INCREASING EQUITY AT THE WORKPLACE

EMPLOYEE RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS SYSTEM TOOLKIT

EQUITY

STEP 4: GENERATE IDEAS FOR INNOVATION

BOSTON COLLEGE
School of Social Work

WORK EQUITY

Directors

Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes, PhD
Samuel L. Bradley, Jr., DSW
Kathleen Christensen, PhD

Employee Resources and Supports System

4.0 Introduction

We have organized Step 4 of the Toolkit for the Employee Resources and Supports System into two sections.

> **Section 1:** The tasks in this section will help your organization generate ideas for innovations that can strengthen the equity of your overall Employee Resources and Supports System, using the seven Levers for Change.

> **Section 2:** Recognizing that innovations in employee resources and supports practices – one of the Levers for Change – can be catalysts for deep change in the equity of the Employee Resources and Supports System, your organization will focus particular attention on employee resources and supports in Section 2.
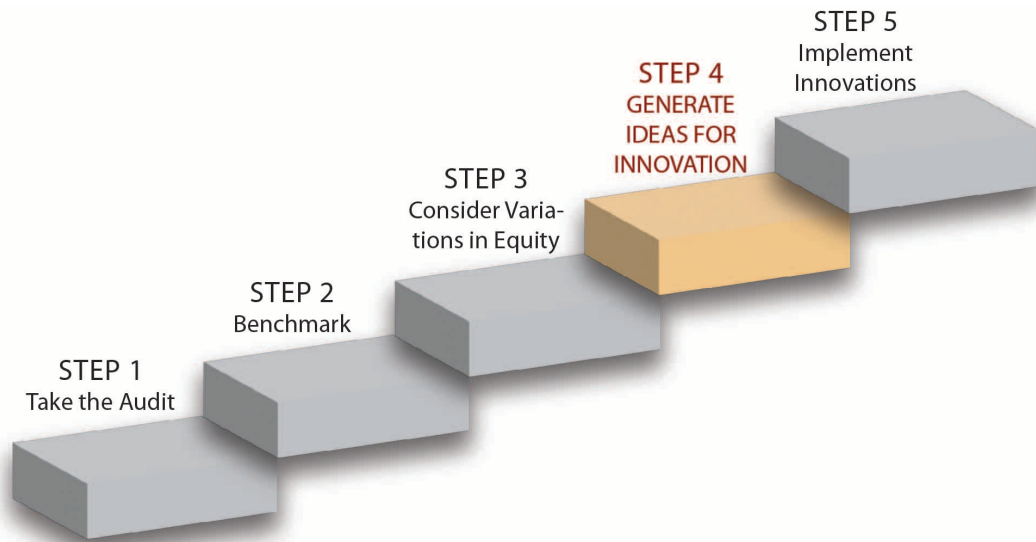

Figure 10: Step 4 of the Employee Resources and Supports System Toolkit

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The process of design thinking values the diverse perspectives which can emerge from group conversations and debates. (See "Overview of the Employee Resources and Supports System Toolkit.")

In consultation with your Equity Initiative Committee, the Leader(s) of your Equity Initiative should decide how to best engage different groups of employees in discussions about innovations that can strengthen the equity of your organization's Employee Resources and Supports System.

Option 1: Your organization could invite the members of your DEI Committee to participate in one (or more) brainstorming activity.

Option 2: You might convene discussion groups (for example, brown bag lunches, focus groups, etc.) with employees who are affiliated with specific demographic and social identity groups to discuss innovations in your Employee Resources and Supports System that could address some of their priorities and preferences.

Option 3: Your Equity Initiative Leader(s) could create a "suggestion box" to invite ideas from employees throughout the organization.

Employee Resources and Supports System

4.2 Step 4 Tasks (Section 1 and Section 2)

Section 1: Tasks to Assess the Equity of Your Employee Resources and Supports System

As noted in the Overview of this Toolkit, Work Equity recognizes that your organization has at its disposal seven mechanisms that have the potential to address some of the root causes of inequities embedded in your organization's employment systems. We refer to these mechanisms as Levers for Change. (Please see the "Overview of the Employee Resources and Supports System Toolkit" for the discussion of the Levers for Change.)

