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race forward
THE CENTER FOR **RACIAL JUSTICE** INNOVATION

Race Reporting Guide

A RACE FORWARD MEDIA REFERENCE

- Guidelines for covering key issues with a racial lens

- Reporting on specific racial and ethnic groups

- Harmful racial discourse practices to avoid

- Key terms and concepts

- Online resources

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Introduction

When we talk about education, health care, voting rights, and many other topics, there is often an aversion to talking about race. Though some suggest we are "post-racial," we find that race still plays a defining role in a person's life trajectory, experiences, and outcomes. In addition, shifting demographics make even more urgent our need to speak openly about racial bias and inequity, and their deep roots in our history, culture, and institutions. This system of racialization—which routinely confers advantage and disadvantage based on skin color and other characteristics—must be clearly understood. However, when race enters our public conversations about these important national issues, the dialogue is too often dehumanizing and racially charged. Language matters, and we need more tools to move our race conversations forward in more accurate, fair, and productive ways. Race Forward's Race Reporting Guide aims to provide critical support for the use of responsible language and story framing that reflects ethical and rigorous journalistic standards and affirms the dignity and human rights of people of all races.

For over 30 years, Race Forward has been teaching and writing about race. We publish the award-winning daily news site Colorlines, conduct original research on pressing racial justice issues, present the biennial Facing Race National Conference, and

"Language matters, and we need more tools to move our race conversations forward in more accurate, fair, and productive ways."

provide training and consulting services. One of our recent reports, *Moving the Race Conversation Forward*, revealed key findings and recommendations on how mainstream can address racial issues to reshape and reform the way we talk about race and racism in our country. It found that most coverage of race and racism is not "systemically aware," meaning that it focuses on racism at the level of the individual, dismisses systemic racism, or refers to racism in the past tense. This kind of reporting leaves out important contextual information such as the role of history, institutional policies, and inequitable practices, and it rarely features prominent, robust coverage of racial justice advocacy or solutions.

The purpose of this race reporting guide is to serve as an accessible and concise tool for journalists and thought leaders in the United States talking about race, racism, and racial justice in the media. It aims to provide context and guidelines to inform reporting and language, and to encourage more conversation and understanding. Language is ever-evolving, so this is not meant to be comprehensive, or to reflect all perspectives and important thinking that has been done on these issues. Questions and suggestions related to this guide are welcome, and we invite journalists and media-makers to consider Race Forward a resource in story-development, experts available, and talking about race in the media. Contact us at media@raceforward.org.

THE GUIDE INCLUDES:

Covering Key Issues With a Racial Lens

It is critical that media coverage on race bring an explicit racial lens to breaking news, investigative reporting, and multimedia storytelling. This means that reporting on subjects impacted by race should include a component that looks at systems, not just individuals. A systemic analysis means we examine the root causes and mechanisms that feed into patterns. It makes for good journalism and opens up new avenues of inquiry and storytelling. This section highlights pressing, and often under-reported, issues that disparately impact people of color, and provides tips and guidelines to help avoid pitfalls often found in media coverage.

GENERAL REPORTING TIPS

- Be explicit about race.

- Avoid stereotypes.

- Use a multiracial lens, and consider all communities of color.

- Investigate issues from a systemic ("Is there an institution or a practice at work that has race-based consequences?") over an individual ("Is this person a racist?") perspective.

- Focus on actions and impacts, rather than attitudes and intentions.

- Place the humanity and leadership of people of color at the center.

- Feature prominent, robust coverage of racial justice advocacy and solutions.

- Ensure headlines, images, captions, and graphics are fair and responsible in their depiction of people of color, and coverage of the issues.

- Give proper credit to the owner/creator of the media you are sharing, and request permission when appropriate.

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS & MILLENNIALS

- Familiarize yourself with changing racial and ethnic demographics in the geographic areas you're covering, and report with them in mind.

- By 2044, the United States is projected to be a plurality nation, as no race or ethnic group is projected to have greater than a 50 percent share of the nation's total.

- Beware of using terms like "majority-minority" as they do not give a nuanced or accurate picture of the demographic changes occurring in a particular community. Instead describe the change, with figures and a sense of how things have changed over time and why.

- The "Millennial Generation" (born 1981-1993) is the largest, most racially and ethnically diverse generation the U.S. has ever known.

- The fastest growing racial groups are "Two or More Races," (expected to triple in size by 2060), Asian population, and Hispanic population (expected to comprise 29% of the United States population by 2060).

- More than half the growth in total population of the U.S. between 2000 and 2010 was due to the increase in the Hispanic population.

- There were 11.2 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. as of 2012.

- In 2014, 13.3% of the U.S. population was foreign-born, with a rate of growth expected to account for an increasing share of the total population, reaching 19 percent in 2060.

- The federal government is considering allowing those of Middle Eastern and North African descent (MENA) to identify as such on 2020 Census (previously classified as White by default).

