress towards developing and implementing their improvement plan. One Core Team member stated, “Only two people were present for some meetings, with no representation from people of color, which impacted the ability to make changes.” Other participants in debrief discussions identified that the Core Team was committed, however attributed their hindrances to the small CoC size and limits on staff capacity, rather than a lack of commitment to racial equity - that Charlottesville was not a part of a big enough system to focus on equity. Finally, team members also stated that the group had to constantly balance COVID-related housing priorities against racial equity priorities.

The Core Team attempted to reach out to groups in the broader community, including Latinx-led organizations, local nonprofits, and agencies focusing on mental health. These connections were unable to be solidified at the time of the Demo, however the team plans to work on strengthening these relationships in the second phase of their work. The group was, however, able to identify

and engage five people with lived expertise in interviews to be better informed in moving forward with their improvement project.

Several team members in Charlottesville did not feel the work on the Demo had a real impact on policies yet, but instead felt that the Demo helped complete planning work leading up to potential changes in the future. Some team members also felt that working with so many coaches was difficult at times, because while they received a lot of guidance and information, the Core Team did not develop a full sense of ownership or have the capacity to implement the work of fully building out a Core Team and the People's Caucus. Tools were developed for Charlottesville surrounding group development and compensation for individuals with lived expertise. A compensation policy was developed to ensure the equitable compensation of participants with lived expertise on the People's Caucus. The group was also given suggestions surrounding recruitment strategies for the People's Caucus, and an action plan was created. The community opted for a long-term sustainable model that centered around people with lived expertise and encouraged more equitable power-sharing among members of the group.

Charlottesville was able to access Coordinated Entry data and identified racial/ethnic disparities, however, the group was unable to focus on this data as they worked through other issues. According to a team member that participated in the debrief discussions, "the primary disparities surrounded the differences in prior living situations by race," there were far more Black clients accessing services coming from housed situations rather than unhoused. The Core Team also found that white people were more likely to enter Coordinated Entry from unhoused situations. There was also a disparity in VI-SPDAT scores - white clients scored on average 2 more points than other racial/ethnic groups. And finally, the group found that on average, there were more white clients than Black clients in Permanent Supportive Housing programs, which prompted the group to do a lot of thinking around how to more equitably prioritize housing resources.

Interviews with five compensated individuals with lived expertise were completed to aid in redesigning tools and to address process issues in Coordinated Entry. These qualitative interviews focused on prevention and diversion, barriers to housing and services, advancing equitable housing solutions, rapid rehousing, perceptions around homeless assistance, additional services needed, permanent service housing, and how the People's Caucus might be designed. There were several key findings in these interviews with individuals with lived expertise. The Core Team identified two areas where racial equity improvements still needed to be made to more accurately address and evaluate disparities in their Coordinated Entry system. The first was that individuals being interviewed for the People's Caucus were not comfortable talking to white individuals asking interview questions. And the second issue was that interviewees did not have positive experiences in homeless response system programs while they were homeless, and so were hesitant to answer questions. The Core Team had to learn how to respond to and care for this dynamic. Core Team members felt that reviewing this qualitative data was important for

understanding how Charlottesville might address transformational racial equity work in the future. One team member stated, “Doing this would inform how we improve housing service decisions, access to services/shelter - we need a regular system for looking at this information.” Another team member stated that “Charlottesville is an excellent example that progress isn’t able to be measured by quantitative data. What happened was organic, and specifically met the needs of the community...qualitative data informed how we moved forward and may have been even more valuable [than quantitative data].”

The Charlottesville team felt that the Demo group calls and Knowledge Bites offered during the Demo were useful in developing their improvement plan. However, discussion participants did note that it would have been helpful to hold bi-weekly meetings with coaches (instead of weekly) to give time for the group to meet independently to make decisions. Finally, when asked how they would define the impact of the Demo and any successful outcomes, they stated that having the space to intentionally create a plan to build and support a group of people with lived experience was very impactful. Looking to the future, members of the Core Team stated that they are interested in doing more investigation into racial distributions across geography and neighborhoods, including mapping. The group also felt that length of time homeless would also be an important measure to focus on in future work. As of the time of the discussion for this report, the Charlottesville CoC lead stated that they had plans to map out recruitment for an AmeriCorps position to spearhead the launch of the People’s Caucus and to support the planning to revamp CoC governance policy as per the People’s Caucus.

Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC)

The Chicago Core Team examined high-level racial and ethnic disparities in homelessness in their community before and throughout the Demo by comparing the racial and ethnic population distributions across the geography of their county to their Point-in-Time (PIT) count and using other data sources. They found that the greatest disparities exist among Black and Native American/Alaskan households. Black individuals made up 78% of the PIT count in 2019, whereas they only account for 30% of the general population in Chicago. Similarly, Native American/Alaskan individuals made up 0.91% of the PIT count and 0.28% of the general population at large. This means that Black individuals are 2.6 times more likely to show up in the PIT count as homeless than in the general population, and Native American/Alaskans were 3.2 times more likely to show up in the PIT count as homeless.

The following table represents Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC) data from the [HUD Continuum of Care \(CoC\) Racial Equity Analysis Tool](#):

Race/Ethnicity	American Community Survey Census Data	Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Data - 2019	Size of Disparity between Census and PIT
White	49%	19%	2.5 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT

Black	30%	78%	2.6 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Native American/Alaskan	0.28%	0.91%	3.2 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Asian/Pacific Islander	6%	1%	6 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Other/Multi-Racial	14%	1%	14 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Hispanic	29%	11%	2.6 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Non-Hispanic	71%	89%	1.2 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT

Chicago Demo Debrief Discussion Results

The Chicago team formed a Core Team of seven to work on transformational racial equity strategies during Cohort 1. There were six regular participants on the Core Team, three of whom identified as Black and as having lived expertise of homelessness. There were a total of four people of color and two white people on the team. According to a debrief discussion conducted for this report, a member of the Core Team stated that people of color on the team led the work during the Demo, and there was a subgroup of individuals with lived expertise on the team. As of the time of the debrief discussion, the work on the Core Team was still continuing and the group was still meeting regularly. The Chicago team collaborated with key partners outside of the Core Team throughout the Demo by hosting community sessions to get feedback regularly and to create transparency in the racial equity work being completed. They also had feedback sessions focused solely on the experiences of people with lived expertise, and are going to try to integrate these practices more broadly into their Continuum of Care (CoC)’s daily practices. The Core Team member described the group as “a driving course for change” in their system.

The Core Team member asserted that the Chicago team was thoughtful about race, racism and having appropriately diverse representation among decision-making roles in CoC. According to the team member interviewed for this report, the Chicago CoC board Chair is a Black man with lived expertise who felt very comfortable talking about race, and stated that they re-wired their CoC governance structure with racial equity in mind. The Core Team embraced the ethos that those closest to the problem were closest to the solution, to the extent that before the Demo they never considered halting meetings if people with lived experience weren’t in the room when those meetings were about issues that would deeply affect people with lived expertise of homelessness. As a result of the Demo, Chicago now operates its meetings in this manner.

The Chicago team focused on two improvement goals during the Demo - the first was to improve their assessment process by refining acuity protocols for single individuals moving through Coordinated Entry, and the second was to tackle justice discrimination by improving housing

outcomes for justice-involved participants. Examples of strategies that the team employed during the Demo included ramping up their bi-lingual efforts and starting a housing provider accountability network to address the fact that individuals were being systematically denied housing due to their prior involvement in the justice system. The Chicago Core Team also reviewed HMIS data, ran tests, and collected data that was then compared to existing HMIS data. The Chicago team utilized focus groups to gather qualitative data and better inform quantitative data interpretation.

Chicago identified assessment as a phase of their Coordinated Entry system that was in need of improvement. Chicago uses the Vulnerability Index or VI (not the VI-SPDAT) as their assessment tool for single adults and uses a separate assessment index for youth. The group member who participated in the debrief discussion for this report identified the VI as “the most problematic of the tools” and stated that in Chicago’s experience, the index advances white people over people of color in assessment practices. The Core Team member credited the Equity Demo as giving the community a space to explore alternative assessment content.

