**Racial Equity Audit for Food Systems Networks**

This audit is meant to support food systems networks to understand their current position in centering equity and determine ways to be more intentional. Your network’s definition and understanding of equity and intersectionality will evolve, and this audit is a part of that journey. There are a variety of approaches to using this tool and your network can adapt this process so that it works well for your members and the culture of your network. If your group is in the early stages of this work, we recommend dedicating some time to your collective education, and using some of the tools designed for different stages of this continuum included in the “resource” prompts in this document. If you haven’t already, see [this page](https://foodsystemsleadershipnetwork.org/9760-2/) for background and guidance on how to use this document.

**Setting the Stage:**

Before getting started, please reflect on the structure and culture of your network by answering these questions.

* Who is completing this audit? How would you describe your personal identity and relationship to the network?
* What is the network’s intention in conducting this assessment at this time?
* What are your network’s values and how do they guide your work? See [this article](https://hbr.org/2018/04/how-to-establish-values-on-a-small-team) on developing shared values if you have not done that as a network.
* As you engage in these difficult conversations, what [group agreements](https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/groupagree) or community norms do you have to help navigate those? How can you address the inevitable challenging moments in a way that builds relationships, advances the network’s purpose and identity, and reduces harm for people of color?
* If you need support as you begin this process, contact the FSLN backbone team at [FSLNinfo@winrock.org](mailto:FSLNinfo@winrock.org).

**Notes:**

**What actions will you take based on the above section?**

**Network Priorities, Purpose, and Measuring Success**

**As you begin, reflect on the guiding statements, purpose, and priorities of the network. Operationalizing racial equity begins with an internal commitment that flows into all of the network’s activities.**

* Does your network have an agreed upon and clearly defined understanding of equity? If so, what is that definition?
* Describe (including demographics) the people or community that the network hopes to benefit:
* What are your network’s priorities?
* How are the priorities of the network determined? Consider:
  + Are network members involved in setting the network’s goals and priorities?
  + How were BIPOC members of the community involved in setting network priorities?
  + If they were not, how could they be included in the future?
  + What are your network's racial equity commitments?
* If the network doesn't have explicit racial equity goals or priorities, what actions could network leaders take to revise them?
* What is your network’s understanding of intersectionality (see [this article](https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination) for background)? If network leaders have not discussed intersectionality, how could you facilitate this discussion? If you need a reference for intersectionality, check out the resources!
* How is racial equity and intersectionality integrated into your activities and operations?
* Are there measures of success for the network that address racial equity? What are they?
  + If not, how could those be developed?

**Notes:**

**Actions based on this section:**

**Network Leaders and Membership**

**This section will prompt you to think about the makeup of network leadership, membership, and participants, and whether those are representative of the community most impacted by the network.**

* What racial/ethnic groups are most likely to be impacted by the network?
* What is the composition of network membership and participation? Summarize how Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) participate at each level of the network:
* Describe (including demographics) the group that is managing or leading the network:
* Is there a discrepancy in demographic representation between those who represent or speak on behalf of the network and those the network serves?
  + Yes/no
  + If yes, what steps could network leaders take to align the makeup of those the network serves and those who represent the network?
  + If there is no discrepancy, great! How can you maintain that balance?
* Was this initiative co-created with the people it is meant to serve?
  + Yes/no
  + If yes, how will they be able to shape the initiative going forward?
  + If no, what steps could network leaders take to involve the community in the future?
* How engaged are BIPOC leaders in network programs and activities?
  + Are participating BIPOC leaders truly representative of the community?
* Relationship building is a key priority for advancing racial equity. Describe the network’s approach to fostering interpersonal relationships between members.
  + Summarize how the network prioritizes building and maintaining relationships

**Notes:**

**Actions based on this section:**

**Network Operations and Communications**

**This section focuses on how racial equity shows up in network operations and communications. These prompts will guide you through considerations that will help increase alignment between your intentions and actual operations around your network’s racial equity work.**

