



VTA TRANSIT EQUITY TOOLKIT



Sid Faucette and Lisa Guthrie

**VIRGINIA
TRANSIT
ASSOCIATION**





VTA TRANSIT EQUITY TOOLKIT



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4. [LINK Houston: Decision Maker Scorecard](#)
5. [LINK Houston: Facilitation Guide](#)
6. [LINK Houston: Individual Workbook](#)
7. [Evolution: Six Steps to Build an Outstanding Advisory Board](#)
8. [TCRP: Effective Use of Citizen Advisory Committees](#)
9. [Transit Center: Comprehensive Transit Accessibility and Equity Dashboard](#)
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7. Resources



Production Acknowledgements:

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 GRTC, Graphic Images

Human Resources Links

FTA Regulations and Programs: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/regulations-and-guidance>

USDOT Transportation Policy: <https://www.transportation.gov/policy/transportation-policy>

Solano.edu: Equity Framework & Lens 2019: http://solano.edu/professional_development/presentations/equity_lens_2019_mar.pdf

HHS Public Access: Public Transit Equity Analysis at Metropolitan and Local Scales: A Focus on Nine Large Cities in the US: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5476368/>

Makita Wilbon: Racial Equity Lens: <https://www.maketawillborn.com/services/services/equityengagement.php>

RCC: 10 Essential Questions Policy Development: https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/files/content/upload/RCC-10_Essential_Questions_Policy_Development.pdf

Kinder Institute: Racism Has Shaped Public Transit, and its Riddle with Inequities: <https://kinder.rice.edu/urbanedge/2020/08/24/transportation-racism-has-shaped-public-transit-america-inequalities>

David Thomas, Race Matters (HBR): <https://hbr.org/2001/04/race-matters>

Center for American Progress: Reform Agenda for the USDOT: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/reform-agenda-u-s-department-transportation/>

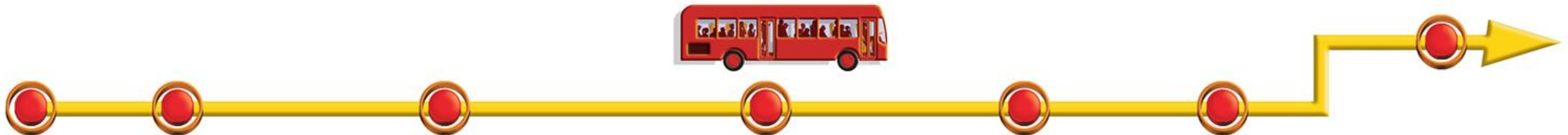
How to Start an Employee Resource Group:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c6c805f94d71ae783e929e0/t/5d38a7b4185634000135c39b/1563994045217/PepTalkHer+How+to+start+an+ERG+Guide.pdf>

Gallup: Three Requirements of a Diverse and Inclusive Culture—and Why They Matter for Your Organization: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/242108/diversity-inclusion-perspective-paper.aspx>

Best Companies AZ - How to Start an Employee Resource Group: <https://bestcompaniesaz.com/how-to-start-an-employee-resource-group/>

HBR - Jill Perry-Smith, You've Built a Racially Diverse Team. But Have You Built an Inclusive Culture: <https://hbr.org/2021/08/youve-built-a-racially-diverse-team-but-have-you-built-an-inclusive-culture>



Regulations and Programs

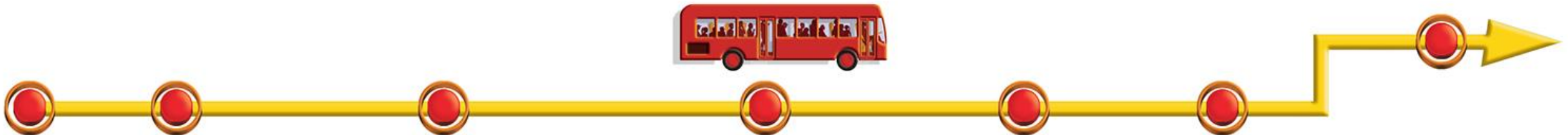
Regulations & Programs

In its role of providing financial assistance to develop new transit systems and improve, maintain, and operate existing systems nationwide, FTA oversees thousands of grants provided to states, tribes, and local public agencies to support public transportation. Grantees have a responsibility to comply with statutory and regulatory requirements associated with the management of federally assisted grants.

