



PURSuing THE HIGH ROAD TO RACIAL EQUITY

A RACIAL EQUITY TOOLKIT
FOR RESTAURANT EMPLOYERS



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INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 is a time of both great catastrophe and great awakening. This is particularly true for employers and workers within the restaurant industry. Few other industries were hit harder by the economic shutdown necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of jobs have been lost, many owners have had to permanently shutter their businesses, and workers have been left for months without work or a safety net. In the midst of this crisis, uprisings for racial justice spurred by the brutal police murder of George Floyd have shone a renewed light on structural racism's stranglehold throughout all parts of U.S. society, and the restaurant industry is no exception.



Of the more than 13 million restaurant workers in the U.S., the majority are women and a disproportionate number are people of color.¹ Even before the pandemic, the restaurant industry claimed eight of the fifteen lowest paid occupations, with people of color disproportionately occupying lower-paying positions.² A national wage gap of nearly \$5 an hour between Black women and white men who hold tipped and management positions in the restaurant industry is the result of the subminimum wage for tipped workers, hiring discrimination, implicit bias and occupational segregation in the industry.³ Racial injustice is prevalent in the restaurant industry, but there are new opportunities for transformative change. The moment is demanding every individual to ask — what part does each of us play, both in the harm and in the necessary transformation of our industry?

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide restaurant management with practical resources for determining to what extent racially inequitable policies and practices are operating in your restaurant and how to transform them. We aim to help you identify where racial bias — whether conscious or unconscious — might be operating in the functions or policies of your restaurant, thus harming the future of your employees of color and your business as a whole.

With extensive support from restaurant leaders who piloted this process and national racial and worker justice organizations — Race Forward, One Fair Wage, and RAISE: High Road Restaurants — we have produced this toolkit as a part of our High Road Restaurants Training program. The High Road program includes racial equity training, technical assistance, and peer-to-peer mentorship, as well as numerous implementation templates. We hope that together, these resources will support restaurants in making a transition to racial equity policies, including a One Fair Wage compensation model.

Our ultimate goal is to create an industry in which running a restaurant business profitably is not

RACIAL INEQUITIES FACED BY WORKERS OF COLOR



GLASS CEILING

White applicants to fine dining restaurants have twice the chance of obtaining a living wage fine dining occupation as an equally qualified worker of color.



LOW FLOOR

Restaurant workers of color earn 56% less income on average compared to equally qualified white workers.



LOCKED DOORS

Structural and durable inequalities that leads to higher rates of unemployment for workers of color in the industry.

As part of a national study, 400 pairs of evenly matched white and people-of-color job applicants were sent into 277 randomly selected fine-dining restaurants to determine how race affects an employer's interest in hiring for fine dining server positions.⁴ The study found that white workers were more likely to be interviewed – and twice as likely to be hired – as equally or better-qualified workers of color applying to the same fine dining establishments. In addition to these audits, an observational study of 133 fine dining establishments found that white workers, a disproportionate amount of them male, occupied 81 percent of management and 78 percent of higher-level non-management positions such as captain, manager, and bartender.⁵ These patterns amount to occupational segregation, often by race and gender, which are not only evident in restaurants but also in other industries across the country.

at odds with fully valuing every worker as a professional. We aim to create a movement of restaurants that strive to enact racial justice every day, including with regard to how they compensate their employees, define their culture, staff their restaurant and serve their customers. This work is steady and ongoing, but it is achievable. We are excited and honored to walk this road with you.

WHAT IS RACIAL EQUITY AND WHY FOCUS ON IT

The national racial justice organization Race Forward defines racial equity as “the systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone.” How does that translate within the restaurant industry? The key words in this definition are ‘systematic’ and ‘outcomes’. Racial inequity and racism are often systematically baked into the everyday culture, policies and operations of our workplaces founded in the dominant worldview over many centuries. In order to counteract this dominant worldview, we must proactively and conscientiously supplant racial harm at every turn, and sometimes build new systems from the ground up. For example, seemingly neutral practices such as relying on ‘word-of-mouth’ to advertise open positions tends to advantage white applicants who already have the social connections to other white front-of-house staff. Instead, we can take the necessary time to intentionally recruit candidates of color and pause the process until we have a pool of applicants that reflects the city in which we do business. We will know we are successful when the outcomes we care about — great equality with regard to wages, equal racial representation across positions, shared leadership, and the ability to define and center the cultures of people of color - actually manifest.

After decades of working with numerous clients in private businesses, non-profit organizations, and local government agencies, we have come to the conclusion that **unless an institution is proactively furthering racial equity through strategic and actionable steps, racial inequity continues to play out as the status quo.** And no matter what the industry, there is much that is lost economically, socially, and culturally when we fail to be proactive and innovative in our organizations. Additionally, while this toolkit focuses specifically on racial equity, we know that an intersectional approach to addressing disparities in the workplace, which is to say understanding the compounding effects of racism and sexism or racism and ageism, for example, is also critical. As Race Forward often instructs, we must take a “race and...” approach, where race is always explicit but not exclusive.

As in all other industries, restaurant industry’s lack of intentional focus on racial equity results in deep racial segregation between front and back-of-house, a large gap in pay and benefits by race, and a near absence of people of color in applicant pools for higher-paying positions. These disparities become evident upon entering most restaurants and noting the race of restaurant workers in various positions. The front-of-house, higher-paid workers — such as the headwaiter or captain, servers, and bartenders — are often white or light-skinned. The back-of-house, lower-paid workers — such as the dishwashers and line cooks are disproportionately workers of color and often out of sight of the restaurant customers. And the restaurant owners and upper management are typically white males.



DIVERSITY
The variety or representation of different kinds of workers

EQUITY
The fair treatment of all employees

RACIAL EQUITY
The systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone



Behind the visible segregation is an array of other kinds of inequities — in compensation, benefits, work hours, workplace safety, hiring, promotions, and workers' rights. **We must thus look beyond the diversity (the variety or representation of different kinds of workers) and focus instead on equity (the fair treatment of all employees and representation in various positions) throughout the operations of our businesses.**

While we often think of racism as a personal failing or an issue between one individual and another, the most insidious forms of racial bias actually play out unintentionally and unknowingly within organizations or companies. In order to be most effective, strategies to counter racism and build systemic equity must be made and sustained at an organizational level.

Racism is a structural problem — it is larger and more powerful force than anything playing out in our individual workplaces. Racist actions and outcomes have been compounded through centuries into our national culture, our laws, and our economic order. This means that when we commit to advancing racial justice through our work, we must act both to transform what is in our control and to work with others to change the structures currently imposed upon us. This is community work, this is political work, this is societal work.

When we approach racial justice work as employers, as people who hold some amount of power to initiate change in our sphere of influence, we must recognize that we are part of a larger movement. At a basic level, this is important because we cannot access a full set of choices to advance racial equity forward within our own workplaces until the context we operate within supports a greater set of possibilities. The racial equity actions we outline in this toolkit aim to shift the material and cultural conditions for Black, brown, indigenous and other employees of color at our workplaces.

RACIAL EQUITY ASSESSMENT FOR RESTAURANTS

Use this tool to help clarify whether racial equity is currently embedded within your restaurant's policies, practices, and culture, and to identify opportunities for practical, visionary improvement.

This assessment tool is divided into two sections:

- TRACK YOUR NUMBERS
- ANALYZE YOUR CHOICE POINTS

The TRACK YOUR NUMBERS section provides you with an overall snapshot of the level of occupational segregation in your restaurant. It includes an easy-to-follow worksheet to help you calculate a number-based score that you can continuously improve upon and use to track and measure racial equity throughout your organization.

