



# Equity Inquiry for Education Networks - Network Health Worksheet



This worksheet is designed to prompt discussion around key areas of inquiry for equity in **Network Health**. Networks have the power to advance equity in critical ways by building partnerships, sharing resources, and collaborating on challenges. They can also perpetuate inequity through concentrated power, homogenous membership, and harmful cultures. The questions on this worksheet examine equity in Network Health around key areas: **People and Partners, Culture and Commitment, Leadership and Decision-Making, and Access and Participation.**

## Directions:

1. **Center your inquiry in the needs, assets, and stakeholders of your community.** Revisit and use the *Understanding Your Community* worksheet as a starting point. The questions in this worksheet refer to “marginalized voices,” but your reflection should be more specific. Consider the people and perspectives who are disenfranchised, under-resourced, and under-represented in your work and community. Note how Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities are affected.
2. **Seek additional resources.** Before reflecting on the equity in your *network health* and ideating on ways to make them more equitable, review resources that highlight common problems and suggest strategies for addressing them.
3. **Respond to questions candidly and specifically.** You might choose to focus on some more than others. Taken together, they are starting points for discussion and greater interrogation. Record additional questions as you go.
4. **Surface and discuss differences.** Answers to these questions will vary across individuals and network members, reflecting their perspectives and experiences. Use this worksheet to identify and understand those differences. Participants can respond to questions independently and then come together to discuss. They might also answer questions together as a group. Be sure discussion is facilitated in ways that mitigate power dynamics and amplify marginalized voices. You may also want to seek additional perspectives of those who can speak directly to *network health*.
5. **In the “Points of Progress” section,** list specific practices, policies, examples, outputs, or work that help the network to be more equitable and inclusive.
6. **In “Work to Advance,”** note specific practices, policies, behaviors, outputs, initiatives, or projects you and the network can put in place to support more equitable *network health*. Some of these may refer to or push on items listed as “Points of Progress.” Focus group discussion in this area. Seek resources and elevate a range of ideas.
7. **Plan for next steps.** Based on your discussion and the ideas generated in the “Work to Advance” section, identify specific changes that will be made to your *network health*. Specify actions, commit to timelines for implementing them, and assign people to work on them. Design the work to ensure that marginalized voices are informing and leading it.

| Areas of Inquiry  | Points of Progress | Work to Advance |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|
| <p><i>Who are the <b>people and partners</b> in our network?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well does our network membership reflect the <b>diverse experiences, cultures, and identities</b> of our community?</li> <li>• How (and in what roles/ways) are marginalized communities <b>represented among the participants</b> in the network?</li> <li>• To what extent do the <b>staff and leadership</b> or our network or partner organizations <b>represent marginalized communities?</b></li> <li>• How is that representation <b>equitable</b> (vs. tokenizing, inauthentic, limited)?</li> <li>• To what extent do network partners have <b>trust-based relationships</b> with marginalized communities? How are <b>relationships built</b>?</li> <li>• To what extent do <b>relationships yield valuable opportunities</b>, formal partnerships, and funding for marginalized communities?</li> <li>• To what extent are network <b>connections made across lines of difference?</b></li> <li>• To what extent are <b>marginalized voices amplified, centered, and prioritized</b> in network-building?</li> <li>• How well do the <b>hiring and recruiting practices</b> of the network or its partner organizations reflect a commitment to equity?</li> <li>• How well does the network <b>foster growth and advancement</b> for people from marginalized communities?</li> </ul> |                    |                 |

| Areas of Inquiry   | Points of Progress | Work to Advance |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| <p><i>What is our network's <b>culture and commitment</b>?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do marginalized people <b>experience network culture</b>? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In what ways does our network <b>foster a sense of belonging</b> for marginalized voices?</li> <li>● To what extent do they feel able to <b>show up as their authentic selves</b>?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● In what ways do different groups <b>feel belonging</b> in our network and programming? Marginalized groups?</li> <li>● In what ways are a <b>commitment to equity addressed in our network mission</b> statement, investments, employee handbooks, training and onboarding?</li> <li>● To what extent does our <b>network's culture reflect that commitment</b>? Our values? As intended? Unintended?</li> <li>● In what ways is our network's <b>culture enforced</b> (expectations, policies, activities, behaviors, leadership, people)?</li> <li>● To what extent is network <b>culture inclusive and equitable</b>? In what ways does it <b>exclude or harm</b>?</li> <li>● How does our culture <b>asset-frame</b> marginalized communities?</li> <li>● <b>In what ways does our network name inequities</b> (e.g. anti-Black racism), harm done, commitments to address them?</li> </ul> |                    |                 |

| Areas of Inquiry   | Points of Progress | Work to Advance |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| <p><i>How is <b>leadership</b> structured and how does <b>decision-making</b> happen in our network?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In what ways does the network <b>invite reflection and feedback</b>, especially from marginalized voices?</li> <li>● How does it <b>make changes and follow up</b> on these perspectives?</li> <li>● How does it <b>acknowledge and address harm</b>?</li> <li>● How is <b>network strategy developed</b>? To what extent is it equitable, inclusive, amplify marginalized voices?</li> <li>● To what extent are network activities and decisions based on <b>informed, authentic needs of marginalized communities</b>?</li> <li>● How are <b>leaders selected</b>? In what ways are marginalized communities represented?</li> <li>● What <b>leadership competencies are valued</b> (and reflected)? How are they developed and held accountable?</li> <li>● How is <b>power distributed in decision-making</b>? On investments, programming, allocation, strategy, leadership?</li> <li>● To what extent are <b>network management and decision-making equitable</b>? Transparent?</li> <li>● In what ways do <b>marginalized communities initiate decisions</b> (vs. having their input solicited)?</li> </ul> |                    |                 |

| Areas of Inquiry   | Points of Progress | Work to Advance |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| <p><i>How do people <b>access</b> and <b>participate</b> in the network?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do network participants <b>learn about, join, or benefit</b> from the network?</li> <li>• To what extent do <b>marginalized communities access and participate</b> in network activities?</li> <li>• How do they <b>inform and design</b> them?</li> <li>• How does the network <b>seek input, leadership, and feedback</b> from marginalized communities?</li> <li>• How does the network <b>amplify the work of leaders and organizations in marginalized communities</b>?</li> <li>• To what extent does it duplicate, fail to support, override, <b>harm, under-recognize, or complete with this work</b>?</li> <li>• How are network <b>resources, information, knowledge, and opportunities shared, accessed, and benefited from</b>? To what extent is this equitable? For marginalized communities?</li> <li>• To what extent do <b>policies and practices enable equitable access</b> and participation for marginalized communities (e.g. time and location of meetings, compensation)?</li> <li>• How well does the network <b>understand and seek to address barriers</b> for marginalized communities?</li> </ul> |                    |                 |

## Reflect and Commit

How did network members' and inquiry participants' responses to these questions differ? What do those differences reveal?

What patterns and shared observations emerge?

What areas require particular work or further inquiry?

What commitments will you make to advance equity in Network Health? Consider planning around these questions:

- **What** work will be done (be specific)? **Why** is it important to prioritize?
- **Who** will work on this? How will marginalized voices inform and lead?
- **How** will the work be done? How will you reflect on and redirect the work as needed? How will the work be evaluated?
- **When** will the work be done?