The Core Team noted that their Single Adult Vulnerability Index was rooted research in which participants were predominantly white. The Core Team wanted to expand the questions beyond medical vulnerability and reimagine existing questions rooted in white dominant cultural norms. The group completed a review of the Single Adult VI while working within the Demo, where skilled assessors evaluated single individuals who completed both the Single Adult VI and a newly developed Pilot Tool. In total 174 individuals were assessed and 162 of those assessments were evaluated. The Pilot Tool included the following new questions:

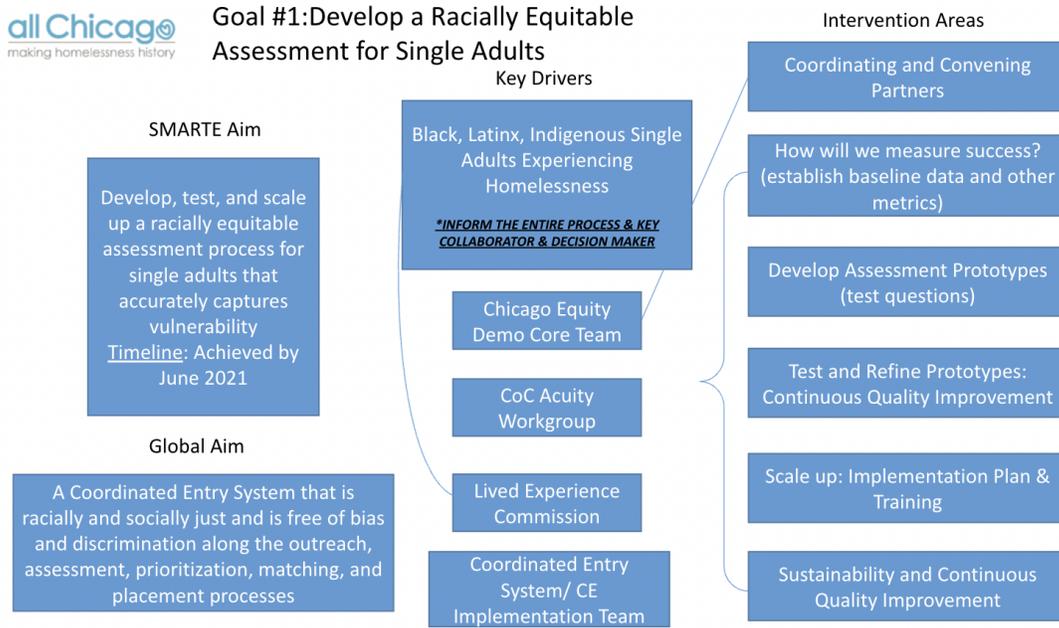
- Have you ever in your life, spent any amount of time in a juvenile or adult correctional facility, jail, prison, or detention center?
- Growing up, did your family experience housing instability such as frequently moving due to financial reasons, living with other families, relatives, (also known as doubling up), living in a shelter, living in nightly or monthly rentals, or anything like that?
- Have you ever been discriminated against because of your sexual orientation or gender identity?
- Do you identify as a Black, Indigenous/Native, and/or a Person of Color who has been discriminated against because of your race or ethnicity?
- Have you experienced violence in a home where you lived or seen others experience violence in a home where you lived? Violence can be physical or emotional.
- Are you currently being hurt or experiencing violence on the streets or in a shelter or attempting to avoid people who have hurt you since experiencing homelessness?

Participant Average Score by Race:

Race	Pilot Score	VI Score	% of Total Clients
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Black/African American	2.5	0.8	86%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.4	0.4	3%
White	2.8	1.5	10%

Driver Diagram for Chicago Equity Demo Improvement Project Goal #1

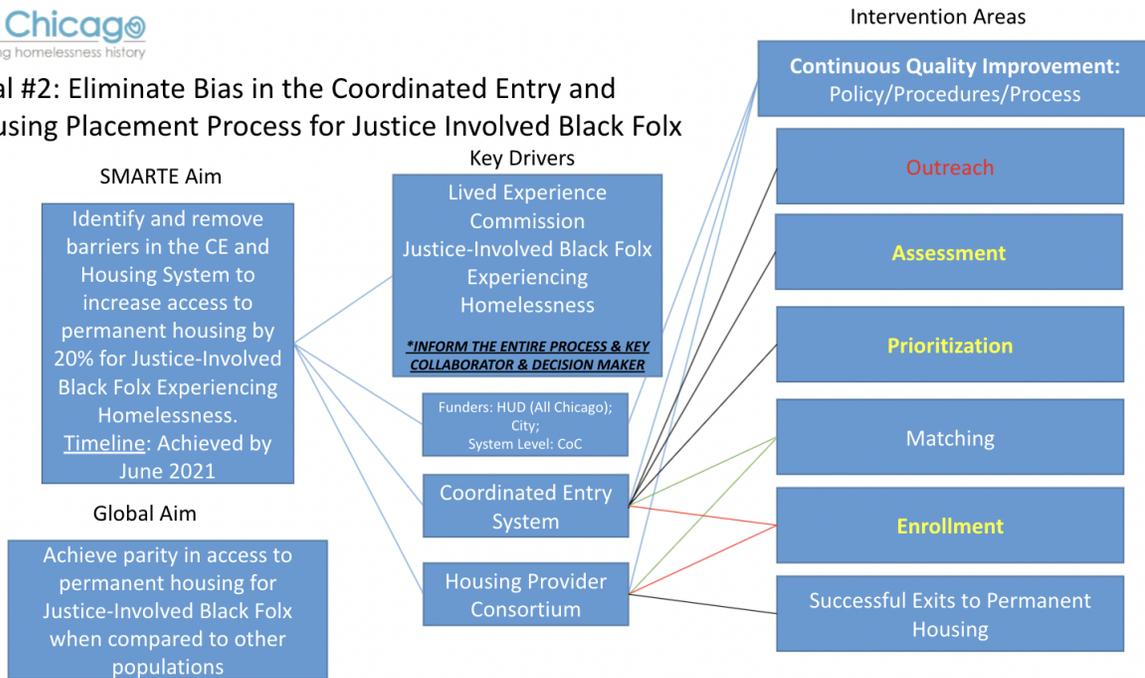


Chicago’s second improvement project goal was focused within both the Continuum of Care (CoC) and in area jail/prison systems. Demo coaches guided the team through this goal-definition process remotely using a Google Jamboard and a human-centered design approach. The group also discussed power dynamics via a power mapping exercise that helped the group name different spheres of influence.

Driver Diagram for Chicago Equity Demo Improvement Project Goal #2



Goal #2: Eliminate Bias in the Coordinated Entry and Housing Placement Process for Justice Involved Black Folx



Finally, the Chicago team member stated that they enjoyed the Cohort 1 Knowledge Bites and hearing from other communities participating in the Demo about what strategies they were working on. The Knowledge Bites with people with lived expertise was very impactful and helpful. According to the Core Team member interviewed for this report, the biggest take-home lesson of the Demo was asking the question of who is making decisions in their Continuum of Care (CoC) and who *should* be making decisions.

Connecticut Statewide

Connecticut data from the HUD CoC Racial Equity Analysis Tool reveal significant racial and ethnic disproportionalities among persons experiencing homelessness in their community. The greatest disparities exist among Black, Native American/Alaskan, and Hispanic households experiencing homelessness. These disparities were consistent across both Continua of Care (CoC)’s in Connecticut that participated in the Equity Demo. CT-503 is the Bridgeport, Stamford, Norwalk/Fairfield County CoC, and CT-505 is the Connecticut Balance of State CoC.

In CT-503:

- Black individuals made up 50% of the PIT count in 2019, whereas they only account for 11% of the general population.
- Native American/Alaskan individuals account for 0.88% of the PIT count but only 0.26% of the general population.

- Hispanic individuals made up 35% of the PIT count in CT-503 and account for 19% of the general population.

In CT-505:

- Black individuals made up 34% of the PIT count in 2019, whereas they only account for 10% of the general population.
- Native American/Alaskan individuals account for 0.52% of the PIT count but only 0.27% of the general population.
- Hispanic individuals show up 28% of the PIT count and account for 14% of the general population.

The following table represents CT-503 and CT-505 data from the [HUD Continuum of Care \(CoC\) Racial Equity Analysis Tool](#):

Bridgeport, Stamford, Norwalk/Fairfield County Continuum of Care (CoC) (CT-503)			
Race/Ethnicity	American Community Survey Census Data	Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Data - 2019	Size of Disparity between Census and PIT
White	73%	40%	1.8 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Black	11%	50%	5 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Native American/Alaskan	0.27%	0.52%	2 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Asian/Pacific Islander	5%	1%	5 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Other/Multi-Racial	10%	9%	Slightly less likely to show up in PIT
Hispanic	19%	35%	1.8 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Non-Hispanic	81%	65%	1.2 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Connecticut Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) (CT-505)			
Race/Ethnicity	American Community Survey Census Data	Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Data - 2019	Size of Disparity between Census and PIT
White	78%	56%	1.4 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Black	10%	34%	3.4 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Native American/Alaskan	0.26%	0.88%	3.4 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	3%	1.3 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT

Other/Multi-Racial	8%	7%	1.1 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Hispanic	14%	28%	2 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Non-Hispanic	86%	72%	1.2 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT

Connecticut Demo Debrief Discussion Results

According to a member of the Demo coaching team for the Connecticut CoCs, all members of the Core Team were committed to reducing disparities in their current system. According to a member of the Connecticut Core Team who participated in a debrief discussion for this report, the community members from CT-503 and CT-505 met regularly as a full group on a bi-weekly schedule. In addition, on weeks that they didn’t meet, group members built relationships with outside stakeholders by having purposeful interactions in the broader community to discuss the important conversations happening at Core Team meetings. Connecticut was intentional in engaging new external partners and in designing communication loops to ensure that all critical partners invested in ending homelessness in Connecticut were involved in the transformational racial equity work within the Demo.

