



Announcing Woods Fund of Chicago's Racial Equity Core Principle

We are excited to introduce the Woods Fund's new core principle of racial equity. This addition comes after significant analysis, discourse and consideration on both an internal and external basis. It is informed by many sources, including foundation colleagues, grantee partners, the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity, the Racial Justice Funder's Roundtable, and the grantmaker's guide by GrantCraft entitled "*Grantmaking with a Racial Equity Lens*".

Racial Equity Core Principle

The Woods Fund of Chicago believes that structural racism is a root cause of many challenges facing less-advantaged communities and people and serves as a significant barrier to enabling work and eradicating poverty. The Woods Fund encourages and supports organizations, initiatives, and policy efforts that lead to eliminating structural racism. Success in this area will be evident when there is equal distribution of privileges and burdens among all races and ethnic groups, and when a person's race or ethnicity does not determine his or her life outcomes. Woods Fund will support organizations that pay disciplined attention to race and ethnicity while they analyze problems, look for solutions, and define and document success. Ideally, these organizations will incorporate an analysis of structural racism into all aspects of their operations. Woods Fund is committed to raising awareness in the philanthropic community to support this work.

The first sentence of our mission statement reads, "*The Woods Fund of Chicago is a grantmaking foundation whose goal is to increase opportunity for less advantaged people and communities in the metropolitan area, including the opportunity to shape decisions affecting them.*" For over fifteen years, our foundation has made over \$45 million dollars in grants to nonprofits in advancing social change through community organizing and public policy development, and promoting community building through the arts. Our primary goal of poverty alleviation is achieved through engaging people in civic life, reducing

racism and helping advance more effective public policies and other barriers to equal opportunity.

Our grantmaking portfolio tells the story of an independent foundation that uses its modest resources in the pursuit of social justice and economic fairness. Throughout this journey we have upheld the ever-challenging and central tenant of participatory policy development. This value continues to shape the lens through which we conduct our business and fosters a profound regard for the wisdom of those most directly affected by the issues to inform the decision-making process. We firmly believe such decision-making results in authentically rich solutions of greater relevance and sustainability.

Remnants of structural racism permeate every aspect of our society and influence many issues, in particular poverty alleviation, which our foundation attempts to reduce through its grantmaking. According to Grantcraft, “... a ‘racial equity lens’ brings into focus the ways in which race and ethnicity shape experiences with power, access to opportunity, treatment and outcomes, both today and historically”.

The Woods Fund of Chicago has chosen to employ a racial equity lens and adopt this core principle to help our foundation think more intentionally about addressing inequities both internally, within the communities in which we operate, and beyond. We have grappled with the process to make racial equity a component of our practice. This action is natural evolution of our ongoing leadership, growth and development as a learning foundation. We believe that by incorporating a racial equity lens into our guidelines and criteria, in some small way we can begin to model and promote racial equity practices within our own foundation and the greater philanthropic community.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Deborah Harrington". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and connected.

President