Equity Matrix

This Equity Matrix was adapted from I4DM Definitional Matrix, developed by The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. We are deeply grateful for this important work and want to honor and acknowledge the many contributors who created this document, for funders and grantees wrestling with power in the philanthropic space. We are especially grateful for the leadership of Indigenous communities across Turtle Island, who continue to be generous with their knowledge and teachings.

Our goal in developing an Equity Matrix is to help make sense of the distinctions between organizations who serve equity-denied groups (most charities and non-profit organizations), and those who are led by or partner with equity-denied groups. This work is guided by a belief that solutions which are self-led by communities with the most proximity to the issue, are also the most effective.

We also recognize that the social impact sector has a long history of funding organizations that reinforce a charity or 'saviour' lens of doing for instead of with. We are inspired by the Aboriginal Rights group working in Queensland in the 1970s that shared this wisdom:

> *If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.*

Using the Equity Matrix, we want to prioritize organizations who are actively bringing an equity lens to all aspects of their work. We believe this should not be limited to organizations working explicitly in the 'equity' space but is essential for any organization who is working towards positive, systemic change.

The Equity Matrix encompasses 4 broad categories: Equity Benefiting, Equity informed, Equity Partnerships and Equity-led. It is meant to be a guidepost for conversation, for consideration and for sense-making both by funders and grantees in the philanthropic space. We envision this as a living document that will continue to shift and adapt based on input from community.

We invite people to use the Equity Matrix as a starting place for orienting where they currently exist in relation to others – and where they may like to go.

Who Are Equity-Denied Groups?
Equity-denied groups include communities that face significant collective challenges in participating in society. This marginalization could be created by attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, sex, nationality, race, sexual orientation and gender identity, etc. Equity-denied groups are those that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities, and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation.

Here is a broad sample of equity-denied groups. We recognize that it is difficult to provide a comprehensive list given the unique nuance of our identities. We also recognize that many people have intersecting identities and belong to multiple groups. Please consider this a starting point, and not exhaustive.

AGE
- Youth ageing out of care

- Underserved Seniors and Elders (in and not in care)

INDIGENEITY, ETHNICITY, RACE

- Indigenous people (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)
- Racialized people
- Faith-based communities facing persecution (Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, etc.)

DIS/ABILITY
- People with physical disabilities
- People living with mental illness
- People who are neurodivergent

ECONOMIC STATUS
- People experiencing homelessness
- People with low-income or living in poverty
- Workers who are vulnerable (essential, temporary foreign, informal labour market)
- Caregivers

SEX, GENDER IDENTITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION
- Women and girls
- Trans and non-binary people
- Members of LGBTQ2s+ communities
- People experiencing domestic or gender-based violence

NATIONALITY
- Newcomers (Permanent and temporary residents including immigrants and refugees)
- Immigration status

OTHER GROUPS EXPERIENCING MARGINALITY
- Prison populations (detained and incarcerated)
- People struggling with addiction

Matrix

To be able to identify as either 'Equity Partnership' or 'Equity Led', applicants must be in at least 3 of the 4 attributes sections: Leadership, Values & Practices, Program & Team, and Accountability to Community.

	Equity Benefitting	Equity Informed	Equity Partnerships	Equity Led
Leadership	No leadership at board or staff levels from equity-denied groups impacted by the mission	Equity-denied leadership at some levels and a commitment to diverse recruitment	Partnerships where equity-denied people are decision makers or partners and leaders on the work that impacts them	Organizations are self-led. Leadership of equity-denied groups impacted by the mission exist at all levels of decision making within the organization
Values & Practices	Interest or mandate to serve equity-denied communities but no ongoing connection with equity-denied groups and/or communities in the mission	Community informed programming with demonstrated ongoing connection to equity-denied communities and/or organizations	Values and organizational practices are driven by diverse people and communities who use an equity lens to inform the work	Culture and knowledge of equity-denied communities impacted by the mission guide the organization and its deliverables
Program & Team	Support causes associated with equity-denied groups within the organization's existing mandate or vision	Staff have anti-oppression awareness when delivering programming and maintain relationships to equity-denied people/communities	Diverse worldviews and experiences are prioritized that expand upon dominant culture and norms and are reflected in the programming	Equity-denied people own, lead and deliver programs in relationship and response to the communities that they serve (the team reflects the community)
Accountability to Community	Some awareness of equity needs, but little to no collaboration	Often collaborates with equity-denied communities or organizations	Full partnership between equity-denied communities and partners in learning, sharing and reporting	Sustains a reciprocal relationship with the communities they represent and serve