DEMOCRACY RESILIENCE TOOLKIT

Prompts and Actions for Navigating Change and Sustaining Racial Equity

GARE
Government Alliance on Race & Equity

2025 EDITION

Scan to explore and add to the toolkit.

INTRODUCTION

Why We Made This

GARE has constructed this two-part Democracy Resilience Toolkit to prompt discussion and action on protecting racial equity in the face of political disruption. This two-part toolkit is also designed to collect and organize shared resources from across our network and allied organizations.

As a network of racial justice advocates, builders and believers, we know that equitable systems benefit everyone. Democratic values safeguard the rights and governing power of marginalized communities. We have come a long way in this work, and our hope is that this two-part toolkit will aid practitioners in sustaining systems that prioritize racial equity, bolster democracy, and secure progress for future generations.

How to Use This Toolkit

Divided into two parts, the Democracy Resilience Toolkit includes:

- Prompts and Actions Pocket Guide (this PDF) - A practical guide to help you identify and implement strategies that support resilience in your work.
- **Interactive Online Community Toolkit** (member-only) - A space for collaboration and ongoing learning with additional resources, opportunities for discussion, and updates on upcoming events designed to provide support and foster sense-making.

Gather with trusted colleagues to review the prompts and actions in this PDF pocket guide.Then explore and contribute to the participatory Online Community Toolkit. Your contributions and reflections will help to transform the Interactive Online Community Toolkit into a cornerstone repository for advancing the movement of racial equity with resilient processes leading the way. Not yet a GARE member? **Find out more about membership here.**

Aligning with FEMA's Disaster Management Framework

GARE's *Democracy Resilience Toolkit* draws inspiration from the FEMA Disaster Management Framework, because in times of uncertainty and significant disruption it is critical to stay focused and be strategic. This framework provides comprehensive guidelines for disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. It prioritizes the protection of communities by minimizing harm and facilitating effective action to increase safety. Similarly, GARE's *Democracy Resilience Toolkit* highlights key considerations to address through mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery in order to champion equity efforts in government systems. Both frameworks emphasize readiness, adaptability, and effective responses to unforeseen challenges. This underscores their shared commitment to assure stability and resilience.

CONTENTS

MITIGATION

Mitigation aims to eliminate or reduce the impact of a threat or challenge from creating long-term disruption to the advancement of racial equity. By anticipating resistance, government can prepare tools and communication plans to counter harmful narratives, build community support, and align partnerships around shared equity goals.

Risk Analysis

How can we evaluate the potential negative impacts of the situation/actions and advise leaders how to navigate the changing dynamics?

Conduct risk analysis of racial equity plans and initiatives to determine the most effective aims of focus.

Assess the infrastructure and staffing required to drive forward ongoing plans and initiatives.

Identify probable disruptions to racial equity work and assess for preventative or abative measures.

Aligning Strategies

How could we update our racial equity plan to navigate the changing dynamics of this current political environment?

Ensure that any name or brand changes keeps values-based language that serves racial equity.

Plan continued support while addressing inequities for vulnerable populations and targeted communities.

Back local businesses, organizations, and community efforts committed to equity mitigating federal disinvestment.

Early Warning Systems

How could we remain alert to potential challenges that can impact efforts, policies, and infrastructure of racial equity work in our jurisdiction?

Establish systems that monitor racial equity policy quakes at and between local, state, and regional levels.

Establish deeper ties at federal, regional, state, and local agencies to exchange information ahead of public news.

Use the GARE Online Community for local government network support, updates on research and local efforts.

Engaging the Community

How could we meaningfully engage with our communities to strengthen our coordination, collaboration, and collective resilience?

Educate communities and civil society on state and local laws that continue to empower equity work.

Leverage allies inside and outside of government.

Harness the narrative power at the community level.

GARE Practitioners: Explore resources related to **Mitigation** and share strategies with peers in the Online Community.

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PREPAREDNESS

Preparedness involves proactive measures such as training, strategic planning, and educational activities to equip individuals and organizations with the necessary tools and knowledge. These efforts will enable you to effectively respond to direct attacks, opposition, or disruptions that may threaten the continuity of racial equity efforts.

Funding & Resources

How can we protect and/or cultivate funding streams to sustain racial equity work?

Braid funds together to increase resilience from challenges by creating mutual benefit/interest.

Blend funds with external funders to champion the effort and create a matching incentive.

Ensure existing funding efforts are backed with data and community support to fend off challenges.

Readying Your Response Team

How could our jurisdiction create and best prepare a Rapid Response Team?

Ensure Rapid Response team is trained in effective competencies on jurisdiction threats and solutions.

Integrate racial equity lens into contingency planning processes to address targeted communities.

Engage in researched scenario planning to ensure the most harm reductive strategies are chosen.

