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NeighborWorks America Faculty

Karimah has worked in the non-profit sector for over twenty-five years. She is currently the regional manager for NAMI South Carolina Lowcountry working to end the silence regarding mental health illnesses.

Karimah began her career as a community organizer. She lived and organized in every region of the US before co-founding ChangeWork Consulting then working on staff with international organizations including Habitat for Humanities International, Encore.org and The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

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Building Rural Leaders of Color in Housing & Community Development

from the course description.....

The dominant narratives about rural America frequently neglect the experiences of black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC). When rural housing and economic challenges are discussed the communities and leaders portrayed tend to lack diversity.

We will explore current trends that make intentional investment in rural leaders of color critical. As the national conversation on structural racial inequity continues to unfold, community development organizations and their partners must play a key role in championing racial equity in leadership.

This course will examine how inclusivity and leadership development can be integrated industry-wide. We're about to share in-real-life examples, information and tools to ensure rural black, Indigenous and people of color have opportunities and skills needed to provide leadership and thrive in community development.

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NeighborWorks America Community Agreements

- **Stay Engaged:** morally, emotionally, intellectually, relationally
- **Speak your truth responsibly:** be mindful of your intention and your impact
- **Listen to understand:** what do you need clarified?
- **Be willing to do things differently and to experience discomfort:** respect diversity and difference of opinions and people
- **Expect and accept non-closure:** commit to ongoing dialogue: rule out expecting a quick fix
- **Confidentiality:** share the take-aways but not a personally identifying story
- **Others?**

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Agenda

- ❖ Welcome / Introductions
- ❖ Context / What's BIPOC?
- ❖ Group Chats
- ❖ **Current Facts and Stats**
- ❖ The Challenge
- ❖ Trends
- ❖ What's working?
- ❖ **Key Principles**
- ❖ Are You Ready?
- ❖ Closing



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Context



- **Why is it important to building rural leaders of color?**
 - Equity
 - NeighborWorks America's Rural Initiative taking action
 - National conversation on race
 - Aging/retirement trends in community development
- **There has been an erasure of the experiences of rural BIPOC people and communities.**
- **Investing in all of rural America** – and not just the white Midwest corn farmer narrative – makes community development efforts more comprehensive and effective for everyone.
- **There's a critical need** to integrate intentional investment, space, and support for inclusivity and leadership development industry-wide.

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What Does BIPOC Mean?

Black refers to mid- to dark-toned complexions who often have African or Caribbean ancestry and who are often the descendants of people who were enslaved.

Indigenous refers to groups native to the Americas who were here before the colonization by Europeans. This includes Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

People of Color is an umbrella term to refer to non-white individuals who often face discrimination. Non-white people include those who have Asian, Latinx, Middle Eastern, Indian, and Pacific Island heritage, among others.

Also, an individual's experience of heritage can fit within multiple groups, as with Afro-Latinx people

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BIPOC



Pronounced “Bye-Pock”, BIPOC is intended to be used in place of “people of color” and is more inclusive of underrepresented groups.

Group Chat

One thing you already know about working with rural leaders of color on housing and community development efforts?



Why is inclusivity and leadership development in housing and community development so important?

CM4
k2

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Why is inclusivity and leadership development in housing and community development so important?

CM18
k3

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Slide 11

CM4 Have you used this format in a NW presentation previously? I am not familiar with it and suspect most of our participants will not be either.

Cormac Molloy, 6/29/2021

k2 I used this during the CLI. If the whiteboard function will be enabled for the VTI webinars, this annotation process will work. Let me know if it will be available

knonyameko@encore.org, 7/6/2021

Slide 12

CM18 Was it intentional to include this slide twice?

Cormac Molloy, 6/29/2021

k3 If there's more than 28 participants, two will be needed.

knonyameko@encore.org, 7/6/2021

Community Development in Rural Communities Current Facts and Stats



1. Erasure of the experiences of rural BIPOC people and communities
2. Percentage of BIPOC living in rural communities
3. Current leadership in housing and community development
4. Retirement cliff with many of the organizations' leadership loom

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Community Development in Rural Communities: current facts and stats



Mooney Falls, located inside the Havasupai Indian Reservation

1. Erasure of the experiences of rural BIPOC people and communities
 - Narrative/depiction of rural communities: *White Midwest corn farmer*
 - One in five rural residents are people of color
 - Over 83% of farmworkers are Latinx
 - Indigenous peoples and reservation life are effectively erased from the rural narrative
 - Farming in only one of many issues facing rural communities (*examples on next slide*)

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Erasure of the experiences of rural BIPOC people and communities



Farming is only one of many issues.....