Each of the nine questions in the audit of the Employee Resources and Supports System (Step 1) addresses one of the seven Levers for Change:

1. Policies (Question #1)
2. Practices (Question #2)
3. Planning/Evaluation (Question #3)
4. Assignment of Roles and Accountabilities (Question #4)
5. Workplace Culture (Question #5)
6. Workplace Climate (Question #6 and #7)
7. Communication (Question #8)

Task 1: Rank Levers for Change from the Audit Items

Directions:

The Leader(s) of your Equity Initiative should put the average scores of your organization's responses to the Audit questions for employee resources and supports that you calculated in Step 1.

First, in Worksheet #7 (next page) enter the scores into Column A for each of the Levers for Change (that is, the scores for each of the items computed for Worksheet #3). Then complete Column B, ranking each of the Levers for Change by comparing the scores for each Lever.

Continue to next page ☞

Employee Resources and Supports System

Employee Resources and Supports System Toolkit Worksheet #7
Ranking the Scores for the Levers for Change in the Employee Resources and Supports System

	Column A: What was your organization's score for each lever for change? **(from Worksheet 3)** Put these scores in the open boxes below.	Column B: How strong is each lever for change? Rank order them for weakest to strongest. 1 = weakest lever (lowest mean score) 7 = strongest lever (highest mean score)
Policy Lever for Change		
1. To what extent does your organization have written policies which ensure that employee access to resources and supports is fair?		
Practice Lever for Change		
2. To what extent does your organization have a range of resources and programs that can support the needs of diverse employees?		
Planning and Evaluation Levers for Change		
3. To what extent does your organization audit the fairness of employees' access to resources and supports?		
Assignment of Roles and Accountabilities Lever for Change		
4. To what extent does your organization hold one or more employees (e.g., supervisors; Director of DEI, etc.) accountable for monitoring the fairness of employee access to resources and supports?		
Worksheet continued on the next page ☞		

Employee Resources and Supports System

Worksheet #7 (continued)

	Column A: What was your organization's score for each lever for change? **(from Worksheet 3)** Put these scores in the open boxes below.	Column B: How strong is each lever for change? Rank order them for weakest to strongest. 1 = weakest lever (lowest mean score) 7 = strongest lever (highest mean score)
Workplace Culture Lever for Change		
5. To what extent do the actions of your organizational leaders indicate that they believe that there is a connection between the organization's DEI initiatives and employee resources and supports?		
Workplace Climate Levers for Change		
6. To what extent does your organization support employee participation in programs such as networks/affinity groups/employee resource groups?		
7. To what extent does your organization recognize that different resources and supports may be sought/needed by different groups of employees?		
Average Score of Two Items Above Use the average of questions 6 and 7 when you rank the Levers for Change in Column B.		
Communication Lever for Change		
8. To what extent does your organization provide employees with equitable access to information about resources and supports available at the workplace?		

Employee Resources and Supports System

The members of your Equity Initiative Committee can consider the rankings of the Levers for Change in your Employee Resources and Supports System and identify opportunities to build on those that are already **strong** (that is, those that are **ranked the highest**). Summarize the observations below.

_____

_____

The members of your Equity Initiative Committee can identify ways to strength those Levers for Change that are currently **weak** (that is, those that are **ranked the lowest**). Summarize the observations below.

_____

_____

Continue to next page 👉

Task 2: Highlight Ideas for Innovation in the Employee Resources and Supports System

Employee Resources and Supports System Toolkit Worksheet #8
Your Ideas for Innovation in Levers for Change in the Employee Resources and Supports System

> Directions:
> The members of your Equity Initiative Committee can use the worksheet below to specify possible innovations that can address root causes of inequities.

