

# Advancing Racial Equity

## The Role of Government

Iowa City

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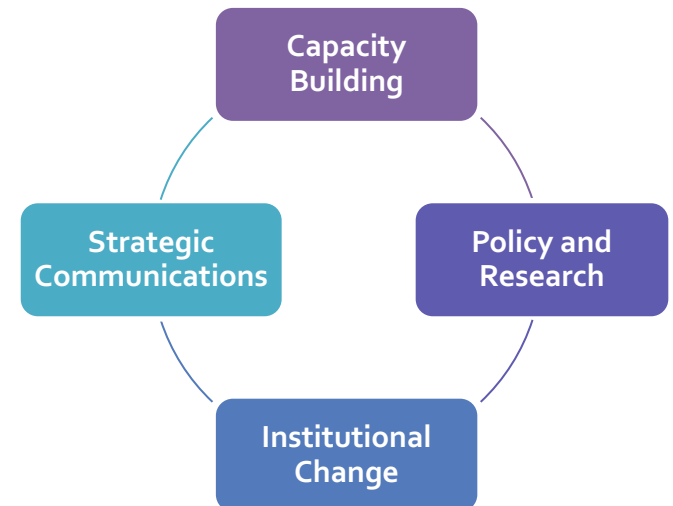
# Government Alliance on Race and Equity

A national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.

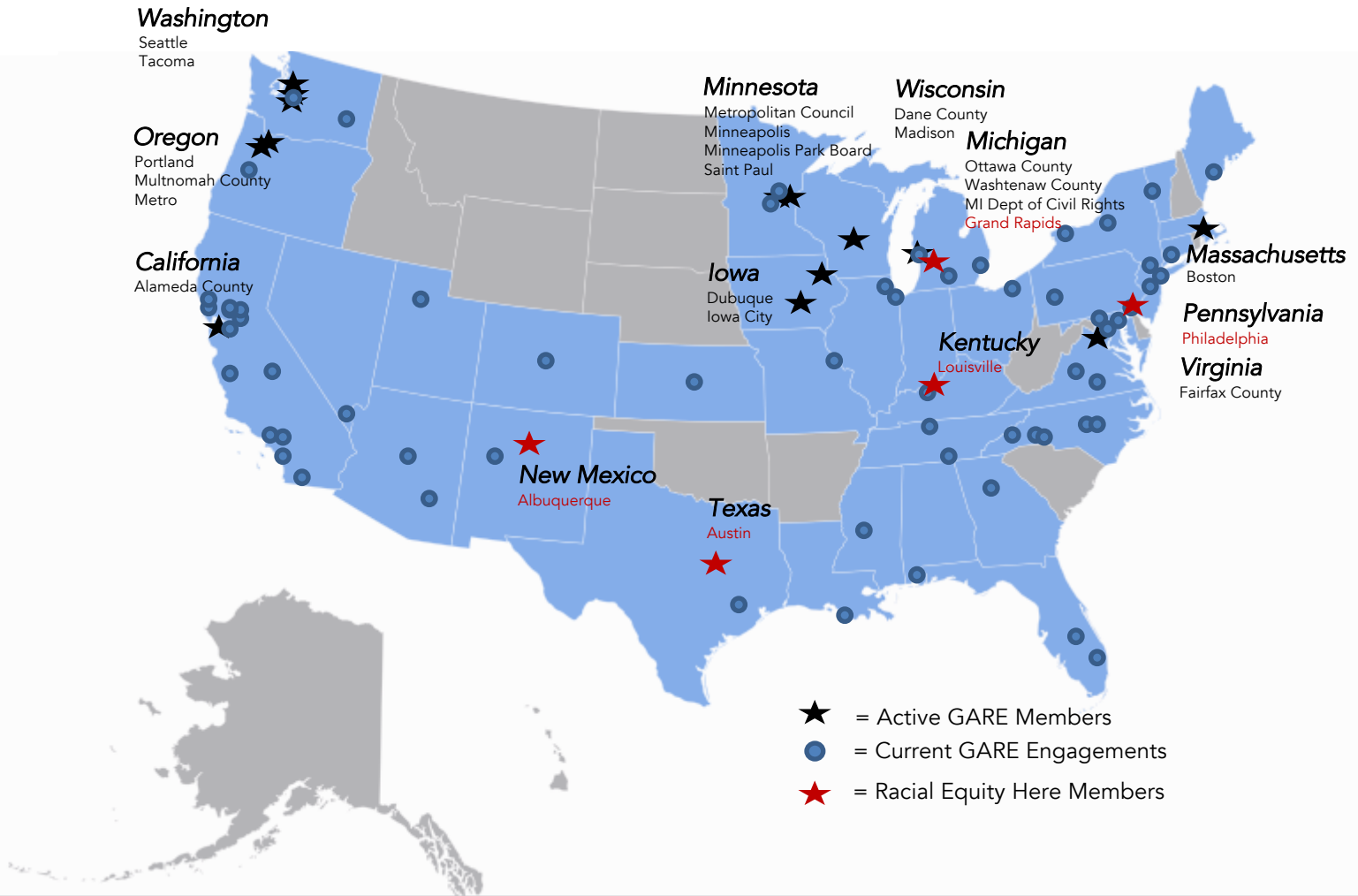
- ✓ A membership network of jurisdictions in leadership
- ✓ Expanding jurisdictions – in 30 states and more than 100 cities – all levels of government
- ✓ Providing tools and resources to put theory into action