Protecting Democratic Discourse

How can we work to ensure healthy and productive discourse across our jurisdiction and combat divisive misinformation and disinformation?

Assemble a Democratic Discourse team to effectively manage internal and external messaging campaigns.

Ensure the Democratic Discourse team works with experts and emerging research for debunking strategies.

Train jurisdiction staff on tiers of proactive and responsive debunking strategies for digital and interpersonal use.

Public Education Campaigns

How can we best prepare our local communities for unified action in the face of racial equity challenges and disruptions?

Share clear goals that will teach your community to be unified responders to racial equity disruptions.

Share training for the community to attend and lead for greater organization on probable response needs.

Unite with local businesses, schools and community organizations to coordinate preparedness efforts.

GARE Practitioners: Explore resources related to **Preparedness.** and share strategies with peers in the Online Community.

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RESPONSE

Response emphasizes the importance of actively addressing disruptions to racial equity initiatives with well thought out planning, decisive action, and a commitment to the underlying principles of fairness and inclusion. By concentrating on both immediate actions and long-term solutions, local, regional, and state governments can not only overcome challenges but also reinforce and solidify the foundation of their racial equity initiatives.

Disruption to Racial Equity Offices

How could a rapid response plan help to stabilize racial equity offices from threatening disruptions?

Share intergovernmental backed messages from a range of local offices to counter attacks.

Use a communication contingency plan for racial equity offices to shelter staff from individual attacks.

Use an operations contingency plan for staff to protect their anonymity while leading racial equity services.

Disruption to Racial Equity Services

How could a rapid response plan help to stabilize racial equity services from threatening disruptions?

Share intergovernmental backed messages on democratic commitment to providing just and fair aid.

Use communication contingency plan to ensure vulnerable citizens can find and maintain service.

Use an operations contingency plan for distribution of services through other local offices or branches.

Racial Equity Threats to Your Community

How could a rapid response plan help to stabilize racial equity related community needs from threatening disruptions?

Share intergovernmental backed messages on democratic commitment to civic and human rights.

Enact contingency plans that aid safe haven, sanctuary and lifeline interventions for targeted citizens.

Disperse information to citizens about permitted protest areas and procedures to aid their safety.

Legal Threats to Racial Equity

How could a rapid response plan help to stabilize racial equity affirming laws?

Share intergovernmental backed messages on democratic commitment to civil and constitutional rights.

Identify organizations that offer interpretation and analysis for threats that pose legal changes.

Identify legal experts willing to work with your general counsel.

GARE Practitioners: Explore resources related to **Response** and share strategies with peers in the Online Community.

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RECOVERY

Recovery involves establishing robust, flexible, and sustainable actions within government institutions that restore and revitalize its racial equity efforts. Such systems are essential not only for helping institutions rebuild after setbacks, but also for driving the continued advancement of long-term racial equity initiatives.

Recovery for Your Equity Office

What actions can we take to effectively recuperate our office after harmful racial equity disruptions?

Deploy a wellness plan that includes employee assistance, counseling services, and integrative feedback.

Conduct impact/needs assessments to help guide a restructuring of equity office/work.

Determine best structure, placement, and framing for sustainable redesign of equity office/work.

Recovery to Your Racial Equity Services

What actions can we take to effectively recuperate our services after harmful racial equity disruptions?

Use impact/needs assessments to identify operational and financial realities to guide a remodel.

Determine best locations for service and best channels for communication to meet community needs.

Collaborate with community to identify solutions and service adaptations and determine effective ways to integrate feedback.

Community Recovery Efforts

What actions can we take to effectively recuperate our community after racial equity disruptions?

Conduct impact/needs assessments to strategize how to most effectively provide aid and support.

Work with state, local, tribal, territorial, and neighborhood partners to distribute aid for the community.

Prioritize recovery efforts from immediate to long-term needs and allocate resources accordingly.

Additional Recovery Efforts

What supplemental actions could we take to effectively mitigate against future racial equity disruptions?

Identify racial equity policies and practices that should be codified into law for long term protection.

Determine other policy safeguards that can be instated to protect offices, services, and communities.

Use base-building strategies with community and partners to strengthen intersectional supports and care.

GARE Practitioners: Explore resources related to **Recovery** and share strategies with peers in the Online Community.

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ALLIES & RESOURCES

Please explore these allied organizations and strategic partners that are galvanizing to protect the work of racial equity for government practitioners and the communities they serve.

ACLU: Firewall for Freedom | www.aclu.org/documents/firewall-for-freedom
ACLU's Firewall for Freedom defends our fundamental rights using a principled playbook, which covers reproductive rights, immigration, free speech, and more to uphold our rights in the states where we live.

Alliance To Reclaim Our Schools | www.reclaimourschools.org
AROS is a coalition of networks of labor unions and community organizations advancing education justice.