	Levers for Change	Your Ideas for Innovation	Organizational "Stakeholders" (including decision makers) in this Innovation
	Employee Resources and Supports Policies		
	Employee Resources and Supports Practices	Please Note: Task 3, below, elaborates on practice innovations because they can have a "multiplier effect," opening the doors for changes in other parts of the Employee Resources and Supports System. You might want to save your ideas for Practice Innovation until you have completed Task 3.	
	Planning and Assessment (e.g., data collection) Related to Employee Resources and Supports		
	Assignment of Roles and Accountabilities for the Equity of Employee Resources and Supports		
	Workplace Culture Related to Employee Resources and Supports		
	Workplace Climate of Inclusion Related to Employee Resources and Supports		
	Communication Related to Employee Resources and Supports		

Employee Resources and Supports System

Section 2: Employee Resources and Supports Practice Innovations

Task 3: Consider Ideas for Practice Innovation in Employee Resources and Supports

Directions:

Your organization may want to adopt a design thinking process to imagine possible innovations in employee resources and supports.

> *Design thinking is a process that can help your Equity Initiative Committee to move from insight to action by brainstorming ideas for your organization to pilot. You can leverage design thinking to create customized equity solutions for your organization.*

The members of your Equity Initiative Committee can use Worksheet #9 (next page) to guide conversations about selected best practices innovations.

Employee Resources and Supports System

Employee Resources and Supports System Toolkit Worksheet #9
Options for Practice Innovation

	Is this option available? Yes or No	If this option is not available, could it be adopted by your organization? Yes or No	If this option is available to some but not all employees, could it be offered to groups of employees who currently cannot access this option? **Specify which employee groups.**
SELECTED WELLNESS PRACTICES			
Does your organization bring preventative health care to the workplace (for example, blood pressure screenings, vaccinations, eye exams, etc.)			
Does your organization offer fitness options at/near the workplace (for example, yoga classes)?			
Does your organization incorporate a "wellness culture" into the rhythms of everyday life at the workplace (for example, by encouraging short "walking breaks" every hour)?			
Does your organization offer financial incentives for healthy living (for example, partial/full reimbursement for health club memberships)?			
SELECTED EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) PRACTICES			
Do employees have access to mental health and addiction supports through an EAP service?			
Do employees family member have access to mental health and additional supports through an EAP program?			
Have EAP programs adopted confidentiality practices?			
SELECTED WORK-LIFE PRACTICES (either through the Organization or EAP)			
Does your organization provide access to information and referral related to caregiving (e.g., preschool child care, afterschool care, summer camps, elder care, care for special needs family members, etc.)			
Does your organization offer seminars or discussion groups for supervisors about work/life issues?			
Does your organization provide appropriate spaces for women who are breastfeeding?			
Does your organization gather information about the extent of employee stress related to their work-life experiences?			
Worksheet continues on next page ☞			

Employee Resources and Supports System

Worksheet #9 (continued)

	Is this option available? Yes or No	If this option is not available, could it be adopted by your organization? Yes or No	If this option is available to some but not all employees, could it be offered to groups of employees who currently cannot access this option? **Specify which employee groups.**
SELECTED PRACTICES CELEBRATING DIVERSITY			
Does your organization periodically invite employees to suggest events that they identify as important to them?			
Does your organization engage employees with diverse demographic and social identities in the planning of DEI events at the workplace?			
Are events sponsored by your organization accessible to all employees, regardless of abilities/disabilities?			
Does your organization use diversity-related calendar events (for example, MLK Day) to recognize the importance of Diversity-Equity-Inclusion at the workplace?			
Can your employees request that an employee resource group (ERG) be established that would focus on issues relevant to demographic identities, social identities, and shared experiences (for example, part-time employees)?			
Can all employees join an employee resource group (ERG) without concerns about negative reactions either from supervisors or co-workers?			
Does your organization gather suggestions from employees about ways to improve diversity events?			
FINANCIAL WELLNESS			
Does your organization provide resources/training to employees who want to strengthen their financial wellness?			

Task 4: Prioritize Your Ideas for Employee Resources and Supports Practice Innovation

> **Directions:**
> The members of your Equity Initiative Committee can use the worksheet below to list their top ideas for employee resources and supports practice innovation.
> The Leader(s) of your Equity Initiative can develop an "elevator speech" that can be used to present your recommendations to top managers, decision-makers, and other key stakeholders.

