Integrating Race: Applying a Racial Equity Lens to the Disability Field

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OUR TEAM

Our team consists of three Master of Public Administration candidates at the Evans School of Public Policy & Governance at the University of Washington. We engaged with this project in fulfillment of our capstone degree requirement. Our faculty advisor was Dr. Grant Blume, who helped guide the creation of this report and provided feedback on all aspects.

Our team would like to explicitly acknowledge our positionality, recognizing that while we approached our research in an empirical and transparent manner, our backgrounds and experiences nonetheless play a role in how we approached this project. Everyone on our team is a person of color, an immigrant, master's educated student without any disability. Further exploration of the intersection between race and developmental disability should incorporate the knowledge and lived experiences of people with those intersecting identities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wise's strategic plan sunsetted last year (2018) and the organization is exploring how it can incorporate racial equity into its upcoming strategic plan. Wise currently serves as a leader in the developmental field through innovation, training, and technical assistance to increase integrated employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities. The following report presents research and analysis on how the disability field in Washington (thereafter referred to as the disability field) currently addresses racial equity, best practices on addressing racial equity, and common barriers that prevent the successful implementation of racial equity in the disability field.

This report is grounded in the following research questions: *What practices currently in place could be contributing to, or not addressing, the limited access of employment services for people of color with developmental disabilities? How can Wise address these gaps in the system?*

Additionally, to dive deeper into exploring our main research question, we focused on answering the following sub-questions:
1. How are other nonprofits that engage in disability work addressing racial inequity in their organizations and services?
2. How can Wise improve its internal understanding of racial equity?
3. How do Wise's partner service providers perceive and experience Wise?

Methodology

These recommendations are the result of a three-phase research process:

Discovery Phase: We began by educating ourselves about the disability field. Part of this initial phase was conducting a literature review to learn about how the history field has evolved overtime.

Data Collection Phase: We gathered qualitative data through surveys, interviews, and a research synthesis to gain a more comprehensive picture of the disability field. Our data collection instruments gathered data from organizations in the disability field about their programs and services, opinions and attitudes about racial equity, challenges and barriers in doing racial equity work, internal culture and strategies and leadership.

Triangulation and Analysis Phase: Lastly, we synthesized and analyzed our data with thematic coding and offered recommendations for improving Wise's racial equity efforts over the course of five years.

Recommendations

As a result of our analysis, we recommend that Wise prioritizes moving forward with the following options over the course of five years:

Short-Term (Year 1)

We encourage upper management to commit to ongoing efforts to learn about racial equity.

Racial equity work is not a destination that can be achieved after a few trainings and programmatic changes, but rather a continuous journey of working towards racial equity. Our research suggests that the organizations most successful in addressing racial equity have upper management that are fully committed to building up personal knowledge about racial equity and encourage their employees to do the same. Creating a shared narrative about what racial equity means and having complete buy-in establishes the foundation required to change other organizational practices that can address racial inequities.

Intermediate (Years 2-3)

Partner with community-based organizations that work closely with communities of color.

Wise is known and respected for the large trainings and conferences it facilitates. Wise should leverage its resources to partner with both community-based organizations that are led by or serve communities of color in the developmental and intellectual disabilities field, and other similar organizations that interact often with communities of color. By asking those organizations to speak at conferences and lead trainings, Wise can help further not only their own understanding about what gaps exist for communities of color, but also extend those learning opportunities to its network.

Gather data and information on communities of color to assess their needs through intentional outreach and data collection

A common finding in the disability field was the feeling that organizations provided disability services to everyone, regardless of race. However, our research suggested that a common barrier in receiving services for communities of color was the unique barriers caused not by their disability or race alone, but how the two intersect with one another in complex ways. One way to lead with racial equity is to invite those closest to the problem to help design its solutions. Conducting intentional outreach to communities of color after dedicating time to personal learning about racial equity can mitigate the possibility of tokenization and lead to more fruitful partnerships. Outreach to communities of color requires intentional planning and partnerships, and if done well, can offer

a fuller understanding of the complex experiences of individuals related to the intersecting of their race, disability, and other identities.

Data can be a powerful tool in mitigating racial disparities. While most of Wise's work does not typically involved working directly with communities, Wise can begin to gather data about who they serve. This can highlight to Wise how they might need to tailor their trainings, as well as determining if more outreach to communities of color is needed and where that outreach needs to occur.

Long-Term (Years 4-5)

Address the intersectionality of race and disabilities in the design of technical assistance trainings and support.

Once Wise has a strong foundation in understanding the complex intersection of race and disability and the unique barriers of those intersecting identities and has partnered with community-based organizations, Wise should incorporate racial equity into their trainings. Technical assistance, trainings and supports should acknowledge that race-neutral trainings in practice can nonetheless have racially disparate effects. Wise should examine its own training materials—preferably with the assistance of a consulting group that is strong in racial equity—to develop trainings that are culturally responsive and/or specifically targeted to communities of color.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

Wise is a capacity-building organization in Seattle, Washington that promotes equitable employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through innovation, training, and technical assistance. Wise operates primarily in Washington and Oregon, but also has partnerships and contracts with governmental and other organizations in states such as Alaska, New Mexico, Georgia and North Dakota.

Wise and Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)

Wise is a national leader in the disabilities field and plays a significant role in expanding the number of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who participate in competitive integrated employment (CIE). CIE is the concept of having individuals with disabilities participating as part of the general workforce where the majority of employees are typically individuals without disabilities.[1] The organization's services primarily provide technical assistance and training to high school transition services, government agencies, and employment agencies. Wise's services also include conducting Person-Centered Planning and training for families, primarily in Oregon and Washington. In addition, Wise undertakes small pilot projects across the country that are innovative in the field of employment for people with developmental disabilities. One such program is the North Dakota VR Pilot Program, where Wise designed the Expanded Support Employment project to move individuals from segregated day services into competitive integrated employment opportunities. While Wise provides some direct service to individuals with disabilities, the core of Wise's services is capacity building for employment agencies. Wise helps employment agencies build their capacity by providing training and technical assistance to meet core competency requirements and manage services to meet a wide range of support needs. Employment agencies serve a crucial role in supporting individuals with developmental disabilities to participate fully in integrated employment. Agencies also work alongside employers to create employment opportunities tailored to the strengths and skills of job-seeking individuals.

Racial Equity in the Developmental Disabilities Field

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[1] "Integrated Employment." *Integrated Employment - Office of Disability Employment Policy - United States Department of Labor*, U.S. Department of Labor, www.dol.gov/odep/topics/integratedemployment.htm.

While projections show that by 2056 up to half of Washington State's population will be people of color,[2] little attention in the literature or among national developmental disability advocates has explicitly focused on the intersection of disability and race. Such projections suggest that it will be crucial to devote resources and outreach efforts to better understand and address the intersection of race and disability. While individuals of color living with disabilities have been around for centuries, formal data and research around this intersection is lacking. Compared to fields such as physical and behavioral health that have vast literature with a racial focus, research in the disability field that focuses on race is sparse.

Wise and Racial Equity

Wise's strategic plan sunsetted last year (2018). The organization is currently working on developing its new five-year plan to be adopted in 2019. As part of this new five-year plan, Wise seeks to incorporate a racial equity component that will help guide its efforts to serve a broader and more racially diverse population. Wise acknowledges that a racial gap exists in the disability field relative to who receives employment services and who does not. In an effort to address this gap, Wise aspires to incorporate a racial equity lens in their work and to improve access to employment services for people of color with disabilities. Wise is committed to improving its racial equity capacity and to expanding its knowledge about the intersection between race and disabilities. As part of this learning effort, Wise is also committed to learning from other organizations in the disability field that are integrating a racial equity focus in their work.

Wise is currently working on its own internal efforts to advance racial equity by creating a Diversity and Inclusion Team to develop their employees' understanding of racial equity. Wise also hired our team to explore where gaps in the organization's practices prevent them from achieving a greater degree of racial equity in their work. Findings from this project aim to identify what gaps currently exist and provide recommendations that can be included in Wise's racial equity strategic plan.

Focus Area and Approach

To guide our analysis, discussion and recommendations, we borrowed the Wheel of Change framework from the Social Transformation Project, an organization based in Oakland, California that works on capacity building around organizational and leadership development.[3] The framework includes three domains required for organizational change: **hearts & minds, structure, and behavior** (see Fig. 1).

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[2] Teixeira, Ruy, et al. *States of Change The Demographic Evolution of the American Electorate, 1974–2060*. Center for American Progress, 2015, *States of Change The Demographic Evolution of the American Electorate, 1974–2060*, cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/SOC-report1.pdf.

[3] Glass, Robert. "Wheel of Change Executive Overview." *Social Transformation Project.*

THE WHEEL OF CHANGE

The Wheel of Change is a model for transforming organizations.

hearts
& minds

structure   behavior
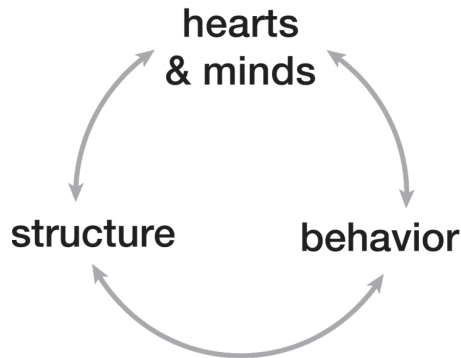
Fig. 1. Wheel of Change diagram from Robert Glass. "Wheel of Change Executive Overview," *Social Transformation Project.*

Hearts & Minds

Hearts & minds refers to individual beliefs and emotions in an organization that create a shared vision and sense of belonging.[4] While each of the three features of the Wheel of Change reinforce one another, hearts & minds is the foundational piece to organizational change. The state of an organization's hearts & minds will set the tone for what behaviors and structures will follow. Throughout our research, our team identified four key stages that organizations in the disability field can be in regarding racial equity:

1. Race-neutral (color-blind): Our organization focuses on disability, *regardless of* race
2. Racial awareness: Our organization focuses on disability *and* race individually
3. Racial equity: Our organization focuses on the *intersection* of disability *and* race
4. Expanded intersectionality: Our organization focuses on disability *and its intersection with race and* ALL the multitude of identities and experiences that an individual holds (i.e. LGBTQ, immigration status, homelessness, mental health, incarceration, etc.)

This report focuses on racial equity, while acknowledging that Wise should ultimately make efforts to move towards an expanded intersectional understanding of disability and race.

Behaviors

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[4] Glass, Robert. "Wheel of Change Executive Overview." *Social Transformation Project.* stproject.org/resources/tools-for-transformation

Behaviors refer to how individuals act and encompasses the habits, skills, norms, and communication practices that are in place in an organization.[5] Some examples include support for developing new skills, welcoming mistakes, open and honest communication, and having clear expectations.

Structure

Structure addresses how organizational resources are set up and includes strategies, operational structures, processes, and technology.[6] Some examples include personnel policies and performance management systems, as well as hiring, meeting, and decision-making processes.

Research Questions

Based on Wise's needs, our work focuses on the following research questions:

"*What practices currently in place could be contributing to, or not addressing, the limited access of employment services for people of color with developmental disabilities? How can Wise address these gaps in the system?*"

In order to dive deeper into exploring our main research question, we also focused on answering the following sub-questions:

1. How are other nonprofits that engage in disability work addressing racial inequity in their organizations and services?
2. How can Wise improve its internal understanding of racial equity?
3. How does Wise's partner service providers perceive and experience Wise?

Overview of Methodology: A Three-Prong Approach

We began our project by launching a *discovery phase* to educate ourselves about the disability field. Part of this initial phase was conducting a literature review to learn about how the history of the field has evolved overtime. We then began a *data collection phase* to gather qualitative data through conducting surveys and interviews, reviewing technical assistance and training materials, and compiling a synthesis of best practices. We aimed to collect information about the programs and services, opinions and attitudes, and challenges and barriers in doing racial equity work of organizations that partner with Wise. We also sought to collect information about organizations'

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[5] Glass, Robert. "Wheel of Change Executive Overview." *Social Transformation Project.* stproject.org/resources/tools-for-transformation

[6] Glass, Robert. "Wheel of Change Executive Overview." *Social Transformation Project.* stproject.org/resources/tools-for-transformation

internal culture, strategies and leadership, and their role in promoting racial equity. Lastly, we analyzed our data during the *triangulation and analysis phase* by focusing on recurrent themes and offering recommendations to Wise to improve their internal understanding of and ability to integrate racial equity into their work. With our recommendations, Wise has the opportunity to be better positioned to improve their racial equity efforts and reach a more racially diverse population.

Key Findings

Conversations with interviewees, survey responses, document analyses, and our synthesis of best practices revealed several key findings. Our findings showed that:

1. Wise is open to concepts related to racial equity and its current values align with racial equity efforts;
2. Our data reveal the perception that Wise has limited internal capacity[7] to engage in conversations around race, and have insufficient and inconsistent buy-in about integrating racial equity in the organization's work;
3. Upper management, and most specifically the Executive Director, can be a catalyst for change because they set the tone and pace for how an organization integrates racial equity in their practices;
4. A number of partner service providers have limited internal capacity to engage in conversations around race and integrate racial equity in their work, and there is inconsistent buy-in about integrating racial equity work across the disability field in Washington; and
5. Wise's position as a leader in the disability field in Washington provides the organization with the opportunity to leverage change towards racial equity in the disability field.

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[7] We define internal capacity as organizational resources, collective expertise, policies, structures, and procedures.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

To most effectively explore the topic of integrated employment access for people of color with disabilities we explored a subset of literature through the Wheel of Change framework and based on its relevance to the following concepts:

(1) How the social construction of disability shapes American public policy **(Hearts & Minds)**
(2) Intersections of integrated employment and race **(Behavior and Structure)**
(3) How organizations like Wise serve people of color with disabilities **(Behavior and Structure)**

Each area of research independently provides substantive background information, but when examined together, the literature reveals how historical and political contexts shape public understanding of disability, integrated employment, and its relation to communities of color.

