



Racial Equity and Cultural Competence Committee

Strategic Priorities 2023-2025

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Mission	3
Vision	3
History	4
RECCC Subcommittees	5
RECCC Priorities	6
1. Create a Culture of Inclusion and Belonging	6
2. Foster Greater Engagement with Staff and Communities	6
3. Develop and Build Sustainable Learning Programs	6
4. Promote Implementation of a Racial Equity Inclusive Lens	7
Our Structure	7

Introduction

The Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) seeks to ensure that every child and family we serve is nurtured, safe, strong and part of a supportive community. Its mission is to support communities, strengthen families, protect children, and promote healthy child development, ensuring that young people flourish as they grow into adulthood. A core foundational value is equity. ACS is also committed to countering the economic poverty and chronic stress that disproportionately harm the city’s children and families of color. We believe in the primacy of equity in housing, education, employment and health care and seek to secure racial, ethnic, cultural, disability, gender and LGBTQ+ equity throughout our services and systems.

We recognized that racism is a societal issue that continues to pervade our many institutions, including child welfare and juvenile justice. Racism can create barriers to children realizing their true potential and to families meeting their needs. And although structural and institutional racism persist in policing, health, housing and other systems; the Racial Equity and Cultural Competence Committee (RECCC) is committed to working with the ACS community to dismantle systems that perpetuate racial and social injustice. The priorities and strategies outlined in this document reflect the continuing efforts of the RECCC to support ACS becoming an anti-racist, multicultural, inclusive meet that commitment.

Mission

To ensure the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) achieves racial equity in all aspects of our work.

Vision

A racially equitable child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care system for all NYC children and families. Equity means:

Race will not be a predictor of how children fare in children’s services systems.



Race will not be a factor when the children’s services makes decisions about a child.



Families will have equitable access to services and supports delivered by diverse and culturally competent staff.



Children’s services recruitment, hiring and promotion practices will ensure equitable opportunities for all.

History

In 2006 the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), under the leadership of then Commissioner John Mattingly, established a Task Force on Racial Equity and Cultural Competency to formally recognize and commit resources to address racial and social inequities in our child welfare system. The group engaged in numerous activities, including a leadership forum, to promote racial equity in our work.

In 2011, the Task Force was renamed the Racial Equity and Cultural Competence Committee (RECCC), expanding to include a representation of ACS staff, external stakeholders and professionals committed to educating and raising awareness of institutional racism and implicit bias. Since then, the RECCC, building on the work of the Task Force, has developed various initiatives to realize its mission – to ensure the Administration for Children's Services achieves racial equity in all aspects of our work. Today, the RECCC remains an advisory body to the ACS Commissioner, providing input and strategizing on policy and agencywide efforts in order to promote an equitable child welfare, juvenile justice and early care system.

The RECCC consists of four subcommittees: data, media/outreach, policy and training, with each subcommittee focused on their areas of specialization and expertise. RECCC committee members work collectively to achieve the overall goals of:

- Building the capacity of Children's Services' staff at all levels to respond effectively to structural racism and individual bias and promote culturally competent policy and practice;
- Developing and implementing specific actions that promote equitable outcomes for children and families of color;
- Partnering with community and other systems that play a key role in the achievement of positive service outcomes to promote racial equity and cultural competence, and;
- Informing policies, training, hiring practices, and program practice guidelines where needed to ensure continuity and sustainability in promoting equitable outcomes for children, families, and staff.

RECCC Subcommittees

Data and Outcomes

- The goal of the Data Subcommittee is to promote the use of data to guide and strategically plan work needed to achieve racial equity in the Children's Services. The subcommittee produces and monitors the child welfare and youth justice data to educate constituents regarding the extent of the disparities and to inform areas of focus to guide our work. The Data Subcommittee is critical to the RECCC's commitment to using data to further dialogue on dismantling racial inequities in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Media and Outreach

- The goal of the Media and Outreach Subcommittee is to increase awareness about racial equity and cultural competency in our work and in our workplace, to families we serve and the staff of ACS and provider agencies. The committee maintains the RECCC webpage as well as promotes RECCC events. In 2017, the committee began hosting Courageous Conversations, a safe space for staff and anyone with experience in the child welfare system to express their views and develop action steps that can help to fulfill the mission of the RECCC.

