

Using Data to Promote Equity and Empower Communities

Thursday morning, 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

All NNIP partners democratize information – particularly to help people that have not traditionally had access to data to understand neighborhood conditions and participate in decisionmaking. Partners also commit to focusing on using information to build the capacities of institutions and residents in distressed neighborhoods. This shared mission aligns well with the conversation about equity that is gaining momentum in more communities, but as a network we do not often discuss what this looks like in practice. This panel explores the role of data and our NNIP partner organizations in furthering equity and social justice. Partners often prepare presentations and reports that document inequities by race, income, and place. After publishing the data and analyses, partners' roles vary depending on their organization's mission and local political and institutional environment. Whatever strategy employed, all partners want to be more effective making information accessible to organizations advocating for equity and implementing strategies to improve opportunities for all.

The purpose of this session is to discuss how partners advance equity in their communities through direct and indirect strategies and how we can be more reflective about diversity issues in our analysis and community engagement.

The panelists will share introductory thoughts for about 20 minutes, followed by about 15 minutes of moderated discussion.

- *Kilolo Kijakazi*, Urban Institute fellow, will moderate the panel and share how Urban is putting a greater emphasis on diversity and inclusion in its research.
- *Matias Valenzuela*, the director of King County's Office of Equity and Social Justice will describe their work to embed equity in government operations, including their strategies to change internal relationships and organizational structures.
- *Steve Spiker* from Urban Strategies Council in Oakland will discuss how being explicit and intentional about social justice affects the Council's strategies and activities.
- *Seema Iyer* will explain Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance's approach to working with low-income communities and other organizations to (re)raise awareness of how neighborhood disparities lie at the heart of injustice and inequity in Baltimore.

The remainder of the session will consist of plenary questions (15 minutes); table talk (20 minutes); and reporting out (15 minutes). The group discussion will not be live-streamed.

Discussion:

- How do partners balance being a neutral data provider with supporting increasing equity in their communities?
- How have partners played different roles in successfully advancing equity?
- How can we be more thoughtful about describing the conditions in neighborhoods, including acknowledging historic and structural forces?

Table Discussion:

- Do you have an example of a project in which your organization explicitly considered equity?
- Do you have an example of a missed opportunity where equity has not been featured but should have been?
- Share ideas about potential ways your organization could be more deliberate about equity in your work and any hurdles to putting them into practice.

Guest Speaker Biographies

Kilolo Kijakazi, Ph.D., is an Institute fellow at the Urban Institute, where she works with staff to develop collaborative partnerships with those who represent those most affected by the economic and social issues Urban addresses, expand and strengthen Urban's rigorous research agenda on issues affecting these communities, effectively communicate the findings of Urban's research to diverse audiences, and recruit and retain more diverse research staff. Before joining Urban, Kijakazi was a program officer at the Ford Foundation, focusing on building economic security for working families and on incorporating the expertise of people of color into all aspects of the work. Kijakazi holds a B.S. from the State University of New York at Binghamton, an M.S.W. from Howard University, and a Ph.D. in public policy from George Washington University.

Matias Valenzuela, Ph.D., is the Director of the Office of Equity and Social Justice in King County, a countywide effort to address the root causes of inequities working with all county agencies and the community. Previously he worked for 14 years in Public Health Seattle & King County, collaborating with local organizations and residents to advance the public's health. His areas of expertise include policy and program planning, community engagement and development, evaluation, language access, grant writing, communication and media advocacy, and of course equity. Early in his career, he worked as a print and broadcast journalist in the United States and abroad. He has taught as a Fulbright professor in Nicaragua, and he is an Affiliate Assistant Professor at the University of Washington's School of Public Health and Community Medicine.

Resources from speakers

Baltimore: What Happened in Baltimore and What Can We Do? A Neighborhood's Perspective <http://bniajfi.org/2016/01/07/what-happened-in-baltimore-and-what-can-we-do-a-neighborhoods-perspective/>

Baltimore: Understanding Neighborhood Context #OneBaltimore
<http://bniajfi.org/2015/05/04/freddie-gray-the-integration-of-bnia-jfi-data/>

King County: Office of Equity and Social Justice, <http://www.kingcounty.gov/equity>

Oakland: Urban Strategies Council Equity Framework
<https://urbanstrategies.org/about/equity/>

Oakland: From Theory to Practice: Three Lessons on Equity and Collective Impact (blog), <https://www.livingcities.org/blog/821-from-theory-to-practice-three-lessons-on-equity-and-collective-impact>

Urban Institute: To talk about structural racism, we have to talk about white privilege
<http://www.urban.org/urban-wire/talk-about-structural-racism-we-have-talk-about-white-privilege>

Urban Institute: Inequality and Mobility Initiative
<http://www.urban.org/policy-centers/cross-center-initiatives/inequality-and-mobility>

Other selected NNIP resources

Boston: MAPC State of Equity Report
http://equity.regionalindicators.org/site_media/pdf/Equity-Report_12-14_150ppi.pdf

Denver: Regional Equity Atlas, <http://www.denverregionalequityatlas.org/>

Portland: Defining, Tracking, and Displaying Regional Equity Conditions: Two Approaches from the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Region
<http://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/sites/default/files/publications/meg.pdf>

Twin Cities: Moving Beyond the Gap: Racial Disparities in Four Twin Cities Neighborhoods
http://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/sites/default/files/publications/lisc_gap_reports.pdf