Social Construction of Disability

Social construction of disability shapes how disability exists in the **hearts & minds** of the public. Conceptual models of disability have historically shaped public understanding of disability, and the ensuing advocacy work that followed. The three most prominent models in which disability has been understood are:

1) Medical Model - Disability is a physical, mental, or emotional impairments that needed to be fixed or ameliorated (1800s).
2) Economic Model - Individuals with disability place a burden on societal efficiency and caused a deficit in human productivity (unknown).[8] [9]
3) Minority Group Model - The disability community is a marginalized group that requires legal protections against discrimination (1960s).[10]

Before the emergence of medical or economic model, an individual's disability was theorized to be directly related to their luck, karma, or the sins of their past life.[11] The medical model reflected

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[8] There was not a clear date on the emergence of the economic model, but it was most heavily referenced when designing disability policy.

[9] Retief, Marno, and Rantoa Letšosa. "Models of Disability: A Brief Overview." *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, vol. 74, no. 1, 2018, doi:10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738.\

[10] Scotch, Richard K., and Kay Schriner. "Disability as Human Variation: Implications for Policy." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 549, 1997, pp. 148–159. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1048092.

[11] Swain, J., French, S., Barnes, C., & Thomas, C. (2004). *Disabling Barriers, Enabling Environments* (2nd ed.) (pp. 112-115). Sage Publications.

a paradigm shift in disability theory and asserted that disability was a tragic deviation from the physical, mental, or neurotypical norm. The economic model focused on an individual's perceived inability to enter the workforce and the perceived far-reaching effects of disability on the economic health of society, shaping legislation rooted in the construction of disability as a deficit-based condition. During the 1960s in the wake of the Civil Rights movement, leaders of the disability rights movement championed the minority group model as a replacement for the medical and economic models. The advocacy and political work done under the minority group model led to the passing of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and subsequent federal legislation that has secured provisions for the disability community.[12]

In the early 1990s,[13] a new framework for disability emerged known as the human variation model. The human variation model acknowledges disability as simply a variation in human genomic expression and asserts that the concept of disability reflects the failure of social institutions to accommodate for wider human variations that exist. Proponents of the human variation model cite appropriate provision of accommodations and positively constructed disability identity as key factors for full integration of the disability community into broader public domains. The crux of the human variation model lies in the belief that versatility and adaptability are inherently human traits[14] and that "to the extent that society fully accommodates a condition, it ceases to be a disability."

Society's understanding of disability has evolved since the 1960s, but in conducting our research, we struggled to find literature on disability and intersectionality. In this context, intersectionality is defined as the interdependent forms of oppression or privilege that an individual experiences due to the different aspects of their identity.[13]

Leaders in the disability advocacy field attest to the importance of attitudes and public opinion, with many claiming that public perception is the best measure of success for integration of the disability community into the mainstream.[15] The #DisabilitySoWhite hashtag campaign recently made waves in the disability community by sparking discussion on the inclusion of people of color

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[12] Retief, Marno, and Rantoa Letšosa. "Models of Disability: A Brief Overview." *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, vol. 74, no. 1, 2018, doi:10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738.

[13] Scotch, Richard K., and Kay Schriner. "Disability as Human Variation: Implications for Policy." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 549, 1997, pp. 148–159. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1048092.

[14] Mccarthy, Henry. "The Disability Rights Movement: Experiences and Perspectives of Selected Leaders in the Disability Community." *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, vol. 46, no. 4, 2003, pp. 209–223., doi:10.1177/003435520304600402.

[15] Mccarthy, Henry. "The Disability Rights Movement: Experiences and Perspectives of Selected Leaders in the Disability Community." *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, vol. 46, no. 4, 2003, pp. 209–223., doi:10.1177/003435520304600402.

with disabilities in media portrayal.[16] People of color with disabilities are especially vulnerable to intersectional invisibility.[17] Intersectional invisibility is defined as the general failure to fully recognize people with intersecting identities, especially those who do not fall into the prototypical stereotype of someone from that population.[13]

Some theorists view intersectional identities through an "additive model" that quantifies the amount of oppression an individual faces by the number of marginalized groups they fall within. Other theorists hypothesize an "interactive" model, in which the oppression faced by individuals falling into multiple marginalized groups as its own unique experience that is not necessarily "more" or "less" oppressive. Visibility, self-identity, and roles are constantly negotiated for individuals with disability, and even more so for those that are also people of color. The context and theory in which disability is studied can either be a tool to promote inclusion of people of color with disabilities into mainstream life, or as a hidden barrier that contributes to their erasure.[5]

Intersections of Integrated Employment and Race

Until the late 1990s and early 2000s, individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities primarily worked in sheltered workshops separated from their typically-developing peers and colleagues.[18] Following key Supreme Court decisions such as *Olmstead v. L.C.* (1999) and *United States v. State of Rhode Island (*2014*)*, states moved toward defunding sheltered workshops and supporting the transition toward integrated competitive employment. Both cases informed and normed how states structured service provision for the disability community. *Olmstead v. L.C.* (1999) **(Structures)** secured community inclusion for individuals with disabilities if the community supports were appropriate, safe, and consented to, while *United States v. State of Rhode Island (*2014*)* **(Structures)** prevented unnecessary segregation in the delivery of state services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Both cases set a precedent of inclusion and integration **(Behaviors)**, evoking parallels to desegregation in the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), though with a disability lens in place of a racial lens.

Landmark court cases have signaled a paradigm shift on how individuals with disabilities are integrated into the workforce, but difficulties maintaining that change and garnering buy-in from typically-developing citizens, employers, and structural gatekeepers persist, especially for people of color with disabilities.

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[16] Blahovec, Sarah. "Confronting the Whitewashing Of Disability: Interview with #DisabilityTooWhite Creator Vilissa Thompson." *The Huffington Post*, TheHuffingtonPost.com, 7 Dec. 2017, www.huffingtonpost.com/sarah-blahovec/confronting-the-whitewash_b_10574994.html.

[17] Purdie-Vaughns, Valerie, and Richard P. Eibach. "Intersectional Invisibility: The Distinctive Advantages and Disadvantages of Multiple Subordinate-Group Identities." *Sex Roles*, vol. 59, no. 5-6, 2008, pp. 377–391., doi:10.1007/s11199-008-9424-4.

[18] Sulewski, Jennifer Sullivan, et al. "Organizational Transformation to Integrated Employment and Community Life Engagement." *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2017, pp. 313–320., doi:10.3233/jvr-170867.

Competitive integrated employment (CIE) is defined as full or part-time work at minimum wage or higher, with wages and benefits similar to those without disabilities performing the same work, and fully integrated with co-workers without disabilities.[19] However, challenges persist even with employment services and legislation protecting the rights of people with disabilities. Among working-age adults, individuals with disabilities have a 33% employment rate compared to 71% of those that do not have disabilities.[20] Additional factors such as race and criminal history further decrease chances of employment.[21] Data from the American Communities Survey show that working age African-Americans with disabilities have a 29% employment rate across the U.S., while working age White Americans have a 39% employment rate.

Transition services train youth with disabilities on skills that maximize independence and self-sufficiency such as financial management, self-advocacy, and use of public information. Transition services have emerged as a powerful mechanism for supporting and preparing individuals with disabilities to obtain competitive integrated employment as they complete high school. Transition services prioritize developing skills for workforce readiness. Even with these services present, stigmas around employing individuals with disabilities persist. Employers frequently cite a fear of poor job performance and qualifications, greater absenteeism, paperwork burden, and fear of the "unknown" as perceived barriers to employing individuals with disabilities.[22] These barriers compound for people of color with disabilities, as studies examining transition services provided to students found that individuals at schools with more low-income students (as measured by receiving free or reduced lunch) and more students of color received less transition services.[23]

Positive strengths-based messaging about integrated employment rooted in social work theory emphasizes individuals' self-determination and competencies. Strength-based messaging can

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[19] Hoff, D. *Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination: Analysis of Title IV of WIOA Statue and Proposed Regulations and Recommendations for Regulatory Changes*. 2014, www.apse.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/CPSD-WIOA-Title-IV-analysis.pdf.

[20]Tucker, et al. "Improving Competitive Integrated Employment for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities: Findings from an Evaluation of Eight Partnerships in Employment Systems Change Projects." *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, IOS Press, 1 Jan. 2017, content.iospress.com/articles/journal-of-vocational-rehabilitation/jvr902.

[21]Ethridge, et al. "The Impact of Disability and Type of Crime on Employment Outcomes of African American and Latino Offenders." *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, National Rehabilitation Counseling Association, 1 Dec. 2017, www.questia.com/library/journal/1P4-2023370522/the-impact-of-disability-and-type-of-crime-on-employment.

[22]Ethridge, et al. "The Impact of Disability and Type of Crime on Employment Outcomes of African American and Latino Offenders." *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, National Rehabilitation Counseling Association, 1 Dec. 2017, www.questia.com/library/journal/1P4-2023370522/the-impact-of-disability-and-type-of-crime-on-employment.

[23] Gary, K W, et al. "Transitioning Racial/Ethnic Minorities With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Influence of Socioeconomic Status on Related Services." *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 2018, doi:10.1177/2165143418778556.

mitigate misconceptions about employing individuals with disabilities. Accommodations for employees with disabilities can be marketed as productivity-enhancements, and strengths-based messaging encourages employers to emphasize the work an individual can do instead of what they cannot do. Utilizing transition services in tandem with positive strengths-based messaging allows disability professionals to address the specific needs of individuals with disabilities looking for employment, as well as the concerns of potential employers.[24]

When examining integrated employment through an economics lens, prior studies have generally relied on a "supply-side" approach that focuses on the personal characteristics of the individual and not on the "demand-side" or the employers, the environment, and corporate culture.[25] The misconceptions that employers have about the employee base act as "incomplete information." Fear of the unknown prevents employers from committing to supported employment and blocks them from seeing the potential positive externalities that individuals with disabilities bring to their work community. Not only do the individuals themselves experience the benefits of monetary capital, civic engagement, and social inclusion, but a diverse workforce benefits everyone. Employer, coworkers, customers, and any individuals who interact with that employee are exposed to a world-view that has been historically erased.[26]

Organizations Serving People of Color with Disabilities

People of color with disabilities face compounded oppression from racism and ableism. Our research revealed a service delivery gap in how leading organizations are addressing the barriers that communities of color encounter when accessing employment training and assistance. We were able to identify three organizations that specifically serve this population: The Arc, Open Doors for Multicultural Families (thereafter referred to as Open Doors), and the Center for Capacity Building on Minorities with Disabilities Research.

The Arc is a national community-based organization that promotes the rights of people with developmental disabilities.[27] The Arc engages in grant writing, capacity building, and research. Additionally, the Arc is an organization that has explicitly identified racial diversity as one of their core values and have a diversity strategic plan, board diversity committee, and other organizational resources dedicated to racial diversity.

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[24]Blanck, P, et al. "Employment of People with Disabilities: Twenty-Five Years Back and Ahead." *Law & Inequality: A Journel of Theory and Practice*, vol. 25, no. 2.

[25] Tucker, et al. "Improving Competitive Integrated Employment for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities: Findings from an Evaluation of Eight Partnerships in Employment Systems Change Projects." *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, IOS Press, 1 Jan. 2017, content.iospress.com/articles/journal-of-vocational-rehabilitation/jvr902.

[26]Hartnett, H P, et al. "Employers' Perceptions of the Benefits of Workplace Accommodations: Reasons to Hire, Retain and Promote People with Disabilities." Vol. 34, 2011, pp. 17–23.

[27]*Diversity Annual Report: A New Beginning*. 2017, www.thearc.org/file/2017-Diversity-Annual-Report.pdf.

Open Doors is a community-based organization housed in Kent, Washington that provides culturally and linguistically relevant information, services, and programming to culturally and linguistically diverse families of persons with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Open Doors highlight their "cultural brokering" model that emphasizes representative service provision as the key to their success. Open Doors currently has staff that speak over nine different languages. A unique trait of Open Doors is their capacity-building services. Open Doors offers training on cultural diversity, early childhood education, self-determination and disability, as well as a diverse parent mentor training program.[28]

Lastly, we examined the Center for Capacity Building on Minorities with Disabilities Research (CCBMDR).[29] CCBMDR's mission is to generate state-of-the-art research and interventions designed to promote empowerment of minority individuals with disabilities and capacity building among agencies delivering services to minority populations. CCBMDR's focus areas are disability, qualitative research, and cultural competency. CCBMDR's most noteworthy program is their Institute on Disability and Human Development. The Institute conducts research and disseminates information, while providing clinical services and community programs to people of color with disabilities.

Discussion

In studying the social construction of disability, we uncovered a consistent pattern of erasure, exclusion, and stigmatization. Since its conception, constructions of disability carried a negative connotation that emphasized its burden on both the individual and society. The recent proliferation of the human variation model challenges historical conceptions and embraces disability while shifting the responsibility of inclusion and accommodation onto public institutions.

Disability advocacy draws its roots from the civil rights movement of communities of color, and both movements parallel each other in many ways. When juxtaposing the social construction of race, with its explicit purpose to label, mark, and subjugate communities of color, with the social construction of disability and its history of erasure, an antagonistic ideological difference is revealed. This could possibly explain the barriers to applying an intersectional lens to disability, as well as the fear of "losing focus" when integrating race into disability work.

Our research revealed codified structures for individuals with disabilities to build their skillset and enter competitive integrated employment. A string of judicial battles secured legal access to those

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[28]"Programs & Services." *Open Doors for Multicultural Families*, 24 May 2017, www.multiculturalfamilies.org/programs-services/.

[29]*Center for Capacity Building on Minorities with Disabilities Research*, ahs.uic.edu/disability-human-development/directory/center-for-capacity-building-on-minorities-with-disabilities-research/.

services, but disparities in implementation and access persist. Further research on the experiences of people of color with disabilities could identify where in the systems individuals encounter institutional barriers, or even racism when accessing services.

Public perception has a profound effect on visibility, identity, and definitions of disability. Outside of accommodations, shifting the hearts of minds of the mainstream community is considered to be both the final frontier for full integration of people with disabilities into society, and the starting point for lasting legislation and legal protection for the community.

