

Ideas for Centering Racial Equity in TDC Pilot Projects

The following ideas are sorted into categories that could be pursued to center racial equity in TDC Pilot projects. Within each category there are options presented that we would typically consider short-, mid-, or long-term tasks, though the time commitment will vary depending on the context. Short-term tasks are not always easy, as the first conversation and the first step can be the hardest. Each category of tasks requires time, capacity, and work. AISP partners are available to support your work on any of these items or in developing other ideas specific to your context (contact sharonzanti@gmail.com). Like [A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration](#), these topics are organized across the data life cycle, with considerations during planning, data collection, data access, use of algorithms and statistical tools, analysis, and reporting and dissemination.

Planning:

Project Framing

- **Short-term:** Incorporate federal TANF history into project framing and presentation of findings (can draw on slides and resources from TDC Equity Webinar).
- **Mid-term:** Spend time researching and documenting changes in state and/or local TANF policy and their implications for racial equity in TANF administration. Incorporate this information into project framing and presentation of findings. Complete this research for the federal/state/local UI system as well.
- **Long-term:** Work with TANF leadership to incorporate this information into agency-wide training, onboarding, etc.

Engagement with Working Partners and Community Collaborators

- **Short-term:** Engage staff who work with TANF clients regularly and with whom you have existing relationships (e.g., public assistance caseworkers, employment and training staff, etc.) regarding findings from TDC pilot project and informing follow-up questions for analysis.
- **Mid-term:** Leverage existing forums to consult more broadly with advocates, community/neighborhood organizations, providers, and/or clients with lived experience about the role of race and racism in TANF, research questions that would most benefit TANF recipients, etc. Always be sure to be upfront about the options that potentially available for research, policy change, and action so that partners and collaborators know that their input has the power.
- **Long-term:**
 - Identify new potential partners and collaborators (advocates, community/neighborhood organizations, providers, and/or clients with lived experience) along with new and accessible ways for convening them (get creative!).
 - Establish a process for including partners and collaborators as part of research/analysis projects ([community participatory action research](#)).

- Search and apply for funding to support authentic engagement on this or future analysis projects.

Data Collection:

- Short-term: Identify ways that race and ethnicity data could be improved and what steps would need to happen to get there – e.g., is there a lot of missing data? Data entry errors? What percent of clients have missing race and ethnicity data? What are the implications of these gaps for analytic projects? Is there an opportunity to integrate race and ethnicity data from another source that would improve data quality?
- Mid-term: Speak with leadership/administrators about the importance of improving data collection and your recommendations for how this could be achieved.
- Long-term: Work with leadership/administrators to devise and carry out a plan to improve race and ethnicity data collection and/or incorporate quality data from other sources.

Data Access:

- Short-term: Reflect upon data access. Take an inventory of data access opportunities for TANF and related data points. Possible questions for reflection: Are there established data access processes? Are they publicly available and communicated clearly? Are there different access points for government employees, university-based researchers, community members and advocacy groups? Should there be?
- Mid-term: Reflect upon open data holdings. Review metadata (data that provides information about other data, e.g., date the data was created, the author, file sizes, geo location) for data assets that are most critical to equity-related analyses. Are there data assets that should be made open, aggregated at an agreed upon level? Would these open data support action and benefit clients?
- Long-term: Work with executive leadership and relevant partners and collaborators to think through current and potential data sharing and integration practices that would benefit clients, particularly Black, Indigenous, and communities of color. What are the benefits of broader access? What are the risks? What would it take to change practice to support positive impact?

Use of Algorithms & Statistical Tools:

- Short-term: Determine if there are current or plans for future use of algorithms or statistical tools in your work.
- Mid-term: Evaluate your current or proposed use according to the [five guidelines from Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency in Machine Learning \(FAT-ML\)](#).
- Long-term: In collaboration with a variety of partners and collaborators, co-create a [Social Impact Statement](#), that describes how these five guidelines (or others relevant to your context) will be operationalized in practice prior to any use of algorithms for decision-making.

Data Analysis

- Short-term: Disaggregate current/planned analyses with existing race and ethnicity data. What are the similarities/differences in client experiences across racial and ethnic groups? Are sanction rates higher for certain groups? [Even when sample sizes are small for certain groups](#), consider what could be learned from the disaggregated data and ways that additional data collection or evaluation projects could center the experiences of these groups.
- Mid-term: Assign someone working on the pilot project to be the lead on digging into race and ethnicity data, implications, new ways to center racial equity in data analysis, etc. Allow space for this person to work on this topic regularly and talk about ideas and insights with the rest of the team.
- Long-term: Incorporate spatial data into pilot project analyses along with contextual information about historical patterns of poverty, racism, redlining, and other structural policies that could add further insight to analytical results. Develop and execute plans to investigate the needs of TANF clients from smaller racial and ethnic subgroups who may be overshadowed in aggregate analyses.

Reporting & Dissemination:

- Short-term: Create a summary of the previous ways that findings have been reported and disseminated. Estimate the reach and impact of previous methods and approaches.
- Mid-term: Identify one output that should be broadly disseminated. First, building upon the work from the Planning stage, have this output (whether a report, brief, dashboard, etc.) reviewed by a variety of partners and collaborators to evaluate accessibility and impact. Use this feedback to improve the output prior to public dissemination.
- Long-term: Build support across the organization to think about reporting and dissemination in a different way. Create an expectation that all public facing data outputs should include a range of products that can be used to communicate findings across a wide variety of audiences, with attention paid to readability and accessibility.