ONLINE RESOURCES
See Race Forward's reports on Millennials
http://raceforward.org/millennials

SOURCES
https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p25-1143.pdf

http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf

http://www.pewresearch.org/key-data-points/immigration/

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

KEY ISSUES

#BlackLivesMatter, racial profiling, mass incarceration, drug policy reform, torture, wrongful conviction, grand jury, police shootings, community protests, for-profit prisons, racial disparities.

ONLINE RESOURCES

See Colorlines coverage of criminal justice
http://www.colorlines.com/criminal-justice

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- Don't take police reports at face value.

- Move beyond presenting disparities (e.g. Black babies are still almost 2.5 times more likely to die before reaching their 1st birthday) and investigate the systemic reasons that influence those disparities, locally and nationally.

- Avoid sensational headlines and "COPS"-like news coverage that dehumanizes and exploits racial stereotypes ("Black-on-Black crime" is no more a phenomenon than "White-on-White crime").

- Identify people as those who have done something, not as a person who is identified only by the acts he or she has committed. For example, instead of "ex-felon," use "formerly incarcerated person," "returning citizen," or "person with a criminal record."

- Don't make assumptions about people who live in a high-crime area. People with criminal records can have as valid and important a perspective on crime and the criminal justice system as representatives of law enforcement or other community residents.

ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT, AND WORKER'S RIGHTS

KEY ISSUES

Unemployment rates, "ban the box" background checks, minimum wage, segregated workplaces, racial wealth gap, worker strikes, income disparities, job protections, unions, low-wage labor.

ONLINE RESOURCES

See Colorlines coverage of Economy & Employment
http://www.colorlines.com/economy
and Workers Rights
http://www.colorlines.com/labor

Race Forward's multimedia tool "Clocking-In"
http://clockingin.raceforward.org

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- Use an explicit racial and systemic analysis that highlights the link between race and poverty.

- Reflect the fact that unemployment and poverty are circumstances faced by everyone, not just people of color and their respective communities.

- Beware of myths such as the "Welfare Queen" and stereotypes that are so prevalent surrounding employment and economics.

- Avoid terms that may subtly, yet profoundly, evoke and reinforce racial stereotypes, such as "urban," "lazy," "hard-working," "entitlement," and others.

- Consider barriers to mobility, including practices that appear race neutral in intent, but have racialized impact.

EDUCATION, SCHOOLS, AND YOUTH

KEY ISSUES

Education/school reform, school-to-prison pipeline, extreme discipline, charter schools, testing, college admissions, access to higher education, school curriculum, segregation, education disparities, affirmative action, student loans, school closures, budget cuts.

ONLINE RESOURCES

See Colorlines coverage of Education, Schools & Youth
http://www.colorlines.com/categories/schools-youth

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- Allocate time and resources for on-the-ground local and state reporting; although a national issue, education disparities and reform measures differ from community to community.

- Look at patterns over time: history of segregation, inequitable funding, roots of laws and policies, and the impact on the current situation, with severe racial disparities, from budget cuts to children of color being subject to more extreme disciplinary measures.

- Speak in depth with all players, beyond politicians, policy makers, and paid experts.

- Talk to parents and students, teachers, advocates on the ground who have been working on these issues, and community members affected.

- Investigate funding inequities and the systemic impact of those inequities.

- Avoid racial stereotypes such as "model minority."

HEALTH

"Obamacare," uninsured, health disparities, racialized medical treatment, maternal health, HIV & AIDS, trauma & PTSD.

ONLINE RESOURCES
See Colorlines coverage of Health
http://www.colorlines.com/health

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES
- Report on health care issues from a systemic perspective. For example, the costs associated with healthcare are a leading contributor to financial instability, and the effects are more pronounced among groups who have relatively low savings or access to health insurance.

- Include the role that factors like stress, environment (pollution, etc.), and lack of access to mental health care have on health issues within communities of color.

- Investigate the history of discriminatory experiences people of color have had with medical care providers, including difficulties with language barriers, leading to racial disparities in health outcomes and a level of distrust towards the healthcare system.

- When discussing health care issues faced by people of color, it is important to note that the disparities are not isolated to a particular period of one's life. These disparities exist as early as prenatal care and continue throughout life.

IMMIGRANTS & IMMIGRATION REFORM

KEY ISSUES

Policy reform, detention centers, mass deportation, child welfare & families, undocumented immigrants.

ONLINE RESOURCES

See Colorlines coverage of Immigration
http://www.colorlines.com/immigration

See Race Forward's Drop the I-Word campaign
https://www.raceforward.org/practice/tools/drop-i-word-campaign

See Race Forward's report "Shattered Families: The Perilous Intersection of Immigration Enforcement and the Child Welfare System"
http://raceforward.org/shatteredfamilies

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- Report from a multiracial perspective. Most Latinos in the U.S. are not immigrants, and immigrants come to the U.S. from every country in the world.

- Examine the ways immigration issues intersect with systems and institutions across society, such as child welfare and local law enforcement.

- Avoid racially charged, dehumanizing language (e.g. "illegal" when describing immigrants). See "racial slur" in the section *Key Terms & Concepts.*

- Cover immigration as a civil issue, familiarize yourself with current policies and laws, and accurately report on immigration reform legislation.

