
Illinois Department of Healthcare & Family Services Racial Equity Impact Assessment Guide (REIA)

The Department of Healthcare and Family Services is investing in Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives (HTC)—equitable, sustainable partnerships across our state that are focused on improving health equity in all forms, including racial equity.

To help guide the development of successful projects, the Department is requiring each Collaborative to use a Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Guide to evaluate how their proposed plan advances racial equity and actively reduces and prevents racial discrimination and inequities.

Projects should detail how applicants took racial equity into account when designing the services that they are proposing to deliver through the HTC Initiative. Applicants should consider questions including:

- **What is health equity?**
- **What is racial equity?**
- **What is the racial equity impact assessment of your project?**

From the start, we want to ensure that proposals have been shaped and examined through this lens—and answers will be evaluated in our formal awards process. We will assess responses to ensure that Collaboratives have engaged community stakeholders from different racial and ethnic groups in the planning process and have a clear plan for continuing to work with these stakeholders to advance equity.

We will be funding models that bring together traditional healthcare providers and community-based organizations and leaders to drive solutions that improve health outcomes and decrease disparities in their community. For example, Collaboratives working to ensure access to healthy foods may engage physicians to integrate food insecurity screenings in healthcare settings, as well as food growers, local entrepreneurs, and community residents to establish local farmers' markets and food bank networks.

To truly transform health in our state, we know solutions need to be shaped by and for the people who will experience them. That's why Collaborative applicants must demonstrate how they have, and will continue to, meaningfully engage their community to address social determinants of health, address historic and systemic racism in the delivery of healthcare, and provide culturally competent and equitable healthcare delivery.

As the largest purchaser of healthcare in Illinois, Healthcare and Family Services is committed to employing its \$150 million annual Transformation investment as an important catalyst in realigning resources to support and drive equity-centric transformational projects. We also believe it is critical for a diverse range of funders to be engaged in the important work of creating long-term, sustainable solutions to improve the health of Illinoisans. We recommend and encourage Collaboratives to engage the business and philanthropic communities in their transformational efforts, to ensure coordinated, comprehensive, and long-term investments in their work.

The Importance of the Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Guide

- We cannot achieve health equity without also assessing and addressing racial equity. We know that the cultural and racial hurdles our communities face accessing quality healthcare perpetuates health disparities and inequities – that’s why Healthcare and Family Services is committed to ensuring that Health Transformation Collaboratives prioritizes racial equity in their plans. This is foundational to fulfilling our vision of improving the lives of all Illinoisans and empowering them to maximize their health and wellbeing.
- As part of the Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives application process, we are requiring each Collaborative to use a Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Guide to evaluate how their proposed plan advances racial equity, and actively reduces and prevents racial discrimination and inequities. From the start, we want to ensure that proposals have been shaped and examined through this lens—and answers to this Guide will be evaluated in our formal awards process. We will assess responses to ensure that Collaboratives have engaged community stakeholders from different racial and ethnic groups in the planning process and have a clear plan for continuing to work with these stakeholders to advance equity. The REIA Guide also encourages a data-driven approach, requiring Collaboratives to identify measurable success indicators as well as a plan for ongoing data collection and public accountability.
- As we pilot the REIA Guide through the Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives application process, we will continue to collect feedback and evaluate its effectiveness at informing and driving equity-centric healthcare transformation. We anticipate that the REIA Guide may be adapted and revised over time, as we embed racial equity in the development and implementation of all Healthcare and Family Services policies, programs, and funding decisions. We look forward to using insights from the REIA Guide to inform and strengthen our ongoing commitment to prioritizing racial equity in the services and care we provide to Illinoisans.

The REIA questions that are a part of the HTC funding application are based on Race Forward’s REIA guide. Read more about that guide [here](#) [PDF].

EXAMPLES OF RACIAL JUSTICE EQUITY IMPACTS

Medicaid Innovation Collaborative

In response to calls to transform Medicaid delivery in the State of Illinois, OSF HealthCare has formed a new Medicaid Innovation Collaborative whose shared goal is to radically transform the way Medicaid is delivered in Illinois. As an example of one of their initiatives, a food pharmacy in the local FQHC located in the Bloomington/Normal area will be managed by a local community-based organization to address the issue of food insecurity for Medicaid patients (MIC Collaborative).

East St. Louis Metro Area Health Transformation Partnership

In Illinois, the East St. Louis Metro Area has been identified as the area with the highest score on the Centers for Disease Control's Social Vulnerability Index. The East St. Louis Metro Area Health Transformation Partnership proposes to design a Community Health Hub that will integrate a collaborative network of providers throughout St. Claire County to provide the "clinical-community linkage" needed to improve health outcomes. The Community Health Hub will be focused on the coordination and linkages to health and community resources through community health workers (CHWs) to assist and provide care coordination services in a hub and spoke model. In this model, the CHWs will assess client needs, source community linkages, coordinating clinical care and ultimately ensure the needed service was actualized for the client.

West Side Health Equity Collaborative

The West Side Health Equity Collaborative proposes a coordinated approach to addressing Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) using a **Peer Recovery Support Model**, led by persons with lived experience as navigators, care coordinators, and/or community health workers (CHW's). Members of the Collaborative will use the universal screening for all project-enrolled adults upon enrollment to the program. The screening tool queries for risk factors specific to children and adults. Patients in the program are paired with a peer recovery support specialist who will use a universal SDOH screening tool in conjunction with a health risk assessment to identify an individual's socio-economic risk factors and refer them appropriate resources. By aggregating screening, healthcare utilization, and outcomes data, the care team can make informed decisions about the allocation of resources needed to best support patients.