The Core Team also reviewed the racial/ethnic composition of staffing in the CoC, and noticed that there was a lack of representation of people of color, especially in high-level decision making roles. In the debrief discussion, a Core Team member stated that the team began to address the need to focus on creating opportunities for people with lived expertise to become engaged in racial equity work, and to develop pathways to employment and other opportunities that lead to leadership roles. The Connecticut team also identified the need to center the voices of those with lived expertise for the purpose of leading the community in changes to the system that would result in reduced racially disparate outcomes. Pivoting from their initial plan to test new Coordinated Entry assessment questions, Connecticut identified that there was an immediate need to get to a shared vision that would increase the representation of Black, Brown, Indigenous and all people of color at all levels of staffing in the CoC. The group felt they had the right allies at the table willing to provide the support needed to attain this goal. Connecticut’s improvement plan stated, *“Giving People with Lived Expertise the power and providing them with a framework to make decisions in our system, as well as creating pathways to meaningful engagement and employment opportunities.”*

This led the Connecticut team to focus on establishing processes that effectively engage people with lived expertise who could be meaningfully included in decision-making bodies in each of the state’s regional groups in their homeless response system (Coordinated Access Networks). The Core Team conducted a scan of all initiatives, committees, workgroups and other efforts that were focused on engaging people with lived expertise of homelessness/housing instability, and identified opportunities for streamlining and strengthening coordination among those efforts. At

the close of the Demo, the Core Team laid initial groundwork for taking a Consumer Leadership Involvement (CLIP) group to scale within each of Connecticut's Coordinated Access Networks. The CLIP group is currently working on securing funding for their future transformational racial equity efforts. This group is predominantly comprised of Black, Brown, Indigenous and people of color on a path toward becoming leaders in the CoC.

The Connecticut Core Team had access to extensive amounts of data about their homeless response system, including data available on their performance dashboard. Connecticut felt that the Demo provided a solid opportunity to review race/ethnicity data, and specifically focused on the following concepts and learning questions:

- What does entry into the homeless response system look like?
- How can we equitably allocate housing resources?
- How can we ensure that Black, Brown, Indigenous and people of color who have been connected to permanent housing do not return to homelessness at disproportionate rates?

According to a member of the coaching team, Connecticut's approach to uncovering ethnoracial disparities within their homeless response system began by reviewing quantitative Coordinated Entry data and Stella data to highlight opportunities for improvement in reducing racial disparities. A member of the Core Team stated, "The *aha* moment was - Who is coming to the homeless system? Who is diverted from entering the system? This was intense to look at as a group." The Core Team was then able to take a further look at the disparities among Black and Hispanic populations entering into the homeless response system. Currently, there is also a small group looking into trends in VI-SPDAT data and better understanding how Black and Hispanic households access the Connecticut homeless response system.

Connecticut Core Team members participated in numerous Knowledge Bite sessions. A Core Team member felt that hearing the challenges that other Demo communities were experiencing was really helpful, and that Equity Demo coaches were good at making connections to other communities or coaches as needed. The Core Team member stated that, "Support was provided, and when [coaches] identified needs they could bring in an expert." This Core Team member also felt that the Race Equity 101 and Cultural Humility sessions were particularly helpful, and were great for providing examples about how to begin the work to create more equitable system processes. Finally, the Core Team member stated that "seeing the Demo team course correct and pivot was great."

Minneapolis/Hennepin County Continuum of Care (CoC)

During the Equity Demo, the Minneapolis/Hennepin County CoC Core Team examined high-level racial and ethnic disparities in homelessness in their community. They compared the racial and ethnic population distributions across the geography of their CoC to their

Point-in-Time (PIT) count. They found that the greatest disparities exist among Black and Native American/Alaskan households. Black individuals made up 58% of the PIT count in 2019, whereas they only account for 13% of the general population. Similarly, Native American/Alaskan individuals made up 11% of the PIT count and only 1% of the general population in the county at large. This means that Black individuals are 4.5 times more likely to show up in the PIT count as homeless than in the general population, and Native American/Alaskans were 11 times more likely to show up in the PIT count as homeless compared to the population at large.

The following table represents Minneapolis/Hennepin County Continuum of Care (CoC) data from the [HUD Continuum of Care \(CoC\) Racial Equity Analysis Tool](#):

Race/Ethnicity	American Community Survey Census Data	Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Data - 2019	Size of Disparity between Census and PIT
White	73%	22%	3.3 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Black	13%	58%	4.5 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Native American/Alaskan	1%	11%	11 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Asian/Pacific Islander	7%	2%	3.5 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Other/Multi-Racial	7%	7%	No disparity
Hispanic	7%	7%	No disparity
Non-Hispanic	93%	93%	No disparity

Hennepin County Demo Debrief Discussion Results

Two debrief discussions were conducted with members of the Hennepin County Core Team. According to these discussions, the Hennepin County team convened a Core Team that included a person currently experiencing homelessness, three people of color, and a wide variety of professional experiences (direct service, administrative, etc.). The group met bi-weekly, and there was a difference in opinion on whether the makeup of the group was diverse enough to fully represent those most affected by homelessness. One member of the team stated that they felt the group was pretty diverse considering the racial/ethnic make-up of the Twin Cities area. Another member of the Core Team stated that in general, Hennepin County doesn't have the right types of representation among decision makers, and that those in control of resources and power in Hennepin County do not include enough individuals with lived expertise of homelessness in decision-making. This person noted that the quality of life in Minnesota for white people is in the top 3 in the country, but for Black residents the quality of life ranks among

the lowest in the country. [This assertion is based on an analysis of a group of measures](#)⁵ from the American Community Survey including unemployment rates, wage rates, incarceration rates, education test scores, homeownership rates, and more.

According to a debrief discussion with a leader on the Core Team with positional power, community leaders started the Equity Demo out with a very clear idea of what the Demo might look like. But when the Core Team came together, this leader stated that they “ended up really stepping back and letting the group lead the process.” When the Core Team was being formed, leaders reached out to a local Indigenous group and to Street Voices for Change, a grassroots group of individuals with lived expertise. The Core Team invited a member of Street Voices for Change to participate in the Equity Demo as they initially did not have representation of anyone with lived expertise on the team.

Throughout the Demo, the Hennepin County Core Team decided on three focus areas, including:

- Targeted prioritization
- Improving client experiences
- Expanding housing inventory

According to the Hennepin County team, they had planned to reach out to critical partners more, but the Core Team never landed on an improvement project, so they didn’t engage with outside partners. One team member stated that there were places that they could’ve engaged [more] with these groups and that there were strong relationships between Continuum of Care (CoC)-related coordinating committees, but they never got to the point where there was something to bring to outside partners or committees.

Both members of the Core Team that participated in debrief discussions stated that a lot of the positions of power in the Continuum of Care (CoC) are held by white people, and in particular that the highest positions of power with decision-making authority in the region are held mostly by white men. To this end, the people of color on the Core Team were frontline workers and not in high-level roles, which both individuals acknowledged was an issue. One of the members of the Core Team stated, “Where is the space to acknowledge when you’re ‘in new territory’ with regards to equity initiatives and having people with lived experiences or people of color in leadership roles?” This Core Team member also stated that when faced with difficult changes, that people have a tendency to revert back to what feels comfortable to them.

During the Equity Demo (Fall 2020-Spring 2021) Hennepin County as a whole was dealing with serious challenges, including the ongoing affects of the pandemic, and reverberations of white supremacist violence. According to a Core Team member, police brutality and violence including

⁵Ingraham, C. (May 30, 2020). [Racial inequality in Minneapolis is among the worst in the nation](#). The Washington Post.

the deaths of Jamar Clarke in 2015 and George Floyd in 2020 had a significant negative impact on Hennepin County's homeless population. The Core Team member described how the community continued to experience intense trauma throughout this period. To name only a few factors, there was an increased presence of white nationalists in Hennepin County, the capital insurrection in Washington D.C. on January 6th, 2021 had reverberations in the community, and the militarization of certain geographic areas of Hennepin County during the trial of George Floyd's convicted murderer (a former police officer) attributed to collective racial trauma and stress. In the context of these compounded, repeated experiences and aftereffects of racism, it often felt difficult for the Core Team to move beyond identifying areas of focus and into the strategy development phase of the work. According to a Core Team member, they listed "idea after idea" and after narrowing it down, the group was still unable to address the 3 priorities. Finally, this member spoke about how hard it was to maintain transparency and speak up regarding racism in this broader local context. They also stated that there are real considerations to take into account when doing racial equity work, such as balancing one's career or reputation while also breaking down power structures that have historically created racially disproportionate outcomes.