- *broadband access*
- *Schools*
- *lack of capital*
- *jobs*
- *sustainable farms*
- *Racial justice*
- *hospitals*
- *roads*
- *Postal Service*
- *loss of traditional livelihoods (manufacturing, mining, timber and agriculture)*
- *inclusive agricultural policies*
- *protections of ancestral lands*
- *tribal sovereignty*

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Community Development in Rural Communities: current facts and stats



2. Percentage of BIPOC living in rural communities

- At least 15% of rural Americans are BIPOC
- 10.3 million people, one in five rural residents are people of color
- 573 self-governing mostly rural Native American and Alaska Native communities and reservations
- More than 98% of U.S. agricultural land is owned by white people, while over 83% of farmworkers are Latinx

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Community Development in Rural Communities: current facts and stats



3. Current leadership in housing and community development

- CD organizations often have diverse staff, yet the leadership has traditionally been white
- Narrow scope of credentials for staff and boards as recruitment driving force
- People of color are largely absent in leadership roles across the affordable housing industry
- Only 16% of community development corporations in the US are led by BIPOC
- Alignment of organizational diversity values with their operating practices

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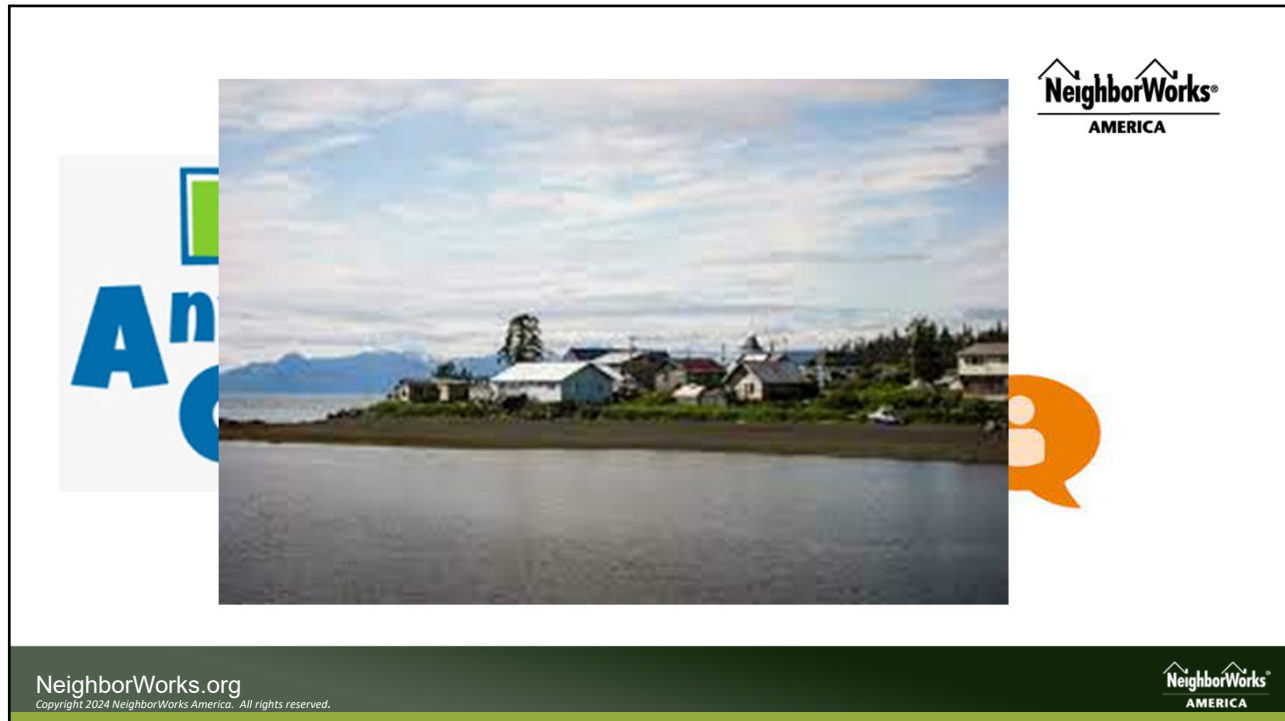
Community Development in Rural Communities: current facts and stats