- Move beyond immigration reform and include immigrants in stories about all issues, as part of the fabric of the United States.

- Familiarize yourself with the range of categories describing a person's citizenship and immigration status: nationality, country of origin, citizen, permanent resident, undocumented/unauthorized.

MEDIA, ARTS & CULTURE

KEY ISSUES
Media representation, film, television, visual arts, books, music, fashion, comedy, hip-hop culture, sports, net neutrality, media reform, social media.

ONLINE RESOURCES
See Colorlines coverage of Media
http://www.colorlines.com/categories/media
and Arts & Culture
http://colorlines.com/categories/arts-culture

See Race Forward's report "Moving the Race Conversation Forward"
http://raceforward.org/moving-race-conversation-forward

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES
- Include people of color in any survey of developments in arts and culture, whether it is a Top Ten list, an investigation, or highlights of trends within an industry or event.

- Campaigns or expressions that originated within a community to reflect its concerns should be discussed in context. Be sensitive when reporting on the appropriation of phrases and movements like #BlackLivesMatter, to refer to outside

groups as it may confuse what the action or analysis was attempting to highlight.

- When reporting on cultural and media products, look at who is in decision-making positions and consider how the power dynamics between different parts of the creation, promotion and distribution often disadvantage people of color.

POLITICS & ELECTIONS

KEY ISSUES
Candidate positions, campaign issues, electoral politics, confirmation hearings, election results, ID restrictions, restrictions on voting rights.

ONLINE RESOURCES
See Colorlines coverage of Politics
http://www.colorlines.com/categories/politics
and Voting Rights
http://www.colorlines.com/categories/voting-rights

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES
- Familiarize yourself with and report on local and state restrictions on voting rights, and their impact on communities of color. Report on key issues for communities of color, locally and nationally.

- Cover elections with a racial lens, highlighting racial disparities and reporting on the racial dimensions of attacks on candidates or their supporters.

- Ensure coverage of candidates avoids stereotypes and dehumanizing language when exploring their racial/ethnic background, their family histories, or the groups they affiliate with.

- Highlight political organizing within communities of color.

WOMEN AND LGBT COMMUNITY

KEY ISSUES INCLUDE:
Sexuality, gender norms, reproductive justice, sexual assault, violence, harassment, marriage equality, homelessness, coming out.

ONLINE RESOURCES
See Race Forward's "Better Together" reports on bridging LGBT & racial justice
http://raceforward.org/better-together

See Colorlines coverage of Gender & Sexuality
http://www.colorlines.com/gender-sexuality
Reproductive Rights
http://www.colorlines.com/tags/reproductive-rights
and LGBT
http://www.colorlines.com/tags/lgbt-0

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES
- Address how sexism, homophobia, and transphobia contribute to racial disparities across all issue areas.

- Report on the long history of laws and policies that have regulated the bodies of women of color.

- Highlight racial disparities, such as violence against Native American women, or that Black mothers are three times as likely to die during childbirth.

- Ensure that stories focused on the LGBT community include a racial lens, and when covering issues focused on race and racism, consider the impact on LGBT people of color.

Reporting On Specific Racial and Ethnic Groups

There are countless data collection systems that ask people to report their race and ethnicity, from the U.S. Census, to political polls, to surveys conducted by think tanks, marketing firms, human resource departments, and so on. However, there is no consensus on which categories to use, how categories are defined, and category options may change over time. The U.S. Census itself hasn't been consistent and is considering new categories and ways to ask Americans about their race or origin in 2020, in order to minimize confusion and allow people to accurately describe their identity.

Data on all racial and ethnic groups is critical to highlight racial disparities, and provides a foundation for systemic change through allocation of funding, resources, and political seats. Reporting that is inclusive of all racial and ethnic groups, even when data is limited, is essential for an complete and accurate understanding of the racial dimensions of a story.

See "Changing Demographics" in the section *Covering Key Issues* and "Race" and "Racial & ethnic categories" in the *Key Terms & Concepts* section.

See "Race" and "Racial & ethnic categories" in the *Key Terms & Concepts* section.

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES
- Use racial and ethnic identification when it is pertinent to a story, fairly (across all racial categories, including identifying persons as "White") and appropriately (without relying on stereotypes).

- Ask people about their heritage and strive for respectful accuracy that observes how people self-identify racially and ethnically, and that allows for multiple categories.

- Use consistent terms for racial and ethnic groups that are descriptive and accurate, rather than reductive, and be prepared to respectfully communicate to your subjects the style for racial and ethnic categories used in your outlet.

- Except when referencing surveys or polls that use other language, Race Forward uses the following racial and ethnic categories: American Indian and Native American, Asian American / Pacific Islander (AAPI), Black and African American (terms are not necessarily interchangeable, as many Black people in immigrant communities do not call themselves African American), White, and Latino rather than Hispanic (except when data sources specifically use "Hispanic," the term "Latino" is preferred as less derivative of colonial lineage).

- Note the limitations of data sets you use: what is missing or potentially misleading about communities of color. Broad generalizations that treat communities as a monolithic group can have an enormous impact on subpopulations with differing socioeconomic and cultural experience.