The Hennepin County Core Team reported that the tools and materials that they found useful were a Power Mapping exercise done with the group toward the end of the Demo. This was completed with a virtual tool used for remote group work that participants of the conversation enjoyed. Members of the Core Team who participated in debrief discussions also thought the Knowledge Bites were very helpful, invaluable, and that they learned a lot from them. One member of the team stated that the infographics were also impactful, especially one showing the reimagining of cross-sector dynamics related to homelessness - such as affordable housing, transportation, education, and work opportunities. This person also stated that they appreciated hearing from people with lived experience during the Knowledge Bites (especially younger individuals) and that they didn't get the sense that these speakers were being tokenized. For one member of the team, the Cultural Humility topic was very valuable, and the lead Demo Coach was asked to provide additional training to two key leadership groups.

The Core Team accessed a lot of quantitative HMIS data during the Equity Demo, including a comparison of system trends from when the VI-SPDAT was in use, and after the community moved on to asking different assessment questions. The group accessed referral and assessment data disaggregated by race/ethnicity. According to community debrief discussions, members of the Core Team believed they would have benefitted from connecting their data more intentionally to the work of the Core Team. One team member stated that looking at system-level data was useful because in their daily job, they usually look at data related to people's individual paths to housing, rather than aggregate data. This team member also spoke about the Core Team's work to get a better sense of the housing preferences of individuals experiencing homelessness and explained that was why assessment was a focal point in their racial equity

work during the Demo. When the community used the VI-SPDAT, individuals were placed into housing using their assessment scores, rather than focusing on the individual preferences of individuals and households experiencing homelessness. Finally, Core Team members in Hennepin County stated that looking back at their work in the Demo, they hoped to revise questions on their Coordinated Entry assessment to decrease racial disparities and would have liked to collect qualitative data upfront to assess this.

Nashville-Davidson County Continuum of Care (CoC)

Nashville-Davidson County data reveal significant racial and ethnic disparities among persons experiencing homelessness in their community. When comparing County data from the American Community Survey to Nashville’s Point and Time (PIT) count, white individuals are 14 percent less likely than their population size to show up in their PIT count data as experiencing homelessness. In contrast, the greatest disparities in Nashville’s PIT count are among Black and Native American individuals. According to the HUD CoC Racial Equity Analysis Tool, persons identifying as Black (27%) were 1.6 times as likely to show up in the 2019 PIT count (45%) as compared to their population size in Nashville. Individuals identifying as Native American/Alaskan (0.3%) are 5.3 times as likely to show up in the 2019 PIT count as experiencing homelessness compared to their population size (1.6%).

The following table represents Nashville-Davidson County Continuum of Care (CoC) data from the [HUD Continuum of Care \(CoC\) Racial Equity Analysis Tool](#):

Race/Ethnicity	American Community Survey Census Data	Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Data - 2019	Size of Disparity between Census and PIT
White	64%	50%	14 percent <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Black	27%	45%	1.6 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Native American/Alaskan	0.3%	1.6%	5.3 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	1%	4 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Other/Multi-Racial	5%	3%	1.6 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Hispanic	10%	3%	3.3 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Non-Hispanic	90%	97%	7 percent <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT

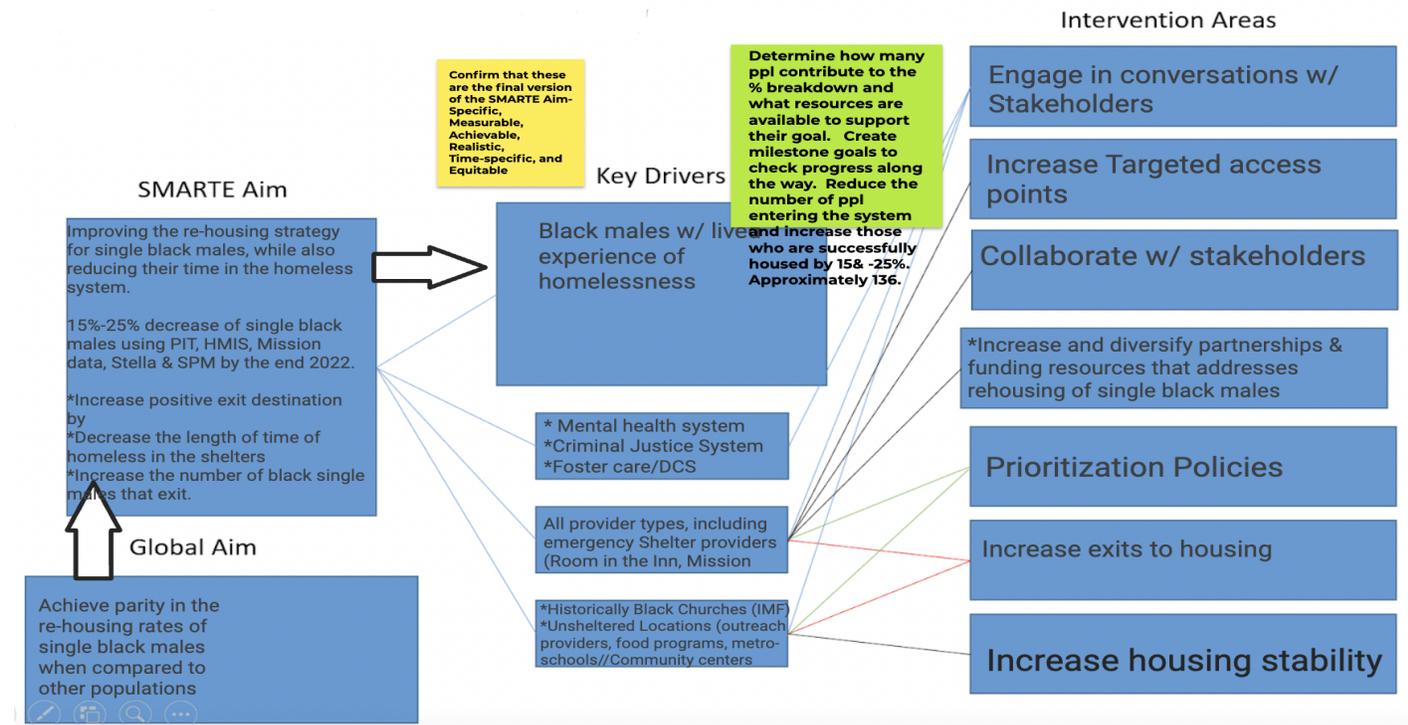
Nashville Demo Debrief Discussion Results

According to a debrief discussion with a member of Nashville's Core Team, Nashville was able to create a diverse group of stakeholders accountable to transformational equity work during the Demo. The Core Team included representatives from Nashville government, organizational representation, as well as people with lived expertise. This group composition helped the team see the full picture of their homeless system and identify the gaps in equitable CoC policies and practices. According to the team member who participated in the debrief discussion, the Core Team group dynamic "balanced out" over time and the group was able to discuss the current realities of the culture of racism intertwined throughout the fabric of the city, as well as how this broader local context compared to the realities of homelessness in Nashville.

Nashville's Core Team decided to meet weekly, and developed additional subgroups that met more frequently. The group was able to meaningfully engage critical partners outside of the local Core Team. These critical partners included local churches and nonprofits to keep them engaged in the developing transformational racial equity work, and the CoC's largest shelters to engage them in the conversation and to analyze their race/ethnicity data. This was an important factor due to Nashville's bed coverage challenges, and this engagement effort helped improve data quality and minimize gaps in Nashville's racial equity analysis. The group also reached out to other communities such as Seattle, Chicago, and Atlanta for information gathering purposes and to find new ideas about racial equity work.

During Demo coaching sessions, the Nashville Core Team launched a decision matrix to help set the stage for brainstorming racial equity strategies. In addition, the group collaboratively developed an improvement plan which focused on identifying and removing barriers in Coordinated Entry to increase access to permanent housing by 20% for justice-involved Black men experiencing homelessness.

Nashville Driver Diagram Draft



Nashville’s Core Team then decided to develop actions and strategies to aid in accomplishing their goals. The team developed intentional goals and practical action steps to bring direct change as well as engage decision makers.

Goal: Engage in Conversations with Stakeholders	
Action Item: Determine a community-wide understanding of the scope of the issue and level of buy-in to track progress.	Action Item: Understand what others are doing and how much is already known about the over-representation of single Black males in the homeless system.
Goal: Increase Targeted Access Points	
Action Item: Increase the number of access point locations and hours of availability.	Action Item: Determine who the various players should be to develop and deliver an effective presentation on the over-representation of single Black men in the homeless system to be presented to decision makers.
Goal: Increase Housing Stability	
Action Item: Recruit formerly homeless Black men as mentors in a peer-support employment program.	Action Item: Define what peer support should look like for this targeted population.

