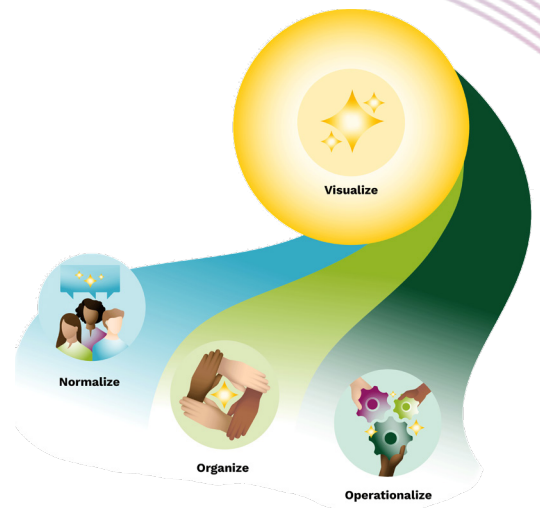


# The GARE Approach:

Visualize, Normalize, Organize, Operationalize

The GARE Approach is an organizational change framework with four interlocking elements – Visualize, Normalize, Organize, and Operationalize —serves as a practical guide for government staff to advance racial equity outcomes. It helps organizations embed racial equity into everyday operations and decision-making, transforming their roles and impact.



## Visualize the Work

### Vision: Creating a Just, Multiracial Democracy

To eliminate racial disparities and create a just society, start by developing a vision of what racial equity looks like for your organization. Work with leadership, staff, and community members to identify values, needs, and the desired outcomes. A shared vision lays the foundation for this journey and helps ensure alignment.

## Key Strategies

- Engage communities most negatively impacted by racial inequities to create the vision.
- Establish a community-driven visioning process to ensure alignment with those most affected by structural racism.
- Encourage a visioning process tied to everyday material reality in neighborhoods and communities. Use everyday, accessible language that is as tied to our senses as possible.

### Discussion Questions:

- What does a just, multiracial world with racially equitable outcomes for all people look and feel like?
- Who else needs to be involved in creating this vision of the world?
- What steps does your team need to take to include others in creating this vision?

**Supportive Insight:** Pay attention to whether there is a gap between what was envisioned by the community and government action. This gap can be avoided by centering communities most negatively impacted by systemic racism, and by engaging and integrating communities into feedback and evaluation processes once a vision has been implemented.



# Normalize the Work

## Creating a Racial Equity Culture

Building on a clear vision, the next focus is embedding racial equity into your organization's culture. This means cultivating a shared understanding and common language around race and equity through ongoing learning and intentional dialogue. By strengthening this collective analysis, organizations can move with urgency and alignment to address racial inequities and prioritize equitable solutions at every level.

## Key Strategies

- Use a racial equity framework that clearly explains systemic racial inequities which names the government's role.
- Establish a racial equity employee survey that is repeated with some frequency to gauge progress and inform future actions.
- Create urgency for racial equity by embedding discussions into everyday operations.

### Discussion Questions:

- How are you building a shared understanding and language about racial equity?
- What steps are you taking to shift how people understand their roles in advancing racial equity?
- How will you help others understand the urgency of racial equity work?

**Supportive Examples:** Some jurisdictions, like Asheville, North Carolina, have recently created Offices of Racial Equity as part of normalizing racial equity work in government. Others have developed jurisdiction websites that regularly report on the progress of their racial equity work. Lastly, Portland, Oregon, has developed and implemented jurisdiction-wide racial equity training, which usually includes basic conceptual training or more specific instruction on using racial equity decision-making policy and/or budget tools.



# Organize the Work

## Building Alliances and Capacity

Effective racial equity work requires organizing both internally and externally. Strong relationships with institutions, nonprofits, communities, and other key actors are essential. Trust must be built, and partnerships developed, to collectively address root causes of inequity.

## Key Steps

- Form a multidisciplinary racial equity team within your organization.
- Partner with communities, especially those most impacted by structural racism, to co-analyze root causes and subsequently co-create solutions.
- Develop relationships across sectors, including nonprofits, educational institutions, and philanthropic organizations.

### Discussion Questions:

- What informs your organizing strategy in your jurisdiction?
- How are you partnering with the community to engage in root cause analysis?
- In what ways are you partnering with the community to engage in developing solutions?

**Supportive Examples:** Austin, Texas, effectively implemented the Organize step by partnering with community members to work on anti-displacement policies to advance housing justice. Sacramento, California, internally organized and established the Sacramento Racial Equity Council. This council guides the city in establishing a plan to equitably partner and be accountable to communities of color, aiming to produce racial equity in its policies and practices.



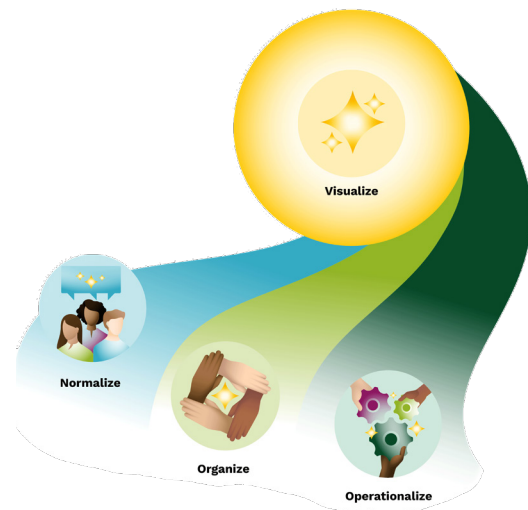




# Operationalize the Work

## Tools for Implementing Change

Operationalizing racial equity means embedding it into the core of your organization's work. This involves using and adapting racial equity tools to critically evaluate policies, practices, and service delivery, ensuring they align with equity goals. By collecting and tracking disaggregated data, organizations can measure impact, foster accountability, and drive meaningful change.



