

Government Alliance on Race and Equity 2026 Call-to-Action Guide

As we commemorate GARE's 10th anniversary and approach the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the Call-to-Action pledge directs jurisdictions to further embed racial equity within their systems and structures. It matters now because the progress made over the last decade is facing significant external pressure and systemic pushback. The moment invites us to re-envision community engagement and co-governance strategies, working alongside impacted communities as we redouble our efforts to achieve a true, multi-racial democracy at every level of government.

[This pledge](#) is a call for practitioners and jurisdictions to affirm their commitment to advancing racial equity. As such, it is open for individual and jurisdiction-level signatures. The language for this pledge is below.

I pledge that, within my department and/or jurisdiction, I will proactively seek to advance racial equity in local governance through 1-2 of the following actions:

EMBEDDING RACIAL EQUITY INTO EXISTING SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

- Ensure that my department/jurisdiction integrates a racial equity analysis into at least one existing system where it is not currently embedded
- Improve the implementation of a racial equity framework within at least one system where such a framework has been embedded but is not yet fully operational

Such systems and frameworks may include but aren't limited to:

- Adopting / implementing a [racial equity action plan](#) or [racial equity tools](#)
- Establishing a racial equity analysis within [budgeting](#), policy, and [decision-making](#) processes
- Developing [performance and evaluation measures](#) to track implementation of racial equity initiatives within my department and jurisdiction

EMBEDDING ROBUST COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES WITHIN NEW AND EXISTING INITIATIVES

- Ensure that my department/jurisdiction refines and updates its [community engagement](#) strategy to intentionally incorporate community participation at each stage of a decision-making process, with the purpose of building towards true [co-governance models](#)
- Explore avenues for creating and/or expanding community partnerships across a range of services and initiatives.

Such issue areas may include but aren't limited to:

- Economic Mobility and Justice
- Holistic Community Safety
- Housing Solutions
- Immigrant Inclusion and Safety
- Mutual Aid Partnerships

LEVERAGING INSTITUTIONS TO SAFEGUARD AND ENFORCE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RACIAL EQUITY

- Work within my local or state government union to advance racial equity goals in my jurisdiction as part of my union's organizing and contracting strategy
- Work within my jurisdiction to establish a racial equity commission charged with ensuring accountability for racial equity goals, or work within/alongside our established racial equity commission to improve its reach and effectiveness

EXPAND THE IMPACT OF MY JURISDICTION IN SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES HARMED BY EXISTING ENFORCEMENT AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURES

- Work within my department/jurisdiction to develop robust community partnerships and co-governance models to enhance economic mobility and advance economic justice to close the Racial Wealth Gap
- Work within my department/jurisdiction to intentionally reach out to and learn from communities targeted by immigration enforcement, develop and refine resources and services for impacted communities, and develop robust partnerships and co-governance models with community-based organizations and groups that are providing on-the-ground support
- Work within my department/jurisdiction to replicate community partnership models focused on immigration defense to develop community partnerships and co-governance models supporting Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color harmed by policing models and institutions

ADVANCING RESPONSIBLE DATA USE AND PROCUREMENT PRACTICES

- Work with my department/jurisdiction to review, flag, and improve contracts, data-sharing agreements, and interagency partnerships that may expose communities to harm or undermine racial equity goals
- Work with my department/jurisdiction to assess and limit how data collected through public services may be accessed, shared, or used for enforcement purposes, particularly in regard to immigration status, gender and sexual identity/orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, or any other form of identification. Develop and promote clear internal policies that limit unnecessary data collection and protect sensitive information from external enforcement access
- Work within my department/jurisdiction to review data systems, surveillance technologies, and third-party vendor contracts to assess potential impacts on marginalized communities. Develop and promote clear internal policies that limit or ban the use of surveillance technologies that put communities at risk of excessive enforcement

By signing this pledge, I affirm that I will seek to advance at least 1-2 of the actions listed above. This will include:

