



SOUND **CITIES** ASSOCIATION

38 Cities. A Million People. One Voice.

SCA Racial Equity and Justice Series: Session 5

November 13, 2020

SCA Guiding Principles


- Assume that others are acting with good intent
- No surprises!
- Have each other's backs
- Think about who is not at the table
- Be candid, but kind
- Once a decision is made, work together to make it work
- Show up to meetings prepared
- Extend grace to others – cut them some slack
- Remain open-minded
- Respect differing views

Rules of Engagement for Breakout Session

- Listen actively -- respect others when they are talking.
- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing ("I" instead of "they," "we," and "you").
- Participate to the fullest of your ability, while also inviting and encouraging others to engage in the conversation -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
- The goal is not to agree – it is to gain a deeper understanding
- Although no one experience or example will prove accurate 100% of the time, we will try to hear the truth in what is said instead of looking for exceptions to the case.
- Assume everyone's good intentions but also acknowledge the impact of saying something that hurts someone else, even if it is unintended.
- Expect moments of discomfort – some of the most important learning moments can come from discomfort.
- All stories shared in this space stay in this space unless explicit permission is given by the person sharing the story that it can be shared in another setting.



Breakout Session 1:

- What barriers do you see to running for office in your community for BIPOC residents?
 - What are some actions you can take to remove those barriers?
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What are some ways that cities can be more inclusive?

- Recognize the importance of inclusivity (not just diversity)
- Inclusivity starts at the top
- Conduct trainings to ensure everyone understand the importance (electeds and staff)
- Ensure everyone's voice is heard
- Value differing perspectives
- Make space for new voices – don't just try to make new people fit into the old box
- Recognize that assimilation is NOT the goal
- Value differing perspectives
- Question how existing rules and norms are excluding new voices
- Revisit council rules and procedures frequently
- Have an explicit legislative process, and ensure everyone understands it
- Question whether acting as “gatekeepers”
- Identify needs of underrepresented groups, provide support and resources
- As leaders, encourage frequent check ins, be open to feedback
- Give safe space for people to share concerns
- Make sure everyone can be their full selves – authenticity is critical to well being

What are some ways that cities can be more inclusive?

- Make sure contributions from everyone are encouraged
- Give credit & recognition
- Promote active debate
- Be courteous
- Critically examine how you behave in interactions with staff and the public
- Ensure meetings are inclusive, and accessible to all
- Think about what things are now being done for convenience (rather than necessity) that might keep people from participating
- Think about the pipeline to office in your community
- How are we unwittingly maintaining the status quo?
- Provide mentorship to people from underrepresented groups
- Check your own biases, and own views on what “leadership” looks like
- Look at how doing appointments – what questions are asked will affect who applies
- Look at how compensation works for city council, and boards and committees – this affects the pipeline
- Access to other resources (e.g., childcare) can also affect who is able to serve
- Be as transparent as possible in appointment process
- Recognize that this is not necessarily a linear process – be open to continuous improvement

Breakout Session 2:

- How are the current structures in your community acting as a barrier to BIPOC elected officials?
- What can you do to make your city more inclusive?