## Center for Social Inclusion

Center for Social Inclusion's mission is to catalyze communities, government, and other institutions to dismantle structural racial inequity and create equitable outcomes for all



# Government Alliance on Race and Equity



# Table introductions

- Name
- Jurisdiction
- Profession
- Why you chose to participate in today's discussion

# Role of Government



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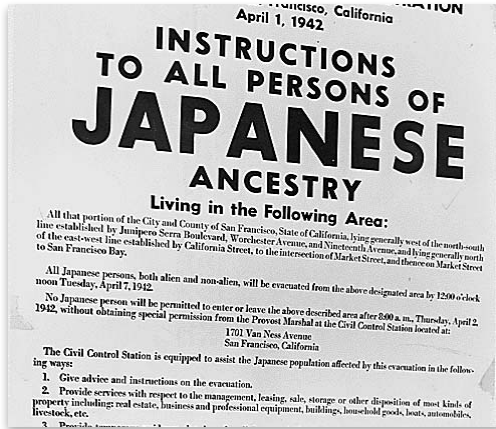
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# Values and realities

- All men are created equal
- With liberty and justice for all
- Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth

# History of government and race

Initially explicit



Government explicitly creates and maintains racial inequity.

Became implicit



Discrimination illegal, but “race-neutral” policies and practices perpetuate inequity.

Government for racial equity



Proactive policies, practices and procedures that advance racial equity.