Structures are in place to integrate and empower individuals with disability, but the rates of access vary from community to community. Our literature review has unearthed significant gaps in research on and service provision for people of color with disabilities, but that does not mean that equitable service delivery to that community is impossible. Barriers to access and gaps in service are present at multiple levels of service delivery, and further research is required to identify strategies to circumvent those barriers.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

Overview

Our methodology centered around answering the overarching question:

"What practices currently in place could be contributing to, or not addressing, the limited access of employment services for people of color with developmental disabilities? How can Wise address these gaps in the system?"

We used sub-questions to explore three distinct dimensions of our primary question:

1. How are organizations that engage in disability work addressing racial inequity in their organizations and services?

2. How can Wise improve their internal understanding of racial equity?

3. How do Wise's partner employment agencies perceive and experience Wise?

We answered the questions above with an **exploratory analysis design** by first establishing a clear understanding of the intersection between race and the disabilities field. Building knowledge at the intersection of these two dimensions was important because it centered our work around equity, and more specifically, around the equitable access of employment services for people of color with developmental disabilities. Laying this groundwork helped us understand how and why people of color with developmental disabilities are underserved in the current system. We also believed that focusing on this intersectionality would contribute to unlocking systems of oppression that may be currently present in the field. Through our research, we detangled the cultural contexts and attitudes in the field that may be influencing who receives, and who does not receive, employment services. Our research comprised of three phases:

1. *Discovery phase*: First, we sought to understand the developmental disabilities landscape by identifying Wise's partnering agencies in Washington State, learning about the role that Wise plays in the disabilities field, and gaining a deeper understanding of the disabilities field including the history of the field and its evolution over time through a literature review. We looked at other fields that have intersected with race to help inform our recommended strategies around racial equity.

2. *Data collection phase:* Second, we collected qualitative data from Wise and Wise's partnering employment agencies through surveys. We conducted direct observation of Wise's Diversity Committee meeting in March 2019 and facilitated semi-structured

interviews of Wise staff, their partnering agencies and leaders in the field. Information collected from Wise staff interviews provided us insight into Wise's office culture, including views and attitudes around racial equity and diversity, their program and services, and work strategies. We learned about how Wise's partner agencies and other organizations in the field understand racial equity and how racial equity is carried out in their work. We believed this is an important area to learn about to get a sense on where the field stands on racial equity. We believed that, as a leader in the field, Wise has the social responsibility to provide high-quality assistance and support to their partnering organizations, as well as lead the field into a more equitable future.

We then collected technical assistance training materials from Wise to help us measure their focus around providing equitable access to employment services to all people with developmental disabilities, including people from different racial and cultural backgrounds. Lastly, we collected data on best practices for incorporating racial equity into organizations. Our data collection efforts were aimed at understanding the extent to which Wise has the internal capacity to integrate racial equity in their work, exposing organizational areas for improvement at Wise, and helping us craft useful recommendations to improve racial equity efforts at Wise.

3. *Triangulation and analysis phase*: After collecting our data, we analyzed it for recurring themes, and compared our findings across data sources to ensure that we depict an accurate and comprehensive portrayal of Wise and organizations in the disability field in Washington State. Comparing the data to each other also enabled us to find gaps in the disability field around racial equity work. Our analysis highlighted the strengths and potential areas for development for Wise and other organizations in the disabilities field. Lastly, we offered recommendations for Wise to improve their racial equity efforts based on our analysis.

An exploratory analysis design allowed us to learn about where the disability field currently stands on issues of racial equity and identify knowledge gaps around racial equity work. Under the Wheel of Change framework, we believe that learning about stakeholders' attitudes and opinions about racial equity work and organizational culture *(**hearts & minds***) influences individual **behaviors** and organizational **structures** around racial equity. Being able to connect **hearts & minds** to **behavior** and **structure** helped us identify potential gaps around racial equity that may be contributing to the inequitable distribution of employment services.

Our report is the first step towards identifying the potential roadblocks that limit people of color with developmental disabilities from benefiting from employment services provided by Wise. We believe that the way Wise and its partners think about racial equity directly influences their capacity and approach to determine who may or may not have access to employment services.

Data Collection and Analysis

We collected data for this report through the following methods:

(1) Semi-structured interviews
(2) Surveys
(3) Document analysis
(4) Synthesis of best practices
(5) Direct observation of Wise's Diversity Committee meeting in March 2019

Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by one of our team members and audio recorded with permission from each interviewee. The interviews provided us with a rich understanding of the interviewee's personal ideas around racial equity, the role of racial equity work in the disabilities field as well as their organization's programs, services, and strategies (*See Appendix C*). Interviews were aimed at providing us with insight about the intersectionality of race and disabilities. Furthermore, interviews helped us learn about the opinions and attitudes around racial equity, how individuals and organizations approach racial equity work**,** organizational cultures, and the disability field in general, as well as strategies to incorporate racial equity in organization's work. A semi-structured interview design also allowed us to ask follow-up and clarifying questions to interviewees, which helped redirect our interviewee towards focused areas of discussion and helped us collect more relevant data of higher quality.

We casted a broad net of who we chose to interview in an effort to collect rich data across several organizations in the disability field. We interviewed three staff members from Wise, a staff member from The Arc of King County, a staff member from the King County Developmental Disabilities Division, a staff member from Open Doors, and a staff member from the Department of Community and Health Services. While some of these individuals were purposefully selected, some were recommended to us by previous interviewees.

Through interviews, we hoped to learn about if and how organizations are conceptualizing racial equity, how racial equity shows up in their work, and what challenges they have encountered in these efforts. We also hoped to learn about any recommendations these organizations might have to improve racial equity efforts in the disability field.

Coding and Analysis

We coded and analyzed seven 30 to 60 minute interviews. The close coding process entailed developing a list of themes that we anticipated the interviews containing based on our research synthesis. These codes acted as the criteria that we used to categorize qualitative information gathered from interviews.

We divided the interviews between the three of us to conduct. After an interview was conducted, our other two research team members listened to the audio recording to identify ideas, phrases, and references that fell within pre-identified themes (n=71). We then organized the phrases under the coding themes and recorded the time when the phrases were said. The two team members listening to and coding a particular interview then compared their findings to minimize cross-coder discrepancies and discussed the extent to which a theme mapped onto one or more research questions.

Once our interviews were coded, we grouped the codes (n=63) under three themes to help give structure to our analysis: 1) Foundational capacity, 2) Strategies and approach, and 3) Barrier to progress.

Surveys

We distributed surveys to Wise staff and Wise's partnering employment agencies as a more targeted approach to collect data around internal organization culture. Wise's executive director was instrumental in helping us disseminate both the internal survey to Wise employees and external survey to Wise's service providers. We had 17 responses for the internal Wise survey and 30 responses for external respondents. The focus of our surveys was to acquire a baseline knowledge in regard to the current attitudes and ideas around racial equity and to learn about organizational cultures across the disabilities field in Washington.

We created our survey using Kwiksurveys, a low-fee online survey administering tool. Our surveys included Likert scale questions, close-ended questions, and open-ended questions. Our survey questions were guided by other racial equity competency surveys[30] but modified when necessary to meet the specific needs of this project. We structured our surveys in four sections: demographic information, organizational climate, racism, and discrimination and harassment. The survey was focused around capturing attitudes and opinions around racial diversity, equity, power, and privilege. The survey also asked information about the extent to which survey respondents were the target of, or had witnessed in a professional setting, harassment and discrimination.

Coding and Analysis

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[30] Omar, Hafizah. "Survey: Assessing Our Staff's Racial Equity & Inclusion Competency." Living Cities, 10 Apr. 2018, www.livingcities.org/resources/344-survey-assessing-our-staff-s-racial-equity-inclusion-competency.

For the Likert scale questions, we grouped together the responses under "agree," "disagree," "comfortable," "uncomfortable," "never/rarely," and "sometimes/often" for more streamlined analysis.

For close-ended questions we followed a conventional protocol to analyze survey data and identify statistically-significant differences in responses using z-scores. For the open-ended questions, we performed open coding using a threshold test.[31] This strategy gave us a systematic way to analyze the open-ended survey answers.

Document Analysis

We focused on reviewing training materials for Wise's technical assistant trainings (n=7). These technical assistance training materials are used by Wise to provide technical assistance to service providers and organized by core competencies, or broader topic areas.

We considered Wise's technical assistant training materials to be a valuable source of data for various reasons. First, reviewing Wise's training materials would help us see the extent to which race was discussed in the trainings. Second, training materials would help us understand how Wise may be thinking about concepts related to racial equity such as diversity and allyship. And third, training materials would give us insight into potential training areas where racial equity can be incorporated. These characteristics of the technical assistant trainings ultimately provide valuable insight into our research questions by helping us further understand Wise's training practices and the kinds of information that is shared with service providers.

Our document analysis of technical assistant trainings was divided in two steps: 1) Document collection and 2) Theme mapping with open coding.

Document collection

We reviewed Wise's Training Course Descriptions manual, which included materials on 74 trainings. We implemented a process to purposefully sample trainings from the total number of trainings (n=74) because of our team's limited timeline and capacity to thoroughly review documents. First, we chose trainings that had the following themes: 1) were introductory in nature, 2) were focused around building capacity among service providers and 3) that discussed best

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[31] For each question, we identified two to three category of possible responses (i.e. yes, no, I don't know). If 25% or more of the participants answered within a particular category, we conducted open-coding analysis of that category. If less than 25% of survey respondents answered within a particular category, we summarized the responses instead of doing open-coding. For categories that had 5 total responses or less, regardless of their proportion to the total number of individuals who answered that question, responses were summarized. Additionally, if a question had less than 5 responses, we summarized the responses regardless of the variation in answers. We worked with our advisor to set the 25% threshold level which determined if we coded or summarized.

practices in terms of improving employment outcomes. We chose these themes based on an assumption that these training materials were the most likely places to find references to racial equity.

We then reviewed the core competencies outlined in Wise's training manual and chose the topic areas that we believed were most introductory in nature, were focused around building capacity among service providers and that discussed best practices in terms of improving employment outcomes. In the end, we selected 7 out of 74 trainings to analyze (*See Appendix E)* and requested these training documents from Wise for further analysis. The majority of the documents collected were PowerPoint decks.

Theme mapping exercise

We reviewed the training documents and systematically identified prominent themes. We then categorized the themes under broader topic areas. This process resulted in the identification of 75 themes, which we categorized under eight broader topic areas.

Synthesis of Best Practices

Our synthesis of best practices was foundational in helping us learn about the tactics and strategies that currently aim to integrate equity racial work in organizations. We reviewed materials from five municipal governments that undertook racial equity initiatives: The City of Seattle, King County, and the cities of Tukwila and Tacoma in Washington, and the city of Portland, Oregon. We also reviewed the toolkits of five social sector organizations: Leadership and Race Toolkit from Leadership Learning Community, Inside Inclusiveness Toolkit from the Denver Foundation, the Racial Equity Toolkit from Greenlining Institute, the Racial Equity Toolkit from JustLead Washington, and the Awake to Woke to Work Toolkit from ProInspire. We also reviewed two relevant case studies of nonprofit organizations—Environmental Support Center's (ESC) and Cleveland Neighborhood Progress (CNP)—that successfully undertook racial equity initiatives.

Analysis and coding

In total, we identified 14 themes across 12 key documents collected from the above-mentioned governmental and nonprofit organizations. The 14 themes were then categorized under three broader themes that facilitated our interpretation of these findings.

Direct Observations

On March 21, 2019, we attended Wise's newly created Diversity Committee to observe the meeting. Our goal in attending this meeting was to learn more about Wise's understanding of

diversity, staff dynamics, and about their organizational culture and attitudes around race and equity. The data collected from this activity complimented our findings from other empirical sources and ultimately helped us develop recommendations for Wise.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Wise is perceived as a leader in the developmental disability field in Washington State. Interviewees described Wise as an innovative thought partner that leads with their technological expertise and contributes to system-level change in the disability field. Additionally, Wise staff are seen not only as forward-thinkers, but as passionate and driven collaborators that possess tremendous heart and understanding of the disability community.

Interviewees also recognized Wise's limited capacity and expertise in racial equity work. They acknowledged Wise as a predominantly white organization with some experience in partnering with organizations that work directly with communities of color. Overall, Wise was perceived as an organization that is aware of the importance of racial equity work and is in the early stages of its racial equity journey.

Addressing the Hearts & Minds: Understanding Racial Equity

In the Wheel of Change, the **hearts & minds** domain explores how people think and feel about a concept and coming up with ways to transform their mental and emotional frameworks to advance social change.

Our findings show that stakeholders in the disability field have mixed feelings about the role of race in the disability field. Because there is still so much work to be done in the disability field, some survey respondents and interviewees worried that focusing on race was a misplaced effort. Our interviewees and those surveyed discussed that hesitancy and resistance to focus on race is still very much a barrier to advancing racial equity work in the disability field. Our survey respondents and interviewees also showed different levels of knowledge when it came to racial equity work. Some individuals felt comfortable talking about race, the history of oppression, power, privilege, and the moral importance of integrating racial equity in organizational work. However, others expressed discomfort talking about race, expressed not knowing why racial equity was important and relevant to their work, and had limited capacity to talk about racial concepts and how race intersects with the disability field. Our findings showed that not everyone is committed to integrating racial equity in their work and that a shared narrative about racial equity is missing from the conversation because individuals have such varying opinions about racial equity.

Additionally, our findings showed that there is limited knowledge about the intersection between race and disability partly because both concepts have been historically discussed in silo. One interviewee explained the difficulty of meeting the unique experience of communities of color with disabilities; they expressed that people of color with disabilities are a subpopulation of a

subpopulation that has been historically invisible to society, and that addressing the unique needs of an individual who is already a racial minority makes work more resource intensive, time consuming, and complex. Due to its complexity, organizations often lack the capacity to meet the needs of people of color with disabilities. Uncovering this sentiment helped us to identify an antagonistic relationship between social constructions of disability and race. Race was conceptualized to divide, stratify, and visibly label communities in relation to whiteness. On the other hand, the disability community has fought erasure, both literally and metaphorically, due to not fitting into the able-bodied, typically-developing mold.