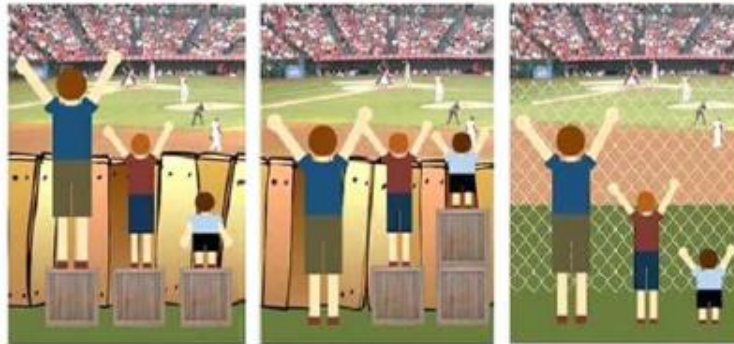
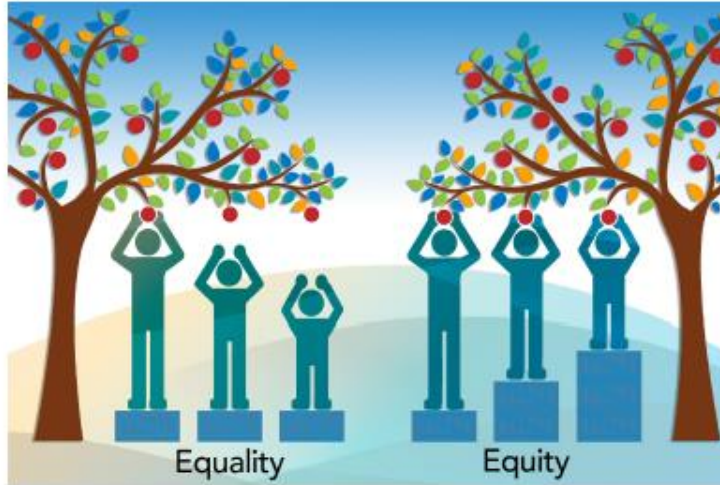
Requirements

FTA monitors grants and federally funded projects to confirm that grantees establish and follow federally mandated procedures, such as:

- Demonstrating legal, financial, and technical capacity to carry out programs and projects
- Providing technical inspection and supervision by qualified professionals of all work in progress
- Ensuring compliance with [procurement requirements](#), including the [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#)
- Complying with all applicable [civil rights statutes](#) and implementing regulations
- Complying with applicable [safety](#) and [asset management](#)



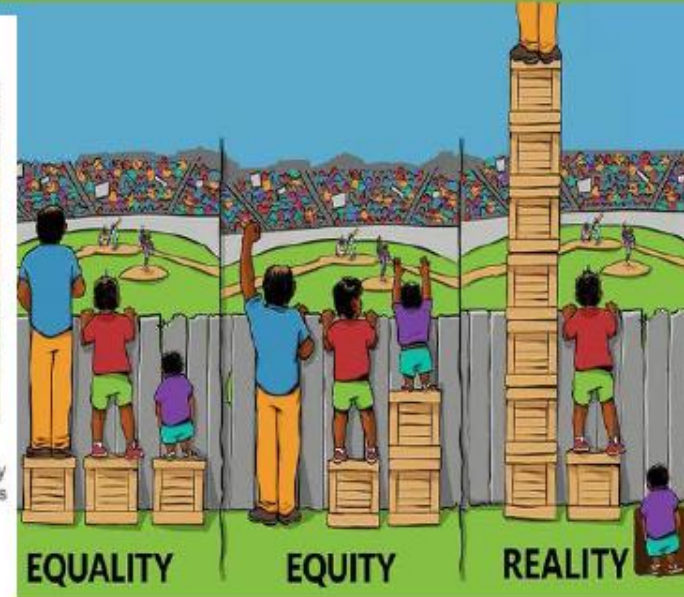
What is Equity?