- Familiarize yourself with the key terms and concepts of race and ethnicity, and how categories that describes these can intersect ("White Argentine," "a person of mixed Choctaw and African American descent," Latinos who identify as "some other race").

- Specify, whenever possible, a person's tribe or ethnic group (Cherokee, O'odham, Mayan, Xhosa), and their region of origin (people from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are South Asian; people from Honduras, Panama, El Salvador and Guatemala are Central American).

- Capitalize proper names of nationalities, peoples, races, tribes, etc. Race Forward capitalizes Black and White, but avoids and does not capitalize brown, red, yellow or similar descriptors sometimes used for racial and ethnic groups. We avoid using the term "brown" whenever possible and believe it is a better practice to actually name the group/ethnicity being referenced. For example, instead of saying, "Black and Brown," we would recommend saying, "Blacks and Latinos," if in fact, Latinos were the group being referred to in this case. "People of color" can in some cases serve as a collective term for non-Whites.

- Don't use geographic descriptors interchangeably with religious or other terms to describe specific groups of people. For example, "Muslim" is not synonymous with Arab, and African Americans are the largest Muslim population in the United States.

- New categories enter everyday language as communities change and people organize themselves, but there is a danger with conflation and avoiding the issue of race by using terms that are not race-explicit.

- Avoid terms like "lighter-skinned" or "darker-skinned" without a specific point of comparison. All groups of people — White, African American, Latinos, Asian American, Native American — show wide variation in skin tone, and should not be characterized in general in comparison to other groups.

Notes on the AP Stylebook

The Associated Press Stylebook is one of the industry standards on language and usage in media outlets. It has several entries related to race, covering the basics, but is missing entries on terms and concepts we think are important, such as "racism" or "hate crime." Race Forward offers a differing perspective on the use of the term "minorities" (see *Key Terms & Concepts* "minorities" and "people of color") and capitalization of Black and White (see *Covering Key Issues* "Reporting on Specific Racial and Ethnic Groups"). Race Forward's race reporting guide aims to provide more context and guidelines to inform reporting and language used when reporting on issues impacted by race. However, language is not static and can change over time; for example, the AP changed their style book in 2013 to "Drop the I-Word" and no longer use "illegal" to describe immigrants. Listed here are some of the AP's current race-focused guidelines:

- The term "minorities" is usually acceptable in news stories.

- Only using identification by race or ethnicity when it is pertinent, such as in:

  - Biographical and announcement stories that involve significant, groundbreaking or historic events.

  - For suspects sought by the police or missing person cases using police or other credible, detailed descriptions. Such descriptions apply for all races. The racial reference should be removed when the individual is apprehended or found.

  - When reporting a demonstration or disturbance involving race or such issues as civil rights or slavery.

- Covering specific racial groups: follow the person's preference, use a more specific identification when possible.

- Do not capitalize Black or White.

- Avoid slurs: if necessary, use in quotes, or better to identify as "a racial slur" or replace the offensive word with a generic descriptive in parentheses, e.g., (vulgarity) or (obscenity).

- Do not stereotype in negative or "positive" ways related to hygiene, intelligence, skills, physical attributes.

- Use illegal only to refer to an action, not a person: illegal immigration, but not illegal immigrant. Do not use the terms illegal alien, an illegal, illegals or undocumented.

Seven Harmful Racial Discourse Practices to Avoid

In a demanding news cycle with ever-tightening budgets and fluctuating staff, it can be challenging to cover news from a perspective that thoughtfully addresses race. The best coverage moves beyond personal prejudice and hate to systemic problems and solutions; focuses on actions and impacts rather than attitudes and intentions; adds a racial lens to our conversations on class, gender, sexuality, and so on; and cultivates discourse that honors the humanity and leadership of people of color. At a minimum, however, it is important that journalists and media-makers avoid seven harmful racial discourse practices commonly found in news media.

1. INDIVIDUALIZING RACISM

Concentrating attention exclusively on thoughts or acts of personal prejudice.

EFFECT ON RACIAL DISCOURSE

Reinforces the common misconception that racism is simply a personal problem that should be resolved by shaming, punishing, or re-educating the individual offender. Often leads to long, inconclusive debates about what is in a person's "heart," and whether or not they intended to be hurtful or discriminatory. Perpetuates false notions of individual agency in our national consciousness.

EXAMPLE

A celebrity or prominent business owner is surreptitiously recorded using racial slurs or otherwise demeaning people of color, particularly a group he or she relies upon as employees, consumers, and/or sources of substantive content or inspiration. Media and general public focus moral indignation on the hurtful words rather than any corresponding record of discrimination in their business practices or impact.

2. FALSELY EQUATING INCOMPARABLE ACTS

Drawing a parallel between an act or expression of racial bias from privileged Whites and one from that of comparatively disadvantaged people of color, without taking into account any power differentials between the two.