The Time is Right

Our data collection revealed numerous strategies for improving Wise's internal understanding of racial equity. Our document analysis of Wise's technical assistance training materials revealed internal values that align with traditional racial equity change efforts. Our document analysis pinpointed investment in staff capacity, organizational growth, diversity, and individualized support as organizational values and priorities - all important components of racial equity change. Nonetheless, it appeared that a racial equity lens was missing from the training materials that we reviewed.

Change Starts with Upper Management

Our synthesis of best practices showed that at the start of change efforts is upper management—especially the executive director or CEO—because they set the tone and pace for change. Upper management has the responsibility of communicating the importance of change efforts, which often starts with educating themselves about the cause being pushed for change in addition to internalizing its importance. In this context, the first step is choosing to focus on the dimension of race under the equity umbrella, learning about the history of oppression, and examining how oppression continues to manifest itself today in the disability field. This initial "discovery period of learning" helps form the lens through which racial equity is viewed, not just as a business imperative but as a moral imperative as well. Upper management can lead by example, managing the change efforts both upwards towards the board of directors, and downwards towards frontline staff, and sideways to external partners.

Complete Buy-In is Necessary for Change

Our synthesis of best practices identified a need for complete buy-in, especially from upper management, before change can occur. Once the upper management has invested in their own learning and committed to the journey (**hearts & minds**), they can seek racial equity trainings, carve time for staff to educate themselves about racial equity during business hours, facilitate discussions with experts in the racial equity field, hire people of color, and modify the

organizational culture to reflect a focus on racial equity (**behavior and structure**). Only when racial equity is reflected in the hearts & minds, behavior, and structure of the organization can the work of racial equity be carried out. This journey, from hearts & minds to behaviors and structures is not an easy one; it requires complete buy-in, intentionality to integrate racial equity, and patience in the racial equity journey.

Our survey responses showed that Wise and their partner service providers have work to do in the racial equity arena. Complete buy-in from upper management and staff to integrate racial equity in their work was not consistent across organizations. Our findings showed that hesitancy around committing to apply a racial equity lens to their work is still a barrier for change.

Addressing Behavior: Norms, Communication, and Skills

In the Wheel of Change, the **behavior** domain is about paying attention to individual's actions and developing new habits to transform behavior. This domain is also about making changes to align norms, communication, and skills with racial equity efforts. As mentioned previously, the state of an individual's **hearts & minds**—or their attitudes and opinions about a subject—also help determine the kinds of actions and behaviors that individuals take.

Our findings showed that current actions and behaviors in the disability field in Washington are not fully aligned with racial equity. Our survey responses also showed that leadership at Wise and their partnering service providers have limited capacity and expertise to participate in internal and external conversations around race and that they have limited tools and resources to address racial inequities and systemic oppression. More service providers reported that they were comfortable talking about race (90%) than Wise staff (63%). It should be clarified that Wise staff were not necessarily more uncomfortable talking about race, but responded feeling more neutral in their ability to engage in conversations about race. In this case, it is possible that recent efforts to discuss racial equity at Wise has made employees more aware of what concepts of race they are not as well-versed in, and can be interpreted as a sign that staff is acknowledging the gaps in their knowledge. While service providers responded overall more favorably about talking about race, they also submitted more negatively-charged responses about racial equity. When asked about racial equity concepts that they are aware of, one respondent stated that "White people are bad according to the SJW [social justice warrior] left, stereotyping an entire (white) race." Another respondent also claimed that "in 99% of cases institutional racism is absolute BS pushed by some to create animosity and division." Although these comments were not typical of the responses we received, they do highlight the level of resistance that still exists in addressing racial equity in the disability field.

Several of our interviewees echoed these themes; interviewees talked about staff hesitancy around engaging in meaningful conversations around race and internalizing racial equity—that is, not only

educating oneself about the history of oppression, but also reflecting on how systems have benefited them and marginalized others—as well as prioritizing race in their organization and work. And in some cases, when organizations focus on racial equity, interviewees expressed a lack of intentionality and purpose. One interviewee talked about people not wanting to be inconvenienced by having to face systems and structures that they have benefited from like white supremacy culture. Another interviewee gave the example of mentioning privilege and power as catalyst for feelings of defensiveness in their organization.

Communication is Essential for Racial Equity Work

One of the first steps for transforming **behavior** is engaging in meaningful—and sometimes uncomfortable—conversations around race and concepts related to racial equity. Conversations are a natural and necessary part for uncovering assumptions, stereotypes, biases and cognitive barriers that prevent racial equity progress. This is also easier said than done, especially in a professional setting where so many dynamics are already at play. Being deliberate about making space for conversations *during* business hours (i.e. affinity groups, book clubs, coffee hour) is an important part for helping ensure that dialogue around race is happening and that conversation around topics related to racial equity is an organizational priority.

Examples of Behaviors Aligned with Racial Equity Efforts

Our findings found progressive efforts to integrate racial equity in organizations. Interviewees discussed partaking in multiple racial equity trainings, attending racial equity conferences, and offering staff professional development opportunities to learn about racism and racial equity *during* business hours. It is important to note, however, that several interviewees also mentioned that trainings alone are insufficient for learning about racism, especially in its modern manifestations (i.e. microaggressions, white fragility, color-blindness). Instead, learning needs to be continuous and an organizational norm, as well as happening at every stage of development from interview practices (i.e. asking job applicants about how their previous work intersected with racial equity) to the development of training materials (i.e. asking what populations will benefit from these trainings and who are we not reaching and why?). One interviewee talked about their organization's journey towards a more empathetic and humble culture as a way to disrupt power dynamics, with upper management making space for staff to voice concerns and upper management admitting fault when appropriate. Interviewees also discussed the importance of acknowledging people's privileges and their positionality, or the power that they hold, in situations.

Another interviewee brought up the example of King County's Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) initiative as trying to align behaviors around racial equity. The ESJ initiative has aimed to apply a racial equity lens to the county's work and implement actionable activities at the departmental

level to engage staff in continuous learning about racial equity. Additionally, this initiative is also committed to measuring their progress in racial equity and developed equity indicators to ensure that they are on the right track. Another important effort by the King County Developmental Disabilities Division was to create a separate budget designed solely for trainings and professional development that anyone can access. Both the ESJ initiative and having a designated budget were available to support learning behaviors aligned with racial equity efforts.

Addressing Structure: Strategies, Processes and Structures

In the Wheel of Change, the **structure** domain explores the creation of a supportive environment for people to make meaningful changes that align strategies, organizational structures, and processes with their ultimate goal. This domain is also closely related to the other two domains in that how people feel, think, and behave about something helps determine the kinds of structures they create, modify, or challenge.

Customizing Services

Our findings showed that targeted programs and services are crucial when working with the disability community. At Wise, Person-Centered-Planning was described as a strategy and model that allows service providers to meet the specific needs of people with developmental disabilities. Interviewees discussed the importance of having sufficient internal capacity in terms of skills to be effective services providers. Several interviewees discussed investing in language access (i.e. translating materials, program brochures, posters) and hiring staff who speak different languages to help non-English speaking families who have been historically underrepresented in the disability field enter the system.

Hiring Practices

Interviewees also discussed the importance of hiring practices as a vehicle for organizational change. One interviewee talked about lowering application barriers, giving the example of not requiring a degree for certain jobs. They also talked about the importance of using life experiences as expertise in an area and asking about racial equity and other relevant concepts during the interview process to ensure that they could contribute to racial equity conversations. Interviewees, however, also described limited efforts made by organizations in the disability field to seek and hire people of color. One interviewee explained that to hire people of color, one has to go into communities and purposefully recruit racial minority job applicants.

Collecting Demographic Data

Our findings also showed the importance of collecting demographic data from beneficiaries of employment services. Interviewees described the importance of looking at their internal data to identify gaps in their system in terms of who was receiving their services and who is not. If a particular racial group is then identified as not benefiting from their services, the organization needs to be committed to find out the reasons for this gap, which often means engaging with communities and community-based organizations to find out where they may be falling short.

Meaningful and Longer-term Partnerships

Our synthesis of best practices discussed that organizations in the disability field have the opportunity to seek intentional, collaborative, and purposeful partnerships with organizations working with communities of color that go beyond a "transactional partnership." While consulting services can be helpful at introducing organizations to racial equity concepts, it does not give organizations a comprehensive view of racial equity, which is nuanced and influenced by various dimensions (i.e. gender identity, sexual orientation, age). Instead, our findings showed that partnering with organizations working towards the same goals should not only be intentional and collaborative, but longer-term as well. One interviewee also discussed the level of commitment, time, and resources needed in racial equity work because in the disability field, this means working for individuals who already have to overcome many barriers due to race alone.

On A Journey Towards Racial Equity

Wise has made progress in its racial equity journey. Wise established its Diversity and Inclusion Team in 2019 and the full organization attended two internal equity trainings—one in Spring 2018 and another in Summer 2018—to begin to help them integrate an equity lens in their work. During our observation of their Diversity and Inclusion Team meeting in March 2019, we saw its potential in providing a space for participants to share areas that they want to learn more about, as well as serving as a safer space where conversations around race and equity can take place. It is important to clearly define the purpose of this team and legitimize its function at early stages of its development to ensure commitment to racial equity from the beginning.

Racial equity is a journey, not a destination. While progress has been made, there is still a lot of work to be done to continue progressing towards racial equity. Wise, as a leader in the disability field in Washington, has the opportunity to lead by example to integrate racial equity throughout all areas of their organization. The next chapter explores actionable recommendations for Wise to expands their efforts on their journey.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

We developed 11 recommendations under three work areas: organizational culture **(hearts & minds)**, hiring and retention **(structure and behavior)**, and outreach efforts **(structure and behavior)**. These recommendations were developed with our findings in mind and designed to address areas that we believe need improvement and alignment around racial equity.

Menu of Options[32]

Work Area 1: Integrate racial equity into the organizational culture

- *Upper management should encourage continuous learning of racial equity of their staff and model this behavior by committing to process of learning and unlearning.*
- *Carve out time routinely during business hours to learn about racial equity.*
- *Address the intersectionality of race and disabilities in the design of technical assistance trainings and support.*

Work Area 2: Hire and retain people of color and promote their upward mobility into upper management

- *Advertise job postings in racially diverse communities and include language in job postings that explicitly welcomes people of diverse backgrounds to apply.*
- *Remove barriers to jobs requirements.*
- *Develop intentional and transparent processes for employment advancement for employees of color.*
- *Clarify and augment grievance policies.*

Work Area 3: Incorporate cultural responsiveness into outreach efforts

- *Focus funding on organizations that target communities of color*
- *Conduct intentional outreach to communities of color to assess their needs*
- *Collect data on race and ethnicity of clients throughout service delivery*
- *Partner with community-based organizations that work closely with communities of color*

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[32] *See Appendix F* for recommendation descriptions.

Table 1: Criteria Used for Recommendation Trade-Offs

Criteria	Description
Sustainability	Sustainability can be considered in regards to the time, financial, technical, and human resources required to commit to and maintain the policy option.
Embraces diverse perspectives	Ability to integrate diverse opinions, attitudes, and lived experiences into the policy option that does not ask others to conform to the status quo, but rather, accommodate diverse perspectives.
Vision alignment	The degree to which the the option promotes staff at all levels to be in alignment with valuing racial equity work.
Promotes ownership	The degree to which the policy option encourages staff to take personal responsibility of promoting racial equity and encourages a sense of belonging at Wise.
Amplifies the voices of staff of color	The policy option creates a space where people of color's voices are heard and prioritized.
Racial outcomes are factored into the work	The policy option is designed to actively change racial outcomes.
Collaborations are built on trust	The policy option encourages building partnerships that are meaningful, intentional, and founded on trust.
Power is shared	The policy option disrupts traditional power dynamics so that traditionally dominant groups share some of their power with communities of color involved in the field of disability.
Cultural responsiveness	The degree to which the policy option accounts for the nuanced, multicultural experiences and backgrounds of the people that Wise interacts with.
Efforts address root causes of racism	The policy option promotes understanding of racial disparities in the disability field not just as they currently exist, but also in the historical context of systemic oppression.

Our Recommendations

We used 10 criterion[33] to weigh the trade offs between our 11 recommendations (see Table 1.). After careful review, we recommend that Wise implement four options from our menu. Our recommended timeline for implementation is **five years**, with short-term options being implemented in year one, intermediate-term options being implemented in years two or three, and long-term options being implemented in years four or five.

Short-Term Recommendations (Year 1)

Upper management should encourage continuous learning of racial equity of their staff and model this behavior by committing to process of learning and unlearning.

We recommend this option in the short-term, as our research synthesis and data collection efforts have reinforced the importance of buy-in from leadership to initiating racial equity change. Upper management is responsible for setting the tone, pace, and vision of the work. Self-education and promotion of racial equity by upper management signals both upwards towards the board and downwards to staff and volunteers that it is a priority. We specifically recommend Wise support their upper management in pursuing additional race and equity trainings, facilitation trainings, and trainings designed to support organizational change. We also recommend this option because it embraces diverse perspectives, promotes vision alignment on racial equity, and promotes ownership of racial equity efforts throughout Wise.

Intermediate Recommendations (Year 2-3)

Partner with community-based organizations that work closely with communities of color

We recommend this option in the intermediate-term, to allow time for Wise to build its foundational capacity on racial equity before engaging organizations that work closely with communities of color. By now, Wise should have a clear direction on its racial equity efforts and specific actionable metrics to achieve those goals. We recommend partnering with both community-based organizations that are led by or serve communities of color in the developmental and intellectual disabilities field, and other similar organizations that interact often with communities of color. Partnerships can be as varied as the facilitators that Wise brings in for trainings to intense multi-year collaborations. Wise can signal both its status as an innovative leader in the field, as well as its commitment to racial equity in its partnerships. This option scored

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[33] We developed our criterion from our literature review of best practices for integrating racial equity in organizations. Table 1 shows the criteria that stood out as key elements for successfully integrating racial equity into organizational culture and practices.

high on almost all of our criteria, with the highest marks in power sharing, trusting collaborations, promoting ownership of racial equity initiatives, racial outcomes factored into the work, and embracing diverse perspectives.