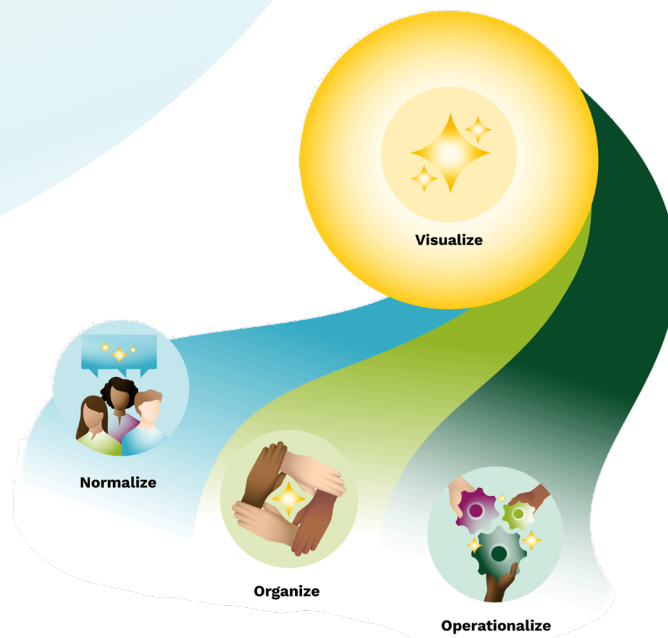
## Key Strategies

- Obtain information about racial inequities - and measure success - through data collection, disaggregation, and reporting.
- Implement racial equity tools to change policies, procedures, and budgeting.
- Engage communities in decision-making processes to ensure transparency and inclusion.

### Discussion Questions:

- How is your organization integrating racial equity tools into decision-making processes?
- Does your organization have a data infrastructure? If not, what are the next steps to establishing a data infrastructure?
- In what ways (e.g., policies, practices, procedures, projects) can your organization utilize data disaggregated by race, gender, and geography (census tract or zip code) in your daily work?
- Which policies, practices, procedures, or projects could your organization prioritize for use of disaggregated data?
- What steps does your team need to take to operationalize racial equity goals?

**Supportive Insight:** Racial inequities are not random—they have been created and sustained over time. Inequities will not disappear on their own. Tools must be used to change the policies, practices, and procedures that perpetuate inequities and contribute to the development of new policies and programs. The use of disaggregated data not only can help identify where racial inequities exist, but can also help governments measure change in equity outcomes over time.



## Supporting Organizational Change

Each part of the GARE Approach plays a vital role in creating long-lasting organizational change. However, in order for organizational change to occur, all four parts of the GARE Approach (Visualize, Normalize, Organize, and Operationalize) must be used together in order to facilitate deeper organizational changes for racial equity to become embedded in the DNA of your organization. It is not enough to apply only one or two or even three parts of the GARE Approach for organizational change. All four parts of the GARE Approach must be actively applied in the following ways:

- **Collectively:** Use all four components to ensure the vision comes to life.
- **Synergistically:** Let the components support each other. For example, community organizing (Organize) can lead to official visioning (Visualize) leading to the establishment of an equity office (Organize) that manages equity learning and development activities across the organization (Normalize) and supports the creation of Racial Equity Action Plans (operationalize) and development and tracking of outcomes for racial equity (operationalize).
- **Universally:** For organizational change to occur, the entire organization must engage with all four parts of the GARE Approach.
- **Actionably:** Commitment alone won't achieve change; effective action is required. Only action will provide the progress needed to create change and bring us closer to the future vision.

The GARE Approach is essential for guiding government staff across the nation toward creating lasting racially equitable outcomes. By Visualizing, Normalizing, Organizing, and Operationalizing, practitioners can build a collaborative and inclusive environment that supports organizational transformation. As jurisdictions adopt and adapt these strategies, they can ensure that racial equity is embedded within the fabric of their work, ultimately leading to more equitable outcomes for all.

# GARE Approach Checklist for Action

## Visualize

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- ☐ Engage in community-driven visioning.
- ☐ Define and document the change your community wishes to see.

## Normalize

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- ☐ Create an Office of Racial Equity.
- ☐ Maintain public-facing web pages to report on racial equity progress.
- ☐ Craft a training plan for all employees, and recruitment of new hires, to apply racial equity tools in their work.

## Organize

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- ☐ Build a core racial equity team.
- ☐ Identify jurisdiction data infrastructure needs and gain executive support for resources.
- ☐ Engage with communities for review of disaggregated data, root cause analysis, and identification of priorities.

## Operationalize

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- ☐ Collect, analyze, disaggregate, and report data.
- ☐ Develop and advance equitable policies, practices, procedures, and budgets.

# Practitioner Practice: Applying the GARE Approach Exercise

**Purpose:** To practice using The GARE Approach the Visualize, Normalize, Organize, Operationalize (VNOO) framework to address racial inequities.

## **Instructions:**

Select a current project or program in your department. Break down how each VNOO element can be applied:

**Visualize:** What equitable outcome do you want to achieve?

**Normalize:** How will you engage stakeholders in conversations about race and equity?

**Organize:** What partnerships and collaborations will support this effort and how can you build more racial equity leaders on staff?

**Operationalize:** What specific policies or actions will integrate equity into the project? Develop a one-page summary outlining your approach.

## **Reflect on the following:**

- What part of the GARE Approach is easiest for your team to apply, and why?
- Where are you encountering resistance, and how can it be addressed?
- How will you measure success for each part of the framework?

**Reflection Prompt:** Which aspect of the GARE Approach resonates most with your team, and where will you focus additional efforts to ensure implementation?