Goal: Increase Exits to Permanent Housing	
Action Item: Interrogate existing Coordinated Entry prioritization policies.	
Goal: Increase and diversify partnerships and funding resources that address rehousing of single Black men.	

Finally, Nashville was able to access and use Point-in-Time count (PIT) data to think about how to complete their Demo goals and to determine what other data sources were needed - including HMIS data as well as data from other sources at local nonprofits. Furthermore, interviewees felt that the Demo coordinated calls and Knowledge Bites were helpful in further developing their plan and understanding the realities of building a new culture within homeless services:

“Knowledge Bites were huge eye openers and gave us a better appreciation for what the Demo project is doing.”

Omaha, Nebraska/Council Bluffs, Iowa Continuum of Care (CoC)

Omaha/Council Bluffs Continuum of Care (CoC) has several racial and ethnic disparities in homelessness in their community. When comparing the racial and ethnic population distributions across the geography of their county to their Point-in-Time (PIT) count, the greatest disparities exist among Black, Native American/Alaskan, Other Multi-Racial and Hispanic households. Black individuals made up 27% of the PIT count in 2019, whereas they only account for 1% of the general population in Omaha. Similarly, Native American/Alaskan individuals made up 2.19% of the PIT 2019 count and 0.35% of the general population at large. This means that Black individuals are 27 times more likely to show up in the PIT count as homeless than in the general population, and Native American/Alaskans were 6.3 times more likely to show up in the PIT count as homeless.

The following table represents Omaha / Council Bluffs Continuum of Care (CoC) data from the both the [HUD Continuum of Care \(CoC\) Racial Equity Analysis Tool](#) and the American Community Survey 1-year estimate for 2019:

Race/Ethnicity	American Community Survey Census Data*	Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Data - 2019	Size of Disparity between Census and PIT
White	77.5%	63%	1.2 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Black	12.3%	27%	2.2 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Native American/Alaskan	0.6%	2.19%	3.7 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in

			PIT
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.8%	1%	3.8 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Other/Multi-Racial	3.4%	6%	1.8 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Hispanic	13.9%	9%	1.5 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Non-Hispanic	66.6%	91%	1.3 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT

*This column was not pulled from the HUD Racial Equity Analysis Tool and was instead informed by the ACS 1-year estimate for 2019.

Omaha/Council Bluffs Demo Debrief Discussion Results

According to a debrief discussion with a member of the Omaha/Council Bluffs Continuum of Care (CoC), during the Equity Demo, Omaha developed a Core Team but the group didn’t fully form or meet regularly. Omaha leaders worked to meaningfully engage with critical partners outside of the CoC, but not to the in-depth level that they needed to gain enough momentum for the Core Team to become a cohesive group. Community leaders worked to build and strengthen relationships in the community with key partners critical to improving the housing outcomes of Black, Brown, Indigenous, and all people of color in Omaha/Council Bluffs, such as Pink and Black, the Urban League, and shelter providers. As a result of the Demo, Omaha leaders were able to radically change the membership of the CoC board to be more racially diverse. Members of this group and others in leadership roles also invested significant time in racial equity training offered outside of the Demo, and convened to learn and process the training content as they went through Cohort 1.

During the debrief discussion, a member of the CoC stated that for a lot of people, it was a bit uncomfortable to have conversations about race and about appropriate representation of Black, Brown, Indigenous and all people of color in high-level roles, and that’s good. They stated that “If everyone is entirely comfortable, then we’re not covering what needs to be covered.” Much of the Core Team in the Omaha/Council Bluffs CoC was made up of high-level decision makers who are also middle-aged white people. Throughout the Demo, the team experienced internal changes on the Core Team, as they tried to expand membership. However, “Everyone was really busy. Responsibilities shifted halfway through. Coaches did an amazing job building a system with knowledge and tools; it is up to the community to implement a plan but the team didn’t do as well as they should have.” A compounding issue with opening the group up to partners outside of the CoC was that not everyone spoke the same technical language. For example, not everyone knew “HUD speak” abbreviations, or had knowledge of the differences between housing resources.

The Omaha Core Team's area of focus during the Demo also shifted over time. Initially, the community wanted to look at the inflow rates of Black and Indigenous individuals and households experiencing homelessness. Later, they shifted to focus more specifically on Coordinated Entry data, including the demographics of those being referred to shelters, and generally how to open up various Coordinated Entry front doors at a more equitable level. In Cohort 1, Omaha did not move past the point of identifying a focus area into a space where strategies were tested via an improvement plan. Demo coaches had several conversations with the HMIS lead, the CoC Lead and board members, and members of the Core Team who worked at providers over the course of the Demo. Coaches developed a suite of resources for Omaha to potentially use as they continue their focus on racial equity strategy.

Demo Data Coaches and the HMIS lead defined together what additional racial/ethnic-related data the Core Team may have wanted to look at that they didn't already have access to. Stella data gave surprising information regarding racial/ethnic disparities in rates of return to homelessness, specifically among Black and Indigenous individuals. Omaha was not able to cultivate qualitative data or direct feedback from people with lived expertise, and were actively trying to form an advisory board to develop a strategy for this lane of the work.

The Omaha team found the Knowledge Bites very useful. The sessions that were focused on the voices of individuals with lived expertise were particularly impactful to the Omaha team. The team is "on the way" to developing a clear plan to identify the ways in which their Coordinated Entry system may perpetuate racial disparities, but they don't have all the answers yet. The Core Team member stated that the tools and knowledge provided by Demo coaches was useful. Coaches brought up issues they hadn't thought of or helped with suggestions for implementing a process for identified problems. "Coaches built a really good process. A lot of it is up to communities to utilize." Finally, the Core Team member stated that their next steps were to solidify the Core Team; making it a board-level committee focused on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion and on issues concerning and related to homelessness.

Tacoma, Lakewood/Pierce County Continuum of Care (CoC)

The Tacoma, Lakewood/Pierce County Continuum of Care (CoC) experiences several major racial and ethnic disparities in homelessness in their community. These can be seen by comparing the racial and ethnic population distributions across the geography of their county to their Point-in-Time (PIT) count. In Pierce County, the greatest disparities exist among Black and Native American/Alaskan households. Black individuals made up 22% of the PIT count in 2019, whereas they only account for 7% of the general population. Native American/Alaskan individuals made up 4% of the PIT count and are only 1% of the population of Pierce County at large. Using these estimations, Black individuals are 3.1 times more likely to show up in the PIT count as homeless than in the general population, and Native American/Alaskans are 4 times more likely to show up in the PIT count as experiencing homelessness.

The following table represents Tacoma, Lakewood/Pierce County Continuum of Care (CoC) data from the [HUD Continuum of Care \(CoC\) Racial Equity Analysis Tool](#):

Race/Ethnicity	American Community Survey Census Data	Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Data - 2019	Size of Disparity between Census and PIT
White	74%	54%	1.3 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Black	7%	22%	3.1 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Native American/Alaskan	1%	4%	4 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Asian/Pacific Islander	8%	5%	1.6 times <u>less</u> likely to show up in PIT
Other/Multi-Racial	11%	15%	1.4 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Hispanic	10%	14%	1.4 times <u>more</u> likely to show up in PIT
Non-Hispanic	90%	86%	Slightly less likely to show up in PIT

Pierce County Demo Debrief Discussion Results

During the Demo, the Tacoma, Lakewood/Pierce County Continuum of Care (CoC) established a Core Team that was committed to planning their improvement plan and developing authentic/representative working relationships. Due to the community getting a later start in the Demo and some turnover among the Core Team throughout the Demo period, coaches spent a considerable amount of time orienting new team members on the purpose and goal of the Demo. Shortly after the Demo launched, a previously established racial equity committee underneath the CoC identified racial tensions, imbalanced power dynamics, and fractured stakeholder relationships that prevented forward movement in the Demo. As part of the work with the Core Team early on, the coaching team supported the community in openly naming these challenges, which allowed the Core Team to relook at who was at the table and make significant adjustments. One coach stated that relationships between providers, members of the CoC board, and some Pierce County staff were in poor condition prior to the Demo, and that the engagement period shed light on the need to consider options to address these tensions. This process led to increased collaboration and transparency, as well as prompting some Core Team members to create space for others to step in and achieve greater progress towards equity in Pierce County’s homeless response system. One coach stated that this was incredibly helpful to moving the work forward. The new Core Team resulted in designated leadership and a more fully representative team of service providers, academics, and county staff. One coach stated:

“Pierce County already came to table with folks around the table - there was a deep investment of local academics that were a part of Continuum of Care -

county staff, non profit staff, local pastors that got pulled into the work as a result of restructure. People that were recently served through the Cultural Hub, that successfully exited to permanent housing, were brought on to the Core Team to speak to strengths and challenges - through Coordinated Entry. One was a Black female mother that was a veteran and was able to express discontent, another was a Black trans womxn, and another a single father returning citizen...Having people who navigated the good and bad of Coordinated Entry and talk through data elements was invaluable.”