* Does the network have established agreements on meeting facilitation and participation to ensure an equal voice in leadership and among network members?
  + Yes/no
  + If yes, is everyone aware of these agreements and do members use them?
  + If no, summarize how the network will explore equitable engagement and facilitation?
* Has the network explored which white supremacy cultural norms are embedded within network culture and processes such as activity design, selection of speakers/participants, etc.?
  + Yes/no
  + If yes, name the white supremacy norm(s) that came up and how you addressed them or how you plan to address them.
  + If no, how can the network commit to educating themselves about and addressing white supremacy culture?
* List the methods used to communicate with the network:
  + Does the network have an established process to decide how it communicates with its members? Were the members included in the design of the process?
* Does the network have a clear process of outreach and communication to engage members from historically disadvantaged communities?
  + Yes/no
  + If yes, explain the process for how this network responds to the specific needs of the historically disadvantaged communities. What is working well? What could the network do more of?
  + If no, how can the network develop an outreach and communications process?
* Has the network read or discussed any research (or invited those who have) on historic issues around race that exist within the member community?
  + Yes/no
  + If Yes, What did you learn?
  + If no, how can the network begin to understand the historical context of the community it serves?

**Notes:**

**Actions based on this section:**

**Power Dynamics**

**In this section, participants are encouraged to analyze both real and perceived power. Perceived power stems from the perceptions of the individual and the group; this type of power has the ability to influence decision making and behavior and is often subconscious. Within a network, perceived power may arise due to the role an individual is playing (facilitator, chair of a committee) or because of social factors such as age or education level.**

***Internal***

* Who holds decision making power in the network (i.e. staff, board members, stakeholders, funders, etc.)?
  + Is decision making distributed across different types of decisions regarding compensation, network priorities, allocating funds, etc.?

***External***

* What are some of the positive and negative outcomes of this network’s actions on marginalized communities and network members?
  + Positive outcomes:
  + Negative outcomes:
* Do your funders/funding sources align with the network in terms of goals and values?
  + If yes, how can you take advantage of that alignment to more deeply center equity in the network?
  + If no, how can you think about influencing funders’ goals and activities, or finding support from more aligned sources?
* How are program implementation responsibilities shared among network members and external partners?
* Is network engagement led and informed by the community?

**Notes:**

**Actions based on this section:**

**Accountability**

**In this section, you will be prompted to think about who you will share these audit findings with, and how. Accountability can be towards an external audience such as network members or funders, or internal considerations such as, the network's guiding statements or intentions.**

* Has this process changed your understanding of racial equity?
* Who are you going to report the findings of this audit to? How?
* Summarize how the findings from this audit will be shared and who you will share them with.
* What actions will the network take, or changes will it make, as a result of this process?
  + What aspect of these changes will be most difficult to make?
* How can you build the learnings and actions resulting from completing this audit into the network?
* Where does the network hope to be in its equity journey one year from now?
* Take a step back and reflect on your original intentions for this audit process.
  + Have you adhered to your original intention?
  + What responses did you notice in yourself? What can you learn from these responses?
  + If there have been multiple people going through this audit process, where have there been disagreement/differing answers and why?
  + Did anything unexpected come up when going through the audit process?

**Notes:**

**Actions based on this section:**

**Conclusion**

Thank you for committing to this process. We hope the questions and prompts above helped you to find new ways to center racial equity in your network. We encourage you to revisit these questions and update your responses as part of your regular planning process, perhaps on an annual basis. To integrate audit reflections into your work, review any notes and next steps listed above and identify a person(s) to take ownership of this process moving forward.

To share any feedback or ideas related to this audit or the process, contact us through the form at the bottom of [this page.](https://foodsystemsleadershipnetwork.org/9760-2/)

This audit and the guidance were developed by a group of Food Systems Leadership Network members, who met over a period of three months in 2021 to develop this audit prototype.

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**For more links and resources, see** [**this page**](https://foodsystemsleadershipnetwork.org/9760-2/) **on the Food Systems Leadership Network**



***About the Wallace Center***

[*The Wallace Center at Winrock International*](http://www.wallacecenter.org) *is a national nonprofit that brings together diverse people and ideas to co-create solutions that build healthy farms, equitable economies, and resilient food systems. Wallace has been a leader in the development of healthy regional food and farming systems for over 35 years, working to scale up the supply and positive environmental, social, and economic benefits of regional, sustainably produced food. We seek to affect systems change to bring benefits to the environment, to communities, and to the farmers and food businesses that are the building blocks of a healthy and equitable food system.*