- Determining the decision-making purview, positional power, and level of influence that I have within my department / jurisdiction
- Identifying the people I will need to get buy-in from to advance these actions and the allies within my department / jurisdiction to assist in this effort
- Periodically updating GARE on the advancement of these calls to action, via GARE surveys and/or direct correspondence
- Sharing blogs, statements, and related materials that showcase your implementation of your CTA (when possible) with GARE
- Reaching out to GARE / the GARE network if I desire collaborative space to strategize with other practitioners



The following pages will delve into the specific Call to Action pathways presented on June 16, 2026, providing practitioners and member jurisdictions with tiered actions they can take to advance policies, practices, and procedures related to immigrant justice, economic justice, leveraging local/state government unions, and establishing racial equity commissions.

These tiers are organized according to level of complexity and are meant to provide something of a roadmap for practitioners, departments, and jurisdictions aiming to deepen their reach and strategies for advancing racial equity. These are not meant to be seen as an exhaustive list.



CTA #1 – Leveraging Government to Support Immigrant Communities and Resist Federal Attacks

Tier 1 Actions

- Deepen my own understanding of the role that departments and jurisdictions can play in supporting, working with, and defending immigrant communities. Invest in developing a local welcoming narrative as well as an inclusive communications infrastructure to combat misinformation, including by engaging trusted community leaders as messengers and resourcing language access across departments
- Identify more-easily adoptable practices you can implement within your department for supporting immigrant communities. These include but aren't limited to providing Know Your Rights materials in public-facing spaces, designating private spaces within public government buildings in the event of federal enforcement actions, etc.

Tier 2 Actions

- Work within my department to analyze current outreach efforts to our jurisdiction's immigrant communities to determine what gaps may exist, what community-led organizations could act as partners in our engagement efforts, and what scaffolding we can create to embed robust engagement and collaboration throughout service delivery and any future decision-making processes
- Identify community-led initiatives that my department can support and partner with. These include but aren't limited to working with mutual aid initiatives to disperse rental or other forms of financial assistance, providing funding/capacity support for rapid response and for immigration legal aid, establishing/supporting court accompaniment programs, etc.

Tier 3 Actions

- Build upon the community partnerships our department/jurisdiction developed as part of its community engagement overhaul to inform the establishment of a co-governance model for immigrant inclusion and safety
- Organize within my jurisdiction and alongside community partners to uplift and enact policies that provide ongoing, more transformative support for immigrant communities. These include establishing universal representation for immigrants facing detention and/or deportation, ending 287(g) agreements that mandate local law enforcement work with immigration enforcement and establishing Trust Policies, banning federal enforcement from staging actions in municipally owned public areas and banning the use of face masks, ending use of data surveillance technologies, etc.

Notes and Connected Resources

- Tier 1 Partner Action(s):
 - Join the SOI-led training for GARE practitioners on Tuesday, July 28th
 - Have your department/jurisdiction take part in [Welcoming Week](#) from Sept 10-19, 2026
- Tier 1 Partner Resources:
 - Solidarity Organizing Initiative: [Know Your Rights resources](#)
 - Welcoming America: [How can I build connections with newcomers?](#) - [Build Trust With Community-Focused Comms](#)
- Tier 2 Partner Action(s):
 - Explore Welcoming America's [Certified Welcoming Standard](#). Consider assessment and certification
 - Explore and learn more about Vera Institute of Justice's [Safe Network](#)
- Tier 2 Partner Resources:
 - Welcoming America: [Certified Welcoming Guide](#)
 - Vera Institute of Justice: [Safe Network 101 - The Human Impact of Universal Representation](#) - [How Mayors Can Counter Mass Deportations](#)
- Tier 3 Partner Action(s):
 - Adopt universal representation for immigrants facing detention or deportation proceedings; reach out to learn more about the Vera Institute of Justice's SAFE Network and work to support growth of universal representation within your region
 - Convene a Multisector Welcoming Network to connect individuals and orgs (including local government, civil society, and businesses) to offer different types of community resources in a quick, urgent, and coordinated way
 - Multisector networks should reflect the demographics of the community and include immigrant and non-immigrant residents, immigrant-serving organizations, and institutions with broader mandates (including schools, chambers, libraries, faith institutions, major employers, and healthcare providers)
 - Possible priority areas: countering fear and misinformation, mutual aid coordination, legal services, and longer-term infrastructure building