A problem identified while convening a fully representative and diverse Core Team was both how to engage people with lived expertise, and how to fully compensate them for their time. The Core Team acknowledged that their CoC had not compensated individuals with lived expertise via equitable processes or developed clear guidance on potential funding sources in the past. The coaching team was able to provide guidance around engagement and compensation that resulted in the CoC making significant progress toward a compensation fund for people with lived expertise who commit their time towards CoC work. Although this was an imminent issue that was resolved throughout the Demo, people willingly participated on the Core Team even in the absence of compensation. This spoke to the sheer dedication and commitment to disrupt inequities in Pierce’s homeless response system. Pierce County’s CoC also had a sub-committee that met regularly and was designed to focus on strategies and goals for their strategic plan. The Core Team had overlapping membership in this sub-committee, but was outside the purview of the governance structure and was the more flexible decision-making body.

After an analysis of HMIS data, Pierce County raised concerns that Black families were not accessing Coordinated Entry and supportive services. Further research found that many of these families had deep connections to the Tacoma Ministerial Alliance (TMA), a non-Legacy provider with historical ties to the community and providing assistance. Building on the community’s [2018 SPARC recommendations](#),⁶ prior to the Demo, Pierce County had piloted a Cultural Hub focused on problem-solving as an intervention to address racial disparities as part of their Coordinated Entry system.

Cultural Hub Working Definition (drafted by the Pierce County Core Team)

- A collaborative partnership between a legacy or traditional Coordinated Entry organization and a new or non-traditional organization to the Coordinated Entry system.
- A partnership that connects an organization at the level of the neighborhood or community and knows the people, circumstances, and needs of that community, including the organizations and agencies that have resources to help. In this sense, the Hub is

⁶Dones, M., Richard, M., Wilkey, C., Yampolskaya, S., & Olivet, J. (2018, January 31). Initial Findings from Quantitative and Qualitative Research. *Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities (SPARC)*.

emergent or grassroots-oriented, rather than planned and implemented from the top-down.

- It addresses the systematic disinvestment and impoverishment of community networks which have negatively impacted net worth, access to economic and social capital, and housing stability. It builds on the inherent strengths of the community.
- It aims for excellent cultural competence, i.e. understanding differences in expression and communication across communities.

Based on the learnings from the Cultural Hub pilot, the Demo Core identified two goals: 1) to better understand the outcomes from the current Cultural Hub pilot, and 2) to create additional Cultural Hubs, replicating what was currently being implemented through TMA. As the collaboration progressed, the Core Team was able to pull diversion data and outcomes and develop a preliminary comparison to non-legacy provider data and outcomes. The Core Team preliminarily found that when comparing outcomes of Black families that go through TMA to legacy providers, TMA had moderately longer lengths of stay and 10% more successful exits to permanent housing. Focus groups were established and are now ongoing to pair these outcomes with conversations from people with lived expertise that have gone through TMA to determine if and how their experiences navigating Coordinated Entry differed from legacy providers. This is part one of Pierce County's improvement project and is still in progress. After the Demo ended, Pierce County was developing a way for non-legacy agencies to be able to partner with and/or apply to be one of the access points through a Cultural Hub.

A second part of Pierce County's improvement project was to replicate this model for single adults. The Core Team elected to conduct a regression analysis of Cultural Hub data to measure efficacy and determine who may benefit from the Cultural Hub. One coach expressed a crucial sentiment about why this Cultural Hub works so well. They stated,

“It is incredibly important to establish trustful relationships and representation matters. Working with someone who is part of the community and looks like you is tremendously helpful. Second, having the Hub located in the community and connected to a trusted church/community institution is more convenient - instead of taking the train, bus, etc. to the government building. Lastly, this Hub had relatively smaller caseloads than our County-level providers. When there are small case loads, providers can commit more time per household to ensure they are receiving the culturally appropriate care, resources, and services needed.”

By the end of the Demo, the community had a strong Core Team who had developed a work plan and timeline for their project and were working on releasing an RFP to identify non-legacy service partners to implement a Cultural Hub (the RFP was due to be released in Aug. 2021).

When asked about the types of data accessed during the Equity Demo to uncover ethnoracial disparities within the Coordinated Entry system, Pierce County emphasized their use of HMIS data and its quality data issues. The Core Team expressed sentiments that HMIS users did not provide raw data and were often shown data in ways that were accessible only to the owners of the data. Instead, HMIS users packaged their data into Tableau and excluded relevant Coordinated Entry data. As a result, the community never extracted the data to perform their own analyses. Reliable and clear themes in data were difficult to ascertain based on the owner's presentation of it. In addition, while provider data proved to be useful, there was no cross-sectoral assessment that examined the role of upstream factors on homelessness (such as child welfare/foster care and the criminal justice system). Overall, the coaches in Pierce County were adamant that qualitative data is critical to providing a more comprehensive analysis of the experiences of Black, Brown, Indigenous, and all people of color and informs more culturally appropriate service provision throughout the Coordinated Entry system. Qualitative Mixed Method (QMM) approaches are essential to seeing the homeless response system in a lot of different ways that uncover mechanisms for fostering greater collaboration, transparency, quality data, fuller representation and decentralized power not just in Pierce County but also throughout the entire Continuum of Care (CoC). One coach ended the debrief discussion by saying,

“The history of the Continuum of Care (CoC) was ingrained in white domination culture norms. We hope the providers acknowledge the work that the County has tried to do to remedy some of the historical racism that has shown up. They have a unique chance to be a model for other communities if they can address tensions openly, honestly, and transparently. Equity work happens beyond the homeless response system, so it is important to develop more meaningful partnerships with other systems like carceral systems. If they can do a better job with prevention and diversion to reduce overall inflow and increase outflow, Pierce County has the opportunity to repurpose existing programs and benefit other interconnected systems like the justice system or youth transitioning out of foster care. Always, the answer is in the experience.”

System-Level Data Disaggregated by Race and Ethnicity

To baseline community performance, the following tables represent data from Stella P from Fiscal Year 2020 (10/01/2019-9/30/2020). The end of this fiscal year corresponded to the beginning of the Equity Demo, which began in September 2020. It should be noted that this analysis was completed retroactively, meaning that these baselines were pulled for the preparation of this report and less utilized during Cohort 1 itself. The baseline data below will be compared to LSA/Stella data to be pulled in February 2022, and at additional time intervals over the next few years to track community progress in tandem with ongoing racial equity efforts.

Across the nine datasets from Equity Demo communities, there is a broad range of overall size in homeless populations, ranging from just 140 households to over 10,000 in each system. The deep differences in data sets and community climate found in this baseline data underscores the very different levels of need and capacities of each community. This data shows us that there is “no one size fits all” approach or experience for communities in Cohort 1 of the Equity Demo. The data represented below provides snapshots of system-level data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, including average length of time homeless, exits to permanent housing, and returns to homelessness.

The following table represents Stella system performance data from Stella P during FY 2020 for Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care (CoC):

Race/Ethnicity	Average Length of Time Homeless*	Percent of Population Group that Exited to Permanent Destinations	Percent of Population Group that Returned to Homelessness after Exit to Permanent Destination**
Black or African American	1,208 days	35%	6%
Asian	1,022 days	45%	0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,642 days	34%	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1,476 days	50%	0%
Multiple Races	1,348 days	31%	6%
White, Non-Hispanic / Non-Latino	1,541 days	24%	6%
White, Hispanic/Latino	1,098 days	36%	9%

*Includes both self reported length of time homeless and the number of average days homeless in the system.

**Within the first 6 months of the reporting period (FY 2020).

The following table represents Stella system performance data from Stella P during FY 2020 for the Charlottesville Continuum of Care (CoC):

Race/Ethnicity	Average Length of Time Homeless*	Percent of Population Group that Exited to Permanent Destinations	Percent of Population Group that Returned to Homelessness after Exit to Permanent Destination**
Black or African American	850 days	24%	0%
Asian	425 days	0%	0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0 days	0%	0%

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0 days	0%	0%
Multiple Races	587 days	33%	0%
White, Non-Hispanic / Non-Latino	946 days	24%	6%
White, Hispanic/Latino	1,196 days	0%	0%

*Includes both self reported length of time homeless and the number of average days homeless in the system.