Gather data and information on communities of color to assess their needs through intentional outreach and data collection.

We recommend this option in the intermediate-term, as Wise will have built a critical mass of knowledge on the history of racial equity by then and will have begun connecting to community-based organizations serving communities of color. This option scored highly on every criteria except for sustainability, as it requires careful planning and implementation, and will need committed focus to intentional outreach if it is to be sustained. This option promotes vision alignment on racial equity efforts, embraces diverse perspectives, promotes power sharing, and is culturally responsive.

Long-Term Recommendations (Years 4-5)

Address the intersectionality of race and disabilities in the design of technical assistance trainings and support.

We recommend this option in the long-term to allow Wise the time to develop the knowledge of racial equity and create partnerships with community-based organization that can help guide them in their racial equity journey. Once Wise improves their understanding of racial equity and develops alliances with organizations who engage in racial equity work, Wise will be better positioned to purposefully integrate race and racial equity in their work. Technical assistance trainings and other supports should be culturally responsive and designed specifically to the needs of target populations. Customization of services is especially important when services are intended to benefit communities of color because their intersecting identities are unique and in many cases, specific. Lastly, it is important to note that this recommendation is more complicated than it sounds. For this reason, Wise should leverage its resources and community partnerships when integrating the intersectionality of race and disabilities in its work.

Conclusion

Our research uncovered a wide breadth of information about Wise, the disability field in Washington, and strategies for advancing racial equity. Though Wise is only in the beginning stages of its racial equity journey, it has the opportunity to take bold steps forward and pave the path for the rest of the disability field.

How are other nonprofits that engage in disability work addressing racial inequity in their organizations and services?

A number of organizations have taken steps to address racial equity in their internal structures. King County initiated and sustained education efforts, institutionalized equitable hiring practices, and screened for racial equity integration in their contracting efforts. The Arc of King County provides targeted programs for communities of color, in addition to implementing equitable hiring practices. Lastly, Open Doors for Multicultural Families mission centers access for people of color with intellectual and developmental disabilities. There are countless angles from which racial equity can be addressed, but what is most important is choosing the angle that works best for Wise.

How can Wise improve its internal understanding of racial equity?

There are numerous steps that Wise can take to codify racial equity into its internal culture, but those steps would not be possible without a baseline understanding of race, power, and oppression. Internal understanding begins with the executive director and upper management. Their responsibility is to lead by example, and to secure buy-in at all levels of the organization. Only then can racial equity education efforts succeed, and foundational knowledge of race, power, and oppression can permeate through the organization.

How does Wise's partner service providers perceive and experience Wise?

Wise is widely-known for its technological expertise and advocacy for systemic change. Within the disability field, Wise has developed a reputation for being innovative, going off the beaten path, and synthesizing out-of-the-box solutions. With that being said, our data collection revealed a pattern of race-neutral service delivery by Wise. Though there are some surface-level partnerships with organizations that work with communities of color, we encourage fostering deeper, relational partnerships with the aforementioned organizations and applying a racial lens when designing programs or trainings.

Wise's role as an innovator, thought partner, and leader in the disability field can only be strengthened by integrating racial equity into its internal systems. The values embodied in racial equity change movements are the same values that are embodied in Wise's current work. Applying a racial lens can only expand Wise's reach to a wider community. Racial equity, much like disability equity, is everyone's responsibility, and a commitment to racial equity means a commitment to a shared narrative of access, inclusion, and opportunity for all.

APPENDIX A: FINDINGS

Interviews

We conducted seven 30-60 minute in-person, semi-structured interviews in various locations throughout Seattle. All interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the interviewee. The interviewees were staff[34] from Wise, The Arc of King County, King County Developmental Disabilities Division, Open Doors from Multicultural Families, and the Department of Community and Health Services. After coding the interviews and identifying 63 themes, we organized them into three meta-themes: 1) Foundational capacity, 2) Strategies and approach, and 3) Barrier to progress.[35]

Foundational capacity

The interviews revealed insights into Wise's internal culture as well as strategies for Wise to develop their foundational capacity for racial equity organizational change. Under this meta-theme, the most frequently mentioned themes were: buy-in, capacity, norms and culture and training.

Buy-In: We identify buy-in as one's commitment to racial equity organizational change. Various definitions of buy-in, as well as conditions to produce successful buy-in were identified in our interviews. Wise staff shared that a lack of clarity and direction about racial equity exacerbated uneven levels of buy-in from employees and upper management. Interviewees also noted that resistance to buy-in due to a perceived perception that racial equity work led to "straying from the focus," which we identify as straying from the focus on the developmental disabilities community, also created barriers to securing buy-in. Staff from King County shared that organizations can be committed to organizational change towards racial equity, even with a lack of expertise or knowledge. Interviewees also shared that absolute commitment by upper management was critical to the successful permeation of buy-in on all levels.

Capacity: Capacity was referenced in different contexts by our interviewees. Wise staff identified a lack of capacity to affect racial equity organizational change rooted in a lack of direction, inability to facilitate conversations on race, and lack of capacity to drive continuing education on racial equity. Other interviewees discussed a need for a "critical mass" of employees committed to racial equity organizational change and internal resources to kickstart the change process. One interviewee shared that their organization used data-driven hiring practices as a means to diversify

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[34] We are purposefully not revealing additional details about the staff interviewed to protect their anonymity.

[35] While it was necessary to collect the information we collected to answer the research questions, we did not have the capacity to talk to people of color with disabilities to incorporate their opinions and perspective in our research.

the workforce within developmental disability organizations. Interviewees from external organizations also identified funding and investment in organizations engaging in racially diverse communities as a mechanism to build capacity. Additionally, an interviewee identified the need to develop the capacity of service providers to understand racial equity.

Norms and Culture: Our interviewees shared what they thought were components that should be normed or integrated into internal culture, for successful racial equity organizational change. One interviewee identified a shared uniform baseline understanding of racial equity that all employees should reach. Another interviewee asserted the importance of allyship and support from white coworkers as integral to a racially equitable culture. Multiple interviewees discussed the importance of fostering a culture of continuous education, reflection, and feedback. Additionally, multiple interviewees identified the need for white coworkers to reflect and confront race, white privilege, and power as part of a shared narrative on race.

Training: Our interviewees discussed aspects that they considered integral to internal training and efforts. Multiple interviewees identified the need for trainings to be facilitated through a shared narrative of racial equity. Additionally, multiple interviewees highlighted the need for trainings to be reflective and ongoing. An interviewee from King County shared that their department required upper management to attend multi-day trainings on racial equity. The same interviewee also shared that their department assembled racial equity change teams that were responsible for coordinating the trainings and driving the internal education effort forward. The same interviewee also shared the presence of County-approved racial affinity groups that met regularly to discuss their experiences. Additionally, multiple interviewees asserted the need for proactive, enthusiastic promotion of training and educational opportunities for effective racial equity organizational change.

Strategies and approach

Interviews were helpful at helping us identify how organizations in the disability field are thinking about and addressing racial equity in their work. Under the meta-theme of strategies and approach, several smaller themes were frequently referenced and emphasized: targeted programs and services, different levels of racial equity knowledge in the field, community outreach efforts, and language access and funding.

Targeted programs and services: References to target programs were made regarding services and efforts being customized and tailored to racially diverse communities including immigrant and refugee families and non-native English speaking families. Several interviewees discussed their effort to find gaps that exists in the disability field that prevent communities of color from being reached by organizations. One interviewee talked about the importance of tackling language and cultural barriers by customizing their services and building internal capacity around specific

individual and family needs. They described having family support specialists who speak up to 21 languages and with similar cultural backgrounds as the families with whom they work with. Another interviewee also talked about the complexities and intersecting identities of their clients, which requires them to have a comprehensive approach to serving families that not only targets the individuals with disabilities, but also works to remove barriers for the individual's family to learn and engaged.

Different levels of racial equity knowledge: Several of our interviewees also acknowledged the large gaps in knowledge in relation to racial equity work in the disability field and at the organizational level. References were made about the desire to have a collective narrative or way to talk about racial equity in the disability field. However, interviewees also acknowledged the resistance that exists in the field to talk about race, cultural diversity, and the intersection of disability, culture, and race. White fragility was described as playing a significant role in the way staff react to discussions of racial equity. In general, racial equity work was described in two ways: as having moral importance in their organization and as more broadly being a function of their job. In particular, interviewees described Wise as not having a uniform "modern understanding" of racial inequities and still working to internalize racial equity.

Outreach efforts: The interviews highlighted the importance of intentional outreach work especially in communities that face additional barriers in accessing employment services due to language and culture. The interviews elevated outreach activities such as marketing their services and holding events in communities of color, and encouraging staff to go visit different communities during business hours. The interviews also talked about racially diversifying the workforce and the importance of seeking and encouraging people of color to apply for service provider positions. Having services providers who look like the communities they serve was described as being an important ingredient in providing appropriate support because working with someone who mirrors the way you look often helps with trust building. One interviewee also talked about looking at the racial makeup of the workforce by salary level to see whether people of color had roles in upper management to prevent staff segregation within an organization.

Language access and funding: Among the strategies discussed by interviewees for integrating racial equity in their work, funding and language access were among the most emphasized. Interviewees talked about the importance of funding organizations that work with communities of color appropriately due to the fact that they often have to work harder to serve subpopulations in the disabilities field. The prioritization of funding to organizations that have not received money in the past, especially if they work in racially diverse communities, was also discussed. Interviewees also talked about the importance of organizations addressing language and cultural barriers that prevent families of color from accessing their services and support. One interviewee discussed the importance of organizational language needing to reflect communities of color's understanding of the disabled experience and services available and the translation of materials

(i.e. posters, flyers) to multiple languages. The same interviewee provided the example that because certain words do not exist in certain languages, special attention needs to be paid to how document are translated to ensure that accurate and easy to understand message are communicated.

Barriers to progress

Interview conversations with Wise and its organizational partners revealed some common challenges that arise when trying to engage in racial equity work. Under this meta-theme, the following themes emerged as most commonly elaborated on: different levels of knowledge, privilege, history, power, and comfort/discomfort.

Different levels of knowledge: Interviewees often cited the various stages of understanding about racial equity as being a large challenge to meaningfully engage in racial equity work. Factors such as a lack of a shared narrative and not knowing where to begin learning about racial equity were some examples that were associated with the different levels of knowledge. Conversations revealed that interest in racial equity was not lacking, but that especially for white employees, it takes a tremendous amount of energy and education to understand how various systems of oppression affect people of color.

Privilege: Often missing from racial equity efforts is understanding racial equity beyond something to do at work. Interviewees shared that successfully engaging in racial equity means to internalize it and not just think of racial equity as something done at work. Internalizing racial equity requires additional intention and effort on the behalf of someone for whom concepts of racial equity is not part of their identity and lived experience. Interviewees shared that privilege also shapes who is acknowledged and able to influence action in the organization. As one interviewee shared, even if people of color are voicing their experiences and sharing their knowledge around oppressive systems, they are not taken as seriously, adding that, "if there is professional... who has power, authority, or who is white, speaks English perfectly, same words, same information will be taken totally differently." Failing to listen to and be in community with those most impacted by institutional and structural barriers was described by interviewees as leading to maternalistic or paternalistic way of administering services instead of having recipients of services determine for themselves what they actually need.

History: Conversations with interviewees often brought up conversations about acknowledging the history of exclusion for both individuals with disabilities, as well as people of color, explicitly calling out that historically, systems have been designed to better serve individuals who are white. As one interviewee shared, that historical precedent is so strong that moving away from this historical practice leads organizations to continue to serve the needs of people who are white. Interviewees also discussed how historically, disability advocacy and racial equity advocacy have not made a lot of progress regarding the intersection of disability and race. Understanding the

history of the journeys of the disability field and racial equity efforts and the lessons learned can help organizations to understand where they need to go.

Power: Of the barriers to progress themes identified, power was the one that interviewees focused on most. Several interviewees discussed that racial equity is not just about bringing in more people of color into organizations or serving more people of color, but how to bring them into the spaces where they have an opportunity to be accepted and given power. Power was most often discussed as having decision making-power and accessing resources and information. Some even emphasized the need to give power in the form of funding to those impacted most by current inequitable systems. Additionally, several interviewees voiced that a large challenge to addressing racial equity is that typically, communities in closest proximity to the problem are not being meaningfully engaged in determining how organizations should provide services and address barriers that exclude communities of color.

Comfort/Discomfort: A number of interviewees shared that one of the barriers to change is that there is a great deal of comfort in continuing to do things exactly the same. Resistance to doing things differently can prevent employees of color from feeling welcomed and supported and often leads to organizations asking employees of color to conform to white norms such as objectivity, defensiveness, and claiming a right to comfort. Additionally, interviewees shared that engaging in racial equity work can be very uncomfortable, especially when discussing some of the inequities that white privilege causes that can lead to employees who are white to feel attacked. As one interviewee shared, it can be uncomfortable to participate in conversations when someone is reminded of the inequities and some of the systems that have been put in place and continue to oppress people of color.

Surveys

Data

For the internal survey, our team analyzed responses from employees across Wise's Seattle, Spokane, and Portland Offices (n=17). Most survey respondents of the internal survey were 35-55, white, female, heterosexual, did not have supervisory responsibilities, and worked at Wise for 1-4 years. For the external survey, our team analyzed responses (n=30) from service providers across 14 counties. Overall, the external survey respondents did not provide a representative sample of frontline staff. Most survey respondents of the external survey were employees with upper management and/or executive responsibilities, 45 and older, white, female, heterosexual, and worked at their organization for at least 10 years (*See Appendix G*).