EFFECT ON RACIAL DISCOURSE

Provides an excuse for, or otherwise seeks to absolve, an individual who has expressed a racist idea or committed a racist act. Encourages the audience to apply a blanket standard of "colorblindness" without acknowledging that the biases of Whites have

a broader impact and get reinforced by institution and systems of power in ways that the biases of people and communities of color do not.

EXAMPLE
Cell phone footage is released of two Latino young men using racially charged language against White and African American police officers in response to an incident of racial profiling that quickly escalates into violent police brutality. Media and pundits on the left and right of the political spectrum focus time and attention on discussing and condemning the "reverse racism" of the youth rather than the history of systemic racism and community complaints about the department.

3. DIVERTING FROM RACE
The practice of asserting that other social identities besides race, such as class, gender, or sexual orientation, are the predominant determining factors behind a given social inequity.

EFFECT ON RACIAL DISCOURSE
Ranks systems of power and dismisses racism as a primary, or even legitimate, determinant of social inequity. This logic inhibits an understanding of how bias and discrimination against groups for one reason – race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic class – intersects with others and works together. This promotes an either/or instead of a both/and framework. The latter offers an important sociological and historical perspective, rather than a single identity or non-racial analysis.

EXAMPLE
A statewide LGBT non-profit organization releases a report that includes findings on rising rates of LGBT youth homelessness. Media coverage fails to take into account and report on how race/ethnicity and immigrant status have differing impacts on the experience of homelessness for LGBT youth of color, and how they affect their interactions with public, nonprofit and private institutions.

4. PORTRAYING GOVERNMENT AS OVERREACHING

Depicting government efforts to promote racial equity and inclusion as misguided, unnecessary and/or improper.

EFFECT ON RACIAL DISCOURSE

Undermines support for a significant government role in dismantling systemic racism. Suggests that if government would just "get out of the way" (i.e., stop infringing on the individual freedom of Whites), we could have a "colorblind" country once and for all.

EXAMPLE

A low-income family of color recounts the story of how they "got in over their heads" in the housing market through the rapid refinancing of their home. Media coverage blames a government program for first-time homebuyers that helped the family make their initial purchase, for disrupting "market forces" which should be "free" from government "social engineering."

5. PRIORITIZING INTENT OVER IMPACT

Focusing more on the intention of a policy or practice and far less, if at all, on its daily impact on people and communities of color.

EFFECT ON RACIAL DISCOURSE

Devalues the humanity of the people and communities of color that bear the brunt of a policy's implementation. Obscures the role of implicit bias in that policy's operation, and reinforces the power of White fear in policy and decision-making.

EXAMPLE

As part of a public health campaign to treat and contain the outbreak of an infectious disease, a city mayor strongly connects the disease with a low-income East Asian immigrant community, thereby stigmatizing the group. Public statements from the city

administration and reports on the outbreak in the media disregard the vantage point of those most affected and under-resourced in the health and education systems, particularly children who are likely to face harassment, bullying, and worse. Policy and public perspectives fail to take into account this group's point of view on how best to approach the issue.

6. CODED LANGUAGE

Substituting terms describing racial identity with seemingly race-neutral terms that disguise explicit and/or implicit racial animus.

EFFECT ON RACIAL DISCOURSE

Injects language that triggers racial stereotypes and other negative associations without the stigma of explicit racism. Fosters anxiety among audiences for the coverage and dehumanizes people and communities of color.

EXAMPLE

Two or three shoplifting incidents in a downtown area, allegedly perpetrated by 8-10 African American junior high students, draw the attention of local news media. Quotes or descriptions from witnesses characterize the 11- to 12-year olds using "pack animal" imagery and terms such as "hyenas," "menacing" and "vicious," that play to White stereotypes and fears of youth of color.

7. SILENCING HISTORY
Omitting, dismissing, or deliberately re-writing history.

EFFECT ON RACIAL DISCOURSE
Isolates racial disparities and attitudes from a historical con-
text and instead presents them as a unique, individual instance.
Results in incomplete or inaccurate understandings of the root
causes of these disparities and attitudes. Obscures the pathway to
illuminate which solutions are most viable or warranted.
Miseducates the public.

EXAMPLE
Tribal leaders have floated a proposal to expand an American
Indian gaming facility in a suburb of a major city where state
lotteries and scratch cards abound. Media coverage of the
American Indian proposals primarily reflects the perspective of
and the potential effects upon the non-Indian population and do
not mention principles of tribal sovereignty and self-determi-
nation; how tribal lands were reserved through treaties with the
United States; or the importance of economic development for
Native tribes.

Key Terms & Concepts

Essential to good reporting on race is understanding the context and historical background that many terms convey. This section of Race Forward's Race Reporting Guide aims to inform reporting and support appropriate language and story framing. While not intended to be a traditional dictionary, the information provided here is intended to enhance understanding of some terminology and encourage usage that reflects cultural and racial awareness.

Affirmative action

This term describes policies adopted since the 1960s that require "affirmative" (or positive) actions be to taken to ensure people of color and women have opportunities equal to those of White men in the areas of promotions, salary increases, school admissions, financial aid, scholarships, and representation among vendors in government contracts. Although they have been effective in redressing injustice and discrimination that persisted in spite of civil rights laws and constitutional guarantees, the policies have been attacked because of perceived "reverse discrimination." The Supreme Court has not ruled all affirmative action unconstitutional but has limited the use and ways which policies can be written and applied. See "**Reverse discrimination**."

