



## Equity Question Bank

November 2022

### Initial Questions

1. Why is this work necessary?
2. Who does this work benefit?
3. How does it benefit the community at large?
4. Who can the process/product harm?
5. Is there a process and time allocated to examine un-intended biases in our perspectives when engaged with data and stakeholders?

### Racial Equity in Planning

1. Are we including diverse perspectives (such as community members with lived experiences and agency staff who understand the data) on the planning committees?
2. Are we building capacity for researchers, administrators, and community participants to work together on agenda-setting?
3. Are we researching, understanding, and disseminating the history of local policies, systems, and structures involved including past harms and future opportunities?
4. Are we building data literacy among organizations and community members, which could range from light engagement through public activities like data “gallery walks” to more intense involvement such as community-based participatory action research?
5. Are we establishing a common language and agreed upon sources and methods for reporting on community-based indicators?
6. Are we clearly discerning who decides how to frame the problem or determine what questions to ask?
7. Does our planning include the use of an asset: creating a framework that aims to clarify how to improve policy, services, and outcomes?
8. Are we lifting up the research needs of community to funders: helping shape funding strategy with funders to support community-driven research?

### Racial Equity in Data Collection

1. Are we adhering to data management best practices to secure data as they are collected—specifically, with carefully considered role-based access?
2. Are we including agency staff and community stakeholders in defining which data should be collected or reused?
3. Are we collaborating to develop a shared data collection agenda that is connected to practice, policy, and research?

4. Are we collaborating with agencies and community to generate a data development agenda – a plan for access and use of data that are needed to answer high-interest questions (e.g., expanding gender identity categories on a registration form; building support for digitizing eviction records)?
5. Are we working with staff to support equity-oriented data collection practices (e.g., programmatic staff to update a registration form, technical staff to update a “forced” field on a data entry plan)?
6. Are we collecting only what is necessary to our context?
7. Are there strong efforts to support metadata documentation including key dimensions of metadata such as: description, technical specifications, preservation, provenance, rights, citation?
8. Are we including qualitative stories to contextualize quantitative data?
9. Are we working with and developing flexible data systems that adapt to context, environment, or system changes?
10. Are we finding out why people ‘opt out’ of providing data for surveys and other data collection efforts, and using their feedback to minimize harm in future data collection processes?

## Racial Equity in Data Access

### *Open Data Questions*

1. Do we have open data that have been identified as valuable through engagement with individuals represented with the data?
2. Do we have clear data release schedules and information on where to go and how to access data once they are released?
3. Are there clear processes for submitting a request to agency for making data open, including how requests will be evaluated?

### *Restricted Data Questions*

1. Are we adhering to data management best practices for data access, e.g., secure transfer of data (encryption in transit and at rest) clear data destruction parameters, if applicable following use?
2. Is utmost care given to de-identification and anonymization of data prior to release?
3. Is there an accessible data request process with clear policies and procedures for submitting a request and how requests are evaluated?
4. Are we creating, using, and sharing high-quality metadata to inform requestors about what data are available?
5. Is there a free or low cost for data requested, with costs clearly communicated (e.g., based on hourly rate or a flat fee)?
6. Is there supporting directory-level data sharing among agencies for referral coordination and to lessen administrative burden on clients?

### *Unavailable Data*

1. Is there clear documentation of why data are unavailable (e.g., specific statute, legislation, data quality explanation, data are not digitized, undue burden in data preparation)?

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## Racial Equity in Algorithms/Statistical Tools

1. Have you involved diverse stakeholders, including specific community advisory boards, in early conversations about the purpose of an algorithm prior to development and implementation?
2. Has responsibility for oversight of algorithm development and implementation been determined with clear channels for input?
3. Are there mandatory impact assessments that involve thoroughly thinking through potential intended and unintended consequences?
4. Have potential benefits and risks been clearly identified and communicated to stakeholders?
5. Is there a human-led algorithm use (i.e., human can override algorithm at any point in process)?
6. Is there transparency regarding what data drive the algorithm and how, e.g., description of design and testing process, list of factors that the tool uses, thresholds used, outcome data used to develop and validate the tool, definitions of what an instrument forecasts and for what time period it is used?
7. Are there efforts to improve the quality of data included within the algorithm, including efforts to balance the use of risk and protective factors?
8. Are 'early warning' indicators used to provide meaningful services and supports to clients?
9. Are multiple measures of validity and fairness used, e.g., testing of metrics that center racial equity such as false positives/negatives across race and gender?

## Racial Equity in Data Analysis

1. Is participatory research being used to bring multiple perspectives to the interpretation of the data?
2. Are domain experts engaged (e.g., agency staff, caseworkers) and methods experts (e.g., data scientists, statisticians) to ensure that the data model used is appropriate to examine the research questions in local context?
3. Is place being correlated to outcomes (e.g., overlaying redlining data to outcomes)?
4. Are appropriate comparison groups being used to contextualize findings?
5. Are mixed method approaches being used when developing the analytic plan, including purposefully seeking out qualitative data (interviews, focus groups, narrative, long-form surveys) in conjunction with quantitative administrative data to better understand the lived experience of clients?
6. Have data been disaggregated and analyzed by **intersectional** experiences (e.g., looking at race by gender)?
7. Have professionals and community members been empowered to use data to improve their work and their communities?

## Racial Equity in Reporting and Dissemination

1. Have a range of products been created to communicate findings across a wide variety of audiences via online and offline methods of dissemination?
2. Has differentiated messaging for different audiences been developed that considers the appropriate level of detail and technical jargon, language, length, format, etc.?
3. Is data reported in actionable form to improve the lives of those represented in the data (e.g., analyzing food purchase data to identify food deserts and guide development of grocery stores)?
4. Has public access to aggregate data (e.g., dashboards, routine reports) been provided?
5. Is structural racism or other harms to communities that are embedded in the data acknowledged?

6. Are stories that complement the quantitative findings included in order to better contextualize the lived experience represented by the numbers?
7. Are impact analyses conducted multiple times during the project (e.g., at the beginning, middle, and end)? Asking the core question: does this work mitigate, worsen, or ignore existing disparities

## Reference

Hawn Nelson, A., Jenkins, D., Zanti, S., Katz, M., Berkowitz, E., et al. (2020). *A toolkit for centering racial equity throughout data integration*. Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy, University of Pennsylvania. <https://aisp.upenn.edu/centering-equity/>

## Glossary

Intersectionality refers to the interconnected identities of an individual – including race, gender, identity, nationality, sexual orientation, and disability. Collecting demographic data to better understand disparate impact based upon intersectionality can be an important step toward equity.

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## Suggested Citation

The DaSy Center (2020). *Equity question bank*. SRI International

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## About Us

The contents of this brief were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H373Z190002. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officers, Meredith Miceli and Amy Bae.

The DaSy Center is a national technical assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The DaSy Center works with states to support IDEA early intervention and early childhood special education state programs in the development or enhancement of coordinated early childhood longitudinal data systems.

To learn more about the DaSy Center, visit the DaSy Center website at <http://www.dasycenter.org/>.

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