

# Shared Language

Shared language is intended to support level setting across your team, organization, or working groups.



# Shared Language

**Anti-Blackness** is a bias, implicit or explicit, that dehumanizes Black people in order to maintain White supremacy. Anti-Blackness may be expressed in the behaviors and attitudes of individuals and the practices and policies of institutions. Anti-Blackness is not limited to White people and institutions but also manifests among other non-Black communities of color and can be internalized by Black communities in the form of colorism, the elevation of White culture, or attempts to separate oneself from Black cultural norms.<sup>36</sup>

**Anti-racism** is the deliberate practice of dismantling historically unequal systems and policies that are built on racial exclusion and bias. Anti-racism confronts the roots of racial inequality in policy, policymakers, and power and recognizes that the only way to undo racism is to name it, describe it, and actively eliminate it.<sup>37</sup> Anti-racism is rooted in taking action to eliminate the results of racism at individual, institutional, and structural levels.

**Asian and Pacific Islanders** are people descended from more than 40 Asian countries or Pacific islands. The category includes multiple and distinct ethnicities that defy borders, such as the Hmong, who are an ethnic group in southern China, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, and Myanmar. Asian and Pacific Islander peoples economic circumstances of arrival into the U.S. varies widely, ranging from some gaining entry as refugees or asylum seekers to others seeking economic opportunity or who are recruited for technological and other high-pay and

high-skill positions. The result is wide economic variation.

**Black or African American** is the racial classification used in the U.S. for people with African ancestry, including Black immigrants, Brazilians, and those from Caribbean countries. The word “Black” represents a spectrum of skin pigmentation, from the darkest through to the very lightest skin colors. The Black population of the U.S. is diverse. Many are descendants of enslaved African people; some are immigrants or descended from immigrants from the Caribbean, African countries, or Latin America.<sup>38</sup> Black Americans whose ancestors were enslaved have a reparations claim to justice related to economic exploitation from both slavery and Jim Crow segregation. Black populations who are more recently immigrated or descendants of never enslaved persons have still been subjected to economic injustices, including redlining and a range of economic exclusions imposed because of the color of their skin and related systemic racism.<sup>39</sup>

**Brave space** is an environment intentionally designed to include five elements: 1) *controversy with civility*, meaning that varying opinions are heard and accepted; 2) *owning intention and impact*, meaning that individuals acknowledge and discuss how dialogue affects others; 3) *challenge by choice*, meaning that everyone has the option to be a part of or to step away from difficult conversations; 4) *respect*, meaning that everyone shows respect for everyone else’s personhood; and 5) *no attacks*, meaning that everyone

agrees not to intentionally inflict harm on another person. Brave spaces should be facilitated by someone who understands and practices anti-oppression work and should not allow for false equivalencies of experiences between oppressed or marginalized people and those who benefit from privilege, power, and authority within the group and society at large.<sup>40</sup>

**Collective prosperity** acknowledges that everyone has a stake in ending White supremacy and systemic racism, and everyone must work in solidarity to undo oppression within ourselves, our communities, and our institutions to achieve a just, free, and prosperous world. It requires that those who have been most marginalized have access to resources, power, and self-determination.<sup>41</sup>

**Color-blind or race-neutral grantmaking** either misidentifies symptoms of inequity as causes of inequity or ignores the role that race plays in causing, reinforcing, and perpetuating inequities, by not identifying systemic racism as the root cause of inequity and poor outcomes among people of color.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, race-conscious grantmaking considers the racialized experiences of communities of color and acknowledges that, due to racism, race is a predictor of life outcomes.<sup>43</sup>

**Economic justice** is the moral principle that every person has the right to establish a sufficient material foundation upon which to have a dignified, productive, and creative

life. This principle acknowledges that economic institutions play an outsized role in determining whether an individual has the opportunity to establish such a foundation and challenges those institutions to guarantee an equal opportunity.

**Equity** is the condition in which neither race, ethnicity, or gender predict life opportunities or outcomes. Within the context of philanthropy, that means that the communities most affected by systemic injustice get the most money to lead in the fight to address that injustice.

**Implicit biases**, also known as unconscious or hidden biases, are negative associations held and expressed without awareness. Implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not be aware that these biases exist.