Anti-racism

The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.

Civil rights

A group of laws designed to protect various groups against discrimination based on race, sex, religion, age, national origin, and

other characteristics. Often used in connection to the Civil Rights Movement, widely recognized as taking place from 1954 to 1968, which included issues and practices such as school desegregation, sit-ins, "Freedom rides," voter registration campaigns, and other acts of civil disobedience to protest racial discrimination.

Class

Classism is the systematic oppression of subordinated class groups, held in place by attitudes that rank people according to economic status, family lineage, job status, level of education, and other divisions. One's race can be a major determinant of one's social or economic class. The variables of race and class, though closely connected, each need distinct attention.

"Colorblind"

A term used to describe a disregard of racial characteristics or lack of influence by racial prejudice. The concept of colorblindness is often promoted by those who dismiss the importance of race in order to proclaim the end of racism. It presents challenges when discussing diversity, which requires being racially aware, and equity that is focused on fairness for people of all races.

Colorism

Discrimination based on skin color, which often privileges lighter-skinned people within a racial group, positioning people with darker complexions at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. It is an example of how White supremacy can operate amongst the members of a single racial or ethnic group. This form of prejudice often results in reduced opportunities for those who are discriminated against, and numerous studies have revealed differences in life outcomes by complexion.

Cultural appropriation or "misappropriation"

Adoption of elements of a culture that has been subordinated in social, political, economic, status by a different cultural group. It may rely on offensive stereotypes, and is insensitive to how the culture of a group has been exploited by the culture in power, often for profit.

Discrimination

Treatment of an individual or group based on their actual or perceived membership in a social category, usually used to describe unjust or prejudicial treatment on the grounds of race, age, sex, gender, ability, socioeconomic class, immigration status, national origin, or religion.

Diversity

There are many kinds of diversity, based on race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, country of origin, education, religion, geography, physical, or cognitive abilities. Valuing diversity means recognizing differences between people, acknowledging that these differences are a valued asset, and striving for diverse representation as a critical step towards equity. See "**Equity**."

Equity

Equity means fairness and justice and focuses on outcomes that are most appropriate for a given group, recognizing different challenges, needs, and histories. It is distinct from diversity, which can simply mean variety (the presence of individuals with various identities). It is also not equality, or "same treatment," which doesn't take differing needs or disparate outcomes into account. Systemic equity involves a robust system and dynamic process consciously designed to create, support and sustain social justice. See "**Racial Justice**."

Ethnicity

A socially constructed grouping of people based on culture, tribe, language, national heritage, and/or religion. It is often used interchangeably with race and/or national origin, but should be instead considered as an overlapping, rather than identical, category. See the section "*Covering Key Issues with a Racial Lens*" and the term "**Racial & Ethnic Categories**."

Hate crime

Criminal acts, motivated by bias, that target victims based on their perceived membership in a certain social group. Incidents may involve physical assault, damage to property, bullying, harassment, verbal abuse, offensive graffiti, letters or email. Hate crime laws enhance the penalties associated with conduct that is already criminal under other laws.

Implicit bias/unconscious bias

Attitudes that unconsciously affect our decisions and actions. People often think of bias as intentional, i.e. someone wanted to say something racist. However, brain science has shown that people are often unaware of their bias, and the concept of implicit bias helps describe a lot of contemporary racist acts that may not be overt or intentional. Implicit bias is just as harmful, so it is important to talk about race explicitly and to take steps to address it. Institutions are composed of individuals whose biases are replicated, and then produce systemic inequities. It is possible to interrupt implicit bias by adding steps to decision-making processes that thoughtfully consider and address racial impacts.

Inclusion

Being included within a group or structure. More than simply diversity and quantitative representation, inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation, with a true sense of belonging and full access to opportunities.

Intersectionality

The acknowledgement that multiple power dynamics/"isms" are operating simultaneously—often in complex and compounding ways—and must be considered together in order to have a more complete understanding of oppression and ways to transform it. There are multiple forms of privilege and oppression based on race, gender, class, sexuality, age, ability, religion, citizenship or immigration status, and so on. These social hierarchies are products of our social, cultural, political, economic, and legal environment. They drive disparities and divisions that help those in power maintain and expand their power. There's a danger in falsely equating different dynamics (e.g. racism and sexism) or comparing different systems to each other (sometimes referred to as the "oppression Olympics"). It is important to give each dynamic distinct, specific and sufficient attention. Every person is privileged in some areas and disadvantaged in other areas.

Minority/minorities

A term that has historically referred to non-White racial groups, indicating that they were numerically smaller than the dominant White majority. Defining people of color as "minorities" is not recommended because of changing demographics and the ways in which it reinforces ideas of inferiority and marginalization of a group of people. Defining people by how they self-identify is often preferable and more respectful. The term "minority" may be needed in specific cases (such as "minority contracting" and "minority-owned businesses") to reflect data that is collected using those categories. See the term "**People of color**," and the section *Covering Key Issues with a Racial Lens*.