- Tier 3 Partner Resources:
 - Vera Institute of Justice: [Advancing Universal Representation Toolkit](#)
 - Welcoming America (Multisector Tools): [Advancing a Welcoming Infrastructure for Humanitarian Relief - DHS Community Action Response Tool](#) - [Multisector Climate Change Worksheet](#)

Important Recommendations

- **Actions and investments should be driven by immigrant residents**
 - Ensure you have a mechanism (formal or informal) to connect and deepen relationships with immigrant leaders and residents, and ensure their feedback is informing decision making. Examples include commission/advisory boards, Welcoming America's [Natural Helpers](#) program, and this [Boulder case study](#)
- **Break down silos between racial equity work and immigrant engagement work**
 - This work is often approached as separate, which can hide complexity of community challenges and opportunities. Focussing only on race can mask the impact ethnicity, language acquisition, immigration status, and trauma have on othering and belonging. Looking only at issues from an immigration lens can mask the impact of race on lived experience
 - Identify who in your government is already working closely with immigrant communities and has strong relationships. If you have an Office of Immigrant Affairs or a staffer tasked with immigrant or community engagement, spend time talking to them. If you don't have this type of position consider establishing one
- **Assess tools and agreements local government uses that also support immigration enforcement, including:**
 - [Automatic License Plate Readers \(ALPRs\)](#): Multiple vendors allow information to be shared with ICE without the locality's knowledge. Additionally, through LEA relationships with ICE, databases can be searched on behalf of ICE
 - Calling Customs and Border Patrol or other DHS agencies for language access assistance. When local law enforcement does not have interpretation capacity or resources to translate materials, departments often turn to local enforcement offices to help out with language services. Make sure that you have policies in place that bar this activity, but also adequately invest in language access infrastructure

Additional Ways to Engage:

- Solidarity Organizing Initiative: Take the [Solidarity Pledge](#) to stay engaged
- Vera Institute of Justice: [Join](#) the [Fairness to Freedom Coalition](#)
- Welcoming America: [Join](#) the [Welcoming Network](#)
- GARE: Explore our [Immigration](#) topic guide, which includes materials and discussions related to the CTA



CTA #2 – Developing Strategies to Operationalize Economic Justice

Tier 1 Actions:

- Analyze my jurisdiction's current data to understand gaps and opportunities in access to resources, effectiveness of community programs, strength of engagement, impact of partnerships, and existence of collaborative decision-making processes. Work within my department to analyze current community outreach efforts and determine what gaps may exist, what community-led organizations could act as partners in our engagement efforts, and what scaffolding we can create to embed robust engagement throughout service improvement/development and any future decision-making processes
- Commit to partner across departments and the community to explore, discuss, verify, or add to the data findings and create a shared understanding and vision for the community. Identify community-led initiatives that my department can support and partner with. These include but aren't limited to working with mutual aid initiatives to disperse rental or other forms of financial assistance, build towards targeted universal economic policies, etc.

