



NESAWG It Takes a Region Conference, Nov. 12-14, 2015
Ways to Think About Addressing Race & Equity in the Food System:
Guidelines and Prompts for Sessions

The following questions are meant to serve as prompts to help all conference participants think more in-depth about the race and equity implications of any topic addressed at the conference (as well as in their ongoing work).

This document draws from the Food Solutions New England (FSNE) Racial Equity Impact Assessment (2015), which was based extensively on the work of the Race Forward Racial Impact Assessment Toolkit. (See: <https://www.raceforward.org/practice/tools/racial-equity-impact-assessment-toolkit>.)

It was developed by NESAWG staff, Steering Committee and additional members of our NESAWG community. It is an outgrowth of our NESAWG Statement of Intent on Race & Equity, developed in 2014 (included here on the following page). If you would like to provide feedback on this effort, please do so in our conference survey, which will be sent to all conference participants on November 14th via email.

1. What decisions are we making or about to make that have an impact on outcomes for different groups? (race, class, ethnic, professions along the supply chain, other)
2. How does the proposed action/decision impact racial and economic disparities? Does it risk reinforcing the status quo, implicit bias and current inequities?
3. How does the proposed action/decision support and advance racial and economic equity (in education, contracting, access to services, health, workforce and economic development, etc.)?
4. Have voices of groups affected by the proposed action/decision been involved with its development? What solutions were proposed by these groups and communities?
5. What do you need to ensure that proposals are successful in addressing disparities? What resources, what timelines, and what monitoring will help ensure success for achieving racial and economic equity?
6. If your assessment shows that a proposed action/decision will likely increase disparities, what alternatives can you explore? What modifications are needed to maximize racial and economic equity outcomes and reduce racial and economic disparities?
7. What reminders, supports and accountability systems can be structured into routine practices to keep equity as a high priority?
8. As we design, evaluate or implement this project, who is involved and most deeply engaged in the process? Has our group made assumptions about others not having enough time to be involved? Are our meetings scheduled at a time when a variety of voices can attend? Are there other ways we can get important voices at the table? If this project is meant to serve, for example, people from a low-income or otherwise distressed community, are these community members contributing substantially to this conversation?

9. If this is a philanthropic endeavor, does it advance the concept of charity, or change? Would the endeavors' successful outcomes lead to social change or reinforce current power dynamics?

10. If your group is writing a grant proposal, are you grassroots community members, or working with such community members jointly? How is this work benefiting grassroots partners? Who is receiving consulting fees and salaries from the grant? Are community members who are spending their time on this work being compensated?

11. If your topic involves contracts with farmers or other business deals, does the project guarantee that the prices paid to farmers will cover their full costs of production? (This includes living wages for farmers and their employees, and the costs of maintaining safe equipment and decent housing.)

12. Will any jobs created pay living wages and recognize the workers' right to freedom of association to negotiate for better working conditions?

13. Is the Living Wage issue being addressed, whether for newly created or existing jobs?

NESAWG Statement of Intent on Race and Equity, November 2014

NESAWG's commitment to a fair and just food system dates back to the organization's beginnings. "A farm and food system for all" is a NESAWG core value. For several years we have endeavored to expand participation by diverse communities, with deliberate intention to work toward multi-racial participation. We want to step up those efforts. NESAWG's Steering Committee and staff intend to make equity a day-to-day and year-to-year working priority.

Equity means fair and just treatment for all; farm and food equity is the notion that opportunities should be universal for access to healthful food, as well as opportunities to excel and prosper in endeavors to grow, market and serve it. Our goal is for our words and actions to lead to change:

- The leaders and participants in NESAWG are more racially and economically diverse. Multi-racial participation greatly improves in all sectors.
- The annual conference is a place where participants can do the sometimes uncomfortable, yet rewarding work necessary to more fully understand and address the multiple forces that contribute to persistent food system inequity. By explicitly dedicating time, and sharing experiences and expertise via NESAWG convenings, we demonstrate a commitment to making food system equity a core value that informs our collective efforts.
- NESAWG network participants help each other (as individuals and as organizations) better understand how the absence of equity plays out in the food system today, and how we can recognize it, challenge it, and change it, and move toward a fair food system for all.

This is a long-term, farm/food system transformation commitment. We see this as a slow, steady deliberate process, in which we are both challenged and inspired, and we look forward to engaging in it with you.