



Statement of the National Academy of Public Administration

Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance

The convergence of COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement amplifies centuries of struggle – the ideal of the conceptually embraced value of equality within democracy and the reality of its shortcomings relative to implementation. To achieve equitable outcomes in government policies, from policing to housing to health care to transportation and more, those programs must be free from racism and other forms of discrimination. The National Academy of Public Administration recognized the importance of these issues when it created the Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance. The Academy's Standing Panels focus on issues that are of such importance to effective government that they require constant attention. We plan to make social equity a higher priority by examining racial/ethnic and other disparities, by focusing on best practices to eradicate the epidemic of racism and other types of discrimination, and by collaborating with other standing panels in the Academy, government agencies, and other interested parties. We support NAPA efforts to address the Grand Challenges in Public Administration, particularly the way in which NAPA fosters social equity, supports diversity and inclusion and examines systemic racism in public administration.

We, the undersigned members of the Academy's Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance and other NAPA Fellows who believe this issue requires far more attention and action, stand resolved to help eliminate systemic racism, unconscious bias, and every form of discrimination in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policy in the United States. This is not work we can accomplish on our own. Government, and society itself, must change. We can, however, leverage our collective commitment, expertise, and experience to provide the practical and intellectual frameworks to redress racial and ethnic disparities that shape different outcomes for people based on the color of their skin. We, therefore, commit urgently and immediately to the following action agenda:

1. Ensure that Academy evaluations of governmental programs, whether administered at the Federal, state, or local level, identify and recommend elimination of policies and practices that have unjust racial impacts on individuals and families.
2. Develop and promote a framework to identify and eliminate policies and practices in existing and pending laws, regulations, and policies that have unjust racial impacts on individuals and families.
3. Hold Public Administrators and elected officials accountable for dismantling systemic racism and eliminating bias as well as achieving equitable results.



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4. Reimagine how programs are administered to focus on the desired outcomes, rather than what's easy to measure. For instance, while it is important to know how many people are served by a particular program, it is far more important to know what percentage of the population are thriving based upon that program.
5. Ensure racial equity is not marginalized within discussions on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
6. Ensure that our own organizations are led and staffed to represent the diversity of the populations they serve, and that our programs are free of bias, and encourage everyone in government to do the same.
7. Use the Academy's convening ability to promote action on issues that foster social equity by educating others and ourselves about new perspectives and best practices, by sponsoring an ongoing series of publicly accessible programs online, and when circumstances permit, in person, and invite everyone reading this statement to participate in this agenda.
8. Affirm that we are totally transparent and accountable to the public in how we achieve each of these principles.

We realize that overcoming embedded racism and other biases may take time, but that there is an urgency that cannot be ignored. Such issues as white privilege, systematic racism, microaggressions, implicit as well as explicit racial bias, and a lack of cultural competence are far more real than we may want to admit. We ask that every administrator and elected official ensure that the voices of all people are included in every decision and that when we say "a government of the people, by the people, and for the people", we truly mean it. Finally, we remind our leaders that equality for all includes racial equality. It has been an omission of American democracy for far too long.

The National Academy of Public Administration is a congressionally chartered, non-profit, non-partisan organization with a vision to *make government work and work for all*, and that charter demands that we examine and address critical issues in governance. We, as fellows of the Academy, have been elected based upon our achievements in public service in government, academia, and related areas. All of us have devoted our entire careers to helping governments serve the needs of the public and to teach and inform the people who provide these services. The Academy stands ready to provide leadership and assistance in realizing our democratic ideal of equality.



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