Tier 2 Actions:

- Build on existing community partnerships to develop a co-governance model for economic mobility and justice and to collaboratively implement advisory councils, mutual aid bodies for rental and financial assistance, targeted universal economic policies, and other policies and initiatives developed alongside community
- Identify and advance transformative economic policies and/or programs aimed at closing the racial wealth gap. Work within our co-governance structure and across relevant departments to draft resolutions, enact pilot programs, and organize towards policy creation/implementation. Such policies may include universal basic income, reparations, reparations, and housing justice initiatives

Tier 3 Action:

- Develop cross-regional partnerships and leverage existing cross-regional organizations (i.e. Council of Government, League of Cities, etc) to expand economic justice and mobility initiatives and policies, using community partnerships and co-governance strategies/structures to inform solutions and implementation
- Strengthen, Connect, Organize, and Gain Momentum at convenings such as ICMA's [Economic Mobility Summit](#), online in GARE regional and working groups, and at the [GARE Membership Meeting + Facing Race](#)

Connected Resources:

- Tier 1 Resources & Partner Action(s):
 - Use the Urban Institute [Upward Mobility Metrics](#) and the [Opportunity Atlas](#) to gather data
 - GARE: [Local/Regional Assessment](#)
- Tier 2 Resources & Partner Action(s):
 - Use the Results for America [Economic Mobility Catalog](#) to identify key transformative economic policies alongside community partners that my department
 - GARE / Race Forward: [Co-Governance Tool](#) & [Co-Governing Toward Multiracial Democracy](#)
- Tier 3 Resources & Partner Action(s):
 - Connect with you local council of government or other regional organizing body

Important Recommendations

- Utilize available data tools, such as Urban Institute Mobility Metrics and Opportunity Atlas, to strengthen your understanding and casemaking
- Strengthen your vision and narrative of inclusive, just prosperity through evidence-based case studies from the RFA Economic Mobility Catalog and GARE's Library
- Connect across your region and your network through GARE's Online Community, local councils of government, and at convenings such as ICMA's Economic Mobility Summit. The socioeconomic challenges we're facing don't end along our established jurisdictional borders, and deepening cross-regional collaboration is integral to developing lasting solutions
- Once available, the GARE Economic Mobility Regional Levers Tool will be a centralized location pulling together resources and recommendations. Follow the GARE newsletter and pay attention to the online community to learn when it is posted

Additional Ways to Engage:

- ICMA: Attend ICMA's [Economic Mobility Summit](#) and be sure to attend the GARE panel/mixer at the event
- Urban Institute: Explore the [Upward Mobility Initiative](#)
- Results for America: Explore the [Economic Mobility Catalog](#) and their [Implementation Support](#) for technical assistance
- GARE: Explore our [Economic Mobility](#) topic guide, which includes materials and discussions related to the CTA



CTA #3 – Leveraging Government Unions to Advance Racial Equity

Tier 1 Actions: Learn + Assess

- Learn how unions, bargaining, and public budgets shape racial equity outcomes
- Identify how current workplace, contracting, staffing, or budget practices may reproduce inequities
- Connect with union leaders, members, and community organizations already engaged in this work
 - If I do not have a union but I'm interested in learning how to organize for one, I will seek to identify what pathways for learning and power-building are available
 - If I have a union but I am not aware of efforts to advance racial equity work within our organizing or contracting strategies, I will check in with my union contact(s) to learn more and will reference available resources for determining what actions may be accessible for our organization

Tier 2 Actions: Organize + Align

- Determine which readily implementable and more transformative racial equity actions could be prioritized for advancement within our department/jurisdiction
- Build member support for racial equity priorities within the union/local
- Develop bargaining, budget, contracting, or procurement demands tied to community needs
- Partner with community organizations to align workplace fights with broader public equity goals

Tier 3 Actions: Structural Change

- Advance transformative bargaining and policy demands tied to public investment, governance, and accountability
- Organize around revenue and budget policies necessary to sustain equitable public services
- Build durable worker-community governing alignment capable of shaping long-term public priorities

Connected Resources:

