



## Equity Principles + Roadmap for Action

Essential Access Health was established in 1968, grounded in the belief that everyone has the right to access the health services and information they want – with dignity and respect. Although significant gains have been made in expanding access to essential health services over the past 50 years, true progress cannot be attained until racism is widely recognized as a public health issue. We acknowledge and affirm that engaging in anti-racist work and the fight for health equity is critical to achieving our mission to champion and promote quality sexual and reproductive health care for all.

We cannot and will not effectively reduce health disparities that persist and disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous and People of Color – including those related to unintended pregnancy, infant and maternal mortality, and STI rates – until we name and address the root cause – systemic racism.

Our goal moving forward is to take consistent and meaningful action to ensure that a person's race is no longer a barrier to achieving optimal sexual and reproductive health outcomes. We pledge to lead and support efforts internally and externally that disrupt and dismantle the policies, systems, and structures that lead to and perpetuate sexual and reproductive health inequities and unequal access to care and opportunities for success among Black, Indigenous and People of Color. We commit to integrating a health equity lens into our policies and broad range of programs and services to take action to ensure that race is no longer a barrier to achieving optimal sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

We are dedicated to working strategically and collaboratively with our staff, Board of Directors, and partners to advance the following *Equity Principles + Roadmap for Action*. The principles and roadmap below will evolve and will hold us accountable to our mission and our values.

### **INCLUSION**

Our work environment and organizational culture will make all individuals and groups feel welcome, safe, respected, and valued. We are committed to hiring a diverse workforce and creating a Board of Directors that is representative of the individuals we serve, and those with personal or professional experience with impacted communities. We strive to create a work environment that is free from discrimination and advances equity and inclusion through our recruitment, hiring, promotion, and training practices. We will build a shared understanding of and commitment to health equity among our staff and Board of Directors. We will enhance knowledge and skills throughout the organization to develop more inclusive internal policies and structures and to more effectively address sexual and reproductive health inequities experienced by Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

### **PROGRAMS + SERVICES**

Our wide range of programs and services will be centered on improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes among individuals routinely oppressed and disenfranchised by institutional and structural racism. Our commitment to health equity will inform our strategic planning, program development, policy and priority setting process, and protocols for conducting clinical research studies.

We will work closely with community members to ensure that our work is informed by the voices and lived experiences of individuals we seek to serve. Our public policy agenda will recognize racism as a public health crisis, address sexual and reproductive health disparities, and help create a more just and equitable health system for all.

## **RESOURCES**

Our funding generated through grant awards, fee for service, and investment income, will be directed, prioritized and coordinated to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes among Black, Indigenous and People of Color. We will identify and dedicate staff time and financial resources in regions and communities that experience health inequities as a result of economic, structural and systemic racism and ensure that our Investment Policy Statement and investment portfolio reflect our commitment to equity.

## **DATA**

Our commitment to health equity will inform and influence the data we collect, and how it is analyzed and applied. We will create action plans and accountability measures for advancing health equity and improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes among historically underserved communities that have experienced systemic bias and barriers to care. Data collected will be leveraged to address long-standing health disparities and will not be used to further stigmatize communities disproportionately impacted by health inequities.

## **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS + MESSAGING**

Our strategic communications, activities and messages will reflect and incorporate a health equity lens. We will emphasize the systemic racism and structural inequities that have persistently contributed to unequal health access and health disparities among Black, Indigenous and People of Color. We will amplify the voices and lived experiences of community members and partners that are directly impacted by - and actively challenging - the social and racial injustices that fuel and perpetuate health disparities and structural racism.

## **CONTRACTING + PROCUREMENT**

Our contracts and vendor agreements will uplift and promote economic growth among historically disenfranchised communities whenever possible. We will conduct due diligence to ensure that our business partners – including banks and vendors - maintain a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and do not engage in predatory practices or policies that further disadvantage and disenfranchise Black, Indigenous and People of Color. We will review, assess, and revise contracts to prioritize contracting with local Small Business Enterprises, Historically Underutilized Businesses, Minority and Women Enterprises, and LGBT Business Enterprises.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

Our role as an anti-racist partner will include naming, disrupting, and dismantling policies and systems of oppression that limit opportunity and hinder access to high quality sexual and reproductive health care among Black, Indigenous and People of Color. We will engage in, support, and amplify the efforts of organizations that are led by and/or primarily serve those most impacted by inequitable health systems and outcomes.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Our accountability to achieving health equity will be measured. We will continue learning and taking action to promote health equity internally and externally. We will institutionalize accountability measures and data-driven action plans including baselines and success indicators, to ensure that programmatic and policy changes have a community-level impact. Measures will be regularly evaluated to ensure relevance and impact over time.