

Equity Advisory Committee (EAC) Kick-Off Virtual Workshop

Saturday, September 10th | 9:00 am - 11:30 am

Summary

On September 10, 2022, twenty-four people with diverse lived experiences, interests, and expertise came together for a two and a half hour virtual meeting to begin to develop a framework and goals for the newly forming Equity Advisory Committee (EAC) of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC). Meeting participants included community members, CCRPC staff and board members, and representatives of municipal and community organizations.

The EAC is being created as part of the CCRPC's ongoing efforts to build the organization's capacity to address systemic racism and inequities in Chittenden County communities. The goal is to achieve a more equitable future for Chittenden County that benefits all residents – especially those who have been marginalized and historically left out of the planning process.

During the meeting participants got to know each other, shared their experiences and recommendations for effective groups, discussed possible roles for the Equity Advisory Committee and prioritized upcoming tasks based on the recommendations in the [organizational equity assessment](#) completed by The Creative Discourse Group.

The following highlights from the workshop represent the key themes from the meeting as well as next steps.

Characteristics of Effective Groups

(themes from small group conversations)

Trust

Members assume good intentions, meet each other where they are, take responsibility when harm occurs, and over time develop a set of shared interests and a shared vision that binds them together.

Group agreements

There are group norms or a code of conduct that guides how the group does its work.

Clear goals and purpose

The group has clarity about the purpose of the group and what the group is trying to accomplish.

Diverse membership

The membership of the group is diverse (including diverse cultures, ethnicity, and perspectives). The presence of young people is valued.

Deep listening

People are able to listen deeply to each other, listen for the purpose of deepening shared understanding, and are able to focus on the message being delivered rather than the messenger.

Power to create change

The group has the power to affect meaningful change.

Group is convened with intentionality and care

People responsible for convening the group are clear about the purpose, follow-up with the group so people know the impact of their work, and provide opportunities for individual interactions with group members in addition to full group work.

Role of the Equity Advisory Committee (EAC)

(themes from small group conversations about possible roles for the EAC)

Engage with Chittenden County residents

1. Uplift the stories of diverse community members and ensure that the voices of those most impacted by barriers/access issues are driving decision-making.
2. Ensure that community input is incorporated at the beginning of planning processes, and revisited before plans are finalized.
3. Create a place for open conversations where new ideas and possibilities can emerge.

Support the work of the CCRPC Equity & Engagement Manager

1. Ensure that equity work is embedded throughout the organization.
2. Ensure that the manager has a meaningful role in establishing priorities for the Equity Advisory Committee and helping to lead the EAC's work.

Provide accountability

1. Identify indicators and metrics to guide CCRPC's equity work.
2. Understand and track how resources flow through the organization and out into the community.

Identify opportunities for direct action

1. Proactively identify new possibilities to create a flow of resources that go directly to communities to help solve immediate challenges.

Please [click here](#) for the full notes from small group conversations

Next Steps

1. Opportunities for immediate action

a. Equity and Engagement Manager Hiring Process

- i. CCRPC is in the process of hiring an Equity and Engagement Manager. We are looking for 2-3 EAC/community members to help review applications this week and meet next Monday, September 19th to determine who should be interviewed; we will then be looking for 2-3 EAC/community members to help conduct interviews later this month. **If you are interested and available, please email Emma Vaughn (evaughn@ccrpcvt.org) to volunteer and we will be in touch with next steps.**

b. Equity Statement Development

- i. We are seeking a few EAC/community members to work with us on developing an equity statement and associated commitments. **If you are interested in helping, please email Emma Vaughn (evaughn@ccrpcvt.org) to volunteer and we will be in touch with next steps.**

c. EAC Membership

- i. We would like to understand your level of interest in joining the EAC, as well as your availability. **Please fill out this form** to share your thoughts about next steps.

d. Upcoming Workshop/Trainings

- i. The Creative Discourse Group is hosting two upcoming training sessions for the CCRPC staff and Board members, and we welcome you to attend:
 1. **Distributing Power & Decision-Making:** Thursday, September 29, 5:30-7:00pm
 2. **How to Engage Effectively with People Who Have Been Minoritized or Excluded:** Monday, October 24, 5:30-7:00pm

If you are interested in attending one or both sessions, please email Emma Vaughn (evaughn@ccrpcvt.org) to confirm attendance and we will send you the Zoom details. More details about this series are available [here](#).

2. Reconvene Equity Advisory Committee

a. Suggested agenda items

1. Create group agreements
2. Updates on action steps (see #1 above)
3. Review and refine EAC roles

Participants

| Name | Affiliation |
|---------------------|---|
| FaRied Munarsyah | The People's Kitchen |
| Kate Nugent | Winooski Partnership for Prevention |
| Catarina Campbell | Howard Center |
| Joanne Crawford | Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi |
| Cristalee McSweeney | Williston Community Justice |
| Bruce Wilson | Service Rendered, Arts so Wonderful |
| Mona Tolba | Cultural Broker / Interpreter |
| Ragab Mohamed | Community Member |
| Basim Aldulimi | Community Member |
| Jasim Muddafar | Community Member |
| Rachel Batterson | Vermont Legal Aid |
| Omar Derzi | Community Member |
| Ahmed Mohamed | Community Member |
| Melissa Lang | Mercy Connections |
| Mike O'Brien | CCRPC Board |
| Malimu Chol Dhoor | Sudanese Foundation of Vermont (SUDFUND VERMONT) Inc. |
| Elaine Haney | CCRPC Board |
| Phet Keomanyvanh | Burlington REIB |
| Elaine Wang | Winooski City Manager |
| Bryan Davis | CCRPC Staff |
| Emma Vaughn | CCRPC Staff |
| Charlie Baker | CCRPC Staff |
| Susan McCormack | The Creative Discourse Group |
| KC Williams | The Creative Discourse Group |