Mixed race, biracial, multiracial

Generally accepted terms to describe a person who has mixed ancestry of two or more races. Many terms for people of various multiracial backgrounds exist, some of which are pejorative or are no longer used. The U.S. Census first gave the option for a person to identify as belonging to more than one race in 2000, at which time approximately 9 million individuals, or 2.9% of the population, self-identified as multiracial.

Multicultural

Involving various cultures in a society, usually with intent to promote tolerance, inclusion, and equal respect for cultural diversity. Does not include an explicit racial lens. Multiculturalism often focuses on interpersonal interaction and communication between people of different cultures rather than a systemic approach to advance equity.

People of color

Often the preferred collective term for referring to non-White racial groups, rather than "minorities." Racial justice advocates have been using the term "people of color" (not to be confused with the pejorative "colored people") since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not White, to address racial inequities. While "people of color" can be a politically useful term, and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, eg: "non-White"), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate.

"Post-racial"

A term used to describe a time in which racial prejudice and discrimination no longer exist. There are deep racial disparities and divisions across our society, and some are even widening. Much like the notion of "colorblindness," the idea of a "post-racial" society does not acknowledge that racism and inequity sit at the core of many of our nation's deepest challenges.
See "**Colorblind**."

Privilege

A set of advantages systemically conferred on a particular person or group of people. White people are racially privileged, even if they are economically underprivileged. Privilege and oppression go hand-in-hand: they are two sides of the same power relationship, and both sides of the equation must be understood and

addressed. People can be disadvantaged by one identity and privileged by another. See "**Intersectionality**," "**White supremacy.**"

Race

While often assumed to be a biological classification, based on physical and genetic variation, racial categories do not have a scientific basis. However, the consequences of racial categorization are real, as the ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture, and is used as a basis for discrimination and racial profiling. How one is racialized is a major determinant of one's socioeconomic status and life opportunities. See "**Racial & ethnic categories**."

Racial & ethnic categories

System of organizing people into groups based on their identified race and ethnicity, with categories that may change over time. Data is derived from self-identification questions; however, people often do not get to select the categories from which they must choose, making most methods of categorizing and counting highly political and often problematic. See the section *Covering Key Issues* "Reporting on Racial And Ethnic Groups."

Racial hierarchy

Ranking of different races/ethnic groups, based on physical and perceived characteristics. Racial hierarchy is not a binary of White vs. non-White, rather a complex system where groups occupy different rungs of political, economic and cultural power. Racist ideology relies on maintaining hierarchies, even among racial groups.

Racial justice

The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond "anti-racism." It is not just the absence

of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

Racial profiling
The discriminatory practice by law enforcement officials of targeting people of color for suspicion of crime without evidence of criminal activity, based on their perceived race, ethnicity, national origin or religion (e.g., "stop and frisk"). Racial profiling is ineffective, damages community-police relationships, and is being litigated around the country as a violation of constitutional rights. However, racial profiling continues to be used by law enforcement authorities at the federal, state, and local levels.

Racial slur
Derogatory, pejorative, or insulting terms for members of a racial or ethnic group. While some slurs, like the "n-word" are understood as such and are avoided, some slurs are still used in everyday speech, with little understanding of their harm. Two such examples that are inaccurate, racially charged, and should not be used:

- **"Illegals"**
  Many outlets have changed their style guides to stop using "illegal" as it applies to immigrants as a result of Race Forward's Drop the I-Word campaign. For more information visit droptheiword.com.

- **"Redskin"**
  Despite being a dictionary-defined slur, it remains in use as the team name for the Washington NFL franchise. There has been widespread campaign for the renaming of the team, as well as other sports teams that continue to use offensive names.

Racism

Historically rooted system of power hierarchies based on race—infused in our institutions, policies and culture—that benefit White people and hurt people of color. Racism isn't limited to individual acts of prejudice, either deliberate or accidental. Rather, the most damaging racism is built into systems and institutions that shape our lives. Most coverage of race and racism is not "systemically aware," meaning that it either focuses on racism at the level of individuals' speech or actions, individual-level racism, dismisses systemic racism, or refers to racism in the past tense. See more on the Four Dimensions of Racism in the Appendix, p.36.

Racist

Describes a person, behavior, or incident that perpetuates racism. Stories of race and racism that focus on personal prejudice ("who's a racist") get a disproportionate share of attention in the media. This reinforces the message that racism is primarily a phenomenon of overt, intentional acts carried out by prejudiced individuals who need correcting and/or shaming, and tends to spark debates of limited value about that individual's character. It is important for media to use a systemic lens on race-related stories to examine systems, institutional practices, policies, and outcomes.