- ACRE Resources
 - [Concrete Examples of Bargaining for the Common Good](#)
 - [Concrete State Solutions to Re-Fund Our Communities](#)
- Local and State Union Resources
 - [American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees \(AFSCME\)](#)
- Federal Union Resources
 - [Branch 4](#)
 - [Federal Unionist Network](#)
- General Resources
 - [How State and Local Government Can Support Workers' Right to Form and Join Unions](#)
 - [Forming a Union at a Non-Union Workplace](#)
 - [Worker Organizing Resource and Knowledge Center](#)

Important Recommendations

- Some of the stronger approaches for leveraging unions include:
 - Demands around revenue generation, such as progressive taxation and corporate accountability
 - Budget transparency and community input
 - Investments in public services like housing, education, and healthcare
 - Protections for immigrant communities, including non-cooperation with ICE

Additional Ways to Engage:

- ACRE: Learn more about ACRE's [network](#) and explore their broader resource and research repository
- GARE: Explore our [Union Strategies](#) topic guide, which includes materials and discussions related to the CTA



CTA #4 – Establishing Effective Racial Equity Commissions in State and Local Governments

Tier 1 Actions:

- Develop an understanding of your own jurisdiction's charter or governance document, including determining what already exists that can support the development and expansion of your jurisdiction's racial equity efforts (including standing up a racial equity commission or improving its reach or implementation)
- Identify colleagues from inside your department and across your jurisdiction who would be interested in learning more about how to embed accountability via a racial equity commission. Identify racial equity values that guide your communities' vision for a racially equitable city, so that these can be embedded as part of this effort

Tier 2 Actions:

- Identify best practices for establishing or expanding the reach of your jurisdiction's racial equity commission by evaluating how racial equity commissions were established elsewhere. Work alongside your cohort to conceptualize and draft a racial equity commission charter and develop a community engagement and public engagement strategy to inform the process
- Identify stakeholders in the community who are willing to work with government, as trusted messengers, to support this effort to establish a racial equity commission

Tier 3 Actions:

- Build a group of government and community leaders to lead the charge for establishing the racial equity commission, and identify a government and community champion to lead the work. Develop resources and plan according to key budget or legislative deadlines to advance the work within the local government structure
- Connect with other racial equity commissions via a GARE-convened recurring meeting space to deepen cross-collaboration and identify shared challenges and opportunities for improving the reach and impact of your work
- Record your work to support GARE in building a nationwide archive of resources to support jurisdictions in establishing effective racial equity commissions

Connected Resources:

- GARE Conversation: [Enforcing Accountability for Racial Equity with NYC Commission on Racial Equity](#) (12.16.25)
- NYC Commission on Racial Equity - Links and Resources:
 - Website: <https://www.nyc.gov/content/core/pages/>
 - Holding Accountability
 - [NYC CORE report](#) responding to the Mayor's Preliminary Racial Equity Plan
 - Opinion, City and State NY: [A racial equity plan must guide Mamdani's budget process](#)
 - Establishing the REC
 - Charter: <https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/newyorkcity/latest/NYCcharter/0-0-0-6480>
 - Budgeting article diving into CORE's mandate: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/richardmcahey/2025/06/03/new-yorks-challenges-in-budgeting-f-or-racial-equity>
 - To learn more about the ballot measure that proposed the NYC Commission on Racial Equity, please visit the former NYC Racial Justice Commission's [final report](#)

Important Recommendations

- There are two types of racial equity commissions: those focused on technical assistance and those focused on accountability. Both types of commissions are important, but having an accountability arm will provide jurisdictions with a local government body that enforce adherence to racial equity commitments
- Structural independence is key to ensuring that a racial equity commission can both:
 - Create/implement/evaluate racial equity policies and initiatives
 - Hold leadership accountable to racial equity goals

Additional Ways to Engage:

- NYC CORE: follow their socials (linked on the [website](#)) and sign up for their [newsletter](#)
- GARE: Explore our [Racial Equity Commissions](#) topic guide, which includes materials and discussions related to the CTA
- GARE: If you are interested in joining a networking group for existing racial equity commissions and other similarly-positioned departments, [fill out this form](#)