***Organizational Health Equity Checklist***

***Foundational Practices for Health Equity Tool:*** <https://www.astho.org/Health-Equity/Foundational-Practices-for-Health-Equity/>

***For each Foundational Practice, ask your team the following questions:***

1. *To what extent do we have these critical capacities?*

* *Not at all?*
* *Isolated individuals, projects, or ad hoc efforts?*
* *Some existing policies, procedures, and practices to support these capabilities?*
* *Widespread organizational standards that support these capabilities exist and are measured?*

1. *What are our supports/constraints in strengthening these critical capacities?*
2. *What are some specific examples of how we do this? How could we better or more extensively incorporate these capabilities in our work?*
3. *If we already have these capabilities, are we proficient? How could we improve?*

Foundational Practice I: Expand the Understanding of Health in Words and Action

* **Assure that both the organization and its partners understand the structural and system-based issues that contribute to health inequities.**
  + Does our organization:
    - Utilize the WHO CSDH framework to increase our understanding of structural and intermediary inequities?
    - Work with communities experiencing inequities to develop, adopt, and promote a shared narrative around health equity?
    - Use its mission, vision, and values statements to communicate and support understanding of the structural and system-based inequities that contribute to poor birth and health outcomes?
    - Lead events, campaigns, and/or use social media to raise awareness of the conditions that create health and the impact of inequities on health outcomes?
    - Work with partner organizations in creating a shared narrative about what creates health?
  + Do clear messages around the key concepts of health equity permeate every area of work within our organization?
* **Use data to demonstrate the connections among social and economic conditions and health outcomes.**
  + Does our organization:
    - Analyze data to develop an understanding of the relationships among the social determinants of health and health outcomes, as well as request data from its partners to create a shared understanding?
    - Conduct any analyses using tools such as health impact assessment or research studies to examine and demonstrate impact on health inequities across policy sectors?
* **Develop leadership that is consistent around applying a racial equity lens and understanding of power and privilege.**
  + Does our organization:
    - Invite and support staff in applying knowledge of personal bias and structural racism in their own work?
    - Develop or adopt policies, practices, and tools that prioritize racial equity in order to address it explicitly?
  + Is our leadership willing and able to speak clearly about racism and the effects of social exclusion?
* **Align actions and investments to reinforce an expanded understanding of health.**
  + Does our organization:
    - Have working relationships, and the capacity to influence policy change efforts that address social inequity, with agencies or sectors such as housing, education, corrections, economic development, public safety, etc.?
    - Follow the WHO CSDH Framework and messaging around health equity?
  + Do our employees have the capacity to ask critical questions to influence how policies, practices and investments are developed within the organization?

Foundational Practice II: Assess and Influence the Policy Context

* **Assess the policy context that creates underlying systems issues that perpetuate health inequities.**
  + Does our organization:
    - Have the knowledge and skills to identify and assess the policy context for health inequities at the state and local level?
    - Use the WHO CSDH Framework (or other health equity framework) to comprehensively assess our state and local policy context regarding the structural and intermediary determinants that contribute to health inequities or advance health equity?
    - Engage the community, especially communities of color, American Indians and other communities experiencing health inequities, to inform our assessment of the policy environment?
    - Promote a health equity in all policies approach?
* **Implement policy changes that improve the social determinants of health and improve health equity.**
  + Does our organization:
    - Influence, develop, and implement policies to improve social and economic conditions in our state, especially for populations of color, American Indians and others experiencing health inequities?
    - Have a process for identifying timely strategic opportunities which may not be “high priority” or “hot-button” issues?
* **Assess and improve our organizations internal policies, programs, and systems, using an equity lens.** 
  + Does our organization apply a health and racial equity approach to our organizational procedures, including:
    - Grant making and reviewing procedures?
    - Hiring and human resources procedures?
    - Workforce development procedures?
    - Data acquisition and analysis procedures?
    - Budgeting and resource allocation procedures?
    - Other key organizational procedures?

