

Appendix B: Glossary

- ANTI-OPPRESSION ORGANIZATION** An organization that actively recognizes and mitigates the oppressive effects of white dominant culture and power dynamics, striving to equalize that power imbalance internally and for the communities with which they work.
- ASSIMILATE** The phenomenon that occurs when people belonging to the nondominant group understand dominant culture norms and take on their characteristics either by choice or by force. Many people of color are asked to “check their identities at the door” in professional settings to make their white peers comfortable. By doing so, many people of color find it easier to get promotions and professional opportunities, as well as to gain access to informal networks typically accessible only to whites.
- CRITICAL MASS** In reference to representation of people of color within an organization or at a certain level of leadership. This figure is dependent on, and reflective of, the specific demographics of the communities in which an organization serves or operates.
- CRITICAL RACE THEORY** A theory that explicitly states and recognizes that racism is ingrained in the fabric and system of American society. Even without overt racists present, institutional racism is pervasive in dominant culture. Critical Race Theory examines existing power structures, and identifies these structures as based on white privilege and white supremacy, which perpetuate the marginalization of people of color. Overall, Critical Race Theory examines what the legal and social landscape would look like today if people of color were the decision-makers.
- DECOLONIZE (MIND)** We exist within societal structures rooted in historical facts, one of which is colonialism: the policy and practice of acquiring control of land (frequently occupied by people of color), occupying it, and codifying power structures to elevate one race and culture above all others. The international practice of colonization informs the dominant culture that characterizes American society today, driving ideologies and subconscious biases rooted in centuries of racism, classism, and white privilege. In order to dismantle white supremacy and the white dominant culture norms it influences, one must actively “decolonize” the mind, recognizing and counteracting the thoughts, preferences, practices, and behaviors that are deeply rooted vestiges of colonization.
- DIVERSITY** Psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals; including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and learning styles.³⁴
- DOMINANT CULTURE** Dominant culture in a society refers to the established language, religion, values, rituals, and social customs on which the society was built. It has the most power, is widespread, and influential within a social entity, such as an organization, in which multiple cultures are present. An organization’s dominant culture is heavily influenced by the leadership and management standards and preferences of those at the top of the hierarchy. In this paper, dominant culture refers specifically to the American context in which organizational culture is predominantly defined by white men and white women in positional power. See also “White Dominant Culture.”
- EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP** Voluntary, employee-led groups that foster a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational mission, values, goals, business practices, and objectives. Often, these groups provide support to staff who formally or informally lead race equity work in some capacity within an organization.
- EQUITY** The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations, and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.³⁵
- INCLUSION** The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate and bring their full, authentic selves to work. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in the words/actions/ thoughts of all people.³⁶
- LEADERSHIP** Individuals who influence a group of people to act towards a goal. Individuals may or may not be in positions of authority.³⁷

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- MICROAGGRESSION** The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.³⁸
- RACE EQUITY** The condition where one’s race identity has no influence on how one fares in society. Race equity is one part of race justice and must be addressed at the root causes and not just the manifestations. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race.³⁹
- RACE EQUITY CULTURE** A culture focused on proactive counteraction of social and race inequities inside and outside of an organization.
- RACE EQUITY LENS** The process of paying disciplined attention to race and ethnicity while analyzing problems, looking for solutions, and defining success. A race equity lens critiques a “color blind” approach, arguing that color blindness perpetuates systems of disadvantage in that it prevents structural racism from being acknowledged. Application of a race equity lens helps to illuminate disparate outcomes, patterns of disadvantage, and root cause.⁴⁰
- RACISM** A system of advantage and oppression based on race. A way of organizing society based on dominance and subordination based on race. Racism penetrates every aspect of personal, cultural, and institutional life. It includes prejudice against people of color, as well as exclusion, discrimination against, suspicion of, and fear and hate of people of color.⁴¹
- SOCIAL JUSTICE** A concept of fair and just relations between the individual and society. This is measured by the explicit and tacit terms for the distribution of power, wealth, education, healthcare, and other opportunities for personal activity and social privileges.⁴²
- SOCIAL SECTOR** The group of organizations that consist of both nonprofit and philanthropic organizations.
- STRUCTURAL RACISM** The arrangement of institutional, interpersonal, historical, and cultural dynamics in a way that consistently produces advantage for whites and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. It illuminates that racism exists without the presence of individual actors because it is systemically embedded. When the United States was founded, racist principles were codified in governance structures and policies. As a result, racism is embedded in institutions, structures, and social relations across American society. Today, structural racism is composed of intersecting, overlapping, and codependent racist institutions, policies, practices, ideas, and behaviors that give an unjust amount of resources, rights, and power to white people while denying them to people of color.
- WHITE DOMINANT CULTURE** Culture defined by white men and white women with social and positional power, enacted both broadly in society and within the context of social entities such as organizations. See also “Dominant Culture” and “White Supremacy Culture.”⁴³
- WHITE PRIVILEGE** The power and advantages benefiting perceived white people, derived from the historical oppression and exploitation of other non-white groups.
- WHITE SUPREMACY** The existence of racial power that denotes a system of structural or societal racism which privileges white people over others, regardless of the presence or the absence of racial hatred. White racial advantages occur at both a collective and an individual level, and both people of color and white people can perpetuate white dominant culture, resulting in the overall disenfranchisement of people of color in many aspects of society.⁴⁴
- WHITE SUPREMACY CULTURE** Characteristics of white supremacy that manifest in organizational culture, and are used as norms and standards without being proactively named or chosen by the full group. The characteristics are damaging to both people of color and white people in that they elevate the values, preferences, and experiences of one racial group above all others. Organizations that are led by people of color or have a majority of people of color can also demonstrate characteristics of white supremacy culture. Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun identified twelve characteristics of white supremacy culture in organizations: Perfectionism, Sense of Urgency, Defensiveness, Quantity of Quality, Worship of the Written Word, Paternalism, Power Hoarding, Fear of Open Conflict, Individualism, Progress is Bigger/More, Objectivity, and Right to Comfort.⁴⁵