

Gladys Hairston (00:00):

I am Gladys Hairston. I'm the Director of Learning Research Evaluation at the John Rex Endowment.

Meera Kumanan (00:07):

The focus of today's podcast episode is how do we achieve equity and implementation, both from on the groundwork to the higher levels of institutions and funders. So how do we ensure equity? How do we make sure that every stage of the process holds that equity lens? What can be done specifically during the funding stage to realize this mission?

Gladys Hairston (00:30):

This is a great question, and it's one that I think my answer has evolved, but the John Rex Endowment equity has been an underlying theme of what we hoped our implementation grant funding would help our grant funded partners achieve. Within the past couple of years, specifically, our foundation has been going through deeper racial equity learning as a foundation staff and board. So we realize that a more explicitly stated focus, specifically on racial equity, is critical to fulfilling our mission which is to help Wake County become a place where children and their families live healthy lives. So I'd say that ensuring equity for us, you know, before we began, our deep racial equity work may have been asking grantees applicants and grantees to be sure to include staff time into their project budgets. Another way to ensure equity, we would encourage grantees to include stipends for families and children that are participating in any components of the grant.

Gladys Hairston (01:31):

The next iteration of ensuring equity became us including a specific question on our application forms about it. So for example, it would say something like, How will you work toward equitable outcomes for those impacted by this work? In those questions or in those answers to those questions, we wanted to see how an applicant would be thinking about access to their programming. So thinking about who's been typically left out, how might you intentionally reach out to those people and reduce barriers to their participation? So now since we've begun to center racial equity in our own operations and grant making at the John Rex Endowment, we're thinking of how we can better support grantees to ensure equity on the front end of their work, not just by asking them how they already are, but really focusing on, you know, how our funding can help further how they're centering equity.

Gladys Hairston (02:24):

We're focusing on racial equity specifically in our foundation because we know it intersects with all other issues of gender, disability, economic access. And so what it looks like for us now is not only asking grantees how they'll ensure equity of access, but also asking them, what are some ways you like to deepen your understanding of current inequities and how would you like to address them? How might our funding help, you know, our funding and increasingly our advocacy help you to ensure equitable outcomes in what you're doing. So we know that, or we've learned that many of our grant funded partners are already working on building out or building up their racial equity lens to their work. We know this often takes deep change, that it works well, and it's thoughtfully facilitated by someone outside of the organization. And we know that that can cost money. <Laugh>, you know, as organizations are making these mindset and programmatic shifts. So one of the ways that we as a funder are hoping to ensure equity in program implementation is figuring out how we can help more with this. How can we help with those internal conversations that organizations are having?

Meera Kumanan ([03:40](#)):

Thank you so much for sharing your wisdom on this podcast. That was Gladys Hairston from the John Rex Endowment.