The ANALYZE YOUR CHOICE POINTS section goes a layer deeper, covering the following four major workplace areas where racial equity and inclusion can be advanced through clear and actionable means:

- RACIAL EQUITY ASSESSMENT AND WORK PLANS
- RECRUITMENT, OUTREACH, AND ADVERTISING
- APPLICATION AND HIRING
- PROMOTIONS AND TRAININGS

Race Forward calls the decision-making opportunities that you will find in each of these four areas Racial Equity Choice Points. Being able to recognize these decision-making crossroads will enable you to stop, do some analysis, make a new plan of action, and move forward.

TRACK YOUR NUMBERS

One of the best ways to measure racial equity in your workplace is to calculate the level of occupational segregation. This index measures the level of segregation in your restaurant in much the same way that you would measure segregation in a city. You will find a step-by-step Occupational Segregation Worksheet below. The following two illustrations depict what kind of information the worksheet will help you map out.

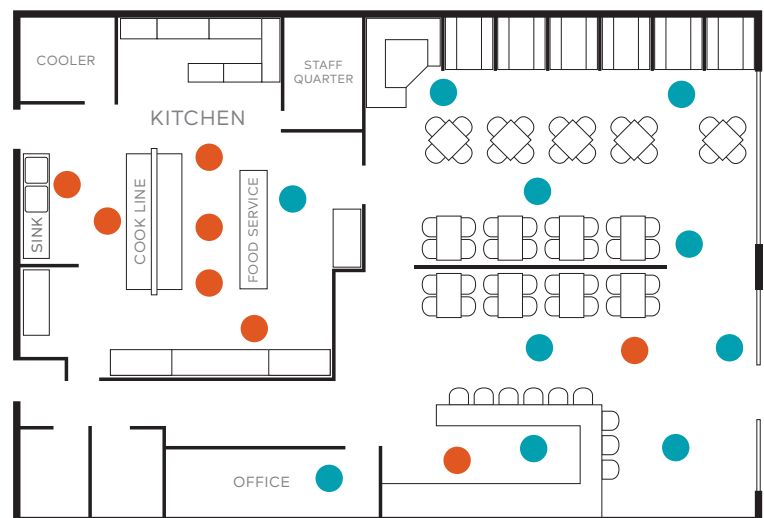
In this section, use the worksheet with your own demographic data to assess the current level of racial equity in your restaurant.

VISUAL EXAMPLES

RESTAURANT A

High Segregation between Workers of Color (orange) and White Workers (blue)

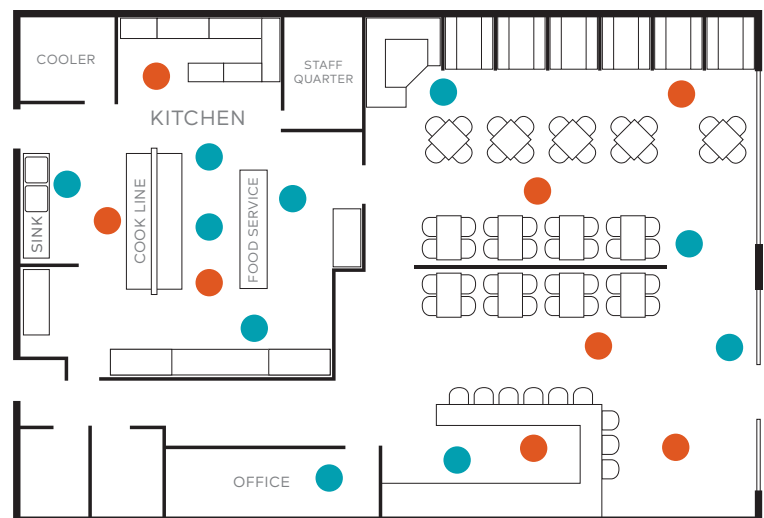
Restaurant A has a total of 10 white workers: 9 (or 90%) in front-of-house positions, and 1 (or 10%) in back-of-house positions. There are 8 workers of color: 2 (or 25%) in front-of-house positions, and 6 (or 75%) in back-of-house positions. Using the Occupational Segregation Worksheet, the segregation level for this restaurant is 65% (high).



RESTAURANT B

Low Segregation between Workers of Color (orange) and White Workers (blue)

Restaurant B has a total of 10 white workers: 5 (or 50%) in front-of-house positions, and 5 (or 50%) in back-of-house positions. There are 8 workers of color: 5 (or 75%) in front-of-house positions and 3 (or 25%) in back-of-house positions. Worksheet calculations result in a segregation level of 25% (low).



OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

Use this worksheet to calculate the level of segregation between white workers and workers of color in front-of-house and back-of-house positions.

FIRST, record your employee demographics.

STEP 1 How many white workers do you employ? _____

STEP 2 How many white workers are employed in front-of-house positions? _____

STEP 3 How many white workers are employed in back-of-house positions? _____

STEP 4 How many workers of color do you employ? _____

STEP 5 How many workers of color are employed in front-of-house positions? _____

STEP 6 How many workers of color are employed in back-of-house positions? _____

NEXT, calculate percentages for these demographics.

STEP 7 Divide the number you entered in Step 2 by the number you entered in Step 1, and then multiply the result by 100: _____

STEP 8 Divide the number you entered in Step 3 by the number you entered in Step 1, and then multiply the result by 100: _____

STEP 9 Divide the number you entered in Step 5 by the number you entered in Step 4, and then multiply the result by 100: _____

STEP 10 Divide the number you entered in Step 6 by the number you entered in Step 4, and then multiply the result by 100: _____

FINALLY, calculate the level of segregation between white workers and workers of color.

STEP 11 Subtract the number you entered in Step 9 from the number you entered in Step 7, and round the result to the closest whole number: _____

STEP 12 Subtract the number you entered in Step 10 from the number you entered in Step 8, and round the result to the closest positive number. If you entered 0 in Step 8, enter the same number you entered in Step 10: _____

STEP 13 Add the number you entered in Step 11 to the number you entered in Step 12, and then divide the result by 2: _____

LEVEL OF SEGREGATION

< 30 low

30 - 60 moderate

> 60 high

THE FINAL NUMBER you enter in Step 13 should be between 0 and 100. If it is less than 30, the level of occupational segregation between white workers and workers of color is low across front-of-house and back-of-house positions. If the number is between 30 and 60, the level of segregation is moderate. If it is over 60, the level of segregation is high.

ANALYZE YOUR CHOICE POINTS

As you will see in this part of the assessment, there is no shortage of great opportunities. The choice points that are listed in each of the four workplace categories were compiled from an in-depth exploration of specific policies, practices, and/or principles that advance racial equity within the restaurant industry. These choice points comprise the various aspects of a restaurant business that most directly impact the realization of a racially inclusive and equitable workplace. Next to each choice point, there is a space for you to score how well that racial equity component is being applied in your workplace. When scoring, try to be as curious, reflective, and honest as possible.

Below each section you will find relevant tools to get you started — best practice tips from other restaurant leaders, exploratory research questions, and example language for goalsetting. If you find this section confusing, or encounter any challenges during this process, we are available to clarify or provide other support.

In this section, you use interviews with management and staff to fill out the assessment. Each racial equity choice point offers an opportunity for reflection, discussion, and goal setting.

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR SCORE

- 1 Read through each Racial Equity Choice Point in the table, and give it a score of 0, 1, or 2 according to the following chart.
- 2 Once you have scored each Choice Point in the table, add them up and enter the total in the Points Earned row.
- 3 Divide the Points Earned by the Total Possible Points for that category. The result should be a decimal value between 0 and 1.
- 4 Once you have calculated a decimal value for each category, use the following table to translate it to a more descriptive evaluation of how well your restaurant is incorporating racial equity in that area of the workplace.

