



Documenting Your Policy Biography Using a Racial Equity Lens

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

*The purpose of this tool is to uncover the **policies and practices** of the **institutions and systems** that influence and shape our lives. These influences often go unnamed. Here's why:*

- *The experiences of racism by people of color often come through the agents of those institutions and systems.*
- *The experiences of privilege by whites is normalized because institutions and systems are generally set up to advantage whites.*

*Our society has a strong focus on individualism, so there's an inclination to interpret experiences of racism as **individual** acts and institutional advantages for whites as the result of **individual** effort. This tool asks you to think beyond the individual level to the level of institutions and systems.*

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. When and how did you first come to understand that "race" is a factor or an issue in our lives? In what ways, if any, is this realization linked to how the institutions or systems of your life operate?
2. What do you consider the most important factors that enabled you to be where you are today in terms of your present life circumstances and well-being? In what ways, if any, is this assessment linked to how the institutions or systems of your life operate?
3. What do you consider the biggest barriers you've experienced in your life? How did you confront them? How did you overcome those barriers? In what ways, if any, is this assessment linked to how the institutions or systems of your life operate?

4. Please think across your lifespan and describe any situations where you may have been advantaged or disadvantaged because of your race. In what ways, if any, is this realization linked to how the institutions or systems of your life operate?
5. What was your school/neighborhood like when you were growing up? What is it like today? What do you think contributed to those changes (if any)? In what ways is the trajectory linked to how the institutions or systems of these settings operate?
6. If you are active in racial equity work, how and why did you get involved? In what ways, if any, is your activism linked to how the institutions or systems of your life operate?