RACIAL EQUITY ANALYSIS

Expanding Peer Mentoring to Increase Access to Quality Licensed Child Care In Seattle

CONTENTS

1A. WHAT DOES YOUR DEPARTMENT DEFINE AS THE MOST IMPORTANT RACIALLY EQUITABLE COMMUNITY OUTCOMES RELATED TO THE ISSUE?

Increase the number of culturally diverse Licensed Family Child Care Providers who have access to key state/city resources related to funding and educational opportunities.

According to *The Seattle Family Child Care Study – Landscape Analysis*, providers who speak a home language other than English find it difficult to understand the opportunities the City provides, as well as the logistics involved in signing up for available programs (Dovetailing Consulting; Kaizen Consulting, January 2019). *Therefore, a primary goal of Imagine U is to support linguistically and culturally diverse Licensed Family Child Care Providers (LFCCPs) in understanding, accessing, and benefiting from key State and City resources.*

Reduce structural and institutional barriers that prevent participation in peer-mentorship for communities of color.

Quantitative and qualitative data suggest troubling inequities related to career advancement and availability of culturally responsive professional development experiences for child care providers of color. *Imagine U's peer mentorship program is intended, in part, to increase diverse representation in the leadership of our profession (peer mentors, state-approved trainers, and beyond).*

Strengthen formal and informal networks that provide ongoing professional (business and marketing, technology, access to information, etc.) and personal (self-care, peer relationships) support to providers from racially/culturally diverse backgrounds.

Historically, providers report that the nature of their profession is one of relative isolation. This is due to a few factors, including limited opportunities to interact with other providers, especially those of different cultural groups. Fully two-thirds of the LFCCP who responded to our survey as well as many members of the Family Child Care Advisory Council (FCCAC) expressed a desire to form new connections with peers and strengthen their existing relationships. *The Imagine U program is designed to foster relationships of trust and support between interns and mentors, among interns, and among mentors.*

1B. WHICH RACIAL EQUITY OPPORTUNITY AREA(S) WILL THE ISSUE PRIMARILY IMPACT?

Education, Community Development, Health and Jobs.

1C. PRIMARY IMPACTS

WORKFORCE EQUITY

LFCCPs of color face more challenges than their white peers in starting their business and receiving the necessary college credentialing to maintain their license in good standing. For instance, the net worth of white households in Seattle is $456,000 as of 2019, as compared to $23,000 for Black households (Balk, 2019). This difference in net worth is in part attributable to the lower rates of homeownership for Black Seattleites, due to racist policies and practices such as redlining and exclusion from the benefits of the GI bill after World War II (Blakemore, 2019). In fact, homeownership rates for Black households in Seattle are among the lowest in the country (Balk, 2019). This means that Black and other Seattleites of color have less capital with which to start a business and have a harder time opening their in-home child care with the added barrier of acquiring a landlord's approval and the instability of renting. Providers who are forced to move due to skyrocketing rental prices or the sale of their house need to go through the entire licensing and Early Achievers rating process every time they move. Additionally, as the price of renting exceeds the cost of mortgages in most metropolitan cities, renters spend more revenue on living expenses than their home-owning colleagues, with no equity built up for future investments.

Additionally, LFCCPs are now required to have at least an ECE Short Certificate to maintain their license in good standing. HB2556 has legislated that providers can obtain a community-based equivalent to the stackable certificates, but that pathway is not yet available. While college attainment has many benefits, many providers struggle to enroll and complete college coursework due to the lack of language offerings, registration challenges, funding issues and technological barriers. This is especially acute for immigrant providers with lower English language proficiency, most of whom are providers of color. The danger in increasing educational requirements without providing realistic approaches to credentialing for providers can lead to much of the disparities children experience in the K-12 system, where the majority of instructors do not come from the communities of the children they serve (Downer, Goble, Meyers, & Pianta, 2016).

Imagine U provides accessible professional development support that is culturally responsive, aligns with the State's professional development requirements, and distributes grants to new business owners to make entrepreneurship more attainable to those who have been historically excluded from the accumulation of wealth.

