

WFRI Anti-Racism Statement & Organizational Expectations

For generations, women and girls of color in Rhode Island and across America have faced systems designed to deny them agency, voice, and economic opportunity. We know that we must do more to overcome centuries of systemic racial oppression and recognize the skills and assets of communities of color. In 2020, with the brutal murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd by police officers, the nation and indeed the global community grappled with America's racist past and present. Women's Fund of Rhode Island (WFRI) leadership focused its intersectional lens internally to determine how we might become more actively anti-racist.

Although organizational values from our inception have included equity and inclusion leading to social justice for all, WFRI has been led, staffed, supported by, and served our community as predominantly white women since our founding. Sixty percent of our income comes from our endowment at the RI Foundation and our donors are predominantly white. As a result, WFRI acknowledges that it has benefited from and participated in the systems, institutions, and culture of American society, which is defined by white supremacy.

In a lifetime, women earn hundreds of thousands of dollars less than men, women own pennies on the dollar compared to what men own and have fewer opportunities to borrow money or obtain credit. Women are more likely to live and die in poverty. Too often, stereotypes, biases, and racial oppression are embedded in our laws and public policies. Women of color suffer most from these inequities, and all women suffer as a result. Not only does this have a devastating impact on women's lives, but it also hurts families, communities, future generations, and our entire economy.

In 2020, only 3.3% of all nonprofits in the US were dedicated to helping women and girls. Only 1.6% of all charitable funding was specifically directed to women & girls initiatives; less so for women and girls of color. WFRI was created to address this inequity. Our mission is to invest in women and girls through research, advocacy, grant making and strategic partnerships designed to achieve gender equity through systemic change.

In our more recent history, our research reports have included racial equity screens intersected with gender equity. WFRI's [Women of Color: A Snapshot](#) report from 2019 specifically highlights a number of the inequities women of color face in RI. In addition, WFRI's [An Uneven Path](#) report addresses how institutional and systemic racism has prevented women of color from accessing benefits that would provide economic security. Many of our grants in the last few years have gone to organizations that are serving women of color and led by Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC).

In 2021, 43% of WFRI Board members are individuals of color. Our Board President and Vice President are both women of color. We have been successful in ensuring that *most* of our events include BIPOC speakers. We ensure that nominees for awards, scholarships, and WPI include candidates of color. We have partnered with TOAST and Rhode Island Coalition of Black Women to produce events that are free or low cost to participants. Nevertheless, we recognize

that work needs to be done to create and maintain a more anti-racist organization.

WFRI is committed to creating a space where people are valued regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, national origin, or religious affiliation. We are committed to practicing intersectional feminism that acknowledges the complex relationships between systems of oppression and moving forward together towards a morally just and equitable society for everyone.

Equity and inclusion are key values of our organization. As such, we recognize our responsibility to ensure our practices prioritize our values when hiring staff and vendors, recruiting board members/volunteers/fellows, investing resources, holding trainings, and advocating for policy change.

By improving our practices and ensuring we are also addressing racial equity through a gender lens, we will be better able to achieve our mission and vision. To that end, WFRI's board has identified the following concrete expectations for advancing racial equity and inclusion moving forward:

- Board, staff and WPI alumni/fellows regularly will participate in anti-racism education, with formal all team training at least every two years; Donors, volunteers and key supporters will be invited to these same trainings and conversations
- Our DEI and Anti-Racism policies/commitment will be made available to the general public on the WFRI website
- Communication tools and materials will follow inclusive language guidelines https://drive.google.com/file/d/14LWAQY3A1bZSjS_UrexEhZcyjuGXEHtt/view?usp=sharing
- Research produced will center racial and gender equity where we can find disaggregated data; WFRI will advocate for disaggregated data where none can be found
- Enhanced consideration will be given to grant proposals whose primary beneficiaries are BIPOC individuals
- Our Women's Policy Institute will include anti-racism programming and ensure that we have strong BIPOC involvement from fellows to speakers within the program
- Expand BIPOC participation in all WFRI programs and events by actively publicizing WFRI events to organizations that serve BIPOC communities. Every effort will be taken to ensure that financial requirements should not be a barrier to participation.
- The Board and staff will be a resource to recommend women and BIPOC individuals

to serve on boards and commissions or be considered for open leadership roles

- Representation of, and accessibility for, BIPOC individuals will be considered when organizing WFRI events or activities, including speakers and participants. Every effort will be taken to ensure that financial considerations should not be a barrier to participation.
- The governance committee and board will engage outside organizations, consultants and stakeholders in sourcing future board members, participants and panelists to be reflective of our community. Our goal is to increase the diversity of all of our participants year over year.
- Board leadership will review our outcomes related to these items on an annual basis and update these organizational expectations as appropriate.