



Equity Leaders Action Network

Introduction

The BUILD Initiative is launching an Equity Leaders Action Network (ELAN) to support individual leaders, over three years, who have responsibility at the state or county level for early childhood systems. ELAN leaders will work together to identify, address and take action on issues of inequity based on race, ethnicity, language and culture in our early childhood state systems. The intention of the ELAN is to:

- Support leaders in developing the will and skill to question personal assumptions, institutional and structural policies and practices, and work collaboratively to develop a blueprint to promote early childhood systems that are explicitly and measurably equitable and excellent for all children.
- Build the capacity of members to critically examine, with a racial equity lens, institutional and structural policies and practices in the distribution of state and federal resources (funding and services).
- Advance change to avoid disadvantaging racially and ethnically diverse children, families and members of the early childhood workforce.

Background

BUILD promotes early childhood systems work that identifies and addresses the root causes of disparities and supports state remedies to address them. BUILD's vision is of a comprehensive, racially equitable early childhood system that is of high quality and ensures that all children have an opportunity to develop and reach their full potential, without experiencing discrimination or bias within the early childhood system. In a racially equitable early childhood system, all children and their families would have equitable opportunities and resources for excellent educational and developmental outcomes, thereby transforming current reality for children from groups historically discriminated against due to race, class, and ethnic/cultural identity.

For years, BUILD has shone a light on alarming and persistent racial disparities in the early childhood arena by hosting presenters, organizing meeting sessions, conducting webinars, and disseminating briefs. Increasingly the information and calls to action have been met with concerned leaders eager to do better for all our children and their families and by colleagues who share our commitment to advance racial equity. But when the meeting or other interaction is over, BUILD has not been able to support or keep connected all those with a shared vision. The Equity Leaders Action Network is one vehicle to address this need for community, collective thinking, purposeful action, and ongoing information sharing and learning.

BUILD will launch a three-year process for the ELAN. During year one, the participants for the Equity Leaders Action Network will be identified. They then will meet to initiate the work of the ELAN, assist members in using a racial equity lens to analyze data and craft potential strategies that address

disparities, break into regional institutes to advance knowledge of a particular set of topics, foster shared understanding and goals, and co-create potential action strategies.

By the beginning of year two, ELAN members, with a cohort of colleagues in their own community, state, or area of focus will have selected issues upon which to focus—the opportunities for change. Each member will be supported to analyze her/his specific issue, understand its root causes, and develop an action plan. Years two and three will be devoted to supporting each member and her/his team of colleagues to design an action plan and initiate its implementation.

Invitation

BUILD seeks to identify leaders who will participate in the inaugural Equity Leaders Action Network of state, county and national leaders. Applicants will be interested in leading for equity and will demonstrate this leadership by taking specific, measureable actions for equity in the early childhood arena during their three-year participation. Members will work together across states to develop a shared understanding of racial disparities and racial equity in early childhood systems. Members will be supported to build their capacity to identify choice points for action to remove structural and/or institutional inequities.

Who

This application is open to leaders who have at least three years experience working in the field of early childhood, whether in health, mental health, early learning and/or family support. Applicants must be state or county leaders who are key actors and decision-makers, including, but not limited to: state early childhood, early learning, health and family support leaders; program directors, program specialists, and county stakeholders. Leaders will represent states, counties, tribal and national leadership.

Network members will be supported by BUILD team leaders as well as by diverse leaders who have knowledge of racially diverse communities, and/or have programs or practices that have demonstrated positive outcomes for young children, their families, and/or the workforce.

What

Develop State Plans: Over a three-year period, members of the Equity Leaders Action Network will create state and regional partnerships, develop a shared agenda within the state or regional grouping, and advance plans for their own state/organization to address structural and/or institutional barriers to the development and implementation of equitable early childhood systems development and implementation.

Members will participate in Action Design Studios to conduct systems-level equity audits and employ design tools to identify strategic actions to transform early childhood experiences and opportunities for children and families who are vulnerable, have high needs, and who experience disparities associated with structural and/or institutional racism.

Selection Criteria

Individuals will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Description of personal goals.

- Alignment of interest of the state or county early childhood system with advancing an equitable early childhood system.
- Ability to participate in the required induction session December 1-3, 2015.
- Efforts to balance the group across early learning, health and family support.
- Demographic and geographic diversity and distribution.

Application Commitment

Timeframe: Selected leaders are expected to participate in the project for three years. We recognize that a member may have a job or position change, but we would like the member to continue his/her participation if possible and practical.

Leading for Equity Institute: Selected leaders will participate in an induction training December 1-3, 2015 in Tampa, Florida. The three-day experience will: foster community within the overall group; build background knowledge; grow an equity-focused community of practice; build equity consciousness; and develop an equity lens.

Use data to define an opportunity: Selected leaders will focus on addressing issues of program quality, access to programs and services for the child, and/or leadership of early childhood programs. They will use their state’s data to define specific geographic target areas, populations of children, families or the workforce for specific analysis of quality, access, and leadership.

Apply analysis to practice/take action: BUILD will support ELAN leaders to move from a defined opportunity to the design of an action plan to implementation of plans. BUILD will also support members to document specific actions taken to address racial disparities and promote racial equity in states and communities so that we can all learn from the efforts—the things that worked well and those that didn’t.