RACIAL EQUITY SCORE RANGE

0 ABSENT

1 PRESENT, BUT WEAK

2 STRONG

WORKPLACE CATEGORY EVALUATIONS

0 TO .2 NEEDS INTENSIVE WORK

.2 TO .4 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

.4 TO .6 FAIR

.6 TO .8 GOOD

.8 TO 1 MODEL

RACIAL EQUITY ASSESSMENT AND WORK PLANS

RACIAL EQUITY CHOICE POINTS	SCORE
Leadership has performed a racial-equity assessment to determine barriers and opportunities.	
Leadership has received Racial Equity and Bias training.	
Explicit racial equity and inclusion goals are built into the mission and goals of the restaurant.	
There is a clear timetable as well as a work plan and assigned staff to complete racial equity goals.	
POINTS EARNED	
POINTS EARNED ÷ 8 <i>Total Possible Points</i>	

EVALUATION:

EXAMPLES OF INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES

- Management team attended High Road Employer Training Program, including racial equity training.

RECRUITMENT, OUTREACH, AND ADVERTISING

RACIAL EQUITY CHOICE POINTS	SCORE
There are explicit racial-equity inclusion goals and timetables for recruiting the applicant pool.	
Racial demographics are tracked throughout the recruitment stage (including an analysis of race by type of recruitment platform).	
The staff team responsible for developing job postings and applications is racially diverse, and all HR personnel are trained in strategies to advance racial equity.	
Job-posting language is specific to the job, does not include exclusionary terms such as “cultural fit,” and depicts a culture of diversity and inclusion.	
Bilingual postings are available in both paper and digital form.	
There is no requirement to disclose prior convictions, provide background checks, or obtain educational certifications not directly related to position.	
Candidates are sourced from specific pathways that have a high representation of people of color (especially referrals from current employees of color).	
Currently employed workers of color are explicitly encouraged to apply to newly opened positions (especially where current underrepresentation exists).	
POINTS EARNED	
POINTS EARNED ÷ 16 Total Possible Points	

EVALUATION:

EXAMPLES OF INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES

- Got rid of all requirements for applicants to disclose prior convictions when not directly applicable to job.
- Fostered partnerships with local organizations connected to workers of color to diversify their recruitment pipeline.
- Included new language on applications that explicitly encourages people of color and formerly incarcerated applicants to apply.

RECRUITMENT, OUTREACH, AND ADVERTISING CONTINUED

QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED

- ◆ Have you noticed any patterns where people of various races have dominated specific occupations in your restaurant?
- ◆ What is your best estimate of the racial composition of the applicant pool for each job opening? (Consider both external and internal pools.)
- ◆ Are people of different races overrepresented or underrepresented in your hiring pool compared to the available recruitment area?
- ◆ What are the major pathways for applicants to find and apply for job openings (e.g., internal promotions, referrals, word-of-mouth from workers at nearby restaurants, digital platforms and social media)? How are the racial demographics different for each pathway?
- ◆ What racial groups are most targeted by your current advertising and outreach efforts? Is there any group that is being missed or excluded?
- ◆ What barriers to applying might exist for different racial communities?
- ◆ What biases might exist in the job application? For example, are there any words or phrases that might make people feel like they are not welcome, or requirements that unintentionally rule out different communities?
- ◆ What outreach and advertising strategies will best reach underrepresented applicants?
- ◆ How many different new and targeted strategies are your job recruiters willing or required to use? And how will recruiters be held accountable to use these strategies?

TARGET GOAL EXAMPLE

Once you've conducted this analysis, you can start creating a specific goal aimed at alleviating racial bias in the recruitment process. For example:

For our front-of-house hires in the next three months, we want to achieve an applicant pool that is at least 25% people of color, and in the three months after that, we want to achieve an applicant pool that is at least 50% people of color.

Make sure the goal is achievable, but also requires enough of a stretch to force you to do some things differently. Outcomes will not change if strategies and practices don't change.

APPLICATION AND HIRING PROCESS

RACIAL EQUITY CHOICE POINTS	SCORE
There are explicit racial-equity inclusion goals and timetables for the hiring process.	
The staff members who are responsible for reviewing and hiring applicants are racially diverse, and all HR personnel must be trained in strategies to advance racial equity.	
The criteria for selecting candidates are standardized and clearly limit opportunities for subjective or biased decision-making to occur.	
The hiring process includes a racial equity-awareness component in which anyone who is reviewing a candidate is required to consciously consider racial equity goals, impacts, and outcomes.	
Hiring procedures and decisions are accountable and transparent to a larger hiring team.	
Any initial trial period is paid.	
POINTS EARNED	
POINTS EARNED ÷ 12 <i>Total Possible Points</i>	

EVALUATION:

EXAMPLES OF INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES

- The HR manager received coaching in racially equitable hiring practices that included learning how a lack of standardized criteria for hiring applicants can allow implicit bias to affect decision making.
- Expanded their hiring team to include people of color.
- All hiring staff received training in non-biased interviewing skills, which included documentation and standard criteria tied to job-specific skill sets.

APPLICATION AND HIRING PROCESS CONTINUED

Refer to the **TRACK YOUR NUMBERS** section earlier in this document for help in answering these questions.

QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED

- ◆ What is the current racial composition of your workforce by position?
- ◆ Are there racial groups that are being hired at disproportionate rates compared to other groups? Are there aspects of your hiring process (e.g., resume screening, interviewing, evaluating) that might be causing that to happen?
- ◆ Can you identify internal staff members who are promotable, trainable, or transferable?
- ◆ How can you improve your hiring processes to ensure that biased decision-making is eliminated?
- ◆ How structured and formal is your current hiring process? Are any of your selection criteria highly subjective, or is there a component of the hiring process that is based on subjective opinions about a given candidate?
- ◆ How many different new and targeted strategies are your job recruiters willing or required to use? How will recruiters be held accountable to use these strategies?
- ◆ How can the hiring process be improved so that people of color and women who are offered a position actually accept and retain it?

VOLUNTARY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN

Voluntary Affirmative Action Plans (VAAP) are designed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to rectify continuing effects of past discriminatory policies or practices. This is not to say that using a VAAP admits intentional discrimination on the part of staff or management. However, if your analysis shows underrepresentation of people of color in certain positions where there is reasonable availability after using proactive recruitment and promotion channels, then using a VAAP is a good way to understand your findings and make a strategic plan of action. VAAPs often include specific placement goals for people of color and women that you can use based on your analysis of your restaurant's current equity landscape. In addition, One Fair Wage's RAISE cohort and new High Road Employer Training Program are available to support you as you design your own VAAP or other plan.

PROMOTIONS AND TRAINING

RACIAL EQUITY CHOICE POINTS	SCORE
HR staff and managers use a written protocol for employee advancement that includes common standards, evaluation rubrics, and regular communication and feedback about an employee’s progress.	
The evaluation team is diverse or seeks input on progress evaluations from diverse staff members.	
“Culture fit” or other subjective criteria for advancement undergo a racial equity review to ensure no implicit discrimination is present.	
All job openings are made known to current staff both verbally and in writing.	
The leadership team actively encourages staff workers of color to apply for front-of-house or leadership positions and prioritizes considering them as candidates.	
Training protocol is standardized, comprehensive, and regularly offered, and it provides a clear pathway to higher-paid positions in both the front and back-of-house.	
If outside training for promotion is required, it is compensated.	
Substantial opportunities are provided for non-English speaking workers to learn adequate English to advance to higher-paying positions in the back and front-of-house.	
POINTS EARNED	
POINTS EARNED ÷ 16 Total Possible Points	

EVALUATION:

EXAMPLES OF INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES

- Management overhauled their promotion system by implementing Individualized Development Plans for all employees. These plans include each employee’s aspirational position and an employer-supported training pathway.
- Managers personally encouraged all qualified candidates of color to apply for promotions when openings arose.

