

Equity Advisory Committee (EAC) Kick-Off Virtual Workshop

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

Summary *(updated 10.11.22)*

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

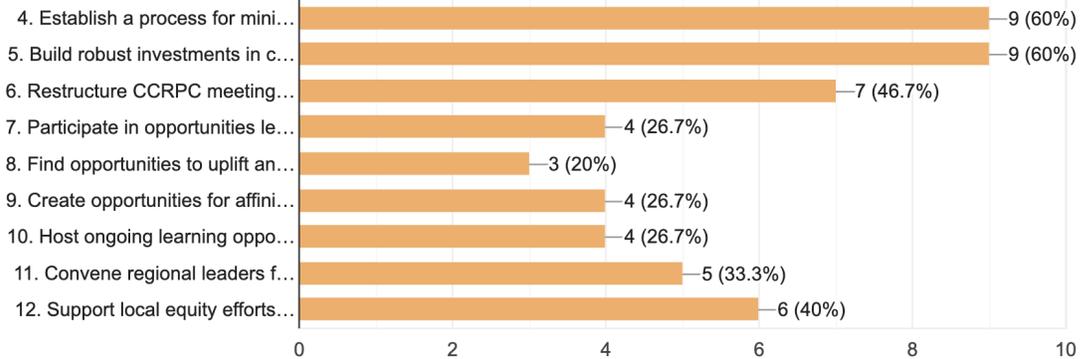
EAC Priority Setting Survey

(completed during the meeting by participants)

Below is a list of additional actions CCRPC can take to make progress. Please review the list below and **check the three actions that you think should be top priorities for CCRPC.**



15 responses



What else do you think CCRPC could do to help create equity and justice for Chittenden County residents?

1. Transportation and housing. Listening circles!!!!!! Making sure efforts are made to bring people's voices to the table who have barriers such as technology, transportation, childcare or differing schedules.
2. Reparations based work (with focus on indigenous and black community reparations)
3. feedback after implementation of policy to ensure policy (and funding) is accessible to the target group
4. To give some classes of law to the new refugees and the people who don't know their rights. Build trust by creating a group like this to help people know their rights.
5. Everything in the above list should be a priority. It was hard to pick just 3. So I'd say prioritize the top 3 choices of everyone, but put the other 6 choices on the list of things CCRPC must do. They are all important and if implemented together will have the greatest impact.
6. delve into and help create policy (if none exists) about how to address racism, incidents of racial harassment on public transportation and in other public venues
7. Update methods of data collection so that the data is beneficial to the community and not just for

<p>administrative reporting. Rethink how and what data you collect - make it meaningful for the marginalized populations. No group should be too small to have input.</p>
<p>8. Continue to be a leader in moving Chittenden County municipalities forward on equity issues. Move municipalities forward on creating inclusive communities in part through zoning and planning that permits the development or housing of all types that is affordable to a range of incomes, including lower income people. This is a racial equity issue because, due to systemic, societal racism, BIPOC are much more likely to be lower income.</p>
<p>9. Continue to integrate DEI and social justice efforts into CCRPC's hiring practices and policies</p>
<p>10. Add equity objectives into all staff job descriptions and evaluations, and have equity operationalized in their work plan, with tasks and deliverables.</p>
<p>11. A variation on 12 is for CCRPC to house that equity policy expertise for smaller/lower resourced municipalities, so that as we are incorporating equity into all of our job descriptions, we may or may not need an equity policy advisor on staff. For Winooski the risk is that person becomes the catch all for all direct community engagement tasks. For other municipalities the risk is they will never invest in such a position/role.</p>
<p>12. Center planning and policy around equitable practices first, including all marginalized groups in Chittenden County, remembering that making changes that benefit the most vulnerable in our community will create changes that benefit many beyond that.</p>
<p>13. More focus and efforts of financial allocated investments into the community of the global majority [affected] by the injustices.</p>
<p>14. Help change bad laws (covenants, etc) and have community oversight of law enforcement (PD's and other agencies). Promote direct decision-making and develop capacity for participation of everyone.</p>

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