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE ACCESS TO SERVICES

For the purposes of this Racial Equity Toolkit, Imagine will focus on immigrant providers of color and the specific racialized oppressions they face. This impacts a large subsection of the provider population in Seattle: based on spoken language data, more than half of the child care providers in Seattle are believed to be immigrants, many of whom have reported that they have emigrated from refugee camps and/or countries experiencing violent conflict (Dovetailing Consulting; Kaizen Consulting, January 2019). Not only do these providers face the issues of access based on language outlined above, they are also much less likely to have access to technology or the technology skills to successfully

participate in many of the professional development opportunities, less access to capital and face racialized trauma in the United States.

To meet these providers' unique needs, services need to be built specifically with these provider community at the forefront—not merely adapted afterward. Immigrant providers, specifically Somali providers, have expressed the need for services that meet are in their language and is culturally inclusive. Imagine U's cohorts were designed individually to meet the needs of the populations they serve. For instance, Imagine U's Somali-language cohort has an emphasis on in-person connection (when possible), is always delivered in Somali with both English and Somali-language materials, and technical assistance is available weekly for those who need additional resources. The Imagine Institute has also created anti-racist, trauma-informed curriculum and plans to offer that as an area of specialization to support providers who have experienced and continue to experience trauma, including anti-racism and the trauma of immigrating to a new country due to conflict.

OUTREACH AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Imagine Institute tailors its outreach methods based on the needs of different provider communities and the main linguistic, racial, and ethnic constituencies of Seattle's provider population are well represented in the program. However, it is worth investigating whether the provider population writ large is representative of the families and children in the city of Seattle. Through examining data from the Washington State Report Card for Seattle School District for the years 2019 – 2020 (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2019-2020) and the most recent Early Achiever Participation Report data on race and ethnicity for providers in the Seattle area, Imagine found that 13.3% of children enrolled in SPS K-12 identify as Asian and 12.9% as Latino. However, only 3.09% and 5.93% of child care providers are Asian and Latino respectively, demonstrating obvious disparities in the representation from these communities. While Black and African American children make up 14.4% of SPS children, 61.86% of child care providers fall into the same demographic. Cultural and linguistic fit is an important component of family choice, so it is worth noting that this demographic information does not specify linguistic, cultural, or ethnic constituencies within this racial designation.

To better understand Seattle families' child care needs, Imagine will engage with community organizations who serve these families in Seattle. Imagine will also continue to pursue high engagement and collaboration with providers of color in its needs assessment, curriculum development, and program implementation. Opportunities to reach out to youth, possibly in high school settings, may also be a method of encouraging a more diverse group of individuals to enter the workforce.

STEP 2. INVOLVE STAKEHOLDERS; ANALYZE DATA

2A. ARE THERE IMPACTS ON GEOGRAPHIC AREAS?

Over half of the United States is a child care dessert (Center for American Progress, 2018) and what child care does exist is not always evenly distributed, as is the case in Seattle (Dovetailing Consulting; Kaizen Consulting, January 2019). Some areas have significantly more representation than others: according to the City of Seattle Family Child Care Study Landscape Analysis, "There are few providers in districts 3, 4, and 7" and "districts 3, 4 and 7 had only 9.4%, 2.0%, and 3.0% of City family child care slots, respectively" (Dovetailing Consulting; Kaizen Consulting, January 2019). Conversely, districts 1 and 2 have nearly 60% of all slots in the city (Dovetailing Consulting; Kaizen Consulting, January 2019).

2B. WHAT ARE THE RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF THOSE LIVING IN THE AREA OR IMPACTED BY THE ISSUE?

Historically, participants in Imagine U are represented in high numbers from Council District 2, which has a high concentration of providers generally. All but one of the providers in this district identify as a person of color (Dovetailing Consulting; Kaizen Consulting, January 2019). In general, 71% of the residents of this area identify as people of color (Dovetailing Consulting; Kaizen Consulting, January 2019).

2C. HOW HAVE YOU INVOLVED COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS?