PROMOTIONS AND TRAINING CONTINUED

QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED

- ◆ What training is currently offered for existing staff members? Who designed the training, and does it include adequate preparation to move into a new position?
- ◆ How are staff members provided training opportunities for positions they are not currently working in?
- ◆ Are there barriers that may preclude staff from training for promotional positions? (Consider additional time constraints, language barriers, financial costs, lack of mentorship, etc.)
- ◆ How formal are training opportunities? Is training based on informal social networks or relationships that may be exacerbated by race and gender biases?
- ◆ Are training and professional-development opportunities built into the business model of the restaurant? Does this include adequate management support for prioritizing the development and dissemination of training material?
- ◆ How is in-depth training and professional development incorporated as part of your staff's regular workday? Is that training provided for all staff members, not just front-of-house or Tier 1 (i.e. highest earning) employees?
- ◆ Are there training gaps that your current workers of color report as the most critical barriers to their promotional development?

TARGET GOAL EXAMPLE

In the next six months, develop a training and advancement protocol that lays out all necessary skills and attributes for each position. Ensure that all staff members understand the new standard criteria for advancement, their current evaluation under the criteria and a pathway towards promotion.

RACIAL EQUITY PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

Once you complete your assessment it is time to get to work.

The following sections outline some specific actions and templates you can use to begin implementation. Most of your progress will come, however, in the time you put in outside this toolkit. There is only so much that can be achieved by reading words on a page. Change will come with the experimentation you put in that is necessary to personalize these suggestions to your own business and location. As part of our High Road Restaurant Training program, we go through training, coaching and peer-to-peer learning. We encourage you to join us, and gain greater access to education, materials and ongoing support. This implementation guide does, however, offer a strong jumping off point, and we encourage you to dive in — *all the way*.

COMMITTING TO WAGE EQUITY

There are many facets of a workplace that communicate fairness and respect to workers, and wages are definitely at the top of that list. Restaurant workers of color nationwide have repeatedly named wage equity as one of their top concerns because of their experiences with discrimination working in restaurants, and because access to living wage jobs that garner higher tips (fine-dining server, bartender and management positions) within the industry are concentrated in the hands of predominantly white and light-skinned men. The subminimum wage for tipped workers, a legacy of slavery, exacerbates the race and gender wage disparity by forcing workers of color to rely on tips, which are highly volatile, as the primary source of their income.⁶



The fact that the subminimum wage for tipped workers, which forces workers of color and women to rely on tips for their income, results in racial inequity is due to both occupational segregation and customer racism in tipping. Occupational segregation results in women of color working in more casual restaurants, where they earn less in tips, and customer racism results in women of color earning less in tips even when they work in higher-end restaurants. Today, 41% of all tipped workers across the country are people of color, and in some states they are the majority of the industry.⁷ Thus, as a result of both occupational segregation and customer racism in tipping, The subminimum wage for tipped workers results in a nearly \$5 per hour wage differential (including tips) nationally between Black women and white men in the restaurant industry overall and on the dining floor specifically.⁸ In other words, the highest paid group — white men who work in the front of house or management — earns nearly \$5

more than the lowest paid groups — Black women who work in the front of house and Black women who work in the back of house. This wage gap rises to nearly \$8 an hour in states such as New York and Massachusetts.⁹ Our current two-tiered wage structure is not working; we must re-envision it in order to manifest true material change for people in their everyday lives.

In order to reduce workers' dependence on tips, for the reasons described above, employers should explore transitioning to One Fair Wage — a full minimum wage paid by the employer. Seven states already require One Fair Wage — CA, OR, WA, NV, MN, MT and AK. The custom and practice in those seven states has long been to pay all workers a full minimum wage and share tips among all non-management employees in the restaurant, in both the Front- and Back-of-House. This is a system highly desired by many employers to increase wage equity between the Front of the House, which often has more white employees, and the Back of the House, which often has more employees of color. Of course, employers should use this Toolkit and the training offered by RAISE High Road



Restaurants to desegregate the workplace so that there are more workers of color in the Front of the House. However, in addition, One Fair Wage and RAISE High Road Restaurants were able to get a bill passed in Congress in 2018 that allows any employer in the United States that pays all employees a full minimum wage to share tips with all non-management employees, in the Front of the House and the Back of the House. (As of this toolkit's publication, September 2020, New York is the only state that has state-specific law that supersedes that federal bill.) In this way, transitioning to One Fair Wage can both reduce race and gender inequities by reducing front-of-house workers' dependence on tips, as described above, but can also reduce inequities between Front- and Back-of-house workers' pay by allowing for tip sharing throughout the restaurant.

Given these research findings, race and gender equity cannot be addressed without discussing the obvious wage disparity present in the restaurant industry. We recommend moving to one of three forms of One Fair Wage (a full minimum wage paid to all employees by the employer) as the first step to racial justice:

- 1) One Fair Wage with tip sharing between all non-management employees in the front and back-of-house;
- 2) a full minimum wage with service charge; or
- 3) gratuity-free models in which the cost of food and labor are all included in the prices listed on the menu.

RAISE High Road Restaurants has created financial templates to help you determine how you might transition to one of these three models while remaining profitable. Please contact RAISE High Road Restaurants for further information about how to obtain these templates. These three models address the biased outcomes that can emerge from forcing workers to rely on tips as a significant portion of their base wage, as a result of occupational segregation and customer racism in tipping.

We recognize that shifting your wage structure may be challenging without broader policy change for One Fair Wage in your state. For this reason, RAISE: High Road Restaurants believes that it is imperative for you to both address the racial inequities in your own restaurant's systems, that are within your control, and at the same time work with us to collectively support statewide and federal policy changes that dismantle systemic racism. If you are an employer whose market does not allow for one of these business models, the suggested best practice is to support and advocate for policy change within your local, state, and federal governments. Beyond supporting One Fair Wage policy and tip sharing as policy, however, you can also reduce the impact of customer racism and sexism in tipping through tip pooling among all front-of-house staff.¹⁰ This is legal in all states.

CULTIVATING A JUST WORKPLACE CULTURE


Creating workplace culture can only be successful when every member of the team practices and believes in the values of an organization. This presents some obvious challenges. How do you ensure the culture you want is present when you are not? How do you shift racist attitudes and perspectives that are rampant throughout the industry? In the interviews we conducted with restaurant leadership, the organizations who found the most success in maintaining their culture set it intentionally from the beginning — from the moment of hire, and in some cases, from the moment of the interview. And, in all cases, the owners or executive level managers set the cultural tone, prioritizing authentic connection and honest relationships with all members of their teams.

It is important to set a clear intention for a just workplace. This begins with making the space that racial equity deserves. A budget reflects an institution's values; be sure to budget the time for your leadership to instill racial equity practices, whether it be one-on-one conversations about structural inequalities with your staff, facilitating team conversations or providing access to external training from outside experts.

We recommend reviewing and potentially rewriting your employee manual - use this tool to help set your intention. Be clear about what language is exclusionary and unacceptable, include behavioral expectations with regard to tolerance, bias and harassment, a non-discrimination clause, and a whistleblower clause. Review the employee manual in person with each new hire. Explicitly highlight behaviors around racism that are unacceptable. What values and behaviors build an inclusive culture? Give concrete examples of what equity and inclusion looks like. Ensure that people of color feel comfortable, are centered, and are reflected in the culture of the restaurant. Give white and/or male employees examples of how they can be active allies. For banquet staff/seasonal staff – have them sign a commitment to safe work spaces. Explicitly call out intolerance for hate and set the expectation of compassion and acceptance.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Consider hosting an orientation when you have new staff members come on board that directly speaks to race, gender and other dimensions of equity. Having restaurant leadership, such as the owner or manager, prioritize this kind of conversation sets the tone about how central race and gender equity are as values in your workplace. For example, Andy Shallal, owner of Busboys and Poets in DC, personally hosts these conversations around race with all his new employees.