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# Advancing Racial Equity

## A national practice

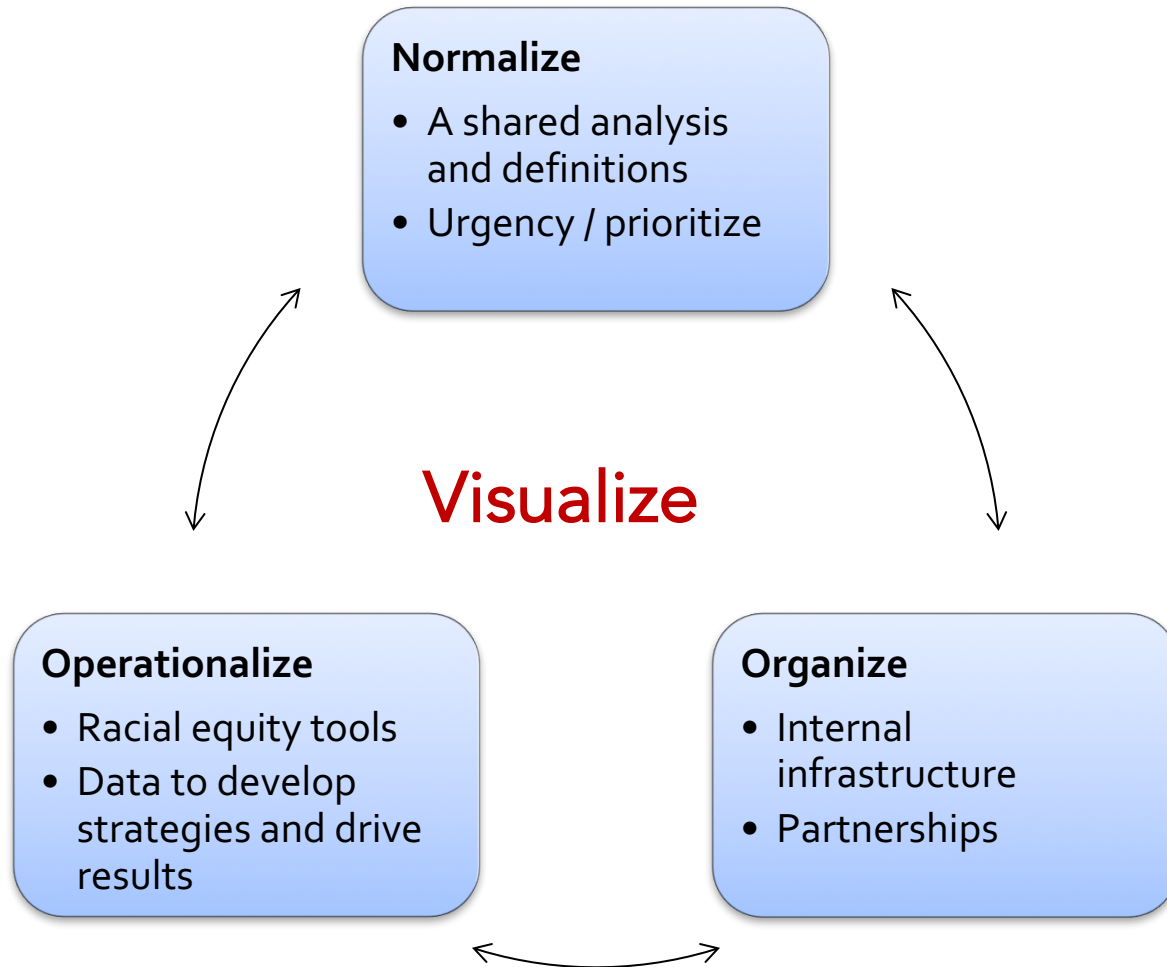


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# National best practice



# Normalize



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# Equity? Equality? What's the difference?



# Racial inequity in the U.S.

From infant mortality to life expectancy, race predicts how well you will do...



# Racial equity means:

- “Closing the gaps” so that race does not predict one’s success, while also **improving outcomes for all**
- To do so, have to:
  - ✓ Target strategies to focus improvements for those worse off
  - ✓ Move beyond “services” and focus on changing policies, institutions and structures

# Bias

The evaluation of one group and its members relative to another.

We all carry bias. Acting on bias can be discriminatory and create negative outcomes for particular groups.



Source: Unconscious (Implicit) Bias and Health Disparities: Where Do We Go from Here?



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# Explicit bias

Expressed directly

Aware of bias / operates consciously

Example – Sign in the window of an apartment building – “whites only”

# Implicit bias

Expressed indirectly

Unaware of bias / operates sub-consciously

Example – a property manager doing more criminal background checks on African Americans than whites.

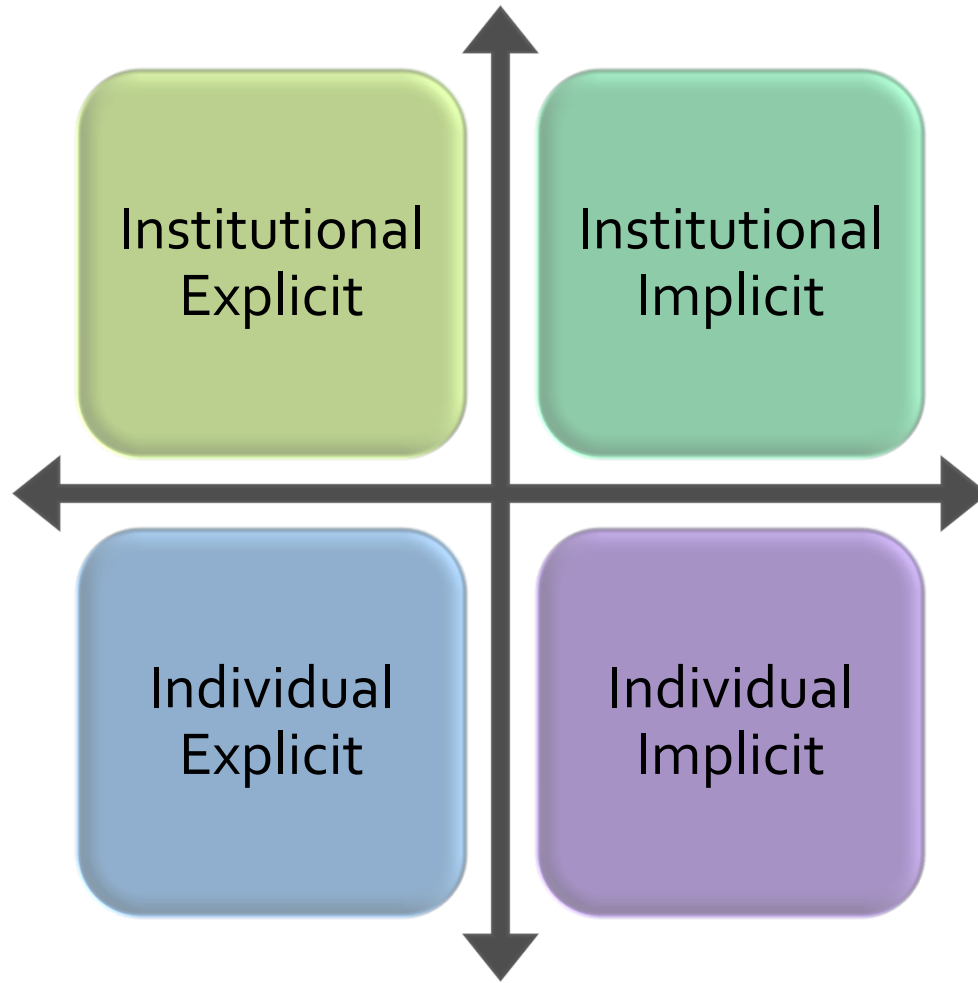




# What to do with bias?

- Suppressing or denying biased thoughts can actually increase prejudice rather than eradicate it.
- Openly acknowledging and challenging biases allows us to develop strategic interventions.





