**Eastside Pathways Equity Pledge (EPEP) FAQ**

“When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else.”

- Toni Morrison

**Q: How does the Eastside Pathways Equity Pledge (EPEP) and Continuum Introduction differ from, or go beyond the Eastside Pathways Partner Agreement or 2020-2023 Strategic Plan?**

**A:** The Partner Agreement is the commitment to work together collectively. The purpose of the Eastside Pathways Strategic Plan is to note the desired outcomes and outputs of our collective impact. It includes the 6 co-developed goals of the Partnership (below) and the resources necessary to sustainably move towards those goals. Of note, the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan was the first to include a racialized goal and the "Racial Equity Pathway" detailing the partnership's racial equity protocol.

The Eastside Pathways Equity Pledge (EPEP) and Continuum align our collective efforts towards systemic racial equity. Utilizing the five collective impact conditions that are already a part of Eastside Pathways Partnership, we're able to address systemic racial equity challenges through:

- **Common Agenda** - We align to a common goal to reduce harm and increase equity, and pair that with an understanding of current systems and structures, including the impacts of race and racism.

- **Shared Measurement** - The Continuum Introduction includes recommendations from leaders of color on where to begin your work (levers), paired with high-level examples of how your progress and process might be measured, and finally helps you hold the practice of equitable validation as the most effective form of assessment - centering those most impacted.

- **Mutually Reinforcing Activities** - Because these issues are systemic, it is the sum of the parts which create the community system. The levers presented in the Continuum Introduction, represent a year’s worth of work by leaders of color to identify systemic issues that show up in East King County across multiple dimensions including race, gender, etc. The levers are presented on the Continuum acknowledging that “equity is not a destination but rather a journey”.

- **Continuous Communication** - Communication allows collaboration and cross-sharing with others committed to racial equity through Eastside Pathways Collaborative Action Networks (CANS).

- **Backbone Support** - Ongoing support in the form of convening, facilitation, data support, and capacity building opportunities such as professional development, dialogs, healing spaces, etc.

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**2020-2023 Strategic Goals**

- Every child is ready to learn.
- Youth graduate from high school prepared for their post-secondary plan.
- Every young adult attains a post-secondary degree, training or certification and enters a career of their choice.
- Every child thrives in and out school.
- Every child and youth attains optimal mental, behavioral and physical health.
- Race does not determine outcomes for children and youth.

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**Racial Equity Pathway**

Identify, address and take steps to dismantle racial inequities in systems and practices that marginalize children, youth, young adults, and families.
Q: I already have an equity pledge. How might signing the Eastside Pathways Equity Pledge impact our statement?

A: One of Eastside Pathways core concepts is Targeted Universalism - do what uniquely works for you or your focus population(s) so that we can all make it to the desired outcome. That being said, the purpose and application of the EPEP isn’t to use a one-size fits all approach, rather it is to serve as a touch point to capture our shared commitment at a community level, as a collective.

Additionally by signing the Eastside Pathways Equity Pledge, Community and Organizational Eastside Pathways Partners are able to align with, and have shared ownership in, leading anti-racist activities in East King County.

Q: I already have an equity pledge. How might the Eastside Pathways Equity Pledge support existing efforts?

A: I doesn’t it is designed to act as a support. Eastside Pathways Partnership was developed using the Collective Impact model, which is designed to pull leaders and organizations out of isolation in order to tackle systemic issues. By participating in the Partnership and signing the EPEP, you have access to cross-organizational and cross-sector relationships and resources (see below), going beyond the scope of a single individual or organization. Of note, the Continuum provides a guide to implementing the pledge and how you can become more equitable, adaptive, inclusive, and accountable.

Q: I'm a Community (Individual) Partner. As an individual how shall I plan to do this work?

A: It starts with the "person". All Eastside Pathways Partners regardless of being affiliated with an organization or not, are asked to do the personal and interpersonal work to explore their racial identity and mental models as it relates to forms of oppression, racial oppression in particular. Additionally, each person is responsible for the roles they hold and the ways in which their actions either reinforce or disrupt the status quo.

“If I didn’t define myself for myself, I would be crushed into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive.”
- Audre Lorde

Q: Are organization’s Board of Directors, where applicable, required to review and/or sign the EPEP?

A: Aligned organizational authority is critical to leading and sustaining institutional change. All leadership positions, especially those with the responsibilities to oversee systems level issues, are encouraged to not only sign but be an integral part of the process and ongoing progress and measurement.
Q: For Organizational Partners, who should sign the Eastside Pathways Equity Pledge?

