

RARE EQUITY PLAN – ADOPTED FEBRUARY 2022

Equity Vision Statement

Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) envisions a network of emerging leaders that are addressing society's most pressing issues from the rural Oregon perspective. As a result of RARE's programming and relationships: community-based organizations have increased capacity, people are thriving across all identities and experiences, and members are successful in achieving their professional and personal goals.

RARE service should be accessible, enjoyable, impactful, and safe for all people regardless of their identity and background. Our goal is to eliminate barriers and disparities that exist in our membership, organization, and partnerships.

We strive for a RARE where...

- our diverse members are bringing value to rural communities and advancing their leadership and professional goals without fear of repercussions, discrimination, or oppression.
- we are relationship-based: connected to each other, the community, and organizations working to create a more just and equitable community.
- hosts and members are aligned with RARE's mission, vision, and values and receiving valuable support and services as a result of their partnership with RARE.
- staff have the capacity to respond to host organization and member needs, provide host organization and member support, and identify and address equity issues.

Equity Priority Areas & Goals

Priority Area: Update organizational mission, vision, and values with an equity lens

Ideas for Year 1 Goals:

1. Develop an 'equity lens' tool to support our analysis.
2. Revisit and update organizational mission and vision.
3. Develop Organizational Values.
4. Integrate values into all aspects of programming, screening, hiring, training, and relationship building. Develop clear understanding of what the values look like in action.

Priority Area: Ensure DEI alignment and create clear expectations for RARE relationships (RARE-members, RARE-hosts, hosts-members).

Ideas for Year 1 Goals:

1. Increase communication and transparency around mission, vision, goals.
2. Update host selection criteria to integrate new mission, vision, and values. Set clear expectations around equity, reporting processes, and support from RARE to fulfill those expectations.
3. Develop relationships and partnerships with organizations with social justice focus, led by BIPOC, and in alignment with RARE mission, vision, and values. Identify champions of equity work in rural communities. Explore what RARE's role is in supporting and resourcing these organizations.

Priority Area: Build organizational capacity to fulfill equity goals, support members and hosts, and advance the equity plan.

Ideas for Year 1 Goals:

1. All staff training on diversity, equity and inclusion to build a collective analysis. Topics should include white supremacy culture, anti-racism, trauma-informed conflict and care, and harm reduction.
2. Build relationships and connections with BIPOC contractors/consultants/organizations who can support RARE's direction, and who RARE can support through their programs and services.
3. Integrate equity into hiring criteria and process.
4. Monthly equity meeting for members.
5. Integrate and create space for healing, storytelling, and honest (uncomfortable) conversations for current and past members.

Priority Area: Develop processes, systems, and supports that prioritize the physical and psychological safety for members around the impact of racism and other forms of oppression.

Ideas for Year 1 Goals:

1. Discuss aspects of RARE that might impact psychological safety, and how members can get support.
2. Include conversations and training during supervisor and new member training that offers clear expectations, a reporting process, and working through case studies/scenarios so they have examples of what to do if something occurs.
3. Create clear policies and expectations for hosts and supervisors around discrimination, bias, and all forms of oppression.
4. Create a clear path and policy for (a) how to navigate the reporting process, (b) process for investigating, and (c) how to get support.

5. Further develop the Alumni mentor program to partner alumni with existing members.

Priority Area: Conduct a systemic analysis of, and plan to address, financial and structural barriers to organizational advancement equity (includes barriers to membership, host site participation, and employment).

Ideas for Year 1 Goals:

1. Discuss and analyze existing systemic barriers to equity. Consider: AmeriCorps, University, etc.
2. Begin conversations about what a process might look like to address biggest barriers. Where is there opportunity to transition vs. lead from within.
3. Explore alternative funding options to support more flexible aspects of the program (for example, additional stipends, scholarships, and housing support).