## Institutional / Explicit

*Policies which explicitly discriminate against a group.*

**Example:**

Police department refusing to hire people of color.

## Institutional / Implicit

*Policies that negatively impact one group unintentionally.*

**Example:**

Police department focusing on street-level drug arrests.

## Individual / Explicit

*Prejudice in action – discrimination.*

**Example:**

Police officer calling someone an ethnic slur while arresting them.

## Individual / Implicit

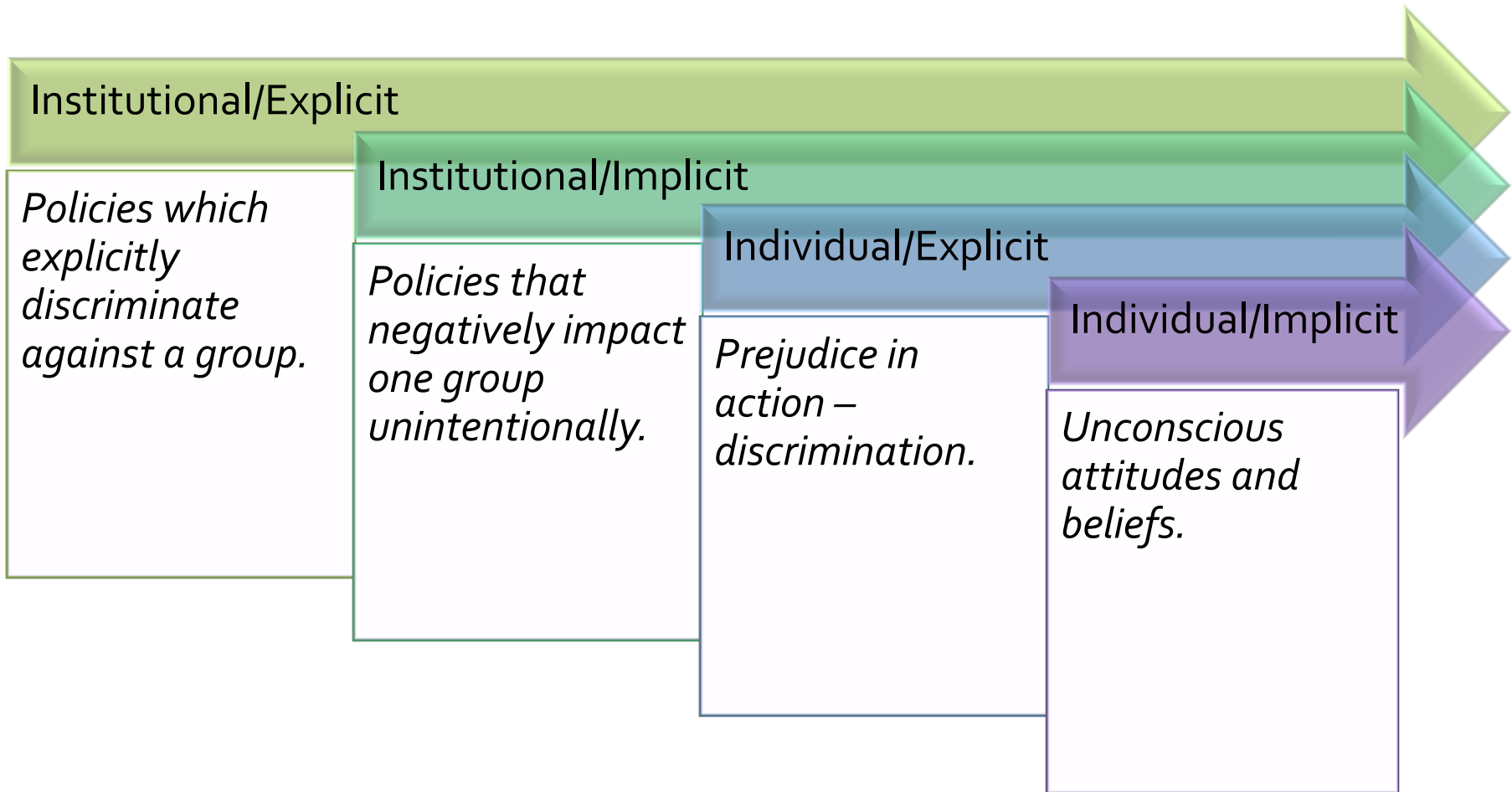
*Unconscious attitudes and beliefs.*

**Example:**

Police officer calling for back-up more often when stopping a person of color.