**Indigenous people of North America** or **Native Americans**, **American Indians**, and **First Americans** are the peoples of North America whose ancestors were present in North America before the arrival of European colonizers. For purposes of this paper, we use these terms to refer to the Indigenous people whose ancestors hailed from the geographical area that currently constitutes the U.S., including Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the current total population of Native Americans in the United States is 6.79 million, which is about 2.09% of the entire population. There are 574 federally recognized tribes or nations within the U.S., about half of which are associated with Indian reservations.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, tribes and nations hold political status as

sovereign governments and have nation-to-nation relationships with the U.S.,<sup>45</sup> giving them access to resources such as federal funds. However, in 2012, the Government Accountability Office counted around 400 unrecognized tribes and nations in the U.S.<sup>46</sup> Colonization, genocide, centuries of systematic oppression, forced assimilation, and extreme poverty have resulted in social, environmental, psychological, physical, economic, and spiritual harm for generations of Native Americans.<sup>47</sup>

**Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination** are elements of the moral principle that Native Americans are the experts on their own lived experiences and therefore know the best ways to achieve their missions and visions, and can develop solutions relevant to their communities and territories. Within the context of philanthropy, this means relinquishing decision-making power to Indigenous leadership when giving money to Indigenous-led funds.<sup>48</sup>

**Latinx** and **Latina/o people**<sup>49</sup> are people descended from the White, Indigenous, and African populations of Central and South America, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean Islands, and people of Latinx heritage who are native to the land we now call the United States (e.g., descendants of original peoples of California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, most of Arizona and Colorado, and parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Wyoming — land acquired through the Treaty of Guadalupe of 1848). They may self-identify as mixed race, Black Latinx, Indigenous Latinx, White Latinx, or Spanish Latinx or Hispanic. Latinx people reflect diverse immigration histories usually related to U.S. foreign policy and interventions,<sup>50</sup> cultures, citizenship related to

generation, and racial categories. Latinx communities can have an array of experience within the U.S. immigration system or no experience at all; the status of those communities ranges from undocumented to documented but temporary, documented and on a pathway to permanent protection, refugee/asylee, lawful permanent resident, or naturalized citizen.<sup>51</sup>

A **microaggression** is a subtle verbal or nonverbal behavior, committed consciously or not, that is directed at a member of a marginalized group that has a harmful, derogatory effect.

**Race** is a social construct used to describe and categorize people based on characteristics like skin color, physical features, ancestral homelands, and language that gives or denies privileges to people based on those characteristics. The idea of race underpins racist policies and systems, and White supremacy culture in the United States.

**Racial justice** is characterized by systematically fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities so that every person is able to achieve their full potential, regardless of race or ethnicity.

**People of color** are those who are racialized outside of Whiteness. This broad designation includes Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Southwest Asian and North African people. Systemic racial inequality impacts racial categories of people of color differently. People of color experience different levels of privilege or harm related to their proximity to the status quo, or Whiteness. In the guide, we use the term “people of color” to point at the structural roots of racial disparities

and the role White supremacy plays in generating these disparities; when relevant, we disaggregate by race and refer to specific groups.

The **racial wealth gap** refers to the lower levels of opportunities to own businesses and financial assets held by people of color compared to their White counterparts as a result of discriminatory race-based laws, policies, and practices that contributed to or sustain inequitable access to capital and wealth-building tools.

**Racial economic inequity** indicates the sum of economic inequalities solely attributable to racial categories. Racial economic inequity directly contributes to the racial wealth gap across multiple policies and systems, including the economy, housing, healthcare, education, and legal and immigration systems. Systemic racism contributes to race-based gaps that manifest in many different economic indicators, such as the measurement of household wealth. Racial economic inequity reflects centuries of racist policies that unfairly encumber people of color in their search to achieve economic security.<sup>52</sup>

A **safe space** is an environment in which a person can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm. A safe space explicitly increases the safety and visibility of marginalized or oppressed community members.<sup>53</sup>

**Southwest Asian and North African** describes people descended from the Middle East and North Africa. As with Latinx, Asian American and Pacific Islander (API) populations, the Census classification of White for persons from this region obscures the nuanced

identities of these people of color, i.e., they are racially diverse even within the countries from which they identify. Countries of origin and ancestry include Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Morocco, Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. To not identify this population as one of color makes them invisible, neglecting the needs of these people and communities.

**White fragility** is the discomfort and defensiveness expressed by a White person confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice. Acknowledging that White fragility is a common experience of White people who are committed to racial justice and that it is their responsibility to work through it without the labor of people of color can help build trust and more quickly achieve racial justice goals among diverse stakeholders.

**White supremacy culture** is the systemic and institutionalized privileging of Whiteness, either explicitly or implicitly. White supremacy culture discriminates against non-Western and non-White standards. As the pervasive and historically dominant norm in the U.S., the White supremacy culture is easily disguised as the status quo and “race-neutral” practices and policies.<sup>54</sup>

## Endnotes

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