“Having worked as the Chair of the Human Rights Commission in Fairfax County at a time when there was a growing movement towards Diversity training, I always noticed one thing. Diversity training was about making white people feel comfortable... The American experience, however, is a Black experience and this country is built on that. So, we need to get there first. We need to create a very comfortable container for Black folks to be in. At Busboys we try to raise Black people up and then bring everyone up to that same level. [Instead of always trying to bring people of color up to the white level]. It’s a perspective of positioning, where are they sitting from a perspective of power?”

—Andy Shallal, Founder and Owner, Busboys and Poets



SPECIAL NOTE

If you are a non-black person, we want to make a special note about the skill and experience it takes to facilitate conversations about race and racism. Most people with white and light skinned privilege have been purposefully sheltered from having hard conversations about race, because of what it reveals about how anti-blackness undergirds larger structures of power in our society. The consequence is often that white people are underdeveloped and/or fragile in these conversations and can cause harm to people of color in the process.

In hearing his success and challenges, we recommend you:

- ◆ Open with a grounding in the realities of structural racism (unfairness) in the industry. You can use One Fair Wage research reports and communication materials to help build out your outline.
- ◆ Share your personal story of coming to this work (what's your stake in this). If you are vulnerable and honest then others are more likely to follow.
- ◆ Allow for staff to share their reflections in pairs or small groups. Then take final reflections from each pair or group in the larger circle. This can ease the fear some have about public speaking.

We suggest you enter these conversations with a high level of humility. Be clear about what the goals of the company are, the current status of your operations, policies and practices, and how open you are for shared leadership around these issues. Then back up that openness with action. It can be very helpful to attend racial justice training to get more exposure to frameworks and facilitation approaches. The most important thing you should keep in mind is how you will navigate pushback from white employees. Under no circumstances should you allow for explicit or subtle racist comments to go without a proper response and correction. As part of our High Road Employer Training program our coaches can help guide you through this process.

In addition to the onboarding process, be sure to have continuous learning throughout the year. We strongly recommend that you have any trainer include events relevant to your business. Examples may include: unwanted touches from a guest, friends speaking about topics in front of other co-workers that may make the unwilling employee uncomfortable, etc. Hold Anti-Harassment and Discrimination classes for all staff and consider communication classes for management teams. These classes not only create safe spaces, but also give your teams valuable skills on how to navigate challenging situations.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Actually having a people of color- and women/queer-forward workplace is a critical first step in building a diverse team. This is why we put the Building Inclusive Culture section first, because as people we know when a space is truly built for and with us. This said, it can be helpful to state your values and benefits publicly on your website or externally-facing materials to generate curiosity. Below are a few examples of external-facing statements on race and equity from restaurants around the country.

Examples:

Busboys and Poets is a community where racial and cultural connections are consciously uplifted... a place to take a deliberate pause and feed your mind, body and soul...a space for art, culture and politics to intentionally collide... we believe that by creating such a space we can inspire social change and begin to transform our community and the world.

Cafe Gabriela was founded in 2010 by Penny Baldado, a formerly undocumented, queer immigrant from the Philippines. Centered and inspired by the courage and actions of Gabriela Silang, a Filipina revolutionary who led a revolt against the Spanish colonizers. Cafe Gabriela is committed to building with the Community. Through our delicious food, coffee and socially relevant art on our walls, we provide a safe and welcoming space for our workers and customers. A place that is warm, nourishing and familiar... Just like your Lola's kitchen.

STOPPING HARASSMENT AND MICROAGGRESSIONS

Now that you hopefully set the tone and intention of your company, it is important to support and cultivate that culture. The leadership team must hold staff accountable immediately should any intolerable behavior arise. The restaurant must also be explicit on what is acceptable guest behavior; these policies must be shared widely with every team member. Clearly outline procedures and protocols on how employees should notify

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Are there additional ways that you can strengthen your commitment to equity and inclusion? Volunteering time as a group at a non-profit organization supporting social justice may be an option. Creating free education and training to underrepresented staff members and the community at large could help provide pathways for their professional development. Consider allowing space for your staff to contribute to the company. If you are a larger organization, create a worker advisory council that consists of leadership along with hourly employees to truly understand what your workers want and need. Open your books so that all workers are aware of the revenue and expenses of the business; open book financing not only creates an opportunity for the staff to learn how to manage the numbers, but also provides the space for them to contribute suggestions that might help the bottom line. This consistent messaging reminds them that their work matters and they work for a company that wants to hear what they have to contribute. Chera Amlag and Geo Quibuyen, from Hood Famous Cafe and Bar in Seattle, train their teams on de-escalation. They want to be sure that their teams do not immediately call the police when the housing insecure or folks experiencing mental health issues enter their establishments. This type of consideration reminds our teams that we care for all members of our community.

management should they feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Erin Ward, owner of Homeroom in California, created a color code system called “Not on the Menu.” If an employee feels at all unsafe, they simply say a color to their manager. Yellow means they are getting a bad feeling or creepy vibe. Orange means some comments have been made that could be construed as threatening. Red means there have been overtly sexual/racist/homophobic comments and/or touching. The staff member can go to the manager on duty and state a color and table number: If yellow — the employee decides whether they want to keep the table, orange — the manager takes over the table; red — the manager asks the guest to leave. This protects the employee from having to explain the situation for the manager to decide the appropriate course of action. The employee retains agency over their life and does not have to tolerate actions that in other establishments might threaten their livelihood.

Creating and maintaining culture is challenging. It’s important to remember that you must have a plan and understanding of what it means to reinforce these messages consistently outside of formal training. Racial equity should feel like the lifeblood of the organization, not just a requirement to check off the list twice a year. Outside training should serve to reinforce, reexamine, and reinvigorate the day-to-day practices. As leadership comes and goes from your space, these values will continuously need to be re-emphasized to ensure racial equity stays at the forefront of your company’s culture. This work may seem obvious to you, but we can never know someone else’s lived experiences. When we are born, we know how to eat and love; the rest we must learn or in this case unlearn.



BUILDING AN EQUITABLE TEAM

Although baking an inclusive culture into all aspects of your business is the most important first step, the mechanisms for decision-making and taking action around team building are also key. This section lays out some of the nuts and bolts of recruitment, hiring and promotion. For questions about retention of a multi-racial and gender diverse staff, we will point you back to the sections on wage equity and inclusive culture. Building an equitable team is obviously important; if you never hire and promote people then

your ability to use your business as a vehicle for racial equity is limited. However, if you can’t retain people because they don’t feel fairly compensated, or don’t feel valued and safe to be themselves within the workplace culture, then your commitment will be short lived and circular. Assuming you are doing all you can to set up just compensation and cultural models, let’s jump into the details.

RECRUITMENT

Inclusion Targets for Candidate pool

We suggest, at a minimum, that the candidate pool should match the percentage of a specific racial and ethnic group in the local labor force or local population, whichever is higher. However, in order



to increase the likelihood of building strongly representative staff in terms of people of color and women, it is better to over saturate your applicant pool. You could, in this case, require that all applicant pools contain at least 50% people of color, or 50% Black candidates, depending on what group of people is not strongly represented on your staff.

You can always shift this requirement based on what is really needed. For instance, if you previously had few Black workers on your service staff, but then you were able to hire a number of Black workers, yet over the same period lost indigenous workers, when a new position became available you could shift the target recruitment goal to focus on indigenous workers. Consistently monitoring the levels of representation of your staff and getting in the practice of setting recruitment targets is the first necessary step towards actually shifting your staff breakdown and culture.