Foundational Practice III: Lead with an Equity Focus

* **Clearly articulate an equity framework and take action to advance health equity.**
  + Does our organization:
    - Have health equity as a central focus of its mission/activities?
    - Have key senior staff who champion health equity and take action to address social determinants of health.
    - Incorporate health equity and the social and economic conditions necessary for health into state plans, budgets, assessments, and other strategic documents?
  + Do leaders in our organization:
    - Recognize the significance of social stratification and take action to advance equity along lines of race, gender, class and income, geography, sexual identification, physical ability, and other socially-defined categories that confer advantage and disadvantage?
    - Have the ability to identify and analyze the power relations of institutions and organizations?
* **Engage stakeholders and commit resources to achieve health equity.**
  + Do leaders in our organization:
    - Help populations that experience inequities to influence the department’s program/policy efforts?
    - Engage with organizations to create/carry out strategies to advance policy change for health equity?
    - Inspire staff and meaningfully engage all stakeholders – including communities of color, American Indians and other communities experiencing inequities – toward a shared agenda and resources to advance health equity?
* **Foster health equity leadership within the organization and community.** 
  + Does our organization:
    - Foster and support the development of leaders at all levels of the organization?
    - Work collaboratively with grassroots and civic organizations whose activities advance health equity?
    - Recognize and support existing and emerging leaders for health equity across the organization?
    - Assure that policy makers are prepared to set policy that advances health equity?
  + Do leaders within our organization collaborate well with one another and with leaders outside of the organization to advance health equity?

Foundational Practice IV: Use Data to Advance Health Equity

* **Develop and maintain data systems with an expanded understanding of structural and intermediary determinants.** 
  + Does our organization:
    - Regularly and systematically collect data on a range of measures across the WHO CSDH Framework?
    - Ensure that data collection methods gather information that allow us to effectively analyze the interrelationships among structural and intermediary determinants of health and health outcomes?
    - Identify gaps in data collection that could help better understand the impacts social and economic conditions have on health outcomes?
    - Acknowledge the limitations and challenges of collecting and reporting data by race/ethnicity and other population subgroups, and do we have strategies in place to address these?
  + Has our organization identified, with community stakeholders, a core set of measures to identify and track correlations between key structural determinants and intermediary determinants and their contributions to measures of health outcomes and health inequities?
* **Analyze data effectively in order to monitor trends and impacts of social determinants of health and health inequities.** 
  + Does our organization:
    - Regularly collect and disaggregate data findings by race, ethnicity, language, gender, age, sexual identification, disability status, income, educational attainment, zip code, and other factors, such as a neighborhood deprivation index, as appropriate?
    - Evaluate different methods for categorizing race/ethnicity?
    - Identify and obtain missing data that would reveal health inequities?
    - Evaluate the ways in which biases may determine how we analyze, report and use our data?
* **Report data to stakeholders and the public in order to promote action to advance health equity.** 
  + Does our organization:
    - Format data findings so that they are useful for all sectors, community stakeholders, and levels of government?
    - Leverage findings from data collection and analysis in order to help change the narrative of what creates health, inform policy change, and support partnerships and engagement?

Foundational Practice V: Advance Health Equity through Continuous Learning

* **Provide education and communication on health equity to all parts/sectors of the organization.**
  + Does our organization:
    - Expand the understanding of what creates health equity with all staff and community stakeholders?
    - Educate public health leaders in effective public health practices to advance health equity?
* **Develop and maintain a highly qualified, well-trained and diverse workforce.**
  + Does our organization:
    - Work with educational institutions to assure the availability of a highly qualified, well-trained, and diverse workforce with the knowledge and skills to advance health equity?
    - Commit to developing a professional workforce that reflects the demographics of the populations we serve?
    - Build the skills and competencies of public health practitioners to identify the role of structural and intermediary determinants on health?
    - Build internal capacity related to health equity through training and professional development?
* **Use continuous quality improvement strategies for ongoing learning, innovation, and improvement of the organization.** 
  + Does our organization:
    - Develop leadership capacity for building a culture of ongoing learning and incorporating continuous quality improvement into daily work to advance health equity?
    - Use performance management and quality improvement principles, such as rapid-cycle improvement, to continuously improve our policies, processes, and programs to advance health equity?
    - Have a plan for spreading successes in advancing health equity?
    - Provide peer-to-peer learning opportunities to advance practice around health equity?

