Building Racial Equity into EcoDistricts' Programs

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EcoDistricts AP (Dec 2017)
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Background

- B.S. from Spelman College & B.S. in Civil Engineering, M.S. in Environmental Engineering from RPI
- Partner HBCU Greenfund fundraising initiative for retrofits, environmental curriculum development, and endowment building of HBCUs
- Green 2.0 Working Group Advisor to promote diversity in environmental fields
- Founding Co-Chair of the NYC Environmental Professionals of Color (EPOC) networking group, a program of the Center for Diversity & the Environment
- Senior Fellow of the Environmental Leadership Program (ELP)
- Advisor on Energy Efficiency and Sustainability efforts in NYC and NYS
- Consultant on advancing JEDI in environmental organizations
EcoDistricts (Protocol & Certification)

- Inclusive approach of district/city sustainable investment that prioritizes outcomes in **Equity**, **Resilience** and **Climate Protection**
- Dec 2017: One of the first 100 EcoDistricts APs
- Nov 2019: ~ 200 APs
Racial Equity Survey Uses:

1) How current APs view EcoDistrict’s commitment to racial equity
2) How the AP is informing APs to promote equity in the work they are involved in
3) To get feedback from professionals of color on what they are seeking regarding a professional credential
Racial Equity Survey Potential Outcomes:

- Changes to the Foundation Course curriculum
- Changes to the Exam structure and questions
- Changes to our marketing and outreach of the AP Program
- Changes to EcoDistricts pricing
- Development of a Scholarship Fund specifically for Professionals of Color
- Development of a Professionals of Color APs Affinity Group
Gender Identity & Sexual Orientation

Gender Identity
- Female: 60%
- Male: 40%
- Gender fluid: 0%

LGBTQIA
- No: 90%
- Yes: 10%

Transgender
- Yes: 100%
- No: 0%
- Prefer not to say: 0%
Which of the following best describes the principal industry of your organization or association?

- Architecture and Engineering: 27%
- Clean Energy and Technology: 5%
- Economic and Community Development: 31%
- Planning and Urban Design: 7%
- Real Estate and Development: 5%
- Higher Education and Academia: 2%
- Other (please specify): 22%
Working in low income communities & alongside communities of color:

*Mostly ‘Yes’, both criteria, around the country & internationally.*

**Are you working alongside low-income communities?**
- **Yes**: 81%
- **No**: 19%

**Are you working alongside communities of color?**
- **Yes**: 84%
- **No**: 16%
Which of the following potential tools would help strengthen racial equity in the EcoDistricts AP program (1 = Most Effective ... 7 = Least Effective)

- Webinar on racial equity in EcoDistricts work: 3.46
- Access to external racial equity toolkits and resources: 4.16
- EcoDistricts racial equity toolkit: 4.51
- Sample racial equity indicators and metrics: 4.73
- Case studies: 4.7
- Cultural competency marketing or other storytelling: 3.39
- Additional part of EcoDistricts Foundation Course focused on racial equity: 3.18
The importance of addressing racial equity is clearly incorporated into the EcoDistricts Protocol.

EcoDistricts’ programs provide the resources necessary for addressing racial disparities & achieving racial equity in community and urban development work.
I have a basic understanding of concepts related to racial equity & structural/institutional racism.

I am actively involved in advancing racial equity & addressing institutional/structural racism professionally in my projects and teams.

I would like to strengthen my knowledge and capacity around racial equity in my work.
The EcoDistricts AP credential has helped me improve racial equity outcomes in my professional experience.

The EcoDistricts Protocol has helped me improve racial equity outcomes in my professional experience.
Which of the following could be barriers to entry for individuals pursuing EcoDistricts AP?

- Cost: 55%
- Relevance to work: 47%
- Lack of information on the credential: 38%
- Exclusivity of training and community: 32%
- Other (please specify): 19%
Racial Equity Questions

• Participated in trainings on institutional and structural racism: *Most*

• Found trainings useful: *Most agree*

• Valuable to learn about, acknowledge, and address the impacts of structural and institutional racism in urban and community development work: *Most agree*

• Basic understanding of concepts related to racial equity/ & structural/institutional racism: *Most*

• Want to strengthen knowledge and capacity around racial equity: *Most*

• Involved in advancing racial equity & addressing institutional/structural racism professionally in my projects and teams: *Most*

• EcoDistricts’ mission communicates the importance of addressing racial, institutional and structural inequities: *Most agree*

• The EcoDistricts AP credential has helped me improve racial equity outcomes in my professional experience: *Most neither Agree nor Disagree*
Discussion:

• Are there any improvements that should be considered to strengthen the organization's commitment to racial equity in the Protocol, Certification Handbook, Foundation Course, and the AP Exam?

• How can EcoDistricts help strengthen racial equity outcomes and build inclusion of professionals of color through its programs?