INTENTIONAL AND PROACTIVE APPLICANT PIPELINES

Using word of mouth to recruit candidates when your current staff makeup is predominantly white will likely result in the status quo. If you are using certain job boards that consistently bring in the same demographic group, then it is time to switch up your strategy. Instead, we suggest actively connecting to channels or organizations that are connected to people of color. Employers who have committed to increasing the representation of people of color in their applicant pools have used workforce development organizations, their local Black or Latinx (Hispanic) community organizations or service centers. Oyster Sunday has compiled this Hospitality Industry Open-Source Job Board Database that is broken down by nation and states to help you localize your search.

As you continue experimenting with new applicant sources, make sure to track in a simple spreadsheet the race and gender demographics of the applications you receive from different sources. You can also track other important demographics, such as disability or age, that will help you counter the forces of exclusion that have historically been operating. That way you can more quickly change course if one strategy is not producing results.

Source	Asian American	Black	Indigenous	Latinx	White	Total
Internal Posting	12 23%	5 9%	2 4%	14 26%	20 38%	53
Poached	10 22%	12 27%	1 2%	9 20%	13 29%	45
Jobs on the Menu	7 15%	15 32%	4 9%	9 19%	12 25%	47
East Bay Works Job Board	13 24%	7 13%	6 11%	13 24%	15 28%	54

LEGALITY OF INCLUSION TARGETS



Note on legality of racial quotas:

Please visit the ACLU for more details on the legality around race focused hiring.

Inclusion goals are legal, acceptable tools for combating underrepresentation.

Some items to ensure you are setting inclusion lawfully:

- ◆ Employers can set program established goals or targets (such as “we will hire crews that better reflect the demographics of our city”) but not rigid quotas or set-asides (such as “the next 5 people we hire in X job must be women”).
- ◆ The program does not unduly harm members of non-targeted groups, such as by refusing to hire any people from those groups
- ◆ The individuals who benefit from the program must be qualified for the jobs in question.
- ◆ The program is temporary; once the goal is attained, it cannot be used to maintain those numbers. Short-term timetables help monitor progress toward the long-term goal.
- ◆ The program is reviewed regularly to assure that the goals and timetables are still justified, and to assure that non-targeted groups are not being unduly harmed.
- ◆ Management must communicate about the program and its goals, make clear that unlawful discrimination will not be tolerated, and monitor its effectiveness.

APPLICATION LANGUAGE AND REQUIREMENTS

Ensure your application materials are another point of contact in which applicants of color and women are clearly desired and valued. Consider including (and not including) the following features on your applications:

- ◆ State your businesses core values at the top of the application
- ◆ Include a phrase that explicitly encourages Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQ+, femme and non-binary people to apply.
- ◆ Perform a thorough review of all required qualifications to make sure that criteria that advantage people with educational privilege, access to wealth or exposure to white culture are eliminated, especially if they are not critical to performing the job.
- ◆ If you have a question about prior convictions remove it.
- ◆ Include a question on your application about prior work experience in a multi-racial setting and how that person contributed to a culture of inclusion. Consider including other questions that seek information about someone's experience or skill set in supporting a racially equitable workplace.

HIRING

RACIALLY DIVERSE HIRING COMMITTEE

Before you begin reviewing applications, create a diverse hiring committee in order to bring in a broader set of perspectives and voices, limit singular subjective decision making, and increase group accountability. The optimal size for a committee is about 3-4 staff representatives of various management levels. All people should receive training in the interview protocol and be compensated for their role on the committee.



RESUME REVIEW

Reviewing resumes is a common phase of the hiring process in which implicit bias can enter. Often fast paced, stressful and carried out by a single person with little accountability, this phase is ripe for unconscious assumptions and stereotypes to take hold. Our subconscious minds can be triggered by even small details such as names, addresses, and places of previous employment, filling in assumptions of how qualified a candidate is or is not.

Hopefully, reviewing resumes with your hiring committee will help you slow down and discuss, out loud, the factual and truly relevant information about a candidate. In your committee, pre-determine what is the role that needs to be filled and focus only on the minimal required skills and assets that you can apply consistently. This will help prevent you from expanding and contracting criteria or shifting the role as different applications come through that might trigger your subconscious preferences.

DESIGN A RACIAL EQUITY PRIMER



Racial Equity Primers or “Bench cards” are tools that originated in child welfare courts to intervene in the automated, unconscious and often devastating decision making of judges to separate families based on racial stereotypes and lack of proper reflection and process. Bench cards are a short list of mental primers – research, questions or prompts – that you can go over with your decision-making team to align your actions with your stated intentions. It asks you to become consciously aware of your potential racial biases and stereotypical assumptions before you actually make decisions. Create a short list of questions or statements that you can review with your hiring team before going over resumes.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS OR PROMPTS

- ◆ Your team’s personalized racial equity goal in terms of building a just and inclusive work space
- ◆ A list of the hiring criteria including what is actually necessary to qualify the candidate; it should not include cultural markers of whiteness or class privilege, and it should include skillsets related to functioning in multicultural settings.
- ◆ Consider listing additional relevant prior experience to include other industries that disproportionately employ people of color, such as retail.
- ◆ Consider whether anyone applying for a position in Human Resources or management should have the ability to speak more than one language relevant to your staff.

IMPLICIT BIAS TRIGGERS

- ◆ Lack of proactive and explicit racial equity goals
- ◆ Stress and time pressure - Your brain reverts to subconscious reactivity when under pressure or moving quickly.
- ◆ Not the expected fit - Candidate doesn’t match the profile you had imagined for the role leading you to overlook the candidate’s qualities
- ◆ Stereotype bias - Dominant cultural stereotypes about a group can be primed leading our minds to automatically apply them to the candidate, regardless of validity.
- ◆ Subjective evaluation processes - Without explicit and objective criteria with which to evaluate our biases can fill in.
- ◆ In-group preferences - Affinity for people who look and act like us

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS WITHOUT A RESUME

Resumes can be a barrier for some candidates who have not been given the structural support of some formal job market norms. Consider points of entry in your process that would invite and support new candidates. For instance, you could host an open job fair in which Human Resources personnel or managers are available to talk about the positions and culture of the restaurant. You can set up a standardized process for how to accept applications from candidates who don't also have resumes.

Consider a simple screening template that you can use in person or as a phone screen for candidates that don't have resumes. This template can have a list of short questions that you score on a 0-2 scale (0=Not Proficient, 1=Somewhat Proficient, and 2=Proficient). Questions could include:

- ◆ A total of at least 1 year of serving-related experience.
- ◆ Some experience in the role being hired.
- ◆ Ability to explain restaurant roles and how they work together

Keep the list short and score each one. If the interviewee scores at least 60% out of the total possible points, move them on to the full phone or in person interview process.

PROMOTION

ONBOARDING AND TRAINING

It is important to provide clear and transparent resources for all staff to be able to succeed at their role. Equity means recognizing that the structural barriers that exist in our society often put people at different starting places. For instance, if you grew up dining at high end restaurants with your family, you have decades worth of exposure to the culture and expectations for specific types of service. Of course, the ultimate goal is to create a restaurant culture that is not dependent on white-dominant norms for service, however, there might be some extra exposure that white candidates have to the functioning of a restaurant that gives them an advantage. If this is the case, consider offering extra support or more training time for new staff that are having to put in extra effort to master their role.

For training purposes, consider creating a list of the core expectations for each role that you can use during training and continuously refer to over time so that there are no assumptions about what someone does or doesn't know. The list could include both the task at hand and a rubric for different degrees of mastery or a simple scoring rubric (say from 0-2 again) that allows staff to see where they need to improve.

