

## Eastside Pathways Equity Pledge (EPEP) Backstory - Project Manager

In my role, as a Community Impact Manager, and as multi-racial woman I am committed to racial healing and systemic change for all. I firmly believe that no matter how you slice it race and racism must always be a part of the dialog in these rooms so that “race no longer determines outcomes” - 2020-2023 EP Strategic Plan.

When we talk about race there are two major themes that come up along the racial divide, locally and at the national level. “We care and really want to do something about it” and “I can’t carry the burden of educating people on racism, while experiencing it myself every day and trying to fill in the gaps to serve youth of color”. When we turn our gaze to parents and youth of color we hear loud and clear that we have to do something about the issues that have already been lifted up before we ask for more – more surveys, more forums, more patience, etc.

After the murder of George Floyd in 2020 that divide came to a head. Leaders of color, Black leaders in particular, said no more. No more patience – we want justice now. No more extraction – we need to heal. No more excuses – we demand change now. So, we had to start somewhere. We set aside productivity and opened our doors to leaders of color to process, support and heal one another. With the permission of these courageous leaders we were able to capture the themes, systemic issues, that they were experiencing in their roles. The leaders were compensated for their time and their participation has been anonymous to protect them from further harm.

With the support of a group of leaders, the EPEP Taskforce, representing many organizational positions, gender and racial groups we were able synthesize those stories into an action plan and formal acknowledgment of the reality we are all facing today. It is my honor to present to you the Eastside Pathways Equity Pledge and Continuum. My ask is that you honor the people, your fellow community members, by taking action. We no longer need to ask “but what do I do?” or “where do I start”. We no longer need to rely upon leaders of color to educate us on the historical context and can begin to partner on developing and implementing solutions.



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