4. Retirement cliff within community development looms

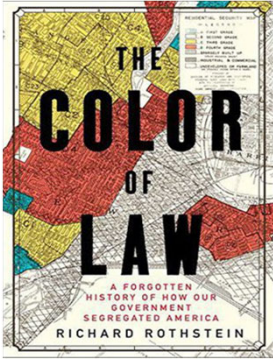
- Low turnover of well-motivated white founding leadership with access to resources
- The generation of organizational founders in the community development field has aged
- Many long-term/founding leaders are now retirement age
- The race, aging and population trends in rural communities

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The Challenge



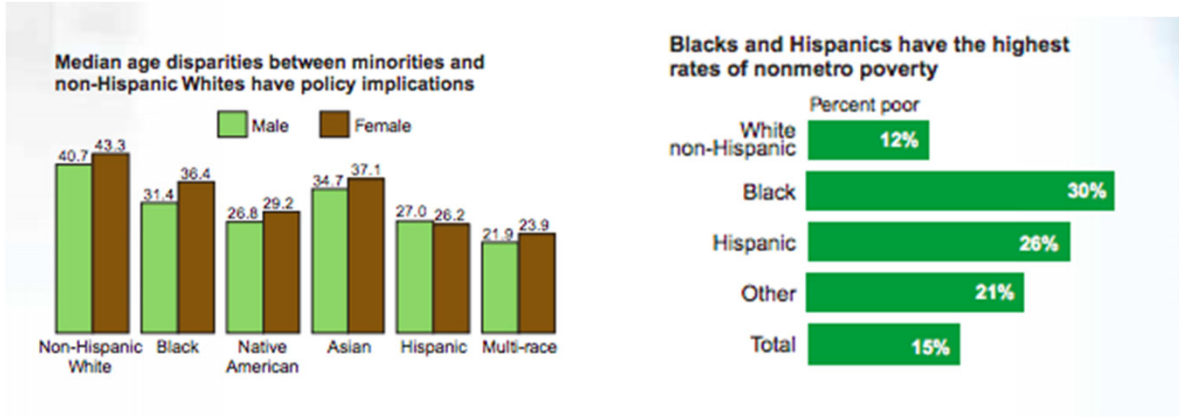
- After decades of government-sanctioned discrimination and systemic racism in housing, rural BIPOC leaders bear the scars.
- The housing and community development sector also bear the scars.
- There is a racial leadership gap in Executive Director/CEO roles.
- Creating clear paths to support, train and inspire aspiring leaders of color are important to move the dial towards more diverse leadership.

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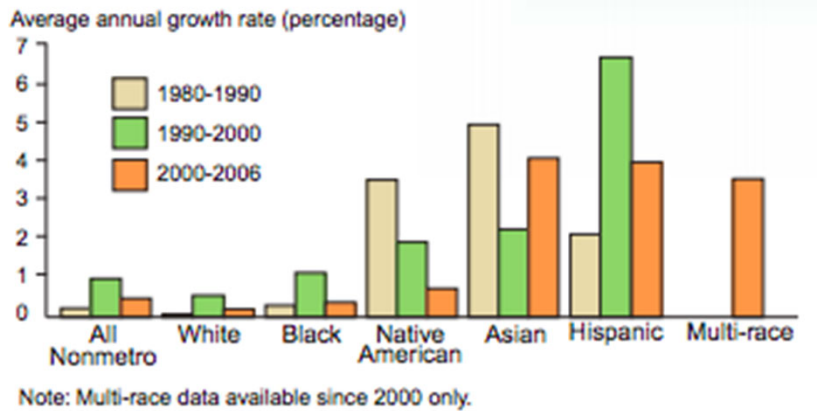
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Community Development in Rural Communities: current facts and stats



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Community Development in Rural Communities: current facts and stats



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Building Rural BIPOC in Housing and Community Development What's working?

- After the video, we will discuss these questions in chat:**
1. What aspect of the programs and results stood out to you? Why?
 2. What components helped the program's success?