Sample Training Template

TOUR OF THE RESTAURANT	SCORE
Table and seat numbers	
Server sections	
Menu meeting with Chef	
Ability to describe menu items	
Understanding of major allergies	
Menu meeting with bar manager	
Ability to describe menu items	
Understanding of base spirits	
Wines by the glass	
Ability to describe menu items	
Dry storage, walk in, wine cellar	
Restocking and cleanliness	
Take out service standards	
Packaging and restocking	

SERVICE

Opening duties	
Reservation etiquette	
Point of sale system	
Flow of service	
Greeting	
Menu knowledge	
Timeliness	
Check back after each dish	
Farewell	
Proper wine service	
Opening wine	
Understanding of proper glassware	
Service sidework	
Polishing glassware	
Restocking service stations	
Closing duties	

RACIALLY EXPLICIT INTERVIEW GUIDES



- ◆ Always make sure you have a standardized interview template so that there is consistency and fairness for all applicants.
- ◆ During the interview process, discuss your wage structure and reasons why you choose to share tips / add service charge / include hospitality. This will help ensure that the candidate understands the values of your organization before they are hired. There cannot be race equity without wage equity.
- ◆ In your interview guide include a few questions that allow candidates to answer how they would respond to situations that are racially charged or where customers or coworkers are committing racial microaggressions. This is a tactic that the hiring teams at Busboys and Poets use to get a deeper sense of an applicant's analysis and practice with on-the-job issues of race and racism.
- ◆ White customer comes in and requests a white server. Black customer comes in and requests a Black server. How do you think about these two situations differently? How do you handle those situations?
- ◆ Customer comes in and asks for your poster supporting LGBTQ rights to be taken down. How do you respond?
- ◆ You hear a co-worker say, "that's so gay". How do you respond?
- ◆ Include questions about a candidate's skills and experience that are explicitly related to serving a multi-racial customer base, navigating a multi-racial and gender diverse workplace, fluency around social justice issues and values, the ability to speak multiple languages, and other relevant qualities that reflect the vision of the workplace you are trying to establish. Including questions about these skills and experiences communicates to your leadership team, staff and incoming hires that these are tangible, valuable skills for this restaurant.



ASSESSMENT

Standardized assessment of job performance can be challenging in the restaurant industry because it is not a conventional practice. However, performance evaluation can help lift folks up and ensure that they are engaged with their role and your company. RAISE: High Road Restaurants recommends implementing a practice that includes several components compiled from our members.

Performance management is not limited to annual reviews, but happens in various ways throughout one's employment. The first is immediately and regularly. Take time to speak about an employee's performance close to the occurrence. Focus the conversation on the behavior or task, be specific as possible, and remember to be complimentary as well as corrective. For example, "I noticed you really connecting with table 3! Thank you for demonstrating the hospitality that we strive for." Or, "I overheard you use the word 'gypped' when speaking about the tip someone left you. While receiving a low tip can be difficult, please refrain from speaking about that while on the floor. Furthermore, and more importantly, that term is a derogatory term for the Roma people. That type of oppressive language is inappropriate and will not be tolerated here." These types of regular interactions can help normalize speaking about job performance, as well as help maintain your culture.

Quarterly check-ins for new employees and bi-annual/annual reviews for tenured employees are recommended depending on your restaurant/company capacity to execute these thoughtfully. While Human Resources experts are moving away from numerical-based evaluations, we recommend having something standardized that can help remove/address unconscious biases. We have yet to see any material in our industry that accounts for bias without a numerical system. Therefore, we recommend a three-pronged approach to annual evaluations that includes a numerical system to look at performance as objectively as possible, but also an employee driven self assessment and a written Individual Development Plan (IDP) that is created by the manager and employee. The specificity of actions, such as showing up on time, having *mis en place* for service, etc. can be accounted for in the numerical system, while the other two pieces help to advance the employee by setting goals. This will take time on the manager's part; however, this type of investment in your employee will generate

"If your excuse is, 'I can't find the talent', then you need to homegrow the talent...Leadership has to give their employees permission to recognize their greatness."

*—Joy Zarembka,
Busboys and Poets*



RAISE: High Road Restaurants have different models and templates collected from other restaurants and are happy to share them with our members upon request.

unparalleled return. **RAISE:** High Road Restaurants have different models and templates collected from other restaurants and are happy to share them with our members upon request.

Lastly, we recommend that there is a clear ladder for mobility. What are the technical skills necessary to advance from a busser to a server, from dishwasher to prep cook? Establish clear pay increase policies based on skill or seniority. These should be shared with the teams so they understand how to advance to the next step in their professional development.

POSTING INTERNALLY AND ACTIVE INTERNAL RECRUITMENT

When it comes to open positions, always consider posting internally first if you have a sufficient pool of internal applicants. Explicitly encourage Black, Indigenous and other people of color internally by letting them know in person that a position is available and that you think they would be good for the role. Research shows that people who do not fit the dominant image for a specific job or role can be experiencing the “imposter phenomenon”, where objectively competent individuals tend to minimize their accomplishments or skills out of fear that they are not actually capable. This feeling is created and reinforced by the lack of visible representation in those roles. This said, it is important to actively approach and communicate to a staffer that you think they would be a good fit for the position and that they should consider applying. If they offer concrete reasons as to why they don’t yet feel prepared, then help them make a plan for how they can receive the training and support they need to move to the next stage.

If you notice that a person is not yet ready for a sizable promotion, consider creating a step ladder of training or enhanced responsibility to get them ready for that position. For instance, someone might not be ready for management, but perhaps you could put them in a supervisor position and offer them additional support to succeed in that role.

SIX PRINCIPLES OF GOOD RACIAL EQUITY PRACTICE

1 | THINK BIG

When it comes to racial inequity, we have the tendency to think about the biases or transgressions of individual people. While these are important issues to mitigate, the real barriers to developing an equitable business lie in the policies and general practices of the restaurant. You may not realize that the practices and policies of your restaurant operations maintain barriers for workers of color, but when we look critically at “the ways things have always been done,” we can see that recruitment pools based on referrals from a wait staff that is mostly white or requiring job applicants to disclose prior convictions exacerbates racial inequities.

Every choice point in the assessment tool presented earlier in this document focuses on shifting the business as a whole and for the long-term, not just the missteps of one person. This organizational-level approach ensures sustainability and resilience — so that no matter who comes into a new position or holds decision-making power, the racially equitable policies and practices will remain.

2 | BE EXPLICIT ABOUT RACIAL EQUITY

It is much easier to advance racial equity when you talk about it directly. Talking around racial bias and the negative impacts it has on your workers and your business will only lead to roundabout solutions. Be direct — name your goals, name how racial equity benefits your restaurant and all the people in it, and name the solutions you are taking on. Being explicit about racial equity and inequity with your leadership, your staff, and your customers allows for greater buy-in.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- ◆ Name a specific racial disparity you want to address. For example, if there is currently a pay gap caused by positional segregation in your restaurant, you can set a goal to decrease it by a specific percentage in the next year.

- ◆ Name specific racial populations you are targeting. If you are trying to increase a particular underrepresented racial community in your applicant pool, say African Americans, you should name that community in your goals and develop targeted strategies and sufficient resources to address existing patterns of discrimination.
- ◆ Name a specific racially equitable and inclusive strategy that you want to implement or an outcome you seek to achieve. Use the appropriate choice points from the Racial Equity Assessment.

3 | AIM FOR TANGIBLE CHANGE

Being outcome-oriented is a critical aspect to making real changes within restaurants and the industry at large. It is important to remember that when we notice racial disparities in positions, salaries, or benefits, this is not a natural occurrence. It is likely a result of a racially inequitable policy, practice, or industry trend. While no single restaurant can resolve racial inequity within the broader industry, remedies are possible — and keeping your sights on equal outcomes is the best tool.