# Examples from your jurisdiction –



## Individual racism:

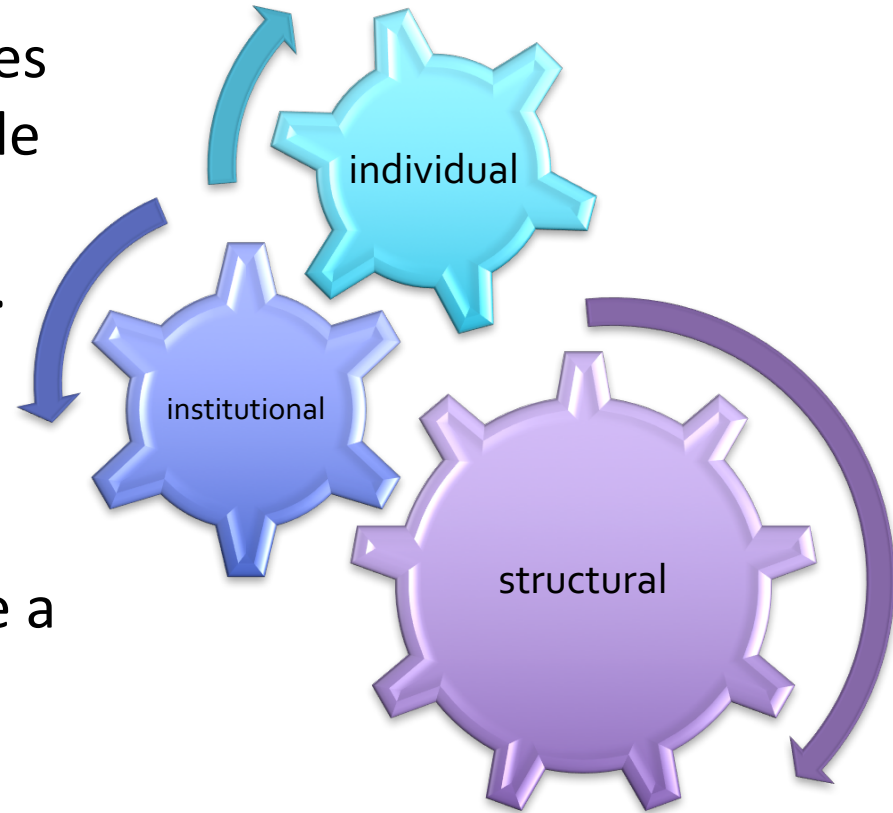
- Pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race.

## Institutional racism:

- Policies, practices and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color, often unintentionally or inadvertently.

## Structural racism:

- A history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.



# Scenario, part 1



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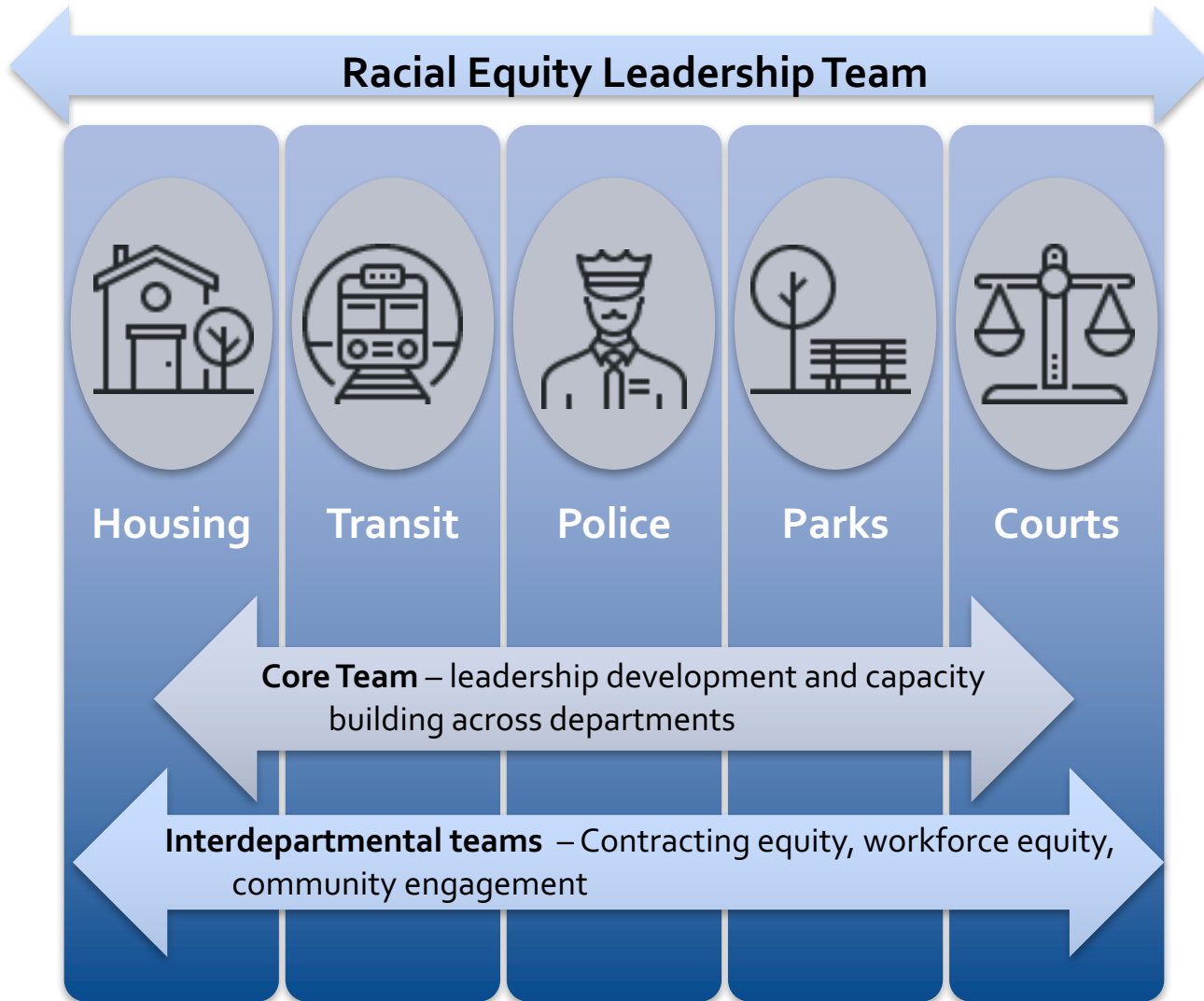
# Organizing



