Equity Assessment Tool
(updated July 2023)

This tool is designed to help River Network operationalize our commitments to equity and inclusion through our work, with a focus on increasing equity on the bases of race/ethnicity and class/income.

Who will implement this tool? The tool should be used as guidance by all staff at River Network – including program and operations staff. Given the challenges of articulating questions that are directly applicable to each and every River Network function, staff are encouraged to interpret the questions broadly to make them applicable to the specific project or decision being considered.

When should this tool be deployed?

The tool should be consistently integrated into River Network's operations. The following are touchstones for when the tool should be deployed either in full or in brief:

- o Developing ideas for new programs, through white papers, concept papers or other means;
- o Determining River Network's policy positions and priorities;
- o Drafting funding proposals, in particular for multi-year or large-scale projects, proposals to local or geographically-focused funders (to ensure we're not pulling away resources that are needed locally), proposals for new initiatives, or proposals we develop in collaboration with other entities. This is operationalized by incorporating a review of the tool into all proposal launch meeting agendas.
- o Annually, as part of activities to evaluate programs (e.g., at staff meetings or retreats) or evaluate progress toward our EDI goals (e.g., at EDI committee meetings or full board meetings); and
- o As part of meetings to coordinate program implementation and delivery.

To help build an organizational culture of accountability and consideration of equity in our work, we will promote use of this tool by:

- o Incorporating a detailed review and discussion of the tool into new staff onboarding processes; and
- o Including a discussion of how the tool has informed or can strengthen our work in all staff mid-year reviews. This step will also serve as a mechanism for documenting use of the tool across the organization.
- o Using this tool during proposal development processes to shape our work from the outset and center equity across all our programs

River Network's Equity Analysis Tool: A Rapid Approach

It is not always possible to create the time and space to deploy the tool fully (e.g. when responding to a funding opportunity on a short timeframe or deciding whether to support a particular policy position). In those circumstances, we will use a "rapid equity analysis" by asking ourselves the questions below, but we commit to deploying the tool fully as part of more detailed project planning.

[1] What are the ethnic/racial and class/income equity impacts of this particular decision and who will benefit from or be burdened by the particular decision?
[2] Are there strategies to mitigate the unintended consequences?
[3] How will we involve those who are most impacted to ensure they have a voice and a role in this project?
[4] Which stakeholders do we have relationships with that we should collaborate with on this program? Who is missing that we should develop relations with?
[5] Are River Network resources and investments distributed fairly and equitably across ethnic/racial and class/income lines?

River Network's Equity Analysis Tool: A Detailed Approach

Relation to one of River Network's [Principles](#) for Equitable & Inclusive Work	Questions to help identify considerations of inclusion and equity *(Note: To answer some of these questions with greater certainty, we might need to collect additional data. Data collection may be a next step or may be incorporated into project funding proposals)*
1. We use equity as a lens through which we view our work and as a guiding principle for choosing the right action	Q: Who is positively and negatively affected by this issue and how? Do people in disadvantaged racial, social and economic groups face unique challenges related to this program/initiative? Q: What policies, processes or relationships contribute to exclude the voices and priorities of those most affected by inequities? How is this program/project shifting those power dynamics? Will it increase or decrease ethnic/racial and class/income equity? Q: Are River Network resources and investments distributed fairly and equitably across ethnic/racial and class/income lines? Are BIPOC-led and serving organizations prioritized when selecting orgs to support with funding and/or technical assistance?
2. We set a table for all. *5. We partner with others who know more than us.*	Q: How are we meaningfully including those most impacted in identifying issues, proposing solutions and making decisions? Q: Are we prioritizing translation and interpretation needs and other accessibility costs as we develop project budgets? Q: What people or groups already support equity, justice and sustainability around this issue and how can we collaborate with them? Q: Which stakeholders do we have relationships with that we could collaborate with on this program? Who is missing that we could develop relations with?
4. We value human and ecological needs.	Q: How do the goals or desired outcomes we have articulated address impacts and provide benefits to both the ecology and the community?
6. We build and maintain relationships that outlast funding.	Q: How will we ensure we maintain relationships with program / project partners after the project is completed? In what ways can we continue to support them after the funding ends?
7. We deploy our resources strategically.	Q: If we choose this focus/priority, how would this maximize positive impact on equity vs. another focus or priority?
3. We practice what we preach. *8. We commit to learn and grow* *9. We are transparent about our capabilities and our progress.* *10. We hold ourselves accountable and welcome others to hold us accountable*	Q: How will we measure, track and evaluate the impacts of this program/project for its contribution to racial and social equity? Q: How do we track how River Network has changed and grown because of this work? Q: How will we share with the broader community what we have learned about doing equitable work through this program/project and invite their feedback? Q: Who is the lead for applying River Network's *Principles for Equitable and Inclusive Work* in this program/project?