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California Coalition of Rural Housing

Melody Lock, Internship Class of 2012




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Group Discussion in Chat

1. What aspect of the program and results stood out to you? Why?
2. What components helped the program's success?



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Key Principles of Building Rural Leaders of Color

1. Prepare organizational space/culture including integrating REDI practices
2. Integrating REDI and BIPOC leadership development into all lines of business and activity, rather than looking at it as its own siloed activity *(more on these in a minute on next slide)*
3. Developing robust Human Resources / hiring / promotions processes to reduce unconscious bias
4. Active engagement / partnership with existing organizations serving rural BIPOC folks or led by BIPOC leaders

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Advancing racial equity, diversity, and inclusion (REDI)

- A. **We continually take action to infuse racial equity throughout our internal culture, systems, and practices.**
- B. We take deliberate steps to strengthen our ability to recruit and retain exemplary diverse staff and leadership.
- C. **We regularly review policies, practices, and procedures to support organizational values**
- D. **We have a supportive culture that enables staff to do their best work**
- E. **Residents we serve has a sense of belonging and ownership in the communities where they live.**
- F. Our REDI progress changes conversations, behaviors and our organizational culture and paves the way for deeper, more lasting, and inclusive change.
- G. **Moving forward, we continue to view our progress through a racial equity lens that drives efforts to ensure the organizational culture reflects the racially just communities we want to see.**

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REDI Example: **Mercy Housing**



“Mercy Housing has served more than 152,000 people. We have participated in the development, preservation and/or financing of more than 48,200 affordable homes. We are one of only a few national organizations that provide affordable housing for all low- and moderate-income populations.

We serve families, seniors, and people with special needs with the full spectrum of affordable housing, including supportive housing for the formerly homeless, transitional housing, permanent rental, and affordable homeownership opportunities.”

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Common Language *(by Mercy Housing)*

How we define — and act upon — three important terms:

Racial Equity: Closing the gaps in employment, education, health, housing and wealth so that race does not predict one's success, while also improving outcomes for all. To do that we must intentionally target strategies to focus on improvements and close gaps so that all are successful, and move beyond services to focus on changing policies, institutions and structures.

Diversity: Including people from any number of demographic backgrounds and identities and valuing the collective strength of their experiences, beliefs, values, skills, and perspectives.

Inclusion: Creating an environment of involvement, respect, and connection—where the richness of ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives are valued. Inclusion puts the concept and practice of diversity into action.

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Continued:

Key Principles of Building Rural Leaders of Color

1. **Prepare organizational space/culture including integrating REDI practices**
2. **Integrating REDI and BIPOC leadership development into all lines of business and activity, rather than looking at it as it's own siloed activity** *(more on these in a minute on next slide)*
3. Developing robust Human Resources / hiring / promotions processes to reduce unconscious bias
4. Active engagement / partnership with existing organizations serving rural BIPOC folks or led by BIPOC leaders

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Continued:

Key Principles of Building Rural Leaders of Color

5. Cultural competency and inclusion practices

- A. active and reflective listening
- B. self-education and asking questions
- C. humility approach
- D. land acknowledgements
- E. use of pronouns
- F. Others? *drop in the chat*



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Continued:

Key Principles of Building Rural Leaders of Color

- 6. Centering the experiences of BIPOC in the narrative and descriptions of rural communities
- 7. Understanding how identity affects access and opportunity
- 8. Dedicating agency resources to professional development and ensuring it is equitably distributed across staff



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Continued:

Key Principles of Building Rural Leaders of Color

9. Including BIPOC in senior leadership roles with substantive decision-making roles
10. Hiring BIPOC as senior staff with substantive decision-making and budgetary authority
11. Reviewing human resource documents, recruiting practices, and marketing of positions



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Continued:

Key Principles of Building Rural Leaders of Color

12. Ensuring the connections, partnerships, and networks are available to sustain efforts led by BIPOC in rural communities
13. Actively advocating for leadership opportunities for rural BIPOC
14. Engaging REDI coaches to provide coaching to BIPOC staff to encourage mobility

"Stories of racial injustice at the hands of law enforcement in rural communities are just as numerous as they are from the lives of folks who live in urban communities. I think one distinction is that often things go unreported, and things are swept under the rug."

*The Rev. Ahim Herring, executive director
FAITH IN ACTION*

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Programs and Strategies: Are You Ready?

Group Discussion in Chat

1. How do you identify and contend with your own biases around race issues?
2. Does your organization currently have intentional leadership opportunities for rural BIPOC leadership development? If so, what are they?
3. What does your organization want to do more of?



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Closing

- ❑ What is one **key take-away** (in chat)?
- ❑ **One small action:** what will you commit to doing in your work to help build rural BIPOC leaders in your work?



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Thank you!

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