Regional institutes: Selected leaders will participate in one of three regional groups focused on a specific equity issue. For example, equity issues might include: increasing the number of people of color, dual language adults with degrees in the early childhood workforce, increasing access for children in high needs communities to state-funded preschool, increasing the number of programs in QRIS from communities with low participation, increasing the number of professional development classes for dual language early educators, reducing infant mortality for African American infants, and reducing racially-predictable expulsion from preschool. The regional groups will contribute to the effort to define these issues through conversation, discussion of the issues, and analysis. They will also support ELAN members to take action to implement solutions and participate in one regional meeting per year and conference calls to advance the issue. Please note: No ELAN meeting will require members to pay their own costs. BUILD will pay for any travel, hotel, and associated meeting costs.

Continuous learning, support, and capacity building: Participate with experienced facilitators in regular follow-up work sessions over the three years to support organizational growth to deepen and expand racially equitable early childhood systems work in subsequent years.

Equity Leaders Action Network Application

Contact Information

Primary Contact Name:

Title:

Organization:

Address:

City/Town:

State/Province:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Supervisor Name and Title:

What is the primary area of focus in your work? Check all that apply.

Early Childhood Systems

Health and/or Mental Health

Early Learning

Family Support

Other (please describe):

Do you primarily work at the state, regional or local level?

State

Regional

County - Rural

County - Urban

County - Suburban

Other (please specify):

BUILD will make every effort to diversify the group of leaders in the Equity Leader Action Network. Answers to the following questions will help us in that process.

Please indicate your age range.

20-30 years old

31-45years old

46-60 years old

Over 60 years old

What level of education have you completed?

Some high school, no diploma

High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent (for example: GED)

Some college credit, no degree

Trade/technical/vocational training

Associate's degree

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree
- Doctoral degree
- Other (please specify):

What is your race or ethnic background?

- White (not Hispanic or Latino)
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American (alone)
- Native American or Alaska Native (alone)
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Two or more races
- Asian (alone)
- Other

General Information

- **Briefly describe how you come to equity work and what keeps you in equity work?**
- **Please provide a brief description of your authority and/or influence, role and responsibility within your state, nationally or in your county as it relates to early childhood programs or services. Include the demographics of the population of children birth to age five for which you are responsible. (Not more than 2 paragraphs.)**
- **Please provide a general overview of your organization's current early childhood systems-building priorities. (Approximately 1 paragraph.)**
- **Please provide your primary goals and objectives for seeking to join the Equity Leaders Action Network and receive technical assistance related to addressing disparities and building equitable early childhood systems. (Not more than 2 paragraphs.)**
- **Describe your work over the last three years on behalf of children birth to age five. Include a description of at least three examples of the following: policies, practice changes, projects, efforts or activities that you have led or continue to lead on behalf of improved outcomes for young children and their families. Please include in the description opportunities and challenges you encountered in advancing the work. (Not more than 2 paragraphs).**
- **Describe your point of view regarding structural inequalities and/or institutional inequalities for children and their families birth to age five. Structural inequalities are defined as the way**

organizations are located or work together or compete that disadvantage racially diverse children and families. Institutional inequalities are defined as policies and practices which disadvantage racially diverse children and families. Please include at least one data point or measurable example of an inequality that impacts children and families that supports your point of view. (Not more than 2 paragraphs.)

Letters of Support: Please include at least one letter from your leadership, both stating its goal to promote strategies to advance equity and supporting your participation in the Equity Leaders Action Network. Letters can come from your immediate supervisor or some other person with authority in the early childhood system. Suggested leaders include people from your state child care administrator, state-funded preschool, Head Start collaboration director, governor’s representative for early childhood, if appropriate, state Part C program, and/or a representative from your state governance structure for your early childhood system. The letter should clearly convey the reason for the writer’s support of your participation in the ELAN and his/her openness both to thinking about disparities and taking action to advance equity, as well as to potential policy and practice changes identified as a result of your participation. Feel free to also include letters of support from other organizational leaders who support your participation.

Webinar: For more information about the ELAN and the application process, join us for a webinar on Friday, July 10, 2015 at 1 pm ET. [Register for the webinar.](#)

Online Application: If you would like to apply to participate in the ELAN, applications are due no later than 5 pm ET on July 30, 2015. [Access the application.](#) Letters of support should be emailed separately to Blanche Stokes at bstokes@buildinitiative.org.

	Three Year ELAN Proposed Plan	
Year		
Year 1	Application Process	July 2 – July 31, 2015
	National Meeting: Induction Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whatever content and outcomes we anticipate. (What brings us to this work? What is equity work in early childhood? What do we want to have at the end of three years? And so forth.) 	December 1-3, 2015 in Tampa, Florida
	Follow-up work session focused on refining individual state/regional work: Selection of a Data Point for Inquiry by teams.	January – March 2016
Year 2	Webinar 1: Content/focus to be determined	February 2016
	Webinar 2: Content/focus to be determined	June – September 2016
	Regional meetings: Discussion of regional Data Point for Inquiry.	March – June 2016
	Follow-up work session focused on refining individual state/regional work: Project Outline Completed.	April 2016
	National Meeting	December 2016
	Regional Meeting (3)	January – June 2017
Year 3		
	Webinar 1	January – March
	Webinar 2	April – June
	Closing Session, In-Person Meeting	December 2017