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**Accountability tools**

Accountability agreements

Departmental work plans

**Racial Equity Tools**

Institution-wide work plans



# Inside / Outside Strategies

Modes of community participation



## **Tend toward –**

Informal  
Local interest  
Voluntary  
Issue/identity focused  
Collective decision making

## **Tend toward –**

Formal  
Broad Interests  
Professional  
Geographic focus  
Hierarchical

# Operationalizing

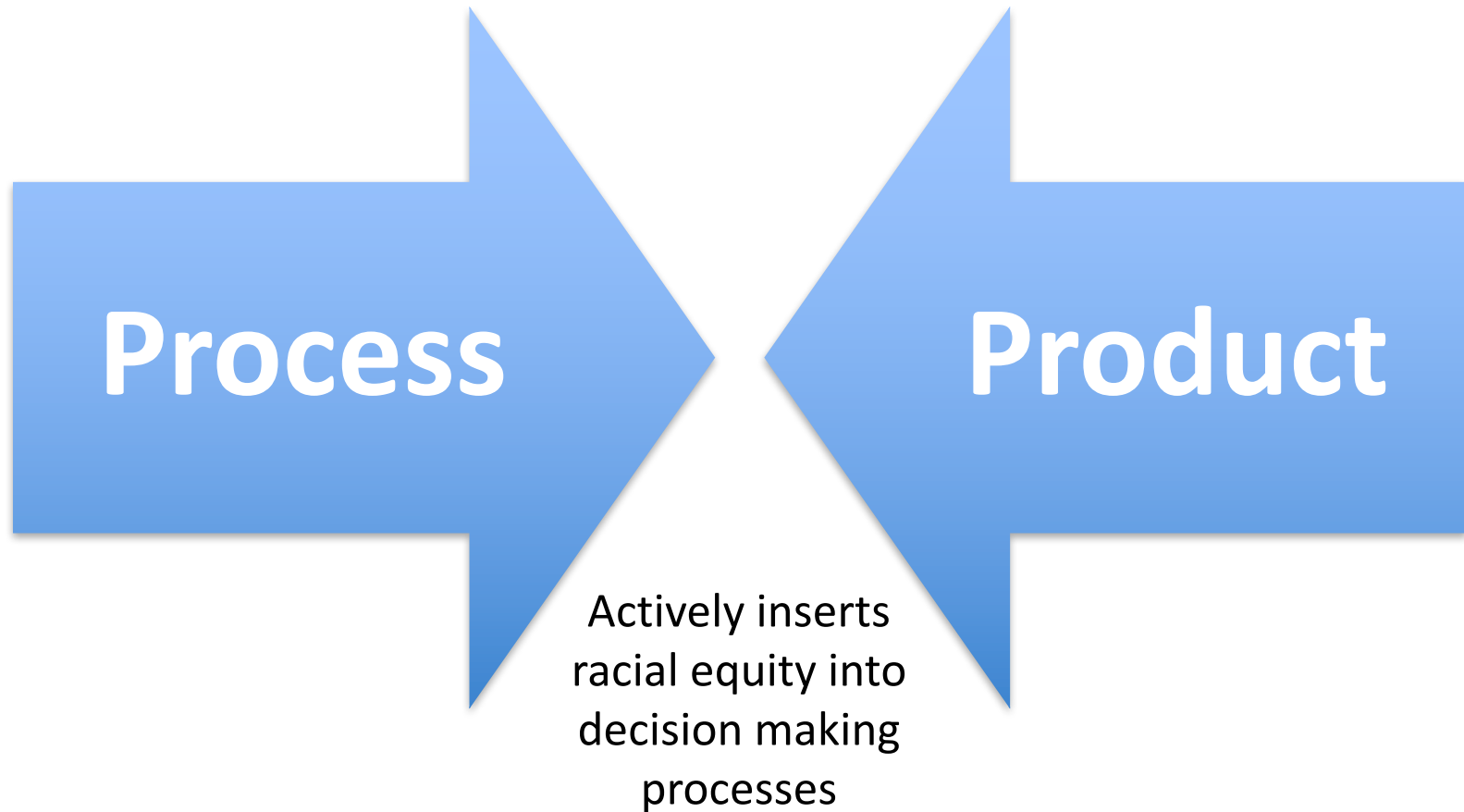


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# What is a Racial Equity Tool?



# What is a Racial Equity Tool process?



# Who should use a Racial Equity Tool?



Elected officials



