



Racial Equity Progress & Accountability Report June through December 2020

In June of 2020, Regional Housing Legal Services (RHLS) and the Pennsylvania Utility Law Project (PULP) responded to the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network (PLAN)'s Call to Action on Systemic Racism with a commitment to proactively address racism.

The following report aims to fulfill the commitments outlined in that statement in the interest of transparency and honesty with our clients, partners, funders, and friends.

Racial Justice Priority One: Outreach, Engagement, Listening, and Learning

- Board Executive Committee, Board Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) committee, Management Team, and staff DEI committee members attend a two-day) Racial Equity training from the Shriver Center (summer).
- Full Board Racial Equity training (winter).
- Staff workplace harassment training & additional management training on harassment (fall).
- Staff training & discussion via 4-part video seminar “Whiteness at Work” from Equity at Work (ongoing). A guided discussion on the first part of the seminar took place at our All Staff meeting in December.
- Individual staff members participated in various additional trainings, workshops, and conferences on racial equity (including the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network’s Racial Equity training from the Shriver Center).

Racial Justice Priority Two: Transparency & Accountability in Housing and Utility Policy

- Authored a report about the distribution of CARES funds that addresses racial disparities in housing and utility access and security.
- Working on multiple other research projects and reports that address racial disparity in housing and utility access.

Racial Justice Priority Three: Resources & Internal Programs

- RHLS Board of Directors passed board resolutions, one to affirm the organization’s commitment to refute racism and to acknowledge our role and responsibility in working to dismantle systems of racism and oppression. The second resolution addresses the racial composition of the RHLS board and presents a time frame for making changes to the board to reflect the communities we serve. RHLS staff are engaging in an internal assessment to better understand our current client community. This includes among other matters, an assessment of the race and gender of our clients’ executive leadership, location of clients’ headquarters and description of the communities they serve.
- RHLS & PULP each have staff members with a significant scope of responsibility related to racial equity issues.
- Solicited new membership for staff DEI committee that resulted in several additional staff expressing interest and commitment to join the committee.