Foundational Practice VI: Support Successful Partnerships and Strengthen Community Capacity

* **Develop and deepen cross-sector and interagency relationships.** 
  + Do our organization:
    - Have leaders who reach out and engage their interagency counterparts to add health considerations to policies in areas outside of traditional public health concerns such as transportation, housing, employment, economic development, etc.?
    - Use the WHO definition of health to engage others and improve the social and economic conditions for health?
    - Work to ensure an understanding of a health equity in all policies approach?
    - Use cross-sector data to support our collaborations with other cross sector agencies?
    - Have developed partnerships with communications experts and the media to assure understanding in the community and expand opportunities for health?
* **Form and maintain community partnerships with multiple stakeholders, including communities of color, America Indians, and others experiencing health inequities.** 
  + Does our organization
    - Partner in a way that intentionally shares power and decision making?
    - Partner with a diverse group of individuals and organizations/agencies, including but not limited to: individuals and groups experiencing inequities: people of color; local and Tribal health departments; cross sector agencies; universities/colleges; the executive branch; community organizations and coalitions?
    - Designate enough time and create avenues for meaningful participation of communities of color, American Indians and others experiencing health inequities in project governance and oversight, assuring that the people who are affected by various decisions are involved in the decision-making process?
    - Practice transparency with communities around agency needs and priorities?
    - Prepare staff to respectfully and thoughtfully engage with communities of color, American Indians and others experiencing health inequities?
    - Utilize the WHO CSDH Framework with partners in conducting community health needs assessments?
  + Are decisions in our organization made in collaboration with community partners – especially communities of color, American Indians and others experiencing health inequities?
  + Has our organization, completed, participated in, or planned a community health needs assessment in collaboration with community partners including people of color, American Indians and others experiencing health inequities?
* **Strengthen community capacity to build collective efficacy to foster institutional and structural change that advances health equity.** 
  + Does our organization:
    - Build the leadership capacity of community members to advocate on issues affecting the environmental, social and economic conditions that impact health?
    - Intentionally foster strong relationships between cross-sectoral partners and populations of color, American Indians and others experiencing health inequities?
    - Work to engage and support populations of color, American Indians and others experiencing health inequities in creating more equitable, local living and working conditions?
    - Actively work to reduce the marginalization of specific racial, socioeconomic or newcomer groups and build inclusive communities and decision making processes?
    - Have an evaluation plan of our community engagement efforts to ensure continuous learning and impact of partnering with communities?
    - Share the evaluation results of our community engagement efforts with community partners?

Foundational Practice VII: Assure Strategic and Targeted Use of Resources

* **Strategically direct fiscal and human resources to those with the greatest need to advance health equity.**
  + Does our organization:
    - Assure that resources are not reinforcing cultural bias, barriers or inequities?
    - Assure strategic distribution of the fiscal and human resources that make possible optimal health and quality of life for all individuals?
    - Have current data that inform where resources should be invested to address those with greatest need?
    - Track resource allocation to assure that it is directed to those with greatest need in order to advance health equity?
* **Invest in research and practice-based strategies and shared priorities for advancing health equity.** 
  + Does our organization:
    - Invest in identifying practice-based evidence that is culturally responsive?
    - Have a planned approach to assure that resources to advance health equity are allocated based on research and practice-based evidence?
    - Prioritize funding in ways that emphasize the assets and opportunities needed across the life span?
* **Use resources to build system capacity to advance health equity.**
  + Does our organization:
    - Allocate sufficient resources for policy development and implementation, workforce development, quality improvement, and performance measurement to advance health equity?
    - Allocate funds to support the meaningful participation of communities of color, American Indians, and others experiencing health inequities in societal decision-making and prioritization processes?
* **Align funding streams across all sectors and levels of government to maximize the impact of efforts to advance health equity.**
  + Does our organization align funding streams to promote health equity and the elimination of health inequities?
  + Are our organization’s payment methodologies and fiscal incentives aligned with performance on health equity measures?
  + Is our organization’s fiscal policy aligned with equitable access to services, supports, assets, and opportunities?
* **Track progress to assure accountability for optimal resource use.** 
  + Do we hold our organization’s provider networks (hospitals/clinics) and other public health system partners accountable for advancing health equity?
  + Are fiscal, programmatic and outcomes analysis, tracking, and improvement processes in place for all allocated expenditures?
  + Does our organization:
    - Track and analyze whether public health allocations are spent in a manner that advances health equity and supports the reduction of health inequities?
    - Rigorously follow and monitor fiscal principles and requirements of public/private stewardship and accountability to improve health equity?