Employee Resources and Supports System Toolkit Worksheet #10
Your Ideas for Employee Resources and Supports Practice Innovation

Ideas for Possible Innovation	Implementation Factors
Idea # 1: Summary of Key Components	• Purpose (Goals/Objectives) Draft Statement _____ • Expected (Measurable) Outcomes Draft Statement _____ • Pre-implementation Preparation (e.g., informational materials, training, etc.) Draft Statement _____ • Announcement/Enrollment Draft Statement _____ • Steps 1, 2, 3, etc. of Implementation Draft Statement _____ • Estimates of Time and Resources Needed for Implementation Draft Statement _____
Idea # 2: Summary of Key Components	• Purpose (Goals/Objectives) Draft Statement _____ • Expected (Measurable) Outcomes Draft Statement _____ • Pre-implementation Preparation (e.g., informational materials, training, etc.) Draft Statement _____ • Announcement/Enrollment Draft Statement _____ • Steps 1, 2, 3, etc. of Implementation Draft Statement _____ • Estimates of Time and Resources Needed for Implementation Draft Statement _____
<center>Worksheet continued on next page ☞</center>	

Employee Resources and Supports System Toolkit Worksheet #10 (continued)

Ideas for Possible Innovation	Implementation Factors
Idea # 3: Summary of Key Components	• Purpose (Goals/Objectives) Draft Statement _____ • Expected (Measurable) Outcomes Draft Statement _____ • Pre-implementation Preparation (e.g., informational materials, training, etc.) Draft Statement _____ • Announcement/Enrollment Draft Statement _____ • Steps 1, 2, 3, etc. of Implementation Draft Statement _____ • Estimates of Time and Resources Needed for Implementation Draft Statement _____

Task 5: Present Idea(s) to Leaders, Decision-Makers, and Other Stakeholders

Share your ideas for innovation with people/groups that might be stakeholders and decision-makers employee resources and supports, as well as people who will determine whether the innovation can be pilot tested.

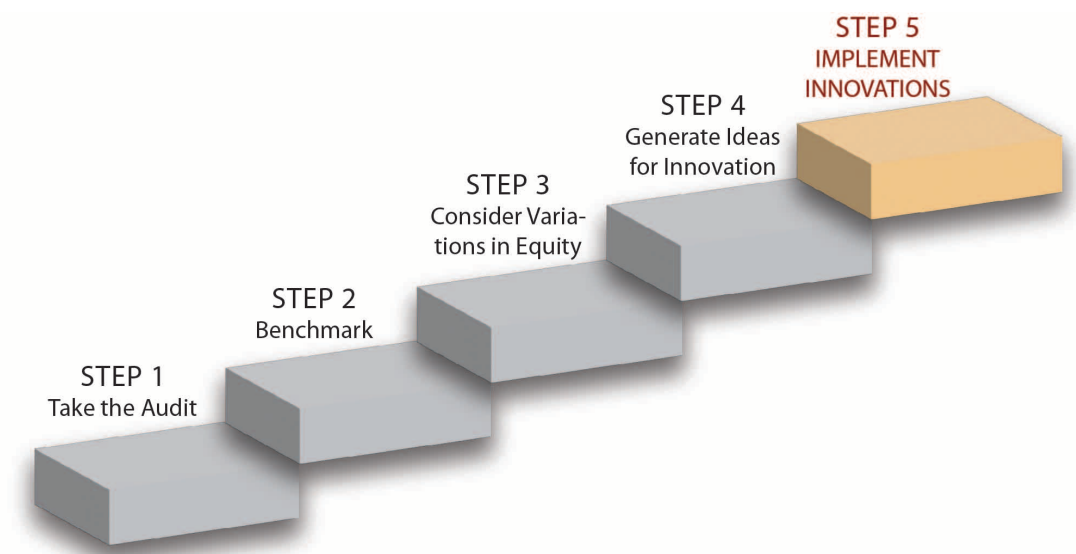☞ **Go to Step 5 of the Employee Resources and Supports System Toolkit: Implement Pilot of Innovations**

Figure 11: Step 5 of the Employee Resources and Supports System Toolkit