**Within the first 6 months of the reporting period (FY 2020).

The following table represents Stella system performance data from Stella P during FY 2020 for the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC) :

Race/Ethnicity	Average Length of Time Homeless*	Percent of Population Group that Exited to Permanent Destinations	Percent of Population Group that Returned to Homelessness after Exit to Permanent Destination**
Black or African American	1,423 days	29%	6%
Asian	2,031 days	24%	0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,241 days	24%	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1,568 days	14%	50%
Multiple Races	1,563 days	26%	11%
White, Non-Hispanic / Non-Latino	1,425 days	23%	7%
White, Hispanic/Latino	1,149 days	25%	3%

*Includes both self reported length of time homeless and the number of average days homeless in the system.

**Within the first 6 months of the reporting period (FY 2020).

The following table represents Stella system performance data from Stella P during FY 2020 for the Connecticut Statewide Continuum of Care (CoC)s:

Race/Ethnicity	Average Length of Time Homeless*	Percent of Population Group that Exited to Permanent Destinations	Percent of Population Group that Returned to Homelessness after Exit to Permanent Destination**
<i>Connecticut Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC)</i>			
Black or African American	940 days	41%	7%
Asian	833 days	24%	25%

American Indian or Alaska Native	1,272 days	35%	11%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	813 days	39%	0%
Multiple Races	602 days	52%	0%
White, Non-Hispanic / Non-Latino	891 days	38%	10%
White, Hispanic/Latino	841 days	46%	7%
<i>Bridgeport, Stamford, Norwalk/Fairfield County Continuum of Care (CoC)</i>			
Black or African American	922 days	53%	5%
Asian	948 days	25%	0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	729 days	29%	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	535 days	50%	0%
Multiple Races	1,259 days	37%	0%
White, Non-Hispanic / Non-Latino	1,143 days	40%	0%
White, Hispanic/Latino	909 days	45%	2%

*Includes both self reported length of time homeless and the number of average days homeless in the system.

**Within the first 6 months of the reporting period (FY 2020).

The following table represents Stella system performance data from Stella P during FY 2020 for Minneapolis/Hennepin County Continuum of Care (CoC):

Race/Ethnicity	Average Length of Time Homeless*	Percent of Population Group that Exited to Permanent Destinations	Percent of Population Group that Returned to Homelessness after Exit to Permanent Destination**
Black or African American	1,202 days	22%	5%
Asian	1,262 days	18%	0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,569 days	15%	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1,119 days	7%	0%
Multiple Races	1,142 days	20%	3%

White, Non-Hispanic / Non-Latino	1,192 days	19%	5%
White, Hispanic/Latino	1,373 days	15%	8%

*Includes both self reported length of time homeless and the number of average days homeless in the system.

**Within the first 6 months of the reporting period (FY 2020).

The following table represents Stella system performance data from Stella P during FY 2020 for Nashville-Davidson County Continuum of Care (CoC):

Race/Ethnicity	Average Length of Time Homeless*	Percent of Population Group that Exited to Permanent Destinations	Percent of Population Group that Returned to Homelessness after Exit to Permanent Destination**
Black or African American	761 days	56%	1%
Asian	233 days	50%	0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	385 days	40%	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	150 days	60%	0%
Multiple Races	816 days	67%	8%
White, Non-Hispanic / Non-Latino	769 days	56%	81%
White, Hispanic/Latino	351 days	53%	0%

*Includes both self reported length of time homeless and the number of average days homeless in the system.

**Within the first 6 months of the reporting period (FY 2020).

The following table represents Stella system performance data from Stella P during FY 2020 for Omaha, Nebraska/Council Bluffs, Iowa Continuum of Care (CoC) :

Race/Ethnicity	Average Length of Time Homeless*	Percent of Population Group that Exited to Permanent Destinations	Percent of Population Group that Returned to Homelessness after Exit to Permanent Destination**
Black or African American	442 days	24%	12%
Asian	564 days	30%	0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	427 days	29%	16%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	628 days	19%	0%

Multiple Races	461 days	29%	27%
White, Non-Hispanic / Non-Latino	446 days	30%	12%
White, Hispanic/Latino	462 days	28%	11%

*Includes both self reported length of time homeless and the number of average days homeless in the system.

**Within the first 6 months of the reporting period (FY 2020).

The following table represents Stella system performance data from Stella P during FY 2020 for Tacoma, Lakewood/Pierce County Continuum of Care (CoC) :

Race/Ethnicity	Average Length of Time Homeless*	Percent of Population Group that Exited to Permanent Destinations	Percent of Population Group that Returned to Homelessness after Exit to Permanent Destination**
Black or African American	899 days	23%	21%
Asian	1,117 days	23%	20%
American Indian or Alaska Native	963 days	18%	8%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	959 days	31%	0%
Multiple Races	1,034 days	19%	15%
White, Non-Hispanic / Non-Latino	950 days	21%	8%
White, Hispanic/Latino	721 days	23%	12%

*Includes both self reported length of time homeless and the number of average days homeless in the system.

**Within the first 6 months of the reporting period (FY 2020).

Conclusion: Creating Equitable Homeless Response Systems

*“Those closest to the problem are closest to the solution, but furthest from resources and power.”
- Glenn Martin*

The experiences of the eight communities that participated in Cohort 1 of the Coordinated Entry Equity Demonstration Project provide us with valuable guidance and recommendations for future racial equity cohorts, and the provision of racial equity work in the HUD Technical Assistance sphere in general.

Lesson 1: Build a Community

The development of authentic and meaningful relationships, both between homeless response system partners and among individuals on community Core Teams takes time, effort and

creativity. Taking the time to support communities in building a representative Core Team with strong relationships was a critical, non-negotiable first step in the process of transformational racial equity work during the Demo. This upfront investment in relationship building embeds new ways of working into homeless response systems that build sustainability in the long-term and give communities the foundation to keep transformational racial equity work moving forward. In this way, communities build a platform to process decisions, create more equitable, bi-directional ways to look at and review data, interrogate strategies and make changes to policies and processes. Growing authentic relationships was instrumental in co-creating values rooted in equity, and establishing a common understanding of the ways communities framed and evaluated system-wide disparities through context-rich, culturally-centered approaches.

Lesson 2: Center the Voices of People with Lived Expertise

Another crucial learning from the Demo came from collectively experiencing the power of trusting the voices and lived experiences of those who have experienced homelessness. At every stage of the Demo, both externally with communities and internally, coaches and communities made significant efforts to center and re-center their daily work on the needs and insights of people with lived expertise. Demo communities learned how to develop a practice of actively and consistently listening to those in the room who have been most impacted by homelessness. They also cited a need for more growth on how to speak without using technical jargon, which can feel alienating and confusing to those unfamiliar with it. Often, community members and coaches clarified statements, terms, and acronyms that were assumed to be universally understood. Demo communities also took steps to transform existing CoC structures to carve out new spaces for individuals with lived expertise. Crucially, communities not only brought individuals with lived expertise “to the table,” but also gave individuals space to build or rebuild the table as necessary. Part of transformational racial equity work is requiring traditional leaders to be held accountable in these new spaces, and to allow spaces with individuals with lived expertise to inform the core tenets of CoC work. In other words, communities practiced naming and reorganizing CoC power structures via power mapping and coaching activities to define spaces where individuals with lived expertise could elevate issues and begin to reimagine systems.

Keeping in mind the importance of establishing community through relationship building and centering individuals with lived expertise, the following core activities also emerged in Cohort 1 as potential components of what an equitable homeless response system may entail. These elements require further testing in Cohort 2:

- 1. Communities formed racially/ethnically diverse Core Teams centered around individuals with lived expertise of homelessness.** The Core Team is a group of individuals *with decision-making power* that assumes accountability for transformational racial equity work in each Continuum of Care (CoC). The racial and ethnic makeup of the Core Team

should mirror the identities of those who experience homelessness in the CoC's geography. Racially diverse and equitable representation ensures that the group has an array of diverse perspectives and ideas needed to identify the root cause and troubleshoot potential solutions. Core Team members engage in relationship building efforts with people with lived expertise, Black, Brown, Indigenous and all people of color, providers who serve Black, Brown, Indigenous and all people of color, and other community members to ensure the CoC has the necessary feedback loops, levels of buy-in and representation to build a racially equitable system.