The Imagine Institute has recruited a workgroup consisting of a geographically, culturally, and linguistically diverse group of six licensed family child care providers, some of whom have participated in Imagine U. Participants were selected based on interest and the following criteria set forth in the contract between the Imagine Institute and City of Seattle, DEEL:

1) A culturally and linguistically diverse workgroup of five or more current Licensed Family Child Care Providers (LFCCPs) who are small business owners in the City of Seattle.
2) At least two members should be state approved mentors who have participated in Imagine U. At least two who have not participated in Imagine U.
3) At least one newly licensed provider who completed an internship with a state approved mentor in Imagine U.
4) All workgroup members shall have knowledge of the Family Child Care Advisory Committee (FCCAC), Child Care and Assistance Program (CCAP), Working Connections Child Care (WCCC), and some may be enrolled in Early Achievers, Washington State Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and may or may not be rated in Early Achievers.

The workgroup will serve as critical friends/thought partners to the Imagine U program staff to help continuously refine and evaluate the program, specifically related to racial equity and social justice. This Racial Equity Toolkit plan will provide the foundation for the group's dialogue and feedback to Imagine U. Due to considerations for health and safety during the pandemic, this document will be shared with workgroup members in a virtually facilitated meeting to review the proposed outcomes and available data. Members will

be given multiple and differentiated opportunities to provide feedback via a variety of media, including written materials, Zoom conferences, phone calls, etc. Over the course of the project, the workgroup will help monitor the plan set forth in this toolkit and will engage in constructive dialogue about questions such as:

1. How does demand for mentoring align with the need for child care in these geographic areas? (Which communities are under-represented?)
2. What supports are necessary to increase provider capacity to effectively care for children of color with special cognitive and behavioral needs, and eliminate disproportionate discipline and expulsion from care for these children?
3. What existing structural and institutional barriers prevent child care providers of color from participating in the program?
4. What opportunities do experienced peer mentors of color need to capitalize on their specialized strengths, grow their careers and retain their employment as ECE professionals?
5. To what extent and in what ways do child care providers need to increase their skills and level of comfort with using technology to access key resources?
6. To what extent do participants of color feel that the program supports their ability and willingness to play a mentorship or leadership role in the field?
7. What affect does the program have on relationships and networks?

2D. WHAT DOES DATA AND YOUR CONVERSATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS TELL YOU ABOUT EXISTING RACIAL INEQUITIES THAT INFLUENCE PEOPLE'S LIVES AND SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION?

The Imagine Institute has identified three main areas of inequity that influence people's lives.

Barriers to Career Advancement and Professional Development: Abundant evidence from past participants and data from consultations with learning experts indicate that providing mentors training and materials in languages other than English is critical. According to Imagine's data, 211 of the 408 licensed family child care providers in Seattle speak East African languages (Amharic, Arabic, Somali, or Oromo). However, only seven of Seattle's 166 state approved trainers in MERIT have delivered STARS training in those languages within the last two years, all of whom became state approved through the Imagine Institute's Trainer Pathways Program. This suggests two gaps: first, that East African providers may lack professional trainers and mentors who speak their language or possess the cultural competency to best meet their needs, and second, that East African and other providers of color are encountering numerous barriers to advancement in the field, namely as trainers and instructors due to lack of language support and racialized oppression.

Lack of Access to Capital: As previously mentioned, access to capital and homeownership are two areas of profound inequality in the city of Seattle that directly impact providers' ability to open and maintain their child care businesses. Lack of homeownership means providers are not able to make critical decisions about their

care environment without landlord approval, face instability when rents are raised or houses sold, and must continuously get relicensed or rerated when they move to new homes. It also means they must compete for the same families. Most licensed providers in Seattle are concentrated in areas with available low income housing options, resulting in increased "competition for the available families in the neighborhood" (Dovetailing Consulting; Kaizen Consulting, January 2019).

Lack of Digital Access and Skills: Interns and mentors have expressed that their lack of experience and comfort with technology required to successfully participate in professional development programs; submit required documents to the City and State; communicate with licensors, Early Achievers coaches and Imagine staff; and access online training, has been both frustrating and a barrier to their successful participