



Pursuing Equity

A Free Learning Network and Action Community
on Equity and Racial Justice in Health Care

Request for Applications

January 2023 – June 2024

We gratefully acknowledge Founding
Supporter Genentech, a member of the
Roche Group, for its generous funding
support to the Pursuing Equity Learning
Network and Action Community.

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Introduction

We cannot have health care quality without equity. Inequities are systematic, avoidable, and unjust, and prevent us from achieving the missions of our institutions and from having a thriving health care workforce and community. Systemic racism and white supremacy culture is at the root of, and perpetuate, these inequities. Creating a health care system that is equitable for all will require radical change to the current system.

The [Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#) (IHI) has more than 30 years of experience utilizing improvement science to improve health and health care. We are committed to leveraging our unique skills and network of experts to push boundaries and improve equity and racial justice in partnership with health care organizations and communities.

By applying improvement methods and creating a collaborative network, we can start to push those boundaries. In 2017, IHI launched the first iteration of Pursuing Equity¹ and partnered with eight pioneer US health care systems to accelerate the role of health care in improving equity. During the two-year initiative, the eight teams made strides to embed a culture of equity by making health equity a strategic priority, facilitating conversations and actions to address structural racism, and testing numerous changes to improve equity in their systems and communities. In 2020, IHI launched the second iteration of Pursuing Equity, an 18-month initiative with teams from 22 health care organizations working to advance equity and racial justice in two project areas: one clinically focused, to close specific equity gaps, and one strategically focused, to impact culture or infrastructure.

IHI has highlighted key lessons and results from previous Pursuing Equity initiatives in several guidance documents and case studies.² Our aim now is to build on those lessons and expand Pursuing Equity to other like-minded health systems that are ready to do the tough, radical, and rewarding work within ourselves, in our teams, in our health systems, and in our communities. This is our collective challenge and opportunity to do better, to work differently, and to become liberated together at a critical time when a new light is being shed on injustices and the political landscape is ever-changing.

IHI's vision is that everyone has the best care and health possible.³ Achieving this vision requires a focus on improving equity and racial justice by dismantling white supremacy culture. The next iteration of Pursuing Equity (January 2023 to June 2024) will challenge and support a small group of health care organization teams to take bold strides through deep work, while a larger community will build the foundation for radical equity work. Engagement in Pursuing Equity will be free to participating teams selected through this request for applications (RFA) process, thanks to a grant from Genentech, a member of the Roche Group. We hope you and your team (3+ people from your organization who are passionate about equity) will join us in this free collaborative network to improve health equity and racial justice. Details regarding the RFA process, expectations for participating organizations, and support from IHI are provided below and on our website. As clear definitions and a shared understanding of language are critical to this work, we invite you to refer to our glossary on the last page.

Our Strategy

IHI Framework for Health Care Organizations to Achieve Health Equity

Achieving equitable care processes and outcomes requires an approach focused on action and learning. It is essential to address institutional structures, areas where health care systems have both direct influence and where they can support equity in the community. Articulated in the 2016 IHI White Paper, *Achieving Health Equity: A Guide for Health Care Organizations*,² and informed by the first two iterations of Pursuing Equity, our current theory of change for improving equity includes five components, described below.⁴

- **Make Health Equity a Strategic Priority**
Organizational leaders commit to improving health equity by including equity in the organization’s strategy and goals. Equity is viewed as mission critical – the mission, vision, and business cannot thrive without a focus on equity.
- **Build Infrastructure to Support Health Equity**
Operationalizing a health equity strategy requires dedicated resources, including human resources and data resources, as well as an organizational infrastructure.
- **Address the Multiple Determinants of Health**
Health care organizations must develop strategies to address the multiple determinants of health, including health care services, organizational policies, the organization’s physical environment, the socioeconomic statuses represented in the community, and healthy behaviors.
- **Eliminate Racism and Other Forms of Oppression**
Health care organizations must look at their systems, practices, and policies to assess where inequities are produced and where equity can be proactively created.
- **Partner with the Community to Improve Health Equity**
To support communities to reach their full health potential, health care organizations must work in partnership with community members with lived experience of inequities and with community-based organizations that are highly engaged with community members.



Our Approach

Pursuing Equity is designed to foster systemic action by health systems to achieve improvements in equity and become liberated in their racial justice efforts. There are two cohorts to choose from, the Learning Network or the Action Community, to provide participants at different stages of equity improvement with the targeted support they need. For both, the IHI team will provide the following types of support:

- Build community and trust among participating organizations;
- Maintain a communication system among participants to support rapid learning, connections, and relationship building with like-minded organizations;
- Engage leading subject matter experts in equity, racial justice, and improvement science to support participating organizations;
- Design and implement a messaging and dissemination plan to publicly highlight the learning and successes of participating organizations; and
- Leverage improvement methods and tools, plus IHI’s Achieving Health Equity Framework,⁴ Psychology of Change Framework,⁵ and Community of Solutions Model.⁶

The following table provides a high-level overview of the Learning Network and Action Community, and the subsequent sections describe both cohorts in more detail. After reviewing this document, if you have questions about which opportunity is the right fit for your organization please email us at pursuingequity@ihi.org.

	Learning Network	Action Community
Cost	Both are free to join thanks to a grant from Genentech, a member of the Roche Group (Participation fee is typically \$30,000 per team)	
Timeframe	Both will start in January 2023 and conclude in June 2024	
Estimated size	40 participating teams	10 participating teams
Goals	Teams will be equipped to bring tools, skills, and a deep understanding of equity and racial justice back to their organizations	Teams will have demonstrated an improved culture of equity and progressed on clinical equity improvement project(s)
Virtual and In-Person Supports	Regular learning- and discussion-based virtual meetings, as well as suggested activities to help bring concepts to life	Learning- and discussion-based virtual meetings, in-person Learning Sessions, virtual coaching sessions, racial justice affinity groups, and a leadership workgroup
Other Trainings	Both include participation in Racial Equity Institute’s (REI) virtual Groundwater Training on systemic racism, which will provide a foundation for the equity and anti-racism work in both cohorts. There will be an optional meet-up for all who attend the IHI Forum in December 2023.	
Application Process	Submit the online application and a letter of commitment from CEO by November 1, 2022	Submit the online application, a letter of commitment from CEO and Board Chair, and a video from your team by October 21, 2022

Learning Network

In the Pursuing Equity Learning Network, a large cohort of teams from across the nation will come together to learn the tools, build and practice the skills, and obtain a deep understanding of equity and racial justice to bring back to their organizations and communities, including:

- Understanding and acknowledging their organization’s racial justice history within the US context;
- Exploring the current state of their organization’s data with an equity lens;
- Identifying inequities in their system and ways to improve them; and
- Beginning a practice of being in deep relationship with one another.

These foundations will be built within regular learning- and discussion-based virtual meetings, as well as through suggested activities to help bring concepts to life. Participating teams will have the benefit of a large group of peers with whom to network, as well as opportunities for discussion, problem-solving, and relationship-building in small cohorts.

Activities	2023												2024					
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
REI Groundwater Training		X																
All-Team Virtual Meetings	X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X	
Group Coaching Virtual Meetings				X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X

All-Team Virtual Meetings

Every other month, teams will join a two-hour Zoom virtual meeting to hear from faculty and guest speakers, learn new tools, skills, and methods, and participate in action-oriented debriefs. The calls will also include time to practice and discuss in small groups, as well as provide suggested activities to try at your organization after the call.

Group Coaching Calls

The Learning Network will be split into smaller cohorts of 4 to 5 teams based on various factors including, but not limited to, regional distribution, population, and organization type and size. Cohorts will meet every other month, on months that the All-Teams Calls are not occurring, for 60 minutes to receive coaching, develop goals and aims, and share and further learning.

Expected Outcomes for Participating Teams

The Learning Network is designed to help participating teams build the infrastructure to advance equity across their systems and move toward improved results for clinical equity areas of their choice. While 18 months may not be enough time to produce dramatic equity-related changes across the systems, we anticipate Learning Network teams will achieve progress on the milestones listed below. Specific progress on these milestones will differ across the Learning Network depending on where an organization is on their equity journey and their active participation in the work.

- Develop a deeper understanding of and ability to acknowledge their organization's history related to racial justice
- Increase fluency for identifying structural equity issues across their organization
- Develop capacity and capability to apply an equity lens to their organization's data to better understand the current state and identify opportunities for improvement
- Identify one or more clinical areas with inequitable outcomes to focus their work
- Develop key aims to advance improvements in inequitable outcomes in a specific clinical area
- Identify a set (or portfolio) of projects to support equity-focused improvements in a specific clinical area

Expectations and Who Should Participate

Learning Network teams should comprise 3 to 7 individuals from your organization who are ready to improve equity and racial justice and commit to dismantling white supremacy culture. We recommend that your team includes members who have a lens on data, quality improvement, equity, and patient-facing care.

We expect teams in the Learning Network will commit to the following:

- Prioritize their attendance at Learning Network calls;
- Advance their understanding of and action to remediate racial inequities at multiple levels, from structural to personally-mediated, and commit to naming and addressing racism explicitly;
- Share learning transparently with others and formally reflect on their progress, challenges, and learning on a regular basis; and
- Demonstrate full leadership support of their efforts and time commitment via a written letter of support from the CEO and throughout their engagement in the Learning Network.

Action Community

In the Pursuing Equity Action Community, a small, close-knit cohort will come together to make progress on measurable clinical equity improvement projects and advance the culture of equity at their organizations, including:

- Improve outcomes in at least one clinical area;
- Routinely monitor stratified data;
- Practice racial justice framing and communication;
- Embody a clear understanding of white supremacy culture;
- Leverage community partnerships; and
- Design systems and processes for multiracial and multicultural groups experiencing inequities to positively impact their system.

These advancements will be supported throughout regular learning- and discussion-based virtual meetings, one virtual and two in-person Learning Sessions, coaching sessions, racial justice affinity groups, and a leadership workgroup. Additional opportunities for networking will be introduced throughout the Action Community. This small community will thrive on building relationships and trust, tracking progress and sharing data, sharing achievements, adapting ideas, group problem solving, and collective network building.

Activities	2023												2024					
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
REI Groundwater Training		X																
Kick-Off & Pre-Work	X	X																
1:1 Coaching Sessions		X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Learning Sessions			X*						X									X*
All-Team Calls					X		X		X		X		X		X		X	
Group Coaching Calls				X		X		X			X		X		X			
Racial Justice Affinity Groups			X*			X			X				X	X	X	X	X	X*
Leadership Workgroup				X		X		X			X		X		X			

* = In-person meeting (Boston, MA)

All-Team Calls

Every other month, teams will join a two-hour Zoom call to hear from faculty and guest speakers, learn new tools, skills, and methods, and participate in action-oriented debriefs. The calls will also include time to practice and discuss in small groups, as well as provide suggested activities to try at your organization after the call.

Group Coaching Calls

Action Community teams will join a one-hour call every other month to share learning, receive group coaching, problem-solve challenges, brainstorm solutions, and build community.

In-Person and Virtual Learning Sessions

Action Community teams will participate in 1 virtual and 2 in-person, three-day Learning Sessions. The in-person Learning Sessions will take place in Boston, MA.

1:1 Coaching Sessions

Coaching sessions will be offered to Action Community teams for one-to-one support on challenges they may face while pursuing radical equity and anti-racism work via their selected projects.

Racial Justice Affinity Groups

Individuals will join one of two Racial Justice Affinity Groups, where individuals who identify as persons of color and white individuals meet separately, to connect in deep discussion and personal practice of racial justice work (learn more [here](#)).

Leadership Workgroups

Executive and senior sponsor participation is paramount to the success of equity improvement and anti-racism work in health care organizations. Executive partners will be asked to join bi-monthly collaborative calls to discuss their participation in equity work at their organization, build a community of like-minded leaders, and brainstorm problem-solving solutions.

Expected Outcomes for Participating Teams

The Action Community is designed to help participating teams make progress on measurable clinical equity improvement projects and advance the culture of equity at their organizations.

While 18 months may not be enough time to produce dramatic equity-related changes across the systems, we anticipate Action Community teams to achieve progress on the milestones listed below. Specific progress on these milestones will differ across the Action Community

depending on where an organization is on their equity journey and their active participation in the work.

- Most participating organizations will see progress toward their desired clinical equity outcomes at the project level
- Some participating organizations will begin to see progress on process measures at the population level
- Some participating organizations will see greater results, such as going to scale with an intervention or demonstrating the ability to sustain improvements
- All participating organizations will have built the capacity to measure and move health equity results for the long haul, including a long-term plan to take their work to scale
- All participating organizations will demonstrate the capability to close equity gaps

Expectations and Who Should Participate

For participation in the Action Community, we are seeking health care organizations that have:

- The heart, motivation, and commitment to do radical racial justice and equity work;
- Recognized that racism and other intersecting forms of oppression are systems issues and that work is required at the personal, team, and institutional levels to eradicate them;
- Existing partnerships with community organizations, or the understanding that community partnership is a critical strategy and relationships need to be developed;
- Quality improvement (QI) knowledge and capability as evidenced by measurable results from previous QI initiatives; and
- Accessible and usable race, ethnicity, and preferred language (REAL) and sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data to measure progress toward their equity goals.

Teams should be multidisciplinary, comprising 3 to 7 people from your organization who are ready to improve equity and racial justice and commit to dismantling white supremacy culture. We recommend that your team composition includes members with a lens on quality improvement, equity, and patient-facing care. Consider executive leaders (e.g., chief health equity officer, chief medical officer, chief quality officer) as well as representatives from data departments, equity or Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) teams, clinicians, and frontline staff. Consider inviting representatives from existing community partnerships who can support your team's efforts throughout the initiative, if a deep, trusting relationship exists. IHI will support each team in engaging people with lived experience of inequities, such as patients of color, throughout their work. Please plan to compensate those patients for their time.

IHI expects that teams in the Action Community will:

- Participate in all meetings over the 18-month period, including regular virtual calls and

team travel to in-person Learning Sessions. Travel costs are covered by the participating organization. As a part of our community agreement, participants will arrange to be fully present during meetings. On-camera participation is expected in virtual settings to help foster relationships and connections;

- Join one of two Racial Justice Affinity Groups, a critical tool of a robust racial justice project where individuals who identify as persons of color and white individuals meet separately (please review more information [here](#));
- Share learning, challenges, and data transparently: submit updates outlining progress, challenges, and learning on a monthly basis, including sharing data on changes tested with other Action Community teams and with your team’s designated senior leader;
- Demonstrate full leadership support of their efforts and time commitment via a written letter of support from the CEO and the Board and throughout engagement in the Action Community;
- Identify one senior leader and one alternate senior leader to participate in bi-monthly leadership calls and to provide a written reply of their reflections on the team’s monthly updates;
- Commit to advancing their understanding of and action to remediate racial inequities at multiple levels, from structural to individually-mediated;
- Commit to naming and addressing racism explicitly;
- Contribute to dissemination to the field by being willing to share your work, challenges, learning, and successes (e.g., IHI blog posts, presentations, case studies, summary reports, media outlets); and
- Acknowledge that to do this radical, deep equity work well, it will feel uncomfortable at times. We will engage in deep, vulnerable conversations about systemic racism, and we expect all participants to willingly lean into this discomfort.

Fees and How to Join

The Pursuing Equity Learning Network and Action Community (January 2023 to June 2024) is being offered free of charge. We gratefully acknowledge Founding Supporter Genentech, a member of the Roche Group, for its generous funding support to the Pursuing Equity Learning Network and Action Community.

We encourage prospective teams to consider that while there are no financial fees, there is a “cost” to participate in terms of resources – both people’s time in Pursuing Equity activities and advancing the work outside of these activities. We recommend that teams come together weekly outside of Pursuing Equity activities to maintain momentum of their efforts. Teams that participate in the Action Community will engage with people lived experience of inequities, such as patients of color, and should plan to compensate them for their time. Finally, each participant

will be expected to “give” a lot as they put themselves out there, be vulnerable, and prioritize for whom we are doing this important work.

Another cost to consider is that team travel to the Action Community’s in-person Learning Sessions will be covered by the participating organization.

To apply for the Pursuing Equity Learning Network or Action Community please follow the steps below. You can access all related documents on [our website](#).

1. Review the criteria, expectations, and commitments to see if your team is eligible and would be successful in participating.
2. Attend an informational call on **Wednesday, September 21, 2022 (3-4 PM ET)** ([Zoom Registration Link](#)) to learn more and ask questions. If you cannot attend, we will post a recording of the call on our website.
3. To apply, fill out [the online application](#) and indicate if you are interested in joining the Action Community or the Learning Network cohort. Note: If you apply for the Action Community and are not selected, your team will be automatically considered for participation in the Learning Network. More details about dates and additional requirements for each opportunity are outlined below.

Learning Network Application

To apply for the Learning Network, submit two items to pursuingequity@ihi.org by **November 1, 2022**:

1. Completed [online application](#)
2. A letter of commitment signed by your CEO

IHI is looking for teams that have demonstrated some initial equity work and that have leadership and infrastructure support for their work in the Learning Network. The intent is for the Learning Network to encompass a diverse range of organization types and populations served. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through November 1, and you can expect a response from IHI within 30 days of the date your application is received.

Action Community Application

To apply for the Action Community, submit three items to pursuingequity@ihi.org by **October 21, 2022**:

1. Completed [online application](#)
2. A short 5- to 15-minute video (as described below)
3. A letter of commitment signed by your CEO and your Board Chair

The IHI team will review your video and application materials and contact your team by December 5, 2022, with either an invitation to join the Action Community or with feedback and an offer to join the Learning Network.

IHI is seeking Action Community submissions that demonstrate enthusiasm and radical hope for the work and an understanding and acknowledgement of systemic racism. We are not looking for perfectly articulated answers! We are looking for people who genuinely care about racial injustice. It is important for leaders to demonstrate their commitment to this work and setting their teams up for success.

Action Community Application: Team Video

Action Community applications must be accompanied by a short video prepared by your team. We want to make sure that your entire organization, not just one person filling out an application, is ready for this work. Gather your whole team, including an executive leader, in person or on a Zoom call, and create a 5- to 15-minute video that addresses the items in the bulleted list below. We are not expecting anything fancy in terms of video production quality.

The video must include these items:

- Introductions: Share your organization name, type, and location; each individual shares their preferred name, pronouns, racial and ethnic identity (and which Racial Justice Affinity Group you would join – learn more [here](#)), and role.
- Leader: How do you plan to support the team and how actively involved will you be in the team's work?
- Why does now feel like the right time to join this effort?
- Who are you doing this work for? How do you define community?

Choose 2 to 3 additional questions to address in the video:

- Why are you committed to being in a more radical experience together to address inequities, one with an explicit focus on dismantling racism?
- Share a quote that represents your commitment to equity and racial justice, either on a personal level or an organizational level.
- Share an example of where you see systemic racism operating in your organization.
- How do you define racism?
- How does your lived experience of your racial and social identities impact your understanding of health and public health?

[Watch IHI's example video](#) to get to know us and get a sense of what your organization's video might look like.

Contact

If you have any questions, please email:

pursuingequity@ihi.org

Pursuing Equity Learning Network and Action Community: Request for Applications (January 2023 – June 2024)

More information is available on our website:

<https://www.ihl.org/Engage/Initiatives/Pursuing-Equity/Pages/default.aspx>

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Health Equity	Health equity is achieved when every person has the opportunity to attain their full health potential. It means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care. It also requires creating opportunity proactively.
Health Inequity	Differences in health outcomes that are systematic, avoidable, and unjust. Inequities are created when barriers prevent individuals and communities from accessing conditions for well-being.
Racial Justice	The creation and proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes, and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, and outcomes for all people, regardless of race.
Racism	A system of advantage and disadvantage based on race, grounded in the presumed superiority of the white race, where we see differential distribution of goods, services, and opportunity based on race. It operates at individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels.
Internalized Racism	The set of private beliefs, prejudices, and ideas that individuals have about the superiority of whites and the inferiority of people of color. Among people of color, it manifests as internalized racial oppression. Among whites, it manifests as internalized racial superiority.
Interpersonal Racism	The expression of racism between individuals. These are interactions occurring between individuals that often take place in the form of harassing, racial slurs, or telling of racial jokes.
Institutional Racism	Discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and practices, and inequitable opportunities and impacts within organizations and institutions, based on race.
Structural Racism	Racial bias across institutions and society over time. It’s the cumulative and compounded effects of an array of factors such as public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms that work in various, often reinforcing, ways to perpetuate racial inequity.
Systemic Racism	The ways in which interlocking systems create advantage for white populations and disadvantage for communities of color. It is the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal – that routinely advantage whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. It is a system of hierarchy and inequity, characterized by white supremacy – preferential treatment, advantage, and power for white people at the expense of people of color. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic, and political systems in which we all exist, dimensions which endure and adapt over time.

<p>White Supremacy Culture</p>	<p>White supremacy culture is the widespread, historically based, and institutionally perpetuated ideology baked into the beliefs, values, norms, and standards of our groups (many if not most of them), our communities, our towns, our states, our nation, teaching us both overtly and covertly that whiteness holds value, whiteness is value. White supremacy culture trains us all to internalize attitudes and behaviors that do not serve any of us. For instance, a belief that we can be perfect, or should be perfect, raises the questions: Who decides what perfect is? Why would we want to be perfect?</p> <p>Read more about the characteristics here: https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/characteristics.html</p>
<p>Oppression</p>	<p>Unjust use of power and authority.</p>
<p>People of Color</p>	<p>A political construct created by people of color to describe people who would generally not be categorized as white.</p>
<p>Liberation</p>	<p>Liberation is about working together in new ways that are self-reflective and rooted in history to address structural racism in health care – and to go beyond providing services, to our own personal roles as health care team members in dismantling oppression.</p>
<p>Racial Justice Affinity Groups</p>	<p>Racial justice affinity is where people of color (BIPOC, Global Majority, Bodies of Culture, etc.) and white participants (White Bodies) meet separately. BIPOC and white people have very different roles in racial justice work. The roles are informed by the ways in which racism and oppression have been internalized within these two groups. Thus, it is preferable that white people are directing to other white people during their discovery, understanding, and dismantling of how they have internalized a sense of white supremacy and superiority. Likewise, it is preferable that BIPOC (cross racially/ethnically) are directing to other BIPOC during their discovery, understanding, and dismantling of how they have internalized a sense of oppression. This racial affinity work augments the mixed-race work of co-designing and co-creating a world of solidarity.</p> <p>These sessions will introduce tools, frameworks, and practice opportunities for the effective use of racial affinity groups as a mechanism for achieving the collective liberation of all people. We will explore the different roles of white people and people of color in racial justice work. People will leave with an understanding of white supremacy culture and how it impacts both groups, knowledge of racial identity development and why that matters for strategy, and embodied practices working with one’s affinity to identify historical reenactments and “call each other in” when they are happening in affinity and in mixed race space.</p> <p>We will follow the needs of the group and adjust cadence and length accordingly.</p>

Sources: CDC; APHA; RWJF; The Aspen Institute; RaceForward; PISAB; REI; Camara Phyllis-Jones; Keith Lawrence and Terry Keleher; <https://www.raceforward.org/videos/systemic-racism>; The Applied Research Center; David Wellman; <https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/websi=>; Liberation Movements. In: Darity Jr., WA (ed.). *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (2nd ed.). 2008;4:431-434. Macmillan Reference USA; Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center