A: The process of signing and implementing the EPEP is an opportunity to work adaptively with your staff and community. The EPEP Continuum Introduction outlines the measurement of this adaptive process. For example, if your organization traditionally uses a top-down approach, expanding signers of the Pledge beyond Executive level, to include community members is evidence of inclusion.

See “Should each Organizational Partner's Board of Directors be required to review and/or sign the EP Equity Pledge?”

Q: I/we have participated in a lot of equity work, training, etc. How can I/we hold ourselves accountable to ensure we follow through? What does accountability look like?

A: Like many leadership positions, management of self, consistency, and "being a self-starter" are prized skills. These skills are early signs (indicators) of how successful interventions will be throughout the journey. We must be clear about who and what we are accountable for. In this case it is "reducing harm and increasing equity". By participating in ongoing measurement, using the Continuum, and leaning into 2-way relationships with "those most impacted" we can validate how effective our actions are towards that vision. It is of note that being aware of the losses and capacity for loss or change is also critical to increasing and sustaining anti-racist work.

"New adaptations significantly displace, re-regulate, and rearrange some old DNA. By analogy, leadership on adaptive challenges generates loss. Learning is often painful. One person's innovation can cause another person to feel incompetent, betrayed, or irrelevant." - The Theory Behind the Practice, Cambridge Leadership

"There is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal." - Toni Morrison

Q: Why does Eastside Pathways Partnership need an equity pledge?

A: While the Partnership holds goals related to the developmental ages and stages, race still plays a huge detrimental role, despite our values for equity and equality for all. These issues are not unique to our Partnership or in East King County. Across our country no matter where you look race also determines outcomes.

The EPEP serves as a pledge to our collective commitment outlining our shared understanding of the current state and includes leader's of color recommendations of what is needed to begin eliminating institutional and structural racism.

The Continuum, co-developed by leaders of color, answers the questions "but where do we begin?" and "how are we, the adults, working together differently to address systemic racism?". This individual and collective work will begin to chip away at these factors (levers) negatively impacting adults, especially adults of color, and ultimately by improving our ability to work together, we will begin to move the needle on "reducing harm and increasing equity".

Q: What if I or my organization agrees to begin the work or already doing equity work, but is not ready to sign the Eastside Pathways Equity Pledge right now?

A: Signing the pledge is a public statement of our collective racial equity work. It's also a mechanism for measuring and tracking which of Eastside Pathways Partners have an interest, or are currently engaging, in racial equity work. It does not determine if one should be leading equity work. We do however caution individuals or organization from leading this work without systems and cultural competency support.
**Q: What happens if we can’t sign the Eastside Pathways Equity Pledge?**

**A:** Signing the EPEP is not a requirement to participate in Eastside Pathways Partnership. However, as stated in the Partner Agreement, a commitment to developing and implementing racial equity interventions is required. Signing the EPEP is a prerequisite to participating in the Racial Equity Collaborative Action Network (CAN) where you will have the opportunity to work with other Partners committed to anti-racist work.

“In my culture, I believe we carry pain until we can reconcile with it through ceremony. Pain is not framed like a problem with a solution.” - Terese Marie Mailhot, Heart Berries: A Memoir

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**Q: How should, or might, the Continuum Introduction be used?**

**A:** When read from left to right, the EPEP Continuum provides a way to measure the depth and efficacy of efforts made to date. Points of measurement are defined as Stagnant, Programmatic, Systemic and ultimately North Star. The Backbone and Data Council will provide data support to track the process and progress of the Partnership as it relates to the strategic goal that “race no longer determines outcome in East King County”. The Continuum is not intended to take the place of listening to, collaborating with, or being accountable to “those most impacted”. We strongly encourage, as stated in the EPEP, you address and assess all forms of racism (personal, interpersonal, structural and institutional) before and throughout the journey. Without doing so, may cause harm and that harm is over-represented and cumulative in people of color. Also note the importance of consensual participation. The lack of representation at “a table”, often exemplified by the use of the word “they”, is a data point indicating a relationship with that person(s) is missing. This should be seen as a reciprocal opportunity for reparation, healing, and relationship building, not a forcing function to make people participate.

“The process of empowerment cannot be simplistically defined in accordance with our own particular class interests. We must learn to lift as we climb.” - Angela Davis

“Definitions belong to the definers, not the defined.” - Toni Morrison