

Why the National Partnership is Working to Advance Racial Equity

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Since its founding in 1971, the National Partnership for Women & Families, which began as the Women's Legal Defense Fund, has fought for equity, justice, and opportunity for all women. Our mission is to improve the lives of women and families by achieving equality for all women.

Our organization recognizes that we cannot achieve this goal without explicitly advancing race equity. Our nation was built on white supremacy, and many progressive movements have perpetuated harm by not working through a lens of race equity and inclusivity, with devastating consequences for the people of color who are left behind.

No organization is immune. We know that we have also been complicit in upholding the status quo. Knowing this, we cannot continue to pursue our work in a race-neutral way. Therefore, we are interrupting our past behavior and taking intentional and significant steps to transform the National Partnership to live our values both internally and externally. In order to succeed in our mission to achieve gender equality we must center women and people of color, groups that have been disproportionately impacted by racism and discrimination, and commit to working in an intentionally anti-racist way.

We are motivated by the following factors to make these changes:

- **Policy solutions must address the roots of structural and systemic racism.** Racism is entrenched in our legal, health, economic, and political systems, and it touches all of the issues our organization focuses on. A focus on race equity means righting historical wrongs by centering those who've been left out and disproportionately harmed and disadvantaged, which in the end improves the lives of all in our society.
- **Policies that do not recognize the impact of intersecting identities and compounded discrimination are incomplete and will not close the gaps between women of color and white women.** Our work must acknowledge that women of color experience additional barriers not faced by white women and must address this compounded discrimination.

- **Lived experience and diverse perspectives are needed to shape our work.** We cannot adequately develop policy solutions if we are not rooting those solutions in the lived experiences of those most affected by the issues we work on. Incorporating a diversity of perspectives in our work through inclusive hiring practices and intentional relationship-building and collaboration with women of color-led organizations and coalitions is critical to identifying and effectively achieving our policy goals.
- **As a well-respected organization with financial and reputational resources, we have an obligation to center, listen to, and learn from women of color.** We commit to being more intentional partners in our advocacy spaces and to make good use of our positional privilege by making room at existing tables and creating new tables that include those who have been doing remarkable work on behalf of women of color.
- **White supremacy fosters toxic work environments.** We want to work in an environment that does not harm people of color and where everyone feels safe and supported.

The National Partnership for Women & Families commits to holding ourselves accountable in our race equity work, and working against racism and sexism in order to strengthen solidarity and movements that help those who are most disenfranchised.