



Racial Justice & Equity Action Plan

At the heart of the Responsible Business Initiative for Justice's (RBIJ) work are our values of racial justice and equity. We are committed to becoming an anti-racist organization that fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion for our staff, interns, board and advisory council members, consultants, and partners.

We also acknowledge the ways that legal structures and systems have been used to harm Black and Brown communities in the United States, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere across the globe. Across RBIJ's areas of work to advance criminal justice reform, race impacts outcomes:

In the US, 55% of those [currently on death row](#) are people of color. Black youth are arrested at a rate 2.5 times higher than that of other youth. For [children serving life sentences](#), 80% are youth of color and more than 50% are African American. Felony defendants who are Black are over 25% more likely than white defendants to be held [pretrial](#) in large urban areas. More than one in four Black men in the United States will go to jail or prison [at some point](#) in their lives as compared to one in 23 for white men. And that disparity is felt long after release when having a criminal record is 40% more damaging for a Black man than a white man.

The statistics in the UK are not much better. There are [54 stop and searches for every 1,000 Black people](#) compared with just six for every 1,000 white people. In 2020, approximately 27% of the overall [prison population](#) come from a Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) background, despite making up only 14% of the general population.

Race cuts through our criminal legal system in real and harmful ways and RBIJ's activities must address those realities. Importantly, [business leaders also recognize](#) they have a clear role to play in addressing these disparities and [Americans are calling for action by the business community](#).

This action plan is intended to fight these realities and commits RBIJ to (1) speak with clarity about criminal justice and racial equity; (2) improve our internal governance to reflect the racial equity we seek to secure in the communities we work; and (3) support a purpose-driven practice that employs strategic advocacy to advance racial justice and equity in the communities we work.



1. Speaking With Clarity

We pledge to speak with clarity on racial justice. We will continue to use clear language on the need for racial justice and equity in all of our work and ensure that there is no question that we stand in solidarity with the Black community and other communities of color and against the racial inequality that still plagues society.

We will further this work by taking the following steps:

In 2023, RBIJ will:

- Review public statements and messaging, such as mission statement and website, to add and/or clarify racial justice language
- Review existing communications for errors or inaccuracies in racial justice language
- Incorporate language into RBIJ's Style Guide to ensure sensitivity and accuracy when discussing racial equity and racial justice

Proposed ongoing action:

- Ensure public statements and messaging are clear on racial justice
- Create and publish a specific guide for business leaders and partner organizations on how to talk about the issues we work on, including proper language around racial justice
- Highlight the impact of justice reform for racial equity in talking points, speaker materials, external publications, and more
- Produce a collection of resources for RBIJ staff and partners, specifically addressing the racial implications of the justice system



2 Practicing What We Preach

We pledge to practice what we preach. RBIJ is committed to providing a respectful and inclusive workplace for its staff, interns, board and advisory council members, consultants, and partners.

We will further this work by taking the following steps:

In 2023, RBIJ will:

- Launch a staff training curriculum that includes, among other things, the requirement to take Harvard's Implicit Association Test and read the Minnesota Historical Society's "White Supremacy Culture"
- Develop a robust internship program that allows for interns to be paid monetarily or for school credit and recruit candidates from institutions such as HBCUs
- Develop pathways for individuals who are justice-involved to have opportunities to work at or with RBIJ
- Support the RBIJ JEDI committee in their efforts to advance this work, including reconsidering how RBIJ does its work
- Develop an annual self-evaluation tool to measure progress in advancing racial justice and equity

Proposed ongoing action:

- Foster a culture in which staff feels supported to learn, raise concerns, and help implement needed changes to make RBIJ an anti-racist organization
- Recruit diverse staff, including interns, and promote their inclusion and advancement
- Consider diversity in staffing projects, recruiting speakers, and selecting consultants and vendors for our programs
- Create strong partnerships within the communities we work to build a pipeline for diverse talent
- Implement a training curriculum, including implicit bias staff trainings, on a recurring basis for all staff and interns
- Complete an annual self-evaluation to measure progress in advancing racial justice and equity



3. Supporting the Communities in Which we Work

We support the communities in which we work to achieve racial and economic justice. We do this by examining our policy, advocacy, and programs to ensure that they directly combat racial injustice – often in partnership with businesses and government leaders. We also consult justice-involved individuals and their families to learn about their experiences with the criminal legal system and inform our approach to promoting racial justice and fairer legal systems that increase safety and foster respect, equity, and dignity for all – particularly in the Black community and other communities of color.

We will further this work by taking the following steps:

In 2023, RBIJ will:

- Identify where racial justice is implicit in ongoing programmatic work and ensure that our strategies to advance racial justice are clear
- Identify how the Workforce & Justice Alliance will use its platform, network, and leverage to advance systemic change, workforce diversity, economic inclusion, and racial equity
- Identify where the principle of racial equity can be more explicitly added to our policy reform work – including in our stand against capital punishment – and our programmatic work
- Identify opportunities to educate the business community on the ways that racial injustice pervades the criminal justice system
- Ensure all of our programming, such as flagship American Workforce & Justice Summit, panels, and webinars, has diverse representation

Proposed ongoing action:

- Create opportunities to advance racial justice and equity in our programmatic work – such as the Workforce & Justice Alliance and policy reform efforts – including work done in cooperation with businesses, community-based organizations, and partner justice organizations
- Create opportunities to engage with the communities we work and businesses on systemic change to end economic and racial injustice
- Create opportunities to promote peer-to-peer learning and the sharing of resources among businesses, community-based organizations, and partner justice organizations to promote best practices to advance racial justice and fair hiring