- 2. Communities explored their local power dynamics in the context of racial equity goals and made changes to staffing or group composition as a result.** Many Demo communities explored power dynamics via coaching and power mapping exercises. In some Demo communities, director and executive-level community leaders began to use their positions of privilege to engage with other CoC staff and providers to actively dismantle any structures or policies that disallow truly racially equitable services, and discussed how their community could dismantle racial disparities in housing and service provision.
- 3. Communities changed their Continuum of Care (CoC) governance structure and board composition to be racially equitable and diverse.** In an effort to dismantle racially inequitable leadership structures, some communities explored the racial and ethnic identities of all levels of leadership in contrast to the identities of those who are most affected by homelessness in their CoC. To begin this work, communities examined local racial/ethnic disparities, collaborated with all stakeholders (intentionally including any racial equity subcommittees) to inspect governance structures and policies, and in some cases made necessary staffing and leadership changes during the Demo.
- 4. Communities performed self-inquiry into racial/ethnic disparities in staffing and reorganized staffing to reflect the racial/ethnic identities those most impacted by homelessness.** Communities examined staffing patterns at different levels (front line, management, executive) to ensure racially equitable representation. In addition, communities developed plans to ensure equitable representation in decision-making bodies and that the racial/ethnic identities of staff is representative of individuals experiencing homelessness in their Continuum of Care (CoC). In addition, the community has surfaced any issues with tokenism and issues with uneven power dynamics among groups, individuals or providers, and is actively collaborating with individuals with lived expertise, Black, Brown, Indigenous and all people of color and other groups that are historically further away from roles with decision-making power.
- 5. Communities reimaged traditional notions of job “expertise” and developed compensation policies and practices to equitably pay people with lived expertise.**

Communities developed their better practices around compensating individuals with lived expertise for their time performing work for the CoC. During the Demo, coaches and communities reimagined how individuals with lived expertise could engage in community discussions, meetings, work sessions, committees, subcommittees and other processes necessary to restructuring systems to be inclusive and racially equitable. Another important theme that surfaced was the need for individuals with lived expertise to receive an individualized level of proactive supports to ensure needs such as transportation and technology are met, that individuals are familiar with the processes they are participating in, and that it is clear how their work will be utilized - including what audiences(s) it will be shared with and why.

- 6. Communities explored the ways in which data practices reflect white dominant cultural norms, and inquired into ways of collecting and analyzing data that center individuals with lived expertise and Black, Brown, Indigenous and all people of color.** Communities performed self-inquiries into who is responsible for determining data collection strategies in their CoC, who analyzes system data and for what audience, and whether these practices are in alignment with the Demo value of centering individuals with lived expertise. Communities performed self-inquiry into whether staff responsible for collecting data were trained in anti-bias and racial trauma-informed practices in data collection, whether data collection activities were conducted at times and in places that were easy for impacted individuals to access, and if data collection activities caused harm or placed any burdens (in terms of time, effort or stress) on individuals accessing services.
- 7. Communities tested and developed racial trauma-informed assessment questions rooted in cultural humility.** Many communities in the Equity Demo chose to focus on the access and assessment portions of their Coordinated Entry systems as a starting point in transformational racial equity work. In broad strokes, each community reviewed their current assessment questions, including how assessment questions were being asked to ensure inclusivity and that each question is person-centered and informed with an understanding of racial trauma. Where necessary, communities redesigned and/or added new assessment questions that were more culturally aligned to the populations most impacted by homelessness and performed data analysis to check on the strategies being tested.
- 8. Communities committed to provide *ongoing* racial equity training opportunities to a wide variety of Continuum of Care (CoC) staff and community members.** During the Equity Demo, communities were expected to be present at Knowledge Bites and other Racial Equity trainings to gain critical content knowledge in the racial history of housing policy and homelessness, cultural humility concepts, and strategies to honor and lift up the voices of those with lived expertise. This ensured that Demo participants had a better understanding of

the processes and mindset needed to reimagine and construct more racially equitable systems.

Appendix A: Community Debrief Discussion Question Guide

The Equity Demo Data Team has put together an evaluation plan for moving HUD's equitable Coordinated Entry system initiatives forward. Each Equity Demo Coach was tasked to work with community, important local stakeholders and Black, Brown, Indigenous and all people of color with lived expertise to reimagine Coordinated Entry processes in service of improving the experience and outcomes for those disproportionately represented in homelessness. Largely, the Equity Demo designed and tested racially equitable Coordinated Entry processes that assisted communities to interrogate and analyze their system to advance sustainable, equitable racial equity practices to combat homelessness. By the end of 1 hour discussion sessions, we gained extensive insight and clarification on their projects. We asked a few starter questions regarding their improvement plan and/or action steps, approaches, and processes; data collection efforts; tool/material development; working relationships; important conversations; and community performance results. The questions were broken down into 5 tasks, which included:

Task 1: Working Relationships and Important Conversations - Development of the Core Team (10 minutes)

1. Did your community develop a Core Team? Did they meet on a regular basis during the demo?
2. Did you meaningfully engage with critical partners outside of the local Core Team? If so, what was your process of engagement? What were those groups/partners and how do you think the quality of deliberation/relationships impacted progress in evaluating racial equity in the Coordinated Entry system?
3. Feedback form respondents stated that there was a lack of appropriate representation within high-level decision-making roles.
 - a. If this was your experience, how comfortable did you or your team feel about having conversations about race and appropriate representation with those in high-level decision-making roles? What are your suggestions for addressing this issue?
 - b. Do you perceive this lack of representation impacted progress towards developing and implementing your improvement plan?
 - c. Do you perceive this lack of representation impacted Coordinated Entry performance outcomes in your community?
4. Did you experience coaching shifts or diminished community capacity throughout this process? To what extent do you attribute these coaching shifts or diminished community capacity as barriers to making progress as stated in your outlined work plan?

Task 2: Improvement Plan/Action Steps Approaches and Processes (15 minutes)

5. What was your improvement plan to address inequities in Coordinated Entry within your project site?
 - a. Did you implement a performance improvement plan ?
 - b. If you didn't implement an improvement project, what did you do instead (process plans, pilot new questions, set up a committee or board to make key decisions around equity in the Coordinated Entry process, etc).?
 - c. If you didn't implement an improvement project, what challenges do you perceive acted as a barrier to developing an improvement plan? From your perspective, please share any insights on challenges with developing your improvement plan.

Task 3: Tools/Material Development as a Result of the Demo (15 minutes)

6. Did you develop coaching tools and materials that assisted with either the improvement process plan and/or your racial equity Coordinated Entry evaluation framework and plan?
 - a. What materials and tools were most helpful in assisting with either of these plans? How do you perceive your tools/Coordinated Entry evaluation framework were helpful in more accurately assessing or decreasing ethnoracial disparities in the Coordinated Entry system?

Task 4: Data Collection Efforts (10 minutes)

7. What types of data (both qualitative and quantitative) did you access during the Equity Demo? (These may have been used to develop your coaching tools/materials/Coordinated Entry evaluation framework or plan).
 - a. What was your approach to uncovering ethnoracial disparities within the Coordinated Entry system?
 - b. How did your improvement plan or tools/materials/governing boards that you developed help to uncover ethno racial disparities within the Coordinated Entry system?
 - i. What points in the Coordinated Entry system were particularly difficult touch points for ethnoracial persons experiencing homelessness in your project site?
 - c. Did you notice a lot of missing data in inflow, returns to homelessness, length of stay, or lack of call backs/issues particularly disproportionately among Black, Brown, Indigenous and all people of color communities?
 - d. Were you able to develop more racially equitable assessment questions to measure vulnerability? What were they? What process did your community use to develop these?

- e. What racial equity improvements still need to be made to more accurately address and evaluate disparities in the Coordinated Entry system?

Task 5: Community Performance Results (10 minutes)

- 8. Were scheduled coordinated calls and/or Equity Demo Knowledge Bites useful in implementing your improvement plan or developing your coaching tools? In what ways were they useful? How did these coordinated sessions aid in creating an equitable approach to your community's Coordinated Entry evaluation?
 - a. How did the Knowledge Bites help to pinpoint racial/ethnic disproportionality in your community? How did they shift your understanding of racial equity?
- 9. Overall, were you able to develop a clear plan to identify the ways in which your community's Coordinated Entry system may perpetuate racial disparities?
 - a. If so, from your perspective and experience what factors within your community's Coordinated Entry system perpetuate racial disparities in homelessness outcomes?
 - b. How would you/your community define impact and a successful outcome? What is a successful outcome/process that was central to seeing change in homelessness in your community? What impact did/will your community's equity demo implementation plan/processes have on reducing ethnoracial disparities in the Coordinated Entry system currently and in the future?
 - c. What are the next steps your community will take to sustain progress made during Cohort 1? Are there any ongoing Coordinated Entry performance measures that your implementation plan will need to continue to measure/pilot?

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Glossary of Terms

HUD - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Equity Demo - Shorthand for the Coordinated Entry Equity Demonstration Project

CE - Coordinated Entry System

- A set of centralized or coordinated processes designed to connect individuals and households experiencing homelessness to housing resources and interventions.

HMIS - Homeless Management Information System

- A local information technology system (database) used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. Each Continuum of Care (CoC) is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards.

VI-SPDAT - Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool

- A survey administered both to individuals and families to determine risk and prioritization when providing assistance to homeless and at-risk of homelessness persons.