Analysis

Across both surveys, confidence in the organization's leadership was higher when not focusing specifically on race, with 81% of respondents in the external survey (and 56% in the internal survey) reporting agreeing that their organization creates an environment where everyone has equal opportunities to advance. More favorable responses from the external providers could be attributed to two important factors. First, the respondents of the internal survey were more representative of the entire organization, whereas the external survey respondents tended to be more representative of upper management roles. Second, Wise respondents have been engaging in discussions around racial equity, increasing their awareness of their own limitations of knowledge and perhaps bringing in a racial equity perspective even when the question is posited in a race-neutral frame. Even within the external service providers whose answers indicated perhaps a greater comfort or experience in engaging in racial equity work, the survey responses also included more extreme resistance to addressing racial equity. For example, one respondent stated that racial equity means that, "White people are bad according to the SJW [Social Justice Warrior] left." Responses such as that one indicate that even across the disability field in Washington State, there is work to be done around race because racial equity work is still not fully being understood.

Document Analysis

Our document analysis of Wise's technical trainings provided us with greater understanding of the organization's key areas of expertise and priority as well as messaging strategies to service providers. While we knew that race may not explicitly show up in the training materials, we aimed to learn more about Wise's openness to ideas related to racial equity.

First, we began by reviewing Wise's 44 page Training Course Descriptions Guide. The words "race/racial," "people of color," (or any reference to a specific minority race or ethnicity), or "equity" were not present in the guide. The word "culture/cultural" showed up five times, but only one of those was in reference to the supported person's racial cultural background (the rest were references to work environments). Several references to diversity and inclusion were also made but more focused around diversifying the workforce by promoting the diverse abilities of people with disabilities and creating inclusive work environments for supported individuals. No acknowledgement of race as a salient diversity dimension in the disability field was made in the technical training materials we reviewed.

Next, we sought to learn about Wise's openness to ideas related to racial equity. We identified 64 themes in the training materials and categorized them under five meta-themes: Staff investment, strategies, tools, and techniques, organizational and systems change, diversity, organizational culture, and best practices (*See Appendix F*).

Staff Investment | The staff investment meta-theme focused on building strong organizational teams and developing capacity for employment services. Our analysis showed that Wise cares about rewarding and empowering their staff and values staff development and wellness.

Strategies, Tools, and Techniques | The strategies, tools, and techniques meta-theme focused around community access services, person-centered planning, and sexuality and visual support. Our analysis showed that Wise's strategies, tool, and techniques are centered around the needs of supported individuals.

Organizational and Systems Change | The organizational and systems change meta-theme showed that Wise values organizational growth and development and sees services providers as "active agents of change" in the disability field.

Diversity | The diversity meta-theme showed that conversations around diversity include awareness around heterosexism and cisgender privilege. Our analysis also showed the acknowledgement of intersecting identities around disability and sexuality, as well as highlighted the importance of inclusive language, allyship, and cultural diversity.

Organizational Culture | The organizational culture meta-theme analysis shows that Wise embraces diversity, aligning work efforts around their organizational mission and promotes a light-hearted work environment.

Best Practices | The best practices meta-theme focused on person-centered planning and information gathering, and tools and employment framing strategies available to service providers. Our analysis highlights some of Wise's best practices around employment placement outcomes including creating a safe space for supported clients, developing a portrait of competence, and reinforcing the customized nature of their work centered around individual client needs.

Our document analysis demonstrates that Wise is committed to staff and organizational development and growth, providing support to their outside partners to achieve employment placement outcomes, customized client support, and collaboration with families, communities, and service providers. Our analysis also showed that Wise is committed to diversity and acknowledges the intersection of identities. All these elements are important for racial equity work. While no mention of race was present in the training materials, our document analysis shows that Wise is open to ideas related to racial equity. However, a racial equity lens was missing from the training materials we reviewed; references to racial diversity only showed up once in the context of creating a healthy work environment. While we cannot make general statements about the implications of these observations, our analysis does highlight some areas where racial equity can be incorporated.

We conducted secondary research on best practices for integrating racial equity into public agencies and nonprofits. We first analyzed the racial equity efforts of *five members of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)*. Four of the governments - Seattle, King County, Tacoma, and Tukwila are located in Washington. The fifth government is Portland, Oregon - the location of one of Wise's remote offices. Next, we reviewed *five different racial equity tool kits designed for organizational change*. Lastly, we examined two cases of successful racial equity change efforts by two nonprofit organizations.

Governments

We chose to analyze governments due to their role in administering funding for transitional services for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. We specifically chose the five aforementioned governments due to their relationship as potential or current customers of Wise, as well as their relatively close physical proximity to Wise offices.

The City of Seattle (Seattle) is often credited as one of the first governments to acknowledge and begin addressing institutional racism. Then-Mayor Greg Nickels announced its Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) in 2008 as a response to a need to "clean house" and confront the pervasive institutional racism in Seattle's operations. At the crux of RSJI was mandatory Institutional Racism training for all City employees, as well as the creation of the RSJI Change Team - a cohort of Seattle employees that work to champion RSJI activities and strength individual department's capacity to push internal transformation. Seattle also incorporated a Racial Equity Tool Kit designed to evaluate disparate impacts on communities of color, as well as to identify opportunities to advance racial equity. Additionally, Seattle assembled a Community Roundtable Advisory Board made up of 25 members from local organizations and institutions aimed at advancing racial equity.

King County, one of Washington's largest regional governments, quickly followed suit and enacted its own Equity and Social Justice initiative. King County identified four core guiding principles - Investing upstream, investing in King County employees, investing in community partners, and accountable and transparent leadership. King County then identified different "determinants of equity", such as quality education and economic development, where the work could take place. King County also had dedicated Equity Change Teams and Equity Work Groups that furthered departmental equity efforts.

Tukwila, just south of Seattle, established an equity policy in 2017. It is small city with a population of roughly 20,000 and large immigrant and refugee population (40%). The policy set 6 major goals - a government representative of its community, high-quality community outreach,

equity in decision-making, equity in city functions, equity in service delivery, equity as a core value in strategic planning, and building internal capacity around equity. Tukwila also established an Equity and Social Justice Commission.

Further south in Washington lies Tacoma. Tacoma began its racial equity journey in 2013 after noticing a mismatch in the demographic of its government and the racial makeup of its community. Tacoma launched an "Equity and Empowerment Initiative in 2014 with five goals - a governmental workforce representative of its community, purposeful community outreach, equitable service delivery to all residents and visitors, support for human rights for all, and a commitment to equity in decision-making.

Portland, Oregon began its racial equity work in response to a study by Portland State University that revealed large disparities between white and minority residents across many indicators of health and well-being. Portland subsequently created an Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR) and began a visioning process for the next 25 years of the city's future. Since Portland began its equity work, it has engaged in community feedback sessions with small business owners, assembled a Citywide Equity Committee reminiscent of Seattle and King County's Change Teams, began an internal equity training initiative, and began utilizing an equity tool for Portland's budget process.

Toolkits

Of the five toolkits studied, two focused on the critical role of leadership in enacting racial equity organizational work, while the other three examined racial equity organizational change through chronological stages. We chose toolkits focused on organizational change across chronological stages due to Wise's unique situation of being an organization that is alert to the urgency of racial equity, while still unsure of its next steps forward. We also chose to analyze toolkits focused on leadership due to themes that arose from our interviews with other disability organizations, as well as Wise's upper management's strong involvement in this project and Wise's Diversity Committee.

Leadership & Race toolkit is designed as a self-reflection tool for leaders in nonprofit organizations engaging in internal racial equity work. The toolkit first establishes a racially responsive framework of leadership that shifts the focus from "hard work", meritocracy, and individualization to one that centers the interdependence of the organization, and collective leadership. The toolkit emphasizes identifying racial equity as a moral imperative and connecting all members of an organization to racial justice and power. The toolkit also centers systems thinking in examining racial inequity, and the way it parallels the connections between individuals within organizations. Accountability to outcomes, internal education, and a continuous reflection are also prioritized in this toolkit. This toolkit is especially helpful to Wise, as upper management

can use it to assess their capacity to initiate and sustain organizational change, assess the interconnectedness of Wise's internal structures, and generate a road map for next steps in their racial equity journey.

Inside Inclusiveness examines the role of upper management in catalyzing an organization's racial equity work. The toolkit identifies the CEO or Executive Director as the most important factor in driving racial equity work. The toolkit claims that the CEO is responsible for the level of commitment, attitude, and pace of an organization's racial equity work. The toolkit also identifies an organization's board of directors as key partners, as the board sets the strategic direction of the organization. The toolkit further identifies targeted hiring practices, culturally responsive performance reviews and professional development programs as effective mechanisms to recruit and retain staff of color.

Greenlining's Racial Equity Toolkit proposes six key steps to integrating racial equity in program design. The toolkit proposes first analyzing the problem a program is intended to solve, and ensuring that the organization has enough information and has identified the appropriate stakeholders. The toolkit then proposes evaluating stakeholder engagement strategies to see if they are intentional, appropriate, and share power. Next, the toolkit suggests that organization map out consequences - will the program have disparate impacts on certain racial or ethnic groups? What steps will be taken to minimize that? Then the policy is examined for financial and organizational sustainability. Finally, the toolkit suggests synthesizing data collection and reporting systems and metrics.

JustLead's Racial Equity Toolkit identifies six steps in enacting racial equity work and tools for internal and external engagement. The steps include securing organizational commitment to racial equity work from the volunteer level to the board level, creating a more equitable organizational culture, recruiting hiring and retaining a diverse workforce, developing accountability to and partnership with communities of color, and applying an anti-racism lens to programs, advocacy, and decision-making. The toolkit also suggests affinity groups for folks of the same race to talk about racial equity. Conversations in the group should be led by race and equity champions that ensure transparency, participation, reflection, and responsiveness to internal education efforts. The toolkit asserts that a white caucus should also be established to allow white staff to explore systemic racism, whiteness, and privilege without the risks of harming their coworkers of color and to force white staff to initiate self-education efforts. Lastly, the toolkit offers a stakeholder engagement assessment sheet that allows organizations to see if their engagement is intentional, reciprocal, and actually shares power.

The *Awake to Woke to Work* toolkit proposes that organizations exist in one of three stages when starting their racial equity journey - "Awake", in which organizations are focused on creating a diverse and representative workforce then "Woke", in which organizations are evolving their

culture towards inclusion, and "Work", in which organizations are accountable to addressing systemic racism and are engaging in systems change. The toolkit identifies seven levers responsible for driving this change: buy-in from the board of directors, senior leaders and managers, data on racial equity work, organizational culture, a reflective learning environment, and community engagement. The *Awake To Woke to Work* toolkit also gave the example of Year Up*,* a local career development organization, holding conversations with their stakeholders annually to identify the community's perspective on how well Year Up was doing in terms of its diversity efforts.

Case Studies

The following two case studies were analyzed because of their organizational similarities to Wise. Both organizations worked in the public sector, with a focus on advocacy, systemic change, and capacity building. The *Environmental Support Center* is an organization that took the opportunity to codify its racial equity efforts into their strategic plan - an opportunity that will be presented to Wise in July. On the other hand, *Cleveland Neighborhood Progress* leveraged their positionality as a leader in their field, much like Wise's position in the disability field, to initiate education efforts on racial equity.

The *Environmental Support Center's (ESC)* racial equity work was catalyzed when a staff of color resigned as they felt their voice was not heard, respected, and acknowledged. ESC feared that an inability to hire and retain staff of color would emerge as an organizational weakness and started by hiring a consultant to conduct institutional racism training. ESC took further steps to create affinity groups for different groups within the staff to talk about race, equity, and power. In time, ESC drafted a public racial equity statement with measurable goals and integrated their initiative into their strategic plan.

Cleveland Neighborhood Progress (CNP) was an organization that was already rooted in activism and organization. CNP's main functions were capacity-building, financial support, and training for community development corporations. CNP partnered with the Racial Equity Institute to launch a "Year of Awareness Building" in the wake of the Tamir Rice shooting. CNP used the "Year of Awareness Building" to coalition build and delivered half-day and full-day race and equity trainings to over 1,500 attendees representing 200 Cleveland-based organizations.

Analysis

All five governmental agencies identified internal education, representative bureaucracy[36], intentional community outreach, community partnerships, and the creation of equity change teams

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[36] A form of representation that captures most or all aspects of a population in the governing or service administering body.

as core parts of their racial equity efforts. All five toolkits identified seven common themes as key components of their racial equity efforts - commitment from leadership, strategic prioritization, internal education, sharing decision-making power, recruitment and retention, data on racial outcomes, and intentional community engagement. Both case studies noted internal education and coalition-building as key components to racial equity work. We aggregated then sorted the themes into three meta themes to make sense of them and align them with the Wheel of Change Framework. The three meta themes were education, internal work and external work.

Education **(Hearts & Mind)***:* Before significant culture change can happen, an organization must internalize and understand the history of race and systemic oppression, as well as its role in upholding or dismantling it. Racial equity is not just liberation for communities of color, it is liberation for all. At its crux, education is the key factor in driving culture change towards racial equity. Members of an organization must realize that racial equity is both an outcome and a process that requires continuous work. A committed education change team that drives the initial education, as well as follow-up and continuing education is critical to successful to organizational change towards racial equity.

Internal Culture **(Structures & Behavior)***:* Racial equity should be integrated into all components of an organization's operations, but most importantly in its *internal culture*. We identify the following core components of *internal culture* change towards racial equity:
- Securing buy-in from the board level to the volunteers level
- Measurable data-informed racial equity strategic goals and strategies for achieving them
- Intentional recruitment, retention, and development of staff of color into leadership roles are a means to developing a workforce that reflects its community

The *Internal Culture* meta theme focuses on how structures can be formalized to drive desired behaviors supporting racial equity, as well as protections to sustain that behavior into the future.

External Outreach **(Structures & Behavior)***:* An organization must be ready to share power when engaging in outreach or partnerships. Partnerships should be intentional, meaningful, reciprocal, and value-aligned. Community outreach must be conducted with intention, cultural responsiveness, openness to feedback, and opportunities for community-led decision-making. How can Wise move beyond "transactional" relationships with the organizations and communities they work with?

