

# Our vision for racial equity, diversity, and inclusion at EPI

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The Economic Policy Institute’s vision is for all workers to share equally in the economic prosperity of our country. Our research exposes the forces that seek to exclude and diminish the power of people of color<sup>1</sup> and women—particularly Black, Brown, and indigenous people—to the benefit of white supremacy and wealthy elites. We recognize the economic legacy of anti-Blackness; slavery; colonialization; oppressive policies, practices, and institutions; and the persistence of structural racism, sexism, and xenophobia today. Therefore, our vision elevates the importance of racial, gender, and worker justice as central to the world we want to see.

Within EPI, we strive to build an institution that reflects our commitment to equity among people with different core identities, including identities by race, ethnicity, class, age, gender, ability, national origin, immigration status, and sexual orientation. We believe that the most effective solutions for our economy will be developed if we continue to view our work through this racial, gender, and intersectional<sup>2</sup> lens and make racial and social justice an essential part of setting our research, policy, campaign, and partnership priorities. We shine a light on the disparate economic conditions Black and Brown people experience and advance policy solutions that address these systemic issues as we work toward a more just society. Acknowledging that this work will never be finished, we commit to the ongoing process of becoming an anti-racist organization.

## Our principles

### Racial justice and gender justice are preconditions for economic justice and thus central to our work

- **Prioritizing racial and gender equity.** We recognize that the historic low priority given to research on issues of race and gender, coupled with the disregard for disaggregation of data by race and gender, has hindered efforts to understand economic issues to their full extent. We ensure that the research we conduct and the policies we propose improve the economic conditions of Black and Brown workers and women, and we assess policies with respect to how they affect these workers.
- **Building transformational partnerships.** We strive for transformational partnerships with research, policy, labor, grassroots, and funder organizations and coalitions that prioritize racial and gender equity and build power within impacted communities.
- **Presenting research and policies for diverse and inclusive audiences.** We present our research and policies in compelling ways to reach and engage a broader, more diverse audience in terms of race, ethnicity, class, age, gender, ability, national origin, immigration status, and sexual orientation.

### Our success depends on a commitment to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion in our recruitment, hiring, staff development, and strategies for retention

- We believe diversity of staff within all departments and throughout the organization—and at all levels—strengthens our ability to tackle and communicate complex social and economic problems.
- We use systems for recruitment, screening, interviewing, and selection that directly mitigate unconscious bias in the job description and hiring processes. We invest early and regularly in staff of all backgrounds through onboarding, mentoring, feedback, and team building; equitable and clearly articulated benefits and compensation; and clear paths to advancement.
- We have a comprehensive program to support professional development and retention of staff, with keen attention to Black and Brown staff given the historic and present-day exclusion of Black and Brown people from positions of power.
- We ensure that all staff have opportunities for power and a voice on their teams and in the organization, both as individuals and through the staff union.
- We develop EPI managers to successfully and equitably lead staff across social identities and differences in power and privilege.

## **We thrive when we respect and value one another for who we are as well as what we bring to EPI**

- We ensure that staff of all backgrounds feel respected for their talents and insights and are encouraged to succeed while being their authentic selves, rather than having to fit narrow or outdated notions of what it means to be an EPI researcher or staff member.
- We seek input from staff of all backgrounds in programs and policies that they are a part of implementing and include them in planning high-profile projects.
- We commit to acknowledging and respecting the gender pronouns and group identities that staff use to describe themselves.
- We celebrate and care about each other as whole and complex human beings.

## **We engage regularly and courageously to promote inclusion, strengthen relationships, and increase understanding across differences**

- We hold ourselves accountable, own our impact, and assume positive intent as we work together across racial, gender, generational, and other social identities.
- We notice how and when our own biases and lack of knowledge may lead us to commit subtle acts of exclusion and bias and proactively seek to educate ourselves. Where we do harm, we seek to acknowledge it and repair it.
- We have the courage and competency to disrupt entrenched power dynamics at the interpersonal, group, and organizational levels that tend to silence voices, while maintaining a mutual commitment to productive solutions.

## **Notes**

1. In this statement, we use “people of color” to refer collectively to people in the following race/ethnicity categories: Black, Latinx, Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI), indigenous, as well as those who identify as multiracial. “People of color” is inclusive of immigrants of color. We also use “Brown,” although we are not able to disaggregate this category using government data. “Latinx” is a gender-neutral term that may be used interchangeably with Latino/Latina or Hispanic. Latinx is an ethnic category, not a racial category. In addition to self-identifying as Latinx, Latinx Americans may also self-identify as any race—Black, white, or another race. We use these terms to reflect a shared, although varied, experience with systemic racism in America.
2. Intersectionality is an analytical framework that helps us understand how interlocking social identities—female *and* Black, for example—combine to create different modes of oppression and privilege that may require different interventions than simply dealing with each social identity in isolation.