

THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER AMERICA

OPERA America Equity Prime

Definition: An equity prime (as in “prompt” or “trigger”) is a tool used by Race Forward to help serve as a reminder to be race explicit within our work and to think through the impact various decisions can have on people of color. An example of the use of an equity prime is the implicit bias bench card used by judges that offers suggestions for avoiding bias while deliberating a case.

Usage: Each staff member will receive a copy of the equity prime and the prompts will be reviewed at the beginning of each staff meeting. It’s a reminder to all of us to think about being race explicit in our decision-making and reporting and to think through how our work positively and negatively impacts people of color. The Equity Prime offers an opportunity to both check our own biases and to support our peers through their own decision-making processes.

Goal: Undoing racism is about creating new habits and processes and shifting our thinking and strategies away from methods that may support inequities within the field. Changes in our day-to-day processes will further our efforts to being race conscious as we convene the field. By introducing this process into our staff meetings, the equity prime will help change the culture of our organization by creating new habits.

Equity Prime - Condensed

Act Consciously and Deliberately

- Be race explicit. Who are our stakeholders and who is invited to participate in our programs and convenings?
- What are the barriers to participation and how can we remove those barriers?

Be Self-Aware

- What biases do we bring to the table?
- Intention is not the same as impact. Have we been mindful of our decision-making process?

Follow Up

- We are all learning. Did we seek feedback from stakeholders and colleagues?
- Did we consider challenges as a learning and growth opportunity rather than a personal critique?

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Equity Prime – Expanded

Act Consciously and Deliberately

- Be race explicit. Who are our stakeholders? Define audience, participants, and community and urge our members and partners to be explicit in their work.
- Who is included in our programs and convenings?
 - What voices should be included in our initiatives?
 - What are the barriers to participation and how can we remove those barriers?
- How does our language and communication invite stakeholder participation?

Be Self-Aware

- What biases do we bring to the table? What do we mean when we talk about “quality” and “culture?”
- What fears do we have around inclusion? Are there topics that diverse participants might raise that we don’t feel prepared to tackle? How can we prepare ourselves for those conversations?
- Have we given any additional burdens to people of color? Are they expected to speak on EDI work? Have we created a space for them to not speak on behalf of EDI topics?
- Be mindful of our decision-making process and that intention is not the same as impact.

Follow Up

- We are all learning. How can feedback be used to support future work?
- Seek feedback from stakeholders and colleagues.
- Consider challenges as a learning and growth opportunity rather than a personal critique.