"Reverse racism"

A concept based on a misunderstanding of what racism is, often used to accuse and attack efforts made to rectify systemic injustices. Every individual can be prejudiced and biased at one time or another about various people and behaviors, but racism is based on power and systematic oppression. Individual prejudice and systemic racism cannot be equated. Even though some people of color hold powerful positions, White people overwhelmingly hold the most systemic power. The concept of "reverse racism" ignores structural racism, which permeates all dimensions of our society, routinely advantaging White people and disadvantaging people of color. It is deeply entrenched and in no danger of being dismantled or "reversed" any time soon.

Stereotype

Characteristics ascribed to a person or groups of people based on generalization and oversimplification that may result in stigmatization and discrimination. Even so-called positive stereotypes (e.g., Asians as "model minorities") can be harmful due to their limiting nature.

Systemic analysis

A systemic analysis means we are examining the root causes and the mechanisms at play that result in patterns. It involves looking beyond individual speech, acts, and practices to the larger structures — organizations, institutions, traditions, and systems of knowledge.

White supremacy

A form of racism centered upon the belief that White people are superior to people of other racial backgrounds and that Whites should politically, economically, and socially dominate non-Whites. While often associated with violence perpetrated by the KKK and other White supremacist groups, it also describes a political ideology and systemic oppression that perpetuates and maintains the social, political, historical and/or industrial White domination.

Race Forward Resources:

Moving the Race Conversation Forward
http://raceforward.org/moving-race-conversation-forward

Drop the I-Word
http://droptheiword.com

Racial Equity Impact Assessment Toolkit
http://raceforward.org/racial-equity-impact-assessment-toolkit

Colorlines
http://colorlines.com/

What is Systemic Racism?
https://www.raceforward.org/videos/systemic-racism

Additional Resources:

W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Racial Equity Resource Guide
www.racialequityresourceguide.org

Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity's
State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review 2015
http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/implicit-bias-review/

For more resources, visit Race Forward's Race Reporting
Guide online
http://raceforward.org/reporting-guide

Four Dimensions of Racism, from Race Forward Trainings:

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL RACISM

INTERNALIZED RACISM
The private racial beliefs held by individuals.

EXAMPLE
Prejudice, internalized oppression and internalized privilege

INTERPERSONAL RACISM
How we act upon our racial beliefs when we interact with others.

EXAMPLE
Bias, bigotry, hate speech and violence

SYSTEMIC-LEVEL RACISM

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM
Racial inequities within institutions and systems of power.

EXAMPLE
School systems that provide unequal opportunities for people of different races

STRUCTURAL RACISM
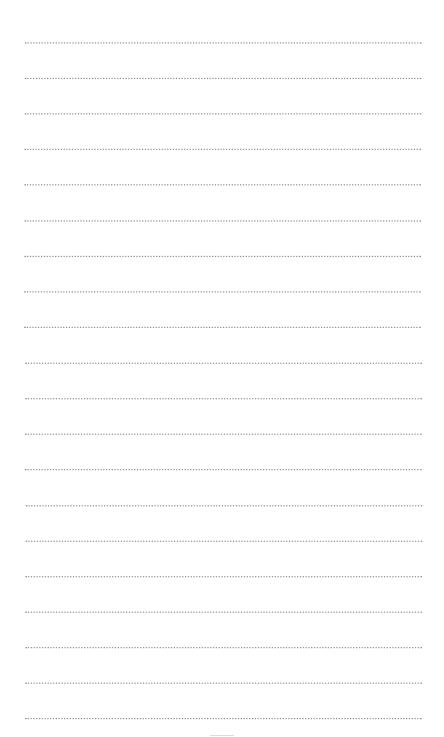Racial bias across institutions and society.

EXAMPLE
The racial wealth gap reflects the cumulative effects of of racial inequities.
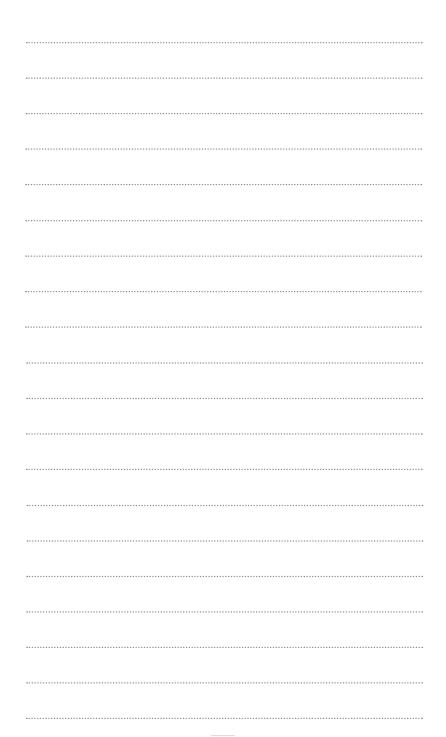
ONLINE RESOURCES
See Race Forward's Racial Equity Impact Assessment Toolkit
http://raceforward.org/racial-equity-impact-assessment-toolkit

Race Forward advances racial justice through research, media, and practice. Founded in 1981, Race Forward brings systemic analysis and an innovative approach to complex race issues to help people take effective action toward racial equity. Race Forward publishes the daily news site Colorlines and presents Facing Race, the country's largest multiracial conference on racial justice.