For example, if your goal is to have an applicant pool that actually reflects the diversity of the available workers in the city where you do business, don't stop short by simply making applications publicly available. While this may seem like an equal opportunity that is visible to everyone, a more holistic approach would be to consider societal reasons why applicants of color might not come across your job postings with the same frequency that white applicants do. Perhaps people are segregated in different neighborhoods, don't use the same digital sites, or don't have access to the same peer networks. Setting outcome-oriented goals — and claiming success when you get there — will be the surest way to combat racial bias that might be operating invisibly inside and outside your restaurant.

4 | ENGAGE STAFF EARLY TO BUILD BUY-IN

Large-scale organizational changes are most effective and sustainable when everyone within a workplace is aware of what is happening, why it is happening, and how people will benefit from it. Be clear with your staff about why racial equity is important for your business. Don't rush the process — racial-justice language and concepts require adequate time and attention to ensure that everyone is on the same page when people come from vastly different life experiences, interpretations, and ways of talking about systemic racial inequity. Don't try to take this on alone if you don't feel confident and comfortable about it. Sending select management and staff members to racial equity and inclusion trainings is one way to clarify conceptual basics that can be shared within your organization.

Also be sure to open communication channels to get feedback, share concerns, and include diverse stakeholders and collaborators throughout the process. When you're analyzing issues and setting racial equity goals, it is critical that you give special attention to how you engage workers of color among your staff, many of whom likely have valuable experience and expertise to contribute about how racial bias might be operating. These can be tricky areas to navigate, so please reach out and the High Road Training Program for support.

5 | MEASURE AND EVALUATE

Like any good work plan, the goals you set are more powerful and achievable if they are concrete and viable. Use "SMART" goals: Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. Setting goals that have well-defined numbers and/or descriptions that mark success can help to ensure your strategies and goals are attainable and motivating. While we never recommend using racial quotas or specific numeric goals that are intended to be permanent, which violates the Title VII anti-discrimination law, we do suggest using affirmative language and strategies that remedy the effects of policies or practices that result in unfair, discriminatory impacts on workers of color.

And of course, make sure you evaluate your work. Here are some questions that can help with that evaluation:

- ◆ Where were you successful, and where did you fall short?
- ◆ Which strategies were most useful?
- ◆ What lessons can we share with others?
- ◆ What can we replicate, modify, or build upon for future success?

Remember, racial equity is both aspirational and operational. Developing clear goals, plans, timetables, work assignments, and accountability measures will not only save you time but will make your efforts more worthwhile.

6 | GET PROFESSIONAL HELP

In the pursuit of racial equity in your restaurant, you should consider hiring a professional team to help identify how racial equity may be impeding your business, consult with your staff, provide trainings, and right-size your approach. Experts in this work are competent at guiding an organization through hard-to-grasp concepts like implicit bias and structural inequity. They can help you understand that racial equity transformations should be add-ins (not add-ons), so that making institutional change is not only achievable, but long-term.

RAISE: High Road Restaurants conducts a High Road Employer Training Program.

RHRR's consultants focus on studying, advising, and moving restaurants towards more equitable business practices.

For more information, please contact heythere@highroadrestaurants.org.

KEY TACTICS TO SUCCESSFULLY OVERCOME IMPLICIT BIAS

Implicit bias — the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner — is a pervasive barrier to racial equity, not just in the restaurant industry, but in society as a whole. However, this type of bias can be one of the hardest to address and overcome because it is implicit and therefore not readily visible to someone who is not looking for it. This is particularly the case when such bias gets embedded into an organization’s business practices and becomes normalized.



Fear not — there are ways to effectively counter implicit racial bias from playing out in your restaurant’s daily functions and putting them into effect doesn’t have to be overwhelming. Although there is extensive research documenting how racial bias operates organizationally and the best ways to mitigate it, we have summarized the research into three easy to remember buckets. Print it out, post it up, and refer to it often. This is a continual process, so learn the basics, try something out, and test anew.

CATEGORIES OF IMPLICIT RACIAL BIAS INTERVENTIONS

RE-PRIMING

Re-priming involves the training, conversations, and cultural shifts that organizations collectively adopt in order to increase their capacity to think about and shift away from racial bias in day-to-day operations. This is the critical background work that strengthens people’s skills and understanding of why racial equity is important and how it can be achieved.

EXAMPLE POLICY OR PRACTICE INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ **Building awareness of implicit bias** (what it is, how it operates at an organizational level, and what the impacts are) enables your leadership and staff to enact racial equity work on a daily basis.
- ◆ **Diverse hiring teams help build accountability** by expanding the number of people reviewing a decision and the diversity of viewpoints. In addition, we are more likely to limit rash, subjective decision-making when we know we will need to explain the reasoning behind our choices.

- ◆ **Institution-wide explicit racial-equity commitments** help us shift the cultural environment we collectively operate within. By making explicit commitments, equity becomes embedded in everyday conversations between management, staff, and customers. Over time this shifts an organization's awareness and capacity to analyze problems and create solutions.

REMOVING THE OPPORTUNITY

Implicit bias often occurs when decision-making processes allow for subjective biases or unconscious stereotypical thinking to enter into the equation. Policies or protocols (such as for hiring or promotions) that limit the opportunities for individual subjective biases to come into play are more resistant to subjective decision-making, and therefore to implicit bias.

EXAMPLE POLICY OR PRACTICE INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ Formalized structures with clear guidelines, protocols, and criteria help limit subjectivity, stereotype bias, and ambiguous definitions of success.
- ◆ Using a name-blind or picture-blind hiring process removes irrelevant information that might trigger biased thoughts and/or stereotypes.

STOP AND THINK

It is common for implicit bias to distort healthy business decisions when an organization's processes don't explicitly include conscious racial-equity goals and considerations. When we don't slow down and directly consider racial impacts, we often revert to operating norms that perpetuate unfair decisions based on stereotypes or unconscious preferences. However, by designing policies or protocols in which considerations of racial equity are built into the way decisions are made in your business, you are more likely to achieve positive, effective, and unbiased results.

EXAMPLE POLICY OR PRACTICE INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ Decisions made under intense time pressure cause our decisions to be guided more by gut reactions than conscientious consideration. Allowing ample time for decision-making decreases unconscious bias and allows logical and value-driven processes to steer the process.
- ◆ A Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) tool for hiring and promotion asks a series of questions that help decision makers determine if and how a new policy or practice might be unfair or have a racially disparate impact on workers of color. You can find an REIA tool on the Race Forward website, raceforward.org, under the "tools" tab.
- ◆ A racially-intentional recruitment policy allows teams to set racial equity goals that are most supportive of the business and its workers. Every time a team comes to a decision point, they can reference the goal to see if their approach is in alignment with best practice. Assessing outcomes allows the team to measure whether the policy has been effective in achieving the racial equity results it originally aimed for.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Bureau of Labor Statistics, February 2019. Employment Projections, 2016-2026.
- 2 National Restaurant Association, (2019). Restaurant Industry Facts at a Glance. <https://restaurant.org/research/restaurant-statistics/restaurant-industry-facts-at-a-glance>.
- 3 One Fair Wage. "A Persistent Legacy of Slavery: Ending the Subminimum Wage for Tipped Workers as a Racial Equity Measure". August 2020.
- 4 Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, The Great Service Divide: Occupational Segregation & Inequality in the U.S. Restaurant Industry (New York, NY: ROC United, 2014).
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 See footnote 3 and 4.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Lynn et al., (2008). Consumer Racial Discrimination in Tipping: A Replication and Extension. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 38(4), pp.1045-1060

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