

# Toward Racial Equity

The list below summarizes our current stance and the steps we've taken so far; **items in bold are actions you can take, too.**

- In the immediate aftermath of widespread protests and calls for racial justice, we continue to listen closely to residents, neighborhood groups, and community partners for their first-hand experience and assessment of community needs. This will allow us to respond directly and authentically. We know that racial equity is an area ripe for innovation and collaboration to develop new strategies. **Share your new ideas and approaches with our team at Grants@racf.org.**
- Racial equity has been an explicit goal of our competitive grantmaking since 2014. Learn about our equity grants – including names of grantees, grant purposes, and dollar amounts – on our Recent Grants page and in this list of grants from our last two fiscal years. While our grantmaking in education and poverty addresses racial equity in some ways, funding that is wholly dedicated to racial equity lags behind these other action areas. With that in mind, we created the **Racial Equity Growth Fund** to increase BIPOC representation among the community's organizational leaders, support and create innovative solutions to the challenges BIPOC face due to systemic racism, and provide training opportunities on diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly to small businesses. We introduced this new fund and highlighted the kinds of programs it might support with a one-hour webinar called "Working Together to Innovate & Amplify Lives of All Communities." Our new **Arts Prevail Fund** promotes racial equity in the arts and the use of art forms to document this historic moment in time, including the local racial

equity movement. Check out our one-hour webinar called “Working Together to Support Vibrancy and Equity in the Arts” to learn more. **You can give to the Racial Equity and Social Justice Fund or the Arts Prevail Fund and encourage others to give as well.**

- The Community Task Force on School Climate, which we are proud to support, concluded a successful advocacy campaign to remove police officers from Rochester City Schools. The Task Force also has helped the district achieve a dramatic reduction in suspension rates and academic gains.
- We have presented “Rochester: Structural Racism and Community History” to multiple audiences across our community. **You can view the talk here and share what you learn with others to help them understand the proximity and urgency of racism right in their own backyard.**
- In 2019, members of our board and staff were in an early cohort of community foundations in the Equity Network to learn from each other how to advance equity in our communities and shape the practice and thinking of the broader community foundation field.
- In 2017, we reorganized our Community Programs department to include a full-time program officer for equity, overseeing our leadership and grantmaking in three action areas: closing educational achievement and opportunity gaps, fostering racial and ethnic understanding and equity, and partnering against poverty.
- Around the same time, **the Community Foundation started an internal conversation with staff about the difference between being a *non-racist* and *anti-racist* organization.** One of the most helpful resources for taking the first step in this work is right here in Rochester – the Urban League’s Interrupt Racism Initiative. Members of the

Foundation's non-management staff forged a grassroots committee that created recommendations for hiring, retaining, and advancing people of color. These were presented to the leadership and incorporated into HR practices.

- In collaboration with our initiative ACT Rochester, we published the eye-opening *Hard Facts: Race and Ethnicity in the Nine-County Greater Rochester Region* and facilitated new learning for school-age children and various groups of adults and community leaders. ACT Rochester continues to regularly provide data on racial disparities, which the Community Foundation and other nonprofits use to help those most affected. An updated Hard Facts report was released on August 20, 2020 (see the TEDx presentation [here](#)). A critical tool for current statistics, the report has been cited by Black Lives Matter activists in interviews.
- In 2013, our largest-ever discretionary grant helped the Rochester Museum & Science Center bring the traveling exhibit "Race: Are We So Different?" to 45,000 visitors. This exhibit proved to be a powerful catalyst for community conversation and action.
- For nearly 10 years, we have worked with partners to increase public awareness of racial inequities. Learn more in our 2019 op-ed in the *Democrat & Chronicle* and the latest in a series of polls on racial understanding.
- In 2011, a group of Black donors created the African American Giving Initiative, a giving circle devoted to the specific needs of the African American community in Greater Rochester. It has awarded more than \$55,000 in grants to local organizations. In 2013, the group published *The State of Black Rochester* book (available on Amazon), a local version of the national Urban

League's *The State of Black America*, to help identify where to focus its grantmaking dollars. **You can give directly to the AAGI or consider becoming a member.**