In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.

In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.

In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.



CHANGING THE FUTURE: Stepping Toward Equity...

The City of Seattle introduced its Race and Social Justice Initiative in 2005. In doing so, it was the first city that had ever undertaken a specific initiative focused explicitly on improving community well-being by addressing institutional racism and eliminating racial inequity.

Public policy has played a pivotal role in both creating and dismantling the structural and institutional barriers that have disproportionately affected marginalized groups, including racial groups, in America. Although the most obvious racially discriminatory policies have been overturned or mitigated, factors that disadvantage communities of color—intended and unintended alike—continue to operate in American society and in public policy.

ABC and our partner organizations consistently receive questions from policy-makers and other leaders regarding practical applications of a racial equity framework in assessing the racial impacts of policies, practices, and programs. These questions represent a larger shared vision of fairness that is far more likely to be achieved if we can increase effectiveness in evaluating the impact of policies on all groups of Maryland residents. This shared vision places Maryland firmly in the forefront of high caliber policy development. Using a racial equity lens in developing policy puts Maryland at the forefront of cities and states that directly address racial equity. Removing structural and institutional barriers that have racially disproportionate impacts on residents increases Maryland's reputation as a livable state and strengthens its economic vibrancy.

This pocket guide is a concrete educational tool for policy leaders and others wanting to translate their commitment to justice and equity to practical applications.

The Challenge

Most policies are developed from a "universalist" perspective that assumes everyone has equal access and opportunity. Such an approach, however, does not account for the structural and institutional barriers to opportunity that continue to operate in American society. Racialized barriers don't just hurt individual racial groups; they hurt our national economy, generating losses on our economic and material productivity. Developing a racial equity approach to policy can assist in changing that dynamic. For example, closing race-based earning gaps by 2030 would increase U.S. GDP by 16%—more than \$5 trillion a year—increasing corporate profits by more than \$450 billion and federal tax revenues by more than \$1 trillion.² As Maryland's population grows and changes, becoming more racially diverse, it is even more critical to examine how policy—legislation, budget priorities, regulatory issues, judicial decisions, and other policy that affect opportunities, access, and day-to-day lives of residents—is likely to impact the different groups in our society, especially those who have been historically cut off from fully benefiting from economic opportunity.

CHANGING THE FUTURE: Policy Applications of a Racial Equity Framework: Background

The UK's Public Sector Equality Act of 2010 requires public authorities to have "due regard to equality considerations when exercising their functions." Although not required by this law, the use of Equity Impact Assessments are strongly encouraged to assess certain policies regarding their potential impact on equality prior to their implementation.

Analyzing the impact of policies on racial and other marginalized groups is not new, either nationally or internationally. The UK, for example, has frequently updated its "Equality Act," including a "Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Impact Assessment" which obligates public authorities to give "due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity."

Nationally, city governments are becoming more responsive to the calls of coalition groups (advocacy, business, community) for policy assessments that address racial (and other forms of) equity. Whether called Racial Equity Impact Assessments³, Equity Impact Assessments, or Race and Social Justice Initiatives, cities and states across the country⁴ either have or are advocating for racial equity impact assessments as standard parts of the policy process.

- Seattle, WA's process is regarded as a model in policy impact assessments. It has a concrete and far-reaching plan of action that incorporates internal outcomes in City government, public engagement and City services, as well as race-based disparities in Seattle communities.
- The state of Connecticut has a narrower focus, applying its racial equity assessment lens only to policies that affect prison populations. In 2009, its General Assembly created measures requiring its Office of Legislative Research to prepare racial and ethnic impact statements for all bills affecting prison population size, when requested by its Legislative Committee.

In these cases, each targeted effort moved from a seemingly "race neutral" decision-making perspective to one that supports legislators in more effectively addressing implicit biases and barriers in systems—and in the process, transforming them.

Leading With Race ...