Government staff



Community

# Scenario, part 2



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# Communicating Effectively on Race



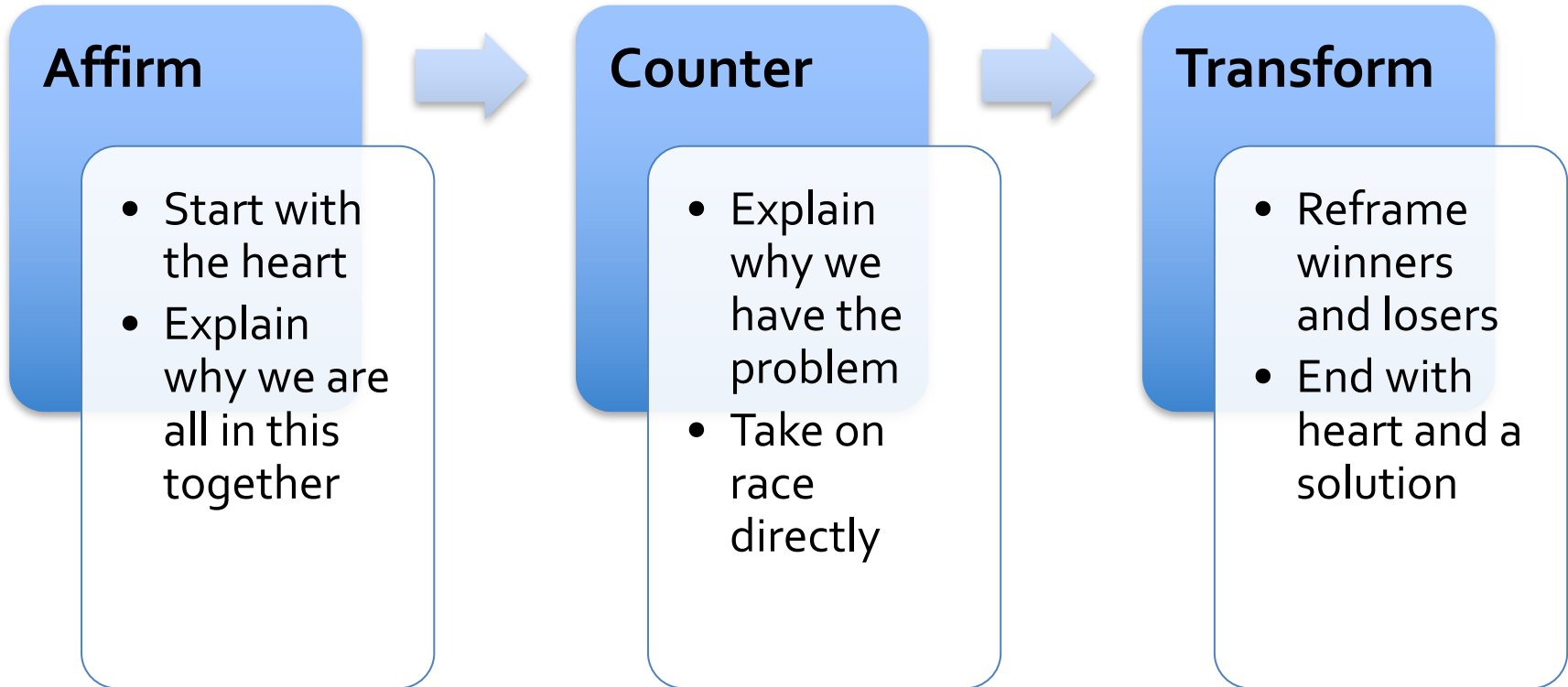
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# Communicating about race

It's more than just talk – ACT



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# Communicating about race:

## It's more than just talk – ACT

### Affirm

- Start with the heart
- Explain why we are all in this together

The health of our children, families, and loved ones depends on the environments in which we live

People of all races want to live in clean environments with decent housing, good jobs, and high-quality schools.