	Sustainability	Embraces diverse perspectives	Vision Alignment	Promotes Ownership	Amplifies the voices of staff of color
RECOMMENDATION 1: INTEGRATE RACIAL EQUITY INTO THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE					
Upper management should model and encourage continuous learning of racial equity	Orange	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange
Carve out time to learn about racial equity during business hours	Orange	Dark Red	Dark Red	Orange	Red
Address the intersectionality of race and disabilities in technical assistance in program design	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green
RECOMMENDATION 2: HIRE AND RETAIN PEOPLE OF COLOR AND PROMOTE THEIR UPWARD MOBILITY INTO UPPER MANAGEMENT					
Advertise job postings in racially diverse communities	Orange	Red	Gray	Gray	Orange
Remove barriers to jobs requirements	Yellow	Yellow	Gray	Gray	Orange
Create intentional and transparent processes for employment advancement for employees of color	Red	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green
Clarify and augment grievance policies	Orange	Orange	Gray	Orange	Yellow
RECOMMENDATION 3: INCORPORATE CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS INTO OUTREACH EFFORTS					
Focus funding on organizations that target communities	Red	Yellow	Gray	Orange	Green
Conduct intentional outreach to communities of color to assess their needs	Red	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Collect data on race and ethnicity of clients throughout service delivery	Orange	Red	Gray	Dark Red	Red
Partner with community-based organizations that work closely with communities of color	Orange	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow

N/A	Low	Medium-Low	Medium	Medium-High	High

	Racial outcomes are factored into the work	Collaborations are built on trust	Power is shared	Cultural responsiveness	Efforts address root causes of racism
RECOMMENDATION 1: INTEGRATE RACIAL EQUITY INTO THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE					
Upper management should model and encourage continuous learning of racial equity	Medium-Low	N/A	N/A	Medium-Low	Low
Carve out time to learn about racial equity during business hours	Medium	N/A	N/A	Medium-Low	Low
Create intentional and transparent processes for employment advancement for employees of color	High	N/A	N/A	Medium-High	Medium-Low
Address the intersectionality of race and disabilities in technical assistance in program design	High	Medium	N/A	Medium-High	Medium-High
RECOMMENDATION 2: HIRE AND RETAIN PEOPLE OF COLOR AND PROMOTE THEIR UPWARD MOBILITY INTO UPPER MANAGEMENT					
Advertise job postings in racially diverse communities	Medium-Low	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Low
Remove barriers to jobs requirements	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Clarify and augment grievance policies	Medium	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium	Medium
RECOMMENDATION 3: INCORPORATE CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS INTO OUTREACH EFFORTS					
Focus funding on organizations that target communities	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium-High
Conduct intentional outreach to communities of color to assess their needs	High	Medium-High	Medium-High	High	Medium-High
Collect data on race and ethnicity of clients throughout service delivery	High	N/A	N/A	Medium	Medium
Partner with community-based organizations that work closely with communities of color	High	High	High	Medium-High	Medium-High

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Primary Research Questions
1) What practices currently in place could be contributing to or not addressing the poor access of employment services to developmentally disabled people of color? How can Wise address these gaps in the system?
2) How are other nonprofits that engage in disability work addressing racial inequity in their organizations and services?
3) How can Wise improve their internal understanding of racial equity?
4) How do Wise's partner employment agencies and partner organizations perceive and experience Wise?

Organization Name:	Individual Name:	Title:	

Pre-Interview Protocol
Explain the purpose of the interview. (See outreach language)
Clarify the topic of discussion.
Explain format of the interview. (Semi-structured, open-ended questions)
Inform participant of the approximate length of interview. (60 minutes)
Inform participant of the purpose of digital recorder – ask permission to use it. Explain who will listen to the recording.
Assure participant that they may seek clarification of questions and that there will be opportunity during the interview to ask questions.
Assure participant that they can decline to answer a question.
Inform participant how to get in touch with you later if they want to.
Ask them if they have any questions before you both get started with the interview.

Focus Area	Indicator	Question	Why do we need this data?
Demographics		1) What is your role in your organization?	Identify interviewee, Contextualizing their role and their involvement with racial equity
Demographics		2) Is your role a supervisory role?	Confirm their place in the "hierarchy"; buy in from management, Buy-in from leadership and management as a key part of racial equity implementation
Demographics		3) How long have you been working at your organization?	Identify interviewee, contextualize perspective on organizational change
Program & Services	Q1, Q2, Q3	4) Could you describe the different types of services that your organization provides?	Get a sense of the org's service areas of focus

Program & Services	Q4	5) Could you describe the extent to which your organization has interacted with Wise in the past 2-3 years?	Understand if and how race equity work is targeted in the field by different orgs.
Program & Services	Q4	6) How would you describe the role of Wise in the disabilities field?	Understand how Wise is involved in the development of their service provider's work
Program & Services	Q1, Q2, Q3	7) What are some of the characteristics of the populations your organization serves? (Prompt with "Can you tell us more" if their answer isn't detailed enough.)	Understand if and how race equity work is targeted in the field by different orgs.
Opinions & Attitudes on Racial Equity	N/A	8a) What do you think of when you hear the word 'equity'?	Priming question
Opinions & Attitudes on Racial Equity	N/A	8b) What does 'racial equity' mean to you?	Individual-level understanding of racial equity
Opinions & Attitudes on Racial Equity	Q1, Q2, Q3	9) Could you describe your organization's understanding of racial equity?	Organizational-level understanding of racial equity
Opinions & Attitudes on Racial Equity	Q1, Q2, Q3	10) How would you describe the role that racial equity plays in your organization's work?	Figure out how important race equity work is in the field and how prominent it is in their work
Challenges & Barriers	Q1, Q2	11) Could you describe how you and your colleagues have faced challenges when engaging in racial equity work (or work that has a racial equity focus)?	Identify barriers/challenges in the field
Challenges & Barriers	Q2, Q3	12) Could you talk about a time when you've navigated challenging dynamics around race or other identities at work? (make sure they talk about lessons learned, root causes, how they responded)	Identify barriers/challenges in the field
Internal Culture & Support Systems	Q1, Q2, Q3	13) Could you describe what opportunities your organization has provided to employees to learn about racial equity? *Examples of this can include but are not limited to: offering DEI trainings to staff, facilitating staff discussions on racial equity, and establishing a shared language on diversity, equity, and inclusion.*	Identify priority in orgs to center race equity work and resources available to employees

Internal Culture & Support Systems	Q1, Q2, Q3	14) Could you describe what support systems does your organization offers to its employees of color? *Examples of this can include but are not limited to: racial/ethnic affinity groups.*	Identify capacity in the field around race equity work
Internal Culture & Support Systems	Q1, Q2, Q3	15) How does racial equity show up in your organization's hiring practices?	Identify intention around race equity work
Strategy & Leadership	Q3	16) How would you describe the commitment of leaders in your organization to racial equity?	Identify priority of race equity work in org
Strategy & Leadership	Q1, Q2, Q3	17) Could you describe the role of racial equity in your organization's priorities? *Examples of leaders include executive-level employees, managers, or supervisors.*	Identify who holds the power to advance race equity work
Strategy & Leadership	Q2, Q3	17a) To what extent have you seen the intersectionality of identities addressed in the disability field?	In other words, have you seen work in the disability field that specifically addresses the lived experience of individuals with different interacting identities including race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.?
Field Application	Q1	18) Could you describe how racial equity is currently being addressed in the disability field?	Tie to field
Field Application	Q1	19) What role should organizations in the disabilities field have in addressing racial equity?	Tie to field
Field Application	Q1	20) Could you tell us what some of the barriers are to addressing racial equity in the disabilities field?	
Recommendations	Q1	21) Could you describe some successful strategies or efforts that other organizations have deployed to address racial equity?	Tie to field
Recommendations		22) Is there anything else you want to share with us? Is there anyone else we should talk to?	Capture any other pertinent info

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW ANALYSIS CODEBOOK

CODE	SUBCODE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE	RESEARCH QUESTION
Programs and Services	Targeted programs and services, disparate impacts, representative clients, thought partner, limited interaction, innovative, leader	Any reference to organizational practices (internal) and/or programs/efforts (external) that are contributing to the inequitable access of employment services to racial minorities. Any reference to organizational practices (internal) and/or programs/efforts (external) that are are addressing the gap in employment services for racial minorities.	"They set up technical assistance, language access in helping families enter the system that are immigrant families/refugee families, non-native English speaking families to understand this complex system and enter the system"	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4
Opinions and Attitudes	Equity, equality, fairness, diversity, intersectionality, gender, privilege, whiteness, white fragility, white supremacy, white privilege, race, power, color-blind, moral importance, acknowledgement, financial/business importance, history	Any reference made about personal beliefs or opinions about or closely related to racial equity as well as belief and opinions about or closely related to racial equity that are held by the participant's organization.	"True equity is when all people have the same access to the resources and the same opportunity for success"	Q1, Q2, Q3
Organizational Challenges and Barriers	Tools, culture, professional opportunity, different levels of knowledge, discrimination, microaggression, individual/interpersonal racism, institutional racism, structural racism, tokenization, fear, unknown, capacity, mistrust/distrust, discomfort/comfort, erasure, gaslight	Any reference made to challenges/barriers when engaging in work, especially around race and equity, and when engaged in work that serves underrepresented groups in the field.	"When we pull the data, we're seeing gaps in the people entering the system, or people that were in school to work, they fall off when they're entering the adult system. And then we're looking at the demographics info and are like, 'why is this not reflective of the people of King County'?"	Q1, Q2, Q3

Internal Culture and Supports	Norms, training, professional development opportunities, support groups, race-neutral supports, job requirements, solicitation/outreach, interview practices	Any reference made to internal organizational processes available to employees, including specific support offered to people of color, and hiring practices.	"They allow us to participate in these trainings, discussions, and equity change teams. And I feel that they really do listen if we are like hey this is not equitable, this is not working, this process has unintended consequences. They take it to heart and try to adjust"	Q1, Q2, Q3
Strategy and Leadership	Policies, accountability, collaboration/partnership, buy-in, priority, investment, language access, outreach efforts, organizational change, opportunity	Any reference made related to buy-in from staff, and upper management in particular, around work that centers race, equity, and inclusion.	"There's many reasons, we're trying to figure those out and prioritize them so that we're part of the solution, not the problem"	Q1, Q2, Q3
Field Application	Leveraging, hiring, language access, history, focus, funding, silo, race-neutral, capacity, unknown, erasure	Any reference made to how the disability field is addressing racial equity, the role of organizations to do racial equity work, and barriers in the field that may be preventing progress in the area of delivering employment service to racial minorities.	"The hope is that as we train more and more, there's a majority of providers and executives trained on these concepts and that that starts shifting the field towards more equitable outcomes and services"	Q1
Recommendations	Recommendation, improvement, lacking, strength, weakness	Any recommendation relating to improving access of employment services to racial minorities.	Language access, cultural sensitivity, trainings are insufficient	Q1, Q3

APPENDIX E: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS META-THEMES

KEY OF TRAINING TYPES BY COLOR	Sexuality and Visual Support	Community Access Best Practices: Creating Community and Building Relationships	Building Relationships with Employers: Connecting with Business to Expand Employment Opportunities	Building a Portrait of Competence: Collecting in Depth Information for Employment	Discovery and Person-Centered Employment Planning	Building and Keeping a Happy and Lasting Team Recruit, Train, and Retain & Building the Roadmap to Community Employment

META-THEMES	Staff Investment	Strategies, Tools, and Techniques	Organizational and Systems Change	Diversity	Organizational Culture	Best Practices
CODES	Recruitment of new staff includes enrollment in organizational vision	Person Centered Planning (PCP)	Change is embraced and loved	Awareness of heterosexism and cis-gender privilege	Embrace diversity in organizational structure	Integrated employment within communities
	Staff is rewarded	Mapping exercise and gathering client history	Teams and organizations are in a constant state of renewal	Intersectionality of disability and sexual minorities	Develop leaders vs. managers	Customized employment
	Invest in versatile staff trainings	Use case studies in technical assistance trainings	Team collaborates and fresh perspectives are encouraged	Gender and sexual discrimination	Alignment around mission and purpose	Frame client around skillset
	Avoid staff burn out by troubleshooting challenges	Community Inclusion services	Staff experiments and takes risks	Service providers in DD field stand on nuanced spaces	Build trust with team	Collaboration (community, family, placement team) to achieve employment placement outcomes
	Invest in adequate staff resources	People First Language	Staff are active agents of change	Inclusive language around sexual identity and gender	Organizational culture affects interactions	Interpersonal development between service provider and client
	Invest in relationship building with and among staff	Open-ended questions	Buy-in from leaders and staff	Tips for talking about sexuality and sexual health	Share success with team among projects	Every person deserves the opportunity to be productive and contribute to society

KEY OF TRAINING TYPES BY COLOR	Sexuality and Visual Support	Community Access Best Practices: Creating Community and Building Relationships	Building Relationships with Employers: Connecting with Business to Expand Employment Opportunities	Building a Portrait of Competence: Collecting in Depth Information for Employment	Discovery and Person-Centered Employment Planning	Building and Keeping a Happy and Lasting Team Recruit, Train, and Retain & Building the Roadmap to Community Employment

META-THEMES	Staff Investment	Strategies, Tools, and Techniques	Organizational and Systems Change	Diversity	Organizational Culture	Best Practices
CODES	Empower staff	Include activities in technical assistance trainings	Leaders are visionaries and committed to the vision	Being an ally is about asking how you can help	Develop a vision for leaders	Frame as return on investment for employers
	Create optimal working conditions for staff	Customer Relationship Management (CRM)	Staff are adaptable	Nuances in intersections	Include humor	Establishing a vision for employment placement
	Lead and coach staff instead of manage	Understand neurodiversity and behavior	Staff is prepared and develop criteria for future goals	Trainings and sensitivity to gender variation		Creating a safe space for supported person
	Encouragement of self-reflection and internal work	Mirror client's language and terminology		Cultural diversity and sensitivity are sought in the workplace		Consider culture of supported person
	Sufficient emotional and physical capacity in staff to do job well	Positive Behavior Support (PBS)				Develop a portrait of competence
	Staff uses learned skills in work					Develop team goal areas
	Organizations support staff wellness					Acknowledge the history of disability

APPENDIX F: COMPLETE MENU OF OPTIONS

Work Area 1: Integrate racial equity into the organizational culture

Upper management should encourage continuous learning of racial equity of their staff and model this behavior by committing to process of learning and unlearning.