Race has thus far maintained an intractable role in American society. Specifically addressing this issue—not from a personal or interpersonal perspective, but from the often invisible structural and institutional perspective—is essential. As we developed this pocket guide we learned that some are concerned that use of an equity lens benefits some groups and not others. Research⁵ has shown, though, that inequity is damaging to the economic well-being of communities, regions and nations alike. Using a framework that carefully acknowledges the detrimental economic and social impact of racism from a structural and institutional frame is not beneficial only to particular groups—it benefits the entire state. By using a racial equity⁶ framework, decision-makers signal that they recognize that challenges faced by some groups ultimately and adversely affect everyone. Intentional and consistent use of a racial equity framework prepares our state for the demographic changes to come by expanding pathways to opportunities that advance the overall interests of as many Maryland residents as possible.

CHANGING THE FUTURE: Policy Applications of a Racial Equity Lens In Maryland ...

The City of Madison established its Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative in 2013, focusing on eliminating racial and social inequities in two main areas in municipal government: policies/budgets and city operations. Equity considerations are now integral to major decisions, with the focus on achieving equitable allocation of resources.

Policymakers in Seattle, Washington, Madison, Wisconsin, and other cities in the United States are on the front lines of taking action by simply asking questions with a racial equity lens when drafting, reviewing and before passing public policy.

Below are 10 essential questions that every policy-maker and civic leader involved in policy development, review and evaluation should use to identify the potential of unintended race-based disparities and, when appropriate, to inform policy decisions. While it may not always be possible to answer every question in detail, each should at least be asked and considered. Asking these questions is an acknowledgement that policy is not "universal" or "colorblind" and that incorporating an equity lens to policy increases the economic growth prospects for Maryland and *all* its residents.

Ten Essential Questions for Policy Development, Review and Evaluation:⁷

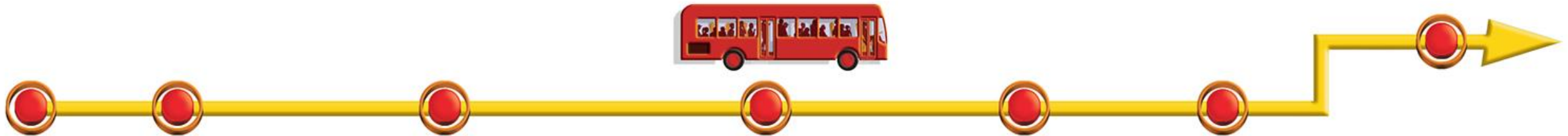
1. How is an equity lens incorporated within the policy?
2. Does the policy explicitly account for potential racially disparate outcomes? If so, how? If not, how can it be incorporated?
3. How is an equity lens incorporated in tracking policy outcomes?
4. Will the policy increase access and opportunity for communities of color? How?
5. Will the policy have a positive impact on racial / ethnic equity, inclusion and full participation of all people (in the process, in implementation, in breadth of outreach and participation, in decision-making and culture of decision-making, etc.)?
6. Will the policy protect against racial violence, racial profiling and discrimination? How?
7. What are the mechanisms in place to ensure accountability (such as equity-focused benchmarks or indicators)?
8. Do the lens and tools for accountability incorporate a racial equity framework? How?
9. Are there changes that could be made to make the policy more equitable and inclusive?
10. What are the economic and social benefits of incorporating an equity lens in this policy?

Developing an Equity Lens

“An equity lens is a tool for analysis, planning, decision making, and evaluation. These tools can be used to analyze the internal, external, and foundational elements of policies or programs on under-served, marginalized, and diverse individuals and groups to identify appropriate accommodation to eliminate barriers; inequities. They can also be used to evaluate interpersonal engagement and how well people work effectively with people who are different from themselves.”

- Drs. Bennett and Cartwright, Intercultural Communication Institute

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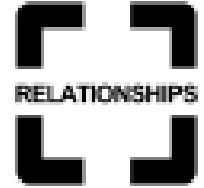


Racial Equity Lens



Centering Race

This filter focuses on the critical need to address race intentionally and explicitly - but not exclusively. With our focus on race we must also acknowledge and address the broader issues related to the multiple dimensions of diversity including, but not limited to, gender, gender identity, ability, and age.