Policy and Legislation

- The Policy Subcommittee advocates for, advises on, and informs ACS' policy and practice standards to promote racial equity and reduce disproportionality. The goal is to ensure that the impact of ACS' work across the City has positive, equitable outcomes for children, families and their communities.

Training and Education

- The Training Subcommittee is committed to building a culture of learning within ACS that fosters open discussions about race and promote the participation and education of all staff as champions of racial equity. The Subcommittee is charged with increasing the capacity of Children's Services staff at all levels so that they can effectively respond to structural racism and individual biases, and promoting culturally competent policy and practice. To achieve this goal, the Subcommittee has previously implemented several training and education projects such as the Child Protective Specialist New Hire Pilot, Undoing Racism training for all levels of staff, the Historical Child Welfare Exhibit, and the Video Learning Series, among other projects.

Priorities

Our strategic focus will be on creating an anti-racist, multi-cultural, inclusive organization. Following are the RECCC's priorities aligned to realize that focus:

- ❖ Create a Culture of Inclusion and Belonging
- ❖ Foster Greater Engagement with Staff and Communities
- ❖ Develop and Build Sustainable Learning Programs
- ❖ Promote Implementation of a Racial Equity Inclusive Lens

Create a Culture of Inclusion and Belonging

Transforming our culture is critical to securing a racially equitable and culturally competent system. The RECCC is committed to creating and building on existing activities to promote ideals and behaviors consistent with becoming an anti-racist, inclusive organization where everyone in the agency, its contracted providers and the communities served are respected and heard.

- Promote agency-wide usage and implementation of Safety Culture Framework
- Define attributes of an anti-racist, inclusive organization
- Conduct (internal) analysis to determine agency's status on anti-racist continuum
- Create a road map for creating a racially equitable inclusive organization

Foster Greater Engagement with Staff and Communities

The RECCC will continue to explore and build partnerships to promote the use of racial equity and culturally competent lenses in all interactions with staff, providers and communities.

- Collaborate with Employee Resources Groups (ERGs)
- Utilize a Community Engagement Framework
- Seek opportunities to partner with community organizations and programs
- Expand RECCC membership

Develop and Promote Sustainable Learning Programs

The RECCC is committed to building and expanding a culture of learning within ACS. The RECCC will advocate for and support the creation and/or continuation of training and staff development programs dedicated to building the capacity of all staff to utilize racial equity and culturally competent lenses.

- Promote the mandatory race equity/cultural competence training for all levels of staff

- Foster leadership engagement and development program
- Create/Reboot/Enhance existing learning opportunities (i.e. Courageous Conversations, Video Learning Series, Racial Accountability Spaces, Symposiums)

Promote Utilization of a Racial Equity Inclusive Lens

The RECCC will identify opportunities to promote the development and implementation of mechanisms to effect equitable outcomes for all impacted by the child welfare, juvenile justice and early learn systems.

- Develop and publish a core message
- Utilize the Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) tool in policy and program development
- Revisit data collection and aggregation to track progress
- Align recruitment, hiring and promotional strategies and practices with Racial Equity Inclusive lens

Our Structure

- Membership: Open to all ACS Divisions & External Stakeholders
- Chair: Assistant Commissioner, Ancil Payne
- Senior Advisor: Deputy Commissioner, Jacqueline Martin
- Subcommittees/Chair:
 - Data & Outcomes – Sara Workman & Fouad Yared
 - Media & Outreach – Valerie Moore & Zachary Howard
 - Policy & Legislation – Heather Blount
 - Training & Education – Tyler James & Bojana Zezelj