By committing to a journey of learning, upper management at Wise can expand its knowledge on racial equity, including the history of oppression and the systems and structures that create barriers for people of color with disabilities to access employment services. The commitment to learn about racial equity will not only signal to employees the important and relevant nature of this work, but also demonstrate that racial equity is a priority for Wise. The strengths of this option include its ability to embrace diverse perspectives, align vision among staff and promote ownership at Wise.

Carve out time routinely during business hours to learn about racial equity.

Designating time during business hours to learn about racial equity demonstrate that it is a priority at Wise. Employees can be encouraged to listen to webinars about racial equity in other fields, such as philanthropy. Employees can also be given the opportunity to create affinity groups among staff to talk about race, power, and privilege. The special ingredient in this option is that racial equity learning happens on the clock, which can then be applied to office dynamics and incorporated into Wise's work. The strengths of this option include its sustainability (can be incorporated under employment development) and its ability to promote ownership and factor racial outcomes in Wise's work.

Address the intersectionality of race and disabilities in the design of technical assistance trainings and support.

The lived experience of a person of color who is also disabled is different than the lived experience of an individual that is a typically developing person of color, or a white person with a disability. For this reason, the intersection of race and disability is unique, and the needs associated with someone with this intersecting identity are also different than others. For this reason, race should be factored into the design of technical assistance trainings. Incorporating this intersection of identities is especially important for service providers that are located in communities with greater racial diversity. This option has the greatest strengths out of this work area and include embracing diverse perspectives, vision alignment, promoting ownership at Wise, amplifying the voices of staff of color at Wise, factoring racial outcomes into Wise's work, cultural responsiveness, and addressing root causes of racism.

Work Area 2: Hire and retain people of color and promote their upward mobility into upper management

Advertise job postings in racially diverse communities and include language in job postings that explicitly welcomes people of diverse backgrounds to apply.

Engaging in racial equity work, especially in its beginning stages, is most challenging when there are few staff of color that have a personal stake in advancing racial equity work. Increasing hiring of staff of color requires intentional outreach efforts to communities that are currently not well represented in the disability field. Sample language to be included in the job posting such as the following makes a clear statement that people of various identities are valued and welcomed: "*Wise encourages people of all backgrounds to apply, including people of color, immigrants, refugees, women, LGBTQ, people with disabilities, veterans, and those with lived experiences.*"[37]

Remove barriers to jobs requirements.

Wise should examine what job requirements are currently included as part of a job description that might be acting as a barrier that keep certain groups from applying. Reexamining common requirements such as bachelor's or a master's degree, driver's license and car can serve as an opportunity to reevaluate other acceptable alternatives. Examples of inclusive alternatives include substituting experience for educational requirements and providing public transit assistance or the ability to rideshare or modify the role where having a vehicle is not a barrier.

Develop intentional and transparent processes for employment advancement for employees of color.

There are many barriers that hinder employees of color from working their way up in an organization. A Harvard Business Review article discusses the mental strain that black women face having to mold to a professional archetype instead of embracing their differences and having to "dim their light" to make their co-workers feel more comfortable.[38] Because of the additional burden that staff of color have to bear compared to their white co-workers, Wise should acknowledge the need to be explicit about their promotion and advancement opportunities. The strengths of this option include amplifying the voices of staff of color and that racial outcomes are factored into Wise's work and cultural responsiveness.

Clarify and augment grievance policies.

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[37] Adapted from King County Job Postings, https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/kingcounty

[38] Cheeks, Maura. "How Black Women Describe Navigating Race and Gender in the Workplace." *Harvard Business Review*, 26 Mar. 2018, hbr.org/2018/03/how-black-women-describe-navigating-race-and-gender-in-the-workplace.

Lack of clear structure and transparency of grievance policies contributes to employee lack of trust that the organization is adequately supporting employees if a negative interaction were to occur. Additionally, policies should include supplemental measures on existing alternatives if there is a conflict of interest with the authority that an employee is required to submit a grievance to.

Work Area 3: Incorporate cultural responsiveness into outreach efforts

Focus funding on organizations that target communities
Through our interview process, we learned that funding allocation has historically gone to white-led and primarily white-serving organizations. Though Wise's role in the disability field is not primarily to distribute funding, Wise can make conscious efforts to support organizations who primarily serve communities of color through monetary support, or by facilitating new relationships between funders and grantees.

Conduct intentional outreach to communities of color to assess their needs
Our research synthesis and interviews emphasized intentional community outreach as a mechanism for assessing community needs. This claim was especially prominent in our analysis of the five governments as part of their racial equity initiatives and is especially salient to Wise as many employment agencies that work with Wise utilize School-To-Work government funding. Intentional outreach allows communities of color to share their needs and shape Wise's trainings and program design.

Collect data on race and ethnicity of clients throughout service delivery
The option to collect data on race and ethnicity in service delivery has high automaticity and does not require significant staff time or financial resources. Multiple interviewees from our data collection highlighted collecting data as a priority in their hiring process and service delivery. Data collection was also a theme that arose multiple times in our research synthesis and any data collected from this option, can be used in a multitude of ways - from choosing which organizations for Wise to partner with, to tailoring trainings, or even to shaping outreach efforts.

Partner with community-based organizations that work closely with communities of color

Community-based organizations that primarily serve people of colors oftentimes know the communities very well and act as access points to those communities. Collaboratively engaging these organizations can strengthen relationships with communities of color, facilitate exchange of subject-matter-expertise between organizations, and foster a shared narrative on racial equity.

APPENDIX G: SURVEY RESULTS

	Wise		Service Providers	
Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**
I feel comfortable talking about race.	13%	69%	7%	90%
It is valuable to examine and discuss the impacts of race at my organization.	0%	82%	3%	90%
I understand the basic concepts of racial equity.	6%	71%	0%	0.86
I feel comfortable sharing my views regarding racial equity at my organization.	12%	59%	3%	0.79
Please rate your comfort level interacting with the following people.	**Comfortable**	**Uncomfortable**	**Comfortable**	**Uncomfortable**
People who have a racial identity other than your own.	65%	29%	89%	11%
People who have a sexual orientation other than your own.	65%	29%	89%	11%
People who identify by a different gender than you or are gender nonconforming.	65%	29%	76%	17%
Please rate the frequency of which you have taken the following actions.	**Never/ Rarely**	**Sometimes/ Often**	**Never/ Rarely**	**Sometimes/ Often**
I have taken steps outside of work to educate myself on the experiences of people of color.	75%	25%	93%	7%
I have set aside my own discomfort and my own fear of saying the wrong thing when talking about race at work.	88%	12%	83%	17%
I have spoken up about racial equity in hiring practices.	65%	35%	75%	25%
I feel like I have risked my reputation and my position in order to talk about race at my organization.	27%	73%	34%	66%

	Wise		Service Providers	
Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**
My organization's leadership is equipped to participate in internal and external conversations around race.	38%	31%	11%	59%
My organization communicates the importance of addressing racial inequities and achieving racial equity.	19%	63%	11%	56%
My organization's leadership has taken bold steps to reduce institutional racism.	13%	25%	22%	44%
My organization creates an environment where everyone has equal opportunities to advance.	6%	56%	4%	81%
Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**
You know how to identify examples of institutional racism.	6%	38%	4%	81%
You have the tools to address institutional racism in your workplace.	25%	19%	15%	46%
You know how to identify examples of interpersonal/individual racism.	6%	50%	4%	81%
You have the tools to address interpersonal racism in your workplace.	27%	33%	12%	56%
You know how to identify examples of structural racism.	25%	44%	15%	65%
You have the tools to address structural racism in your workplace.	31%	13%	27%	38%
	Yes	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Does your organization provide any programs or services specifically targeted at underserved racial populations?	31%	44%	32%	48%

	Wise		Service Providers	
If you heard someone make an insensitive or disparaging remark about another person, about how often was their remark targeted at:	**Never/ Rarely**	**Sometimes/ Often**	**Never/ Rarely**	**Sometimes/ Often**
People of a particular racial identity.	81%	19%	84%	16%
People of a particular sexual orientation.	94%	6%	92%	8%
People of a particular gender or gender identity.	88%	13%	88%	12%
If you heard someone make an insensitive or disparaging remark about another person, about how often was their remark targeted at:	**Never/ Rarely**	**Sometimes/ Often**	**Never/ Rarely**	**Sometimes/ Often**
Community members	91%	9%	71%	29%
Employees without supervisory responsibilities	75%	25%	77%	23%
Employees with supervisory responsibilities	92%	8%	91%	9%
Employee with upper management and/or executive responsibilities	92%	8%	95%	5%
	Yes	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Have you ever witnessed discrimination, harassment, or microaggressions at your organization?	19%	75%	26%	70%
	Disagree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**
The process for reporting acts of discrimination, harassment, or microaggression at your organization is clear to you.	56%	31%	80%	4%

	Wise		Service Providers	
In the past year, how often have you been discriminated against, harassed, or been the target of microaggression(s) while at work for the following reasons:	**Never/ Rarely**	**Sometimes/ Often**	**Never/ Rarely**	**Sometimes/ Often**
Because of your racial identity	91%	9%	86%	14%
Because of your sexual orientation	75%	25%	100%	0%
Because of your gender or gender identity	92%	8%	67%	33%
Because of some other aspect of your identity	92%	8%	86%	14%
	Internal	**External**	**Internal**	**External**
In the past year, please check any/all of the following groups who were the source of the discrimination, harassment, or microaggression:	33%	67%	44%	56%
	Yes	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Have you ever reported any incident(s) of discrimination, harassment, or microaggression to your organization's administrators?	67%	33%	57%	43%
	Yes	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Have you ever witnessed discrimination, harassment, or microaggressions at your organization?	38%	62%	25%	75%
	Internal	**External**	**Internal**	**External**
Who was this discrimination, harassment, or microaggression against?	67%	33%	100%	0%

In the past year, how often have you seen someone discriminated against, harassed, or be the target of microaggression(s) for the following reasons:	Wise		Service Providers	
	Never/ Rarely	Sometimes/ Often	Never/ Rarely	Sometimes/ Often
Because of their racial identity	60%	40%	80%	20%
Because of their sexual orientation	100%	0%	80%	20%
Because of their gender or gender identity	100%	0%	80%	20%
Because of some other aspect of their identity	80%	20%	80%	20%

W EVANS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & GOVERNANCE

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

Letter of Agreement

This letter confirms the working agreement between WISE and Maria Zepeda Flores, Johnson Bach Nguyen and Cecilia Borges Farfan, University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy & Governance graduate student consultants.

Project Description

The purpose of this project is to develop a **Racial Equity Strategic Plan.** The consultants will conduct background research, including an extensive literature review, that is grounded in the overarching research question: *"What practices currently in place could be contributing to or not addressing the poor access of employment services to developmentally disabled people of color AND how can WISE address these gaps in the system?"*

The research and analysis we conduct will inform us in developing strategies WISE can adopt to address racial inequity in each of these areas of focus, examining specifically:

- How are other nonprofits that engage in disability work addressing racial inequity in their organizations and services?
- What development opportunities and experiences can WISE provide to improve internal understanding of racial equity?
- How does the community and partner organizations perceive and experience WISE?
- How does WISE brand and present itself to the community?

We will also gather, review, and analyze our findings, as well as provide recommendations to improve the firm's ability to reach a more racially diverse recipient pool.

Timeline

The project duration is from January 2018 through June 2018 with the following completed target dates:

- First complete draft to WISE due: May 3, 2019
- WISE comments on first draft due to consultants due: May 10, 2019
- Second complete draft due to WISE due: May 17, 2019
- WISE comments on Second draft due to consultants due: May 22, 2019
- Final presentation to WISE: Late spring/early summer
- Completed paper to WISE: May 31, 2019

As a reminder, Spring break is March 19-25, 2018. Please note that some dates are subject to change and the consultants will discuss these changes with Cesilee and WISE staff accordingly.

Research Will Inform Strategic Plan

We collectively agree that depending on the findings that research uncovers, the priorities of this strategic plan may change but will still help answer the main research question of this study. If changes occur, the consulting team will communicate this to WISE until all parties are in agreement.

Responsibilities of Each Party

All parties agree to share their data and insights on the project. Maria, Johnson, and Cecilia agree to do their best and adhere to the deadlines set forth in the bullet list above. Maria, Johnson, and Cecilia will consult WISE as to the research direction and report on the progress regularly. Cesilee Coulson and WISE staff agree to assist Maria, Johnson, and Cecilia by providing them with access to training materials, logistical plans, partnering organizations, internal staff, among others, and timely feedback and guidance on their research draft. WISE will review and facilitate feedback of the consultants' work by the times set forth in the timeline above.

Deliverables

In addition to meeting the academic requirements for the project, Maria, Johnson, and Cecilia will complete the following client-specific deliverables:
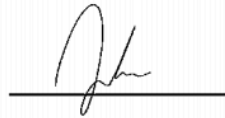
- Presentation to WISE staff

Any changes to the scope of work must be approved in writing by Cesilee, Maria, Johnson, Cecilia, and Professor Grant Blume.

In participating in the Student Consulting Lab, WISE agrees to pay a fee of $850. The first half of the fee ($425) will be invoiced after receipt of this signed letter in February 2018, with the second half due upon receipt of a satisfactory product.
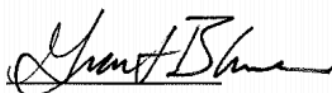
Signed:

_____
Evans School Student Consultant

_____
Evans School Student Consultant

_____
Evans School Student Consultant

_____
Evans School Faculty Advisor

_____
Agency Contact

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