Centering Relationships

This is about creating and sustaining authentic and informed relationships across difference. This filter invites us to move beyond transactional interactions and balance task and relationship to ensure that we are giving support and attention to the process as well as to our desired outcomes. Here we maintain the tone and build the trust to do the challenging work of creating authentically equitable communities and organizations.



Ensuring Access

This filter is the gateway to inclusion and participation. It is necessary to ensure that all stakeholders have real access to programs, resources, and educational opportunities. Here we are also invited to become aware of how we consciously and unconsciously act as gatekeepers who maintain and support the existing systems of inequity within our organization and the larger society.



Building Bridges

This filter invites us to look at how we work with others to act for the collective betterment. It requires us to recognize injustice and to work across differences to find a common ground to achieve equity. Building bridges requires coalition building and extending our networks. Necessary skills are empathy, co-operation, trust, effective communication, mediation and conflict resolution skills.



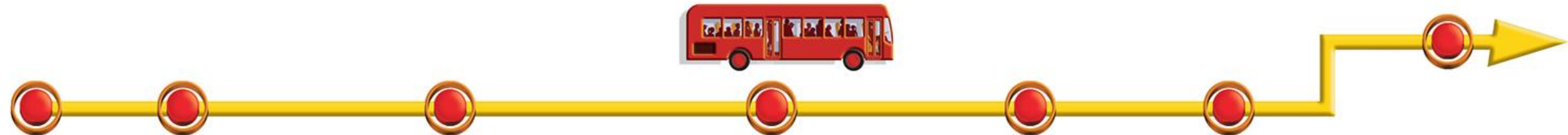
Seeing White

This filter invites a critical examination of the color, culture and consciousness that is the legacy of white colonialism. This lens challenges us to go beyond conceptualizing a racial "other" in people of color and recognize the specific elements that inform the racial identity and actions of white people. With this filter we begin to understand what Whiteness is, how and why it was created, and how it continues to operate to support systems of racial inequity.



Shifting & Sharing Power

This filter invites us to identify, analyze and act to address power dynamics that hinder equity and justice. This is a call to those in formal and informal positions of power to engage in a deliberate process of sharing and shifting that power to ensure agency among all stakeholders. And it is a call to those without positional power to identify and apply their influence to create positive change.



The Truth About Mentoring Minorities

Race Matters

by David A. Thomas

Diversity has become a top priority in corporate America. Despite the best intentions, though, many organizations have failed to achieve racial balance within their executive teams. Some have revolving doors for talented minorities, recruiting the best and brightest only to see them leave, frustrated and even angered by the barriers they encounter. Other companies are able to retain high-potential professionals of color only to have them become mired in middle management. Still others have minorities in their executive ranks, but only in racialized positions, such as those dealing with community relations, equal employment opportunity, or ethnic markets.

In my research on the career progression of minorities at U.S. corporations, I have found that whites and minorities follow distinct patterns of advancement. Specifically, promising white professionals tend to enter a fast track early in their careers, whereas high-potential minorities take off much later, typically after they have reached middle management. I've also found that the people of color who ad-

vance the furthest all share one characteristic—a strong network of mentors and corporate sponsors who nurture their professional development.

These findings have key implications for mentors—mainly that to be effective, they must fully appreciate all the developmental roles they play (such as that of coach, advocate, and counselor) and understand the importance of each at different stages of their protégé's career. The mentor of a professional of color must also be aware of the challenges race can present to his protégé's career development and advancement. Only then can the mentor help his protégé build a network of relationships with people who can pave the way to the executive level. As a foundation, then, mentors must first understand how people of color tend to climb the corporate ladder.

Patterns of Movement

In a three-year research project, I studied the career trajectories of minority and white professionals at three major U.S. corporations.



Based on our study of more than 200 organizations and review of existing academic research, Gallup has identified three requirements for creating inclusive environments for all employees.



How to start an ERG group in 5 easy steps:

1. Garner interest from the company
2. Define your mission & goals
3. Find an Executive Sponsor
4. Get official company approval
5. Promote your ERG internally

*Check to see if your company already has a specific process in place. If so, follow their process.

What is an ERG?

