



OPRE RACIAL EQUITY ACTION STATEMENT PUBLIC COMMITMENTS

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) builds evidence to improve the lives of children and families and works to ensure that evidence is used to inform the effective, efficient, and equitable administration of Administration for Children and Families (ACF) programs, services, and resources. This includes building evidence to help ACF better understand how its policies and programs advance or hinder equity for populations who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.

OPRE has made steps to advance equity through our research and evaluation by:

1. Launching new research efforts centering the experiences of African American children and families, such as the [National African American Child and Family Research Center](#).
2. Hosting an [annual Methods Meeting](#) in October 2021 focused on enhancing participant engagement in our research and evaluation.
3. Updating the ACF Evaluation Policy, which governs OPRE's work, to clarify that considerations of equity are central to our evaluation efforts.
4. Continuing investments in the [Tribal Research Center on Early Childhood Development and Systems](#), [Center for Research on Hispanic Children & Families](#), and [Human Services Programs in Rural Contexts](#).
5. Continuing to build our internal capacity to bring an equity lens to our research, evaluation and program improvement efforts by launching projects such as the [Advancing Contextual Analysis and Methods of Participant Engagement \(CAMPE\)](#) and [Race Equity for Fatherhood, Relationship, and Marriage Programs to Empower Black Families \(REFRAME\)](#). These projects are developing approaches, knowledge, and resources related to equitable approaches intended to inform ongoing and future OPRE efforts.

Moving forward, OPRE will:

In the current year -- demonstrate OPRE's ongoing commitment to equity by publishing a public facing statement of OPRE's commitment to equity that includes OPRE's definition of racial equity in relation to research and evaluation efforts.

September 2023 Update: In May 2023, OPRE published a [statement](#) that expresses OPRE's commitment to racial equity and shares OPRE's definition of racial equity in relation to research and evaluation efforts. The statement provides language OPRE staff can use when writing statements of work and guiding contractors in product development. The statement is a tangible expression of OPRE's commitment to incorporating racially equitable approaches into its research and evaluation work and explains why a focus on racial equity is so important to OPRE's work.

In the next year -- encourage a more diverse pool of contractors, including small and disadvantaged businesses, to apply to conduct OPRE's work by setting up the infrastructure for listening sessions with new and/or non-traditional potential applicants to learn more about challenges they might face in submitting responses to our requests for proposals. These listening sessions will allow OPRE to better understand:

- the technical assistance needs of new and/or non-traditional potential applicants.
- what aspects of our procurement processes, templates, and contract structures might need to be adapted to be more open to new and/or non-traditional potential applicants.

September 2023 Update: OPRE intends to conduct additional market research through a Sources Sought Notice that will be published by ACF's Office of Government Contracting Services to small business contractors in the new fiscal year (FY 2024). The Sources Sought Notice will help OPRE identify vendors who do not regularly bid on OPRE procurements but who have capabilities and experience in using equitable approaches to research, evaluation, related data practices, and evaluation technical assistance. The Sources Sought Notice, additionally, will help OPRE learn if there are aspects of OPRE's typical procurement processes or practices that have unintentionally created challenges to small businesses in responding to OPRE solicitations and gather recommendations to overcome these challenges. Additionally, OPRE has engaged with industry through capability documentation requests and intends to hold due diligence follow up sessions with interested parties that respond to our capability requests and Sources Sought submissions early in FY24.

In the next two years -- build OPRE's capacity to increase the authentic, intentional engagement of communities affected by ACF's programs, policies, research, and data and more directly include their voices, perspectives, and expertise by developing a toolkit for community-engaged research that outlines processes, procedures, norms for this engagement, including:

- contract and procurement language.
- timeline expectations.
- expectations for the kinds of information that could be in contractor workplans regarding the engagement of community members or representatives throughout the entirety of project process.

September 2023 Update: Through OPRE's [Advancing Contextual Analysis and Methods of Participant Engagement \(CAMPE\)](#) project, OPRE convened a Community Advisory Board composed of people with experience participating in ACF-funded programs. Lessons learned from starting this Community Advisory Board will inform the toolkit regarding reimbursement policies, and timeline expectations.

Please send any suggestions or comments on our plans to OPRE_Equity@acf.hhs.gov.

We will provide a semi-annual status update.

ACF is committed to making equity a central part of how we operate and deliver our mission. In 2021, every ACF office committed to equity by creating an Equity Action Plan.

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