

## **EGA Racial Equity POV (Point of View)**

This document expresses the collective journey of EGA to center racial equity. Although EGA has spent significant time developing a racial equity analysis and understanding, and we will experience milestones along the way, we appreciate that this is not work with a clear end point. It will evolve, shift, and expand. This document is an affirmation of our collective commitment to that journey.

Through the process of developing this POV, it became clear that the world was calling upon us to be courageous in our actions and steadfast in our intention to foster racial equity: as grantmakers, representatives of institutions, and as individuals.

Racial equity work can often show up as performative or be conflated with diversity and inclusion. Through this document, we seek to clarify why racial equity matters to us and express our commitment to centering racial equity within our work.

### **Why it Matters**

The positive well-being of people is inherently and inextricably linked with that of the living planet. Conversely, social inequality and impoverishment often go hand in hand with environmental degradation, climate harm and vulnerability. As a result, our work requires us to devote action to the systems of domination and oppression that affect people and the natural world upon which we depend.

There is a premise that questions of race and racism are not central to environmental grantmaking. That premise is false. Like all history, the history of the environmental movement - because it operates within our current cultures and systems - is infused with the deep-seated pain and injustice that stem from systemic racism, violence, and the kind of extractive economic proliferation that harms both people and planet.

We must reckon with our history and chart a better path forward. That path calls upon us to value our common humanity and protect the sanctity and interconnectedness of all life. Along that path, solutions and system changes are rooted in people and centered on building inclusive and regenerative economies.

With this in mind, EGA's focus on racial equity seeks to address the historic and systemic imbalance of power. We understand that white supremacy, colonization, and imperialism manifest themselves through the domination of natural resources, land, water, oceans, health and well-being. Lack of access to the outdoors, clean air and water, healthy environments, and the violent targeting of environmental protectors all impact BIPOC communities at disproportionate levels. For EGA, recognizing and naming past and current injustices requires redistributing power from those who have historically held access to wealth, decision-making, and who have set the rules of engagement. It requires the amplification of power by those who have been and who continue to be marginalized. Our vision for this work is rooted in centering and following Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities and resourcing them to lead.

To shift these systems, we understand that we also must shift ourselves. We aim to change the norms of philanthropy that elevate white power and white fragility over collective progress. Our privilege working in philanthropy—where there is great appropriated wealth, positional influence, and resources—commits us to more actively use these privileges in service of the people and places with the greatest need.

### How We Commit to Taking Action

#### As EGA Board and Staff

- Center BIPOC and marginalized communities who bear the brunt of environmental oppression and create a welcoming space to learn from them.
- Model a new narrative that is both/and of equity and environment.
- Continue to build out data that tells the story of how to democratize grantmaking, philanthropic power, and community wisdom by using quantitative and qualitative information to tell a more complete and robust story.
- Be responsive to the ways we may be perpetuating white dominant culture, practices, policies, and norms and to actively work together to undo those patterns.
- Focus on what we have to gain through our racial equity work and the opportunities for progress, not what "we" may lose or the barriers, fears, and fragility that we may face.
- Choose boldness and courage. Even if we mess up, we keep going.

#### As EGA Members

- To our members and colleagues that are on the racial equity learning journey, but perhaps at a different point along the path, our actions are aimed at keeping everyone moving forward, one step at time.
- Embed a multitude of learning spaces that welcome a variety of learning interests and needs, while being mindful of holding space that builds courage even when fear and fragility may appear.
- Curate spaces for peer-to-peer learning about racial equity and environmental justice, including creating spaces for board and trustee specific learning.
- Bring in diverse thinking and voices by embracing non-white centered learning and wisdom, learning from other justice-rooted fields of work like restorative justice and BIPOC community organizing.
- Connect members to tools for assessing racial equity work.
- Invite white-identifying individuals to highlight specific commitments for themselves and who they have accountability to in community.
- Center addressing past and current injustice, not white comfort.
- Take risks and be courageous!

#### EGA as an Institution

- Review and revise EGA's policies, organizational structures, and procedures to ensure they are conducted with a racial equity lens
- Explore and integrate new practices that promote racial equity
- Listen, Learn, and try.