ERG stands for Employee Resource Group, and can also be known as affinity groups, business network groups, or your company may even call it something else. Whatever they're called, at the most basic level, these organizations provide necessary "safe spaces" for employees to connect & discuss challenges and solutions.

ERG's are groups of employees who join together in their workplace based on shared characteristics or life experiences. Common ERG's could be based on gender, race, sexual orientation, working parents, veterans, and more.

Why start an ERG?

- Opportunities for leadership, problem-solving, innovation at the company, regardless of your seniority level
- Personal and professional development
- Having an impact on the company (retention, culture, morale)
- Working closely with and getting noticed by senior management
- Potential for raises and a promotion

Why an ERG is good for your company?

- Culture
- Retention
- Recruitment



Community Needs Links

LinkHouston: Community Facilitation Guide

<https://linkhouston.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/LINK-facilitation-guide-final.pdf>

APTA: Public Transportation Facts

<https://www.apta.com/news-publications/public-transportation-facts/>

Bloomberg: Why Is American Mass Transit So Bad? It's a Long Story

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2018-08-31/why-is-american-mass-transit-so-bad-it-s-a-long-story>

Faith Walker, The Bus Should Be Free

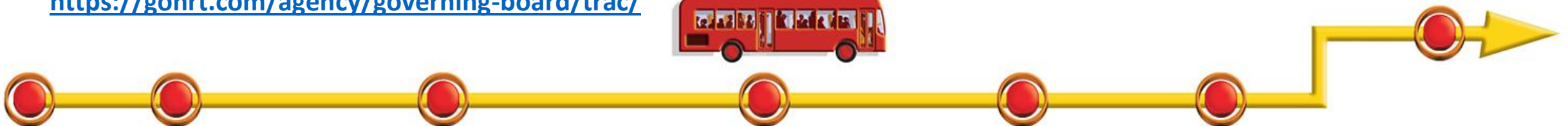
<https://richmondracialequityessays.com/the-bus-should-be-free>

VA Conservation Network: Expanding Public Transit

<http://vcnva.org/expanding-public-transit-2/>

Hampton Roads Transit: Transit Riders Advisory Committee

<https://gohrt.com/agency/governing-board/trac/>



VA Transit Civic Engagement Opportunities

Civic and Social Justice: VA Civic Engagement Table and its member organizations/ New Virginia Majority/Virginia Organizing/Rotary-Kiwanis-Ruritan Clubs-Woman's Club

Faith: Catholic Charities/Churches, Mosques, and Synagogues/Church World Service/Faith in Action/Faith in Public Life/Church Associations/Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy/Interfaith Center for Power and Light/Religious Denominations

Environmental: Citizens Climate Lobby/Coalition for Smarter Growth/Sierra Club and its Chapters/VA Conservation Network/League of Conservation Voters/Bicycle & Pedestrian Advocacy Groups

Education: HBCUs/Community Colleges & Universities/PTA State and Local Chapters/Student Power Network

Elections: Fair Elections Center/League of Women Voters/Spread the Vote/

Equality: Equality VA/Poverty Law Center/VA Black Leadership Organizing & Collaborative/Disabled/Black Lives Matter/LGBTQIA+ Community/Native American Community & Tribes

NAACP: VA Chapter & Local Units

Transit: RVA Rapid Transit/Transit Riders/School Bus Drivers Association/Unserved Communities

Senior Citizens: AARP/Local Senior Centers/Area Agencies on Aging/Virginia Navigator

Labor: Virginia Education Association/Tenants and Workers United/SEIU VA 512—Domestic & Health Care Workers/Virginia AFL-CIO

Youth: Boys and Girls Clubs/Mentor Virginia/RISE for Youth/YMCA/Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts

Regional: Greater Washington Partnership—Metro Now/MPOs and PDCs

Well-Being: Hospitals & Health Care Centers/AMA & Local Chapters/Suicide Prevention/Mental Health Providers/Drug Centers/Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association/UNITE Virginia

Housing: Housing advocates/Better Housing Coalition/Virginia Housing Alliance/Realtors Associations