Democracy 2025 | www.democracy2025.org
Democracy 2025 is a coalition of 350+ organizations representing millions of people, committed to disrupting any efforts by the Trump-Vance administration to attack our rights, our freedoms, and our democracy through strategic legal action in courtrooms and communities across the country.

Democracy Forward | www.democracyforward.org
Democracy Forward is a national legal organization that advances democracy and social progress through litigation, policy and public education, and regulatory engagement.

Federal Initiative to Govern for Racial Equity (FIRE) | www.bit.ly/the-fire-we-face
FIRE, a sister program to GARE at Race Forward, works to support and advance racial equity in public administration at the federal level. FIRE's newsletter, *The FIRE We Face,* offers insights on protecting democracy, racial equity, and public service in the face of systemic threats.

HEAL Together | www.healtogether.org
HEAL Together is a national school district organizing initiative and a sister program to GARE at Race Forward.

In The Public Interest | www.inthepublicinterest.org
In the Public Interest is a national nonprofit research and policy organization that studies public goods and services. They help community organizations, advocacy groups, public officials, researchers, and the general public understand how the privatization of public goods impacts service quality, democracy, equity, and government budgets.

Lawyer's Committee on Civil and Human Rights | www.lawyerscommittee.org
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, founded in 1963 at President Kennedy's request, mobilizes legal advocacy for racial justice. It fights in and out of court to ensure Black people and communities of color have voice, opportunity and power, leveraging resources for litigation, policy, and advocacy.

Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights | www.civilrights.org
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of 240+ national organizations, has fought for civil rights for nearly 75 years. It has led national advocacy for every major civil rights law since 1957.

National Association of State and Territorial Aids Directors (NASTAD) | www.nastad.org
NASTAD works to advance the health and dignity of people living with and impacted by HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, and intersecting epidemics through public health and community partnerships.

www.racialequityalliance.org

ALLIES & RESOURCES

Othering and Belonging Institute | www.belonging.berkeley.edu
The Othering and Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley advances groundbreaking approaches to transforming structural marginalization and inequality.

Partnership for the Future of Learning | www.futureforlearning.org
Partnership for the Future of Learning is a network of individuals and organizations advancing a shared vision for the future of learning and an equitable, racially just, and democratic public education system.

Partnership for Public Service | www.ourpublicservice.org
The Partnership advocates for critically-needed system reforms, supports federal leaders and institutions as they respond to the challenges of the moment, and encourages congressional oversight and legislative action to improve federal workforce management.

People's Action | www.peoplesaction.org
People's Action builds the power of poor and working people, in rural, suburban, and urban areas to win change through issue campaigns and elections.

People's Action Institute | www.peoplesaction.org
People's Action Institute engages in issue campaigns, public education and training to advance a long-term agenda for racial economic and gender justice.

Popular Democracy | www.populardemocracy.org
Popular Democracy is a national network of community organizing groups advancing transformational change for Black, brown and low-income communities, with the aim of forging a representative, multiracial government and society where we all thrive.

Protect Democracy | www.protectdemocracy.org
Protect Democracy is a nonprofit group dedicated to defeating the authoritarian threat, building more resilient democratic institutions, and protecting our freedom and liberal democracy.

Public School Strong | www.publicschoolstrong.org
Public School Strong unites educators, students, parents, families and community stakeholders to protect student and public education at the local, state and federal level.

Race Forward | www.raceforward.org
Race Forward is a national organization that support communities and public institutions to achieve a just multiracial democratic society through governance that advances racial justice.

State of Equity | www.stateofequity.phi.org
State of Equity is a small non-profit team helping to build a state, nation, and world that advances racial justice and health equity in our communities.

Urban Institute | www.urban.org
Urban Institute believes data and evidence are essential to shaping a more inclusive, equitable, and just society.

Western States Center | www.westernstatescenter.org
Through a prism of race, gender, justice and equity, Western States Center works with communities and organizations to build movements, develop leaders, shift culture, and defend democracy.

www.racialequityalliance.org

Safeguarding the Long Game

We designed the *Democracy Resilience Toolkit* to help our network and government allies adopt a "long game" approach. We want to help you take meaningful action now to safeguard racial equity work while embedding it into the fabric of government operations.

As we build upon it together, this toolkit will serve as a blueprint for creating a strong infrastructure that enables racial equity efforts to withstand disruptions and challenges. We hope that your engagement with this toolkit provides you with early support, insights, and the needed community to not only meet the moment, but redefine it and build it anew.

Racial equity and racial justice efforts have never been fleeting trends confined to a single office or a single administration. It has always involved holding public institutions accountable for their contributions to systemic inequities. Racial equity has always been the foundation to achieving liberation for the most marginalized. It is about building and designing systems that allow everyone to thrive with purpose and power. By sharing our collective knowledge, we rise and persevere together!

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Online Community

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GARE Events

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Resources and Tools

Contact Us

gare@raceforward.org

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