# Communicating about race:

## It's more than just talk – ACT

### Counter

- Explain why we have the problem
- Take on race directly

For decades, low-income communities of color have been the dumping grounds for environmental hazards.

Having access to neighborhoods that support success shouldn't be determined by your race.



# Communicating about race:

## It's more than just talk – ACT

### Transform

- Reframe winners and losers
- End with heart and a solution

Those that contaminate our environment need to be held accountable. For our collective good, we need to value the quality of all of our neighborhoods above the profits for a few.

Join me in supporting legislation that will bring accountability. Those that pollute need to pay their fair share so that all of us can have healthy environments in our communities.



# One more example:

## Affirm

- All our children deserve high quality, public education.

## Counter

- Currently, only about 60% of African-American, Latino and Native American students graduate from high school on time.
- Harsh, punitive discipline based on subjective infractions drive that outcome.

## Transform

- We need to remove the subjectivity from the policy and implement after-school programs that use a restorative justice approach to disciplinary challenges.
- These changes will benefit all of our children.



# Scenario, part 3



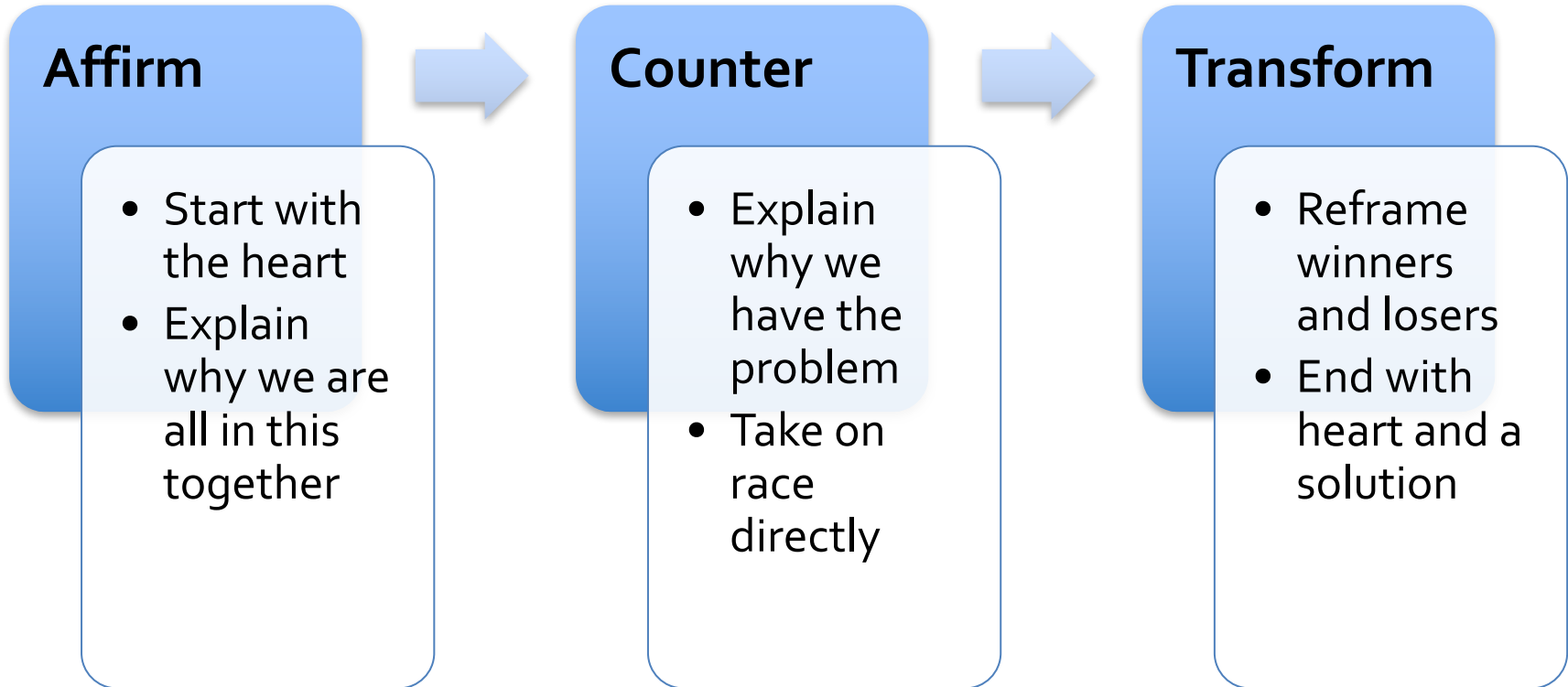
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# Communicating about race

It's more than just talk – ACT



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# Changing minds

- Most importantly, the best way to change attitudes is to change behavior.
- Attitudinal change tends to follow behavior change.
- Requires both short and long-term approaches.

# Roundtables



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# Next steps



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