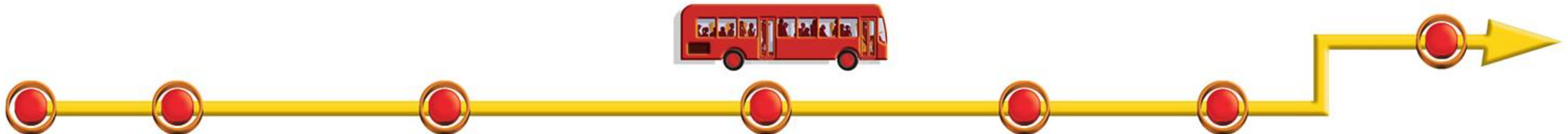
Immigrants: Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights/Central American Associations/Hispanic Organizations/Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice VA/League of United Latin American Citizens/Muslim Associations/All Dulles Area Muslim Society Center/Justice for Muslims Collective/Arab American Institute/Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote

Employers: Large Employers/Black & Minority Owned Businesses; Chambers of Commerce

Lawyers: Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law/ACLU of VA/Southern Coalition for Social Justice

Military: Military Bases, Housing, & Schools/National Guard Units/Veterans

Governmental: Social Services/Special Education Services/Local Parks & Recreation/Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development



Strategic Planning Links

Mead & Hunt: Planning for Equity in Transportation

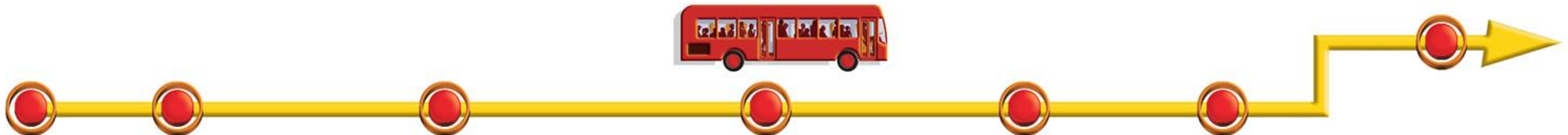
<https://meadhunt.com/equity-in-transportation-system/>

USDOT: Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients

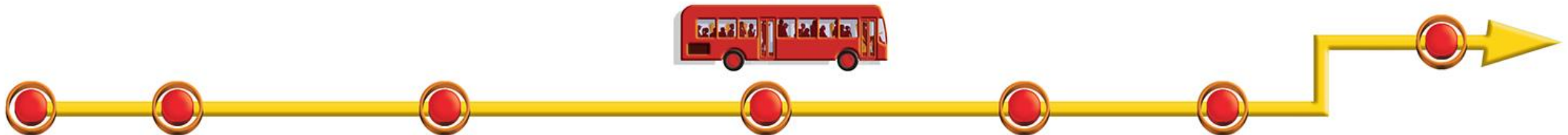
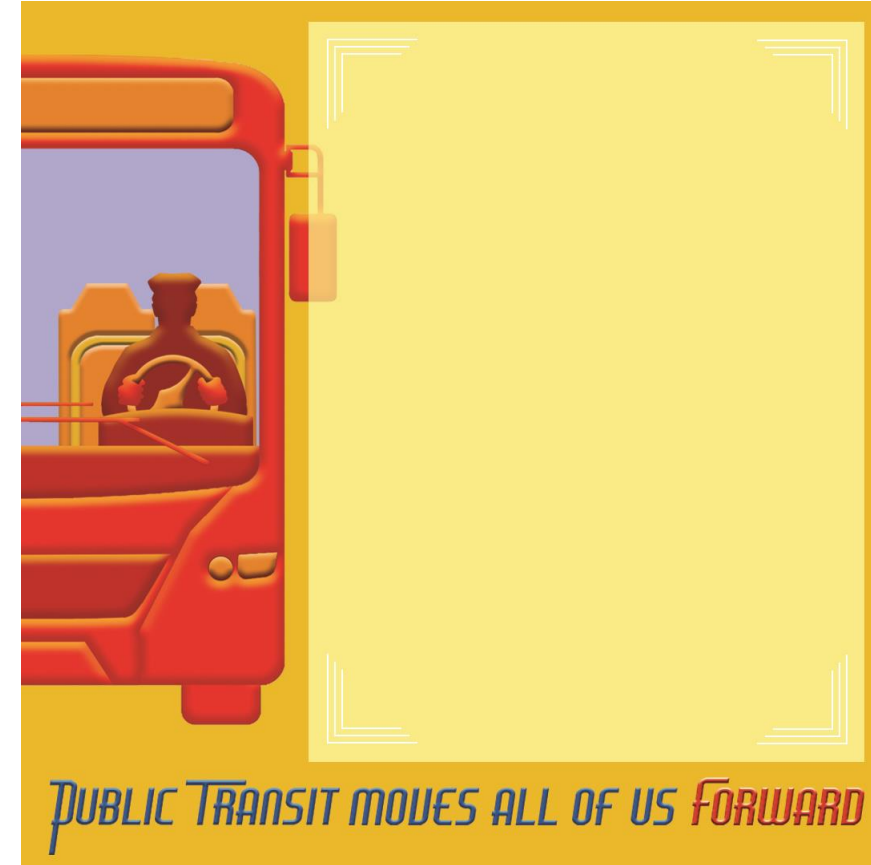
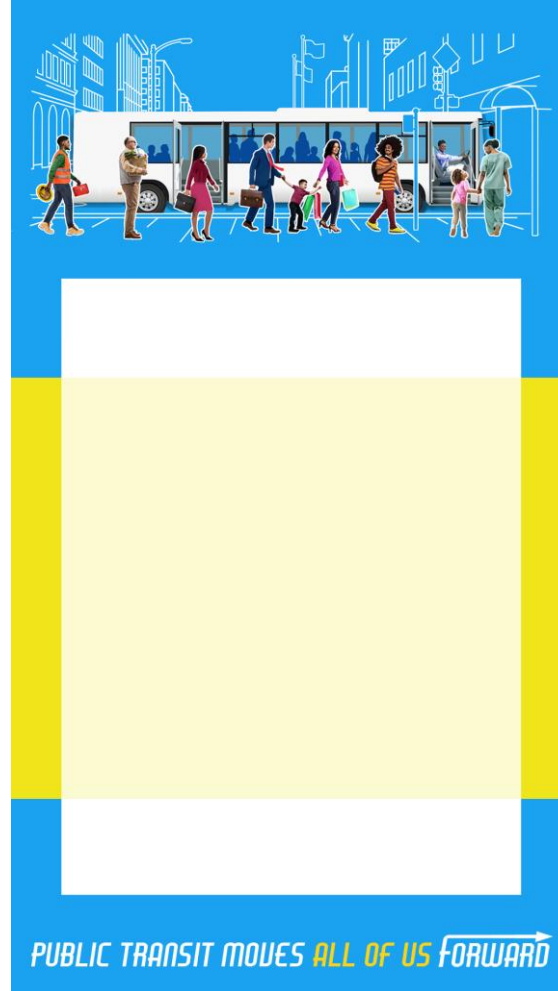
<https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/FTA Title VI FINAL.pdf>

USDOT: Justice 40 Initiative

<https://www.transportation.gov/equity-Justice40#more-about-justice-40>



Communications Templates:



Resources

VA Transit Association	https://vatransit.com
APTA	https://www.apta.com/news-publications/
DRPT	http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/transit/overview/ https://www.vatransitequity.com/
FTA	https://www.transit.dot.gov
Maryland Department of Transportation	https://www.mta.maryland.gov
National League of Cities	https://www.nlc.org https://www.nlc.org/racial-equity-resources-and-reports/
Richmond Racial Equity Essays	https://richmondracialequityessays.com/essays

Blogs:

BusRide	https://busride.com
DiversityInc.com	https://www.diversityinc.com
LinkedIn Transit Groups	https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1784344/
Maryland Transit Association	https://www.mta.maryland.gov
Mass Transit Network	https://masstransit.network
MetroMagazine	https://www.metro-magazine.com
TransitCenter	https://transitcenter.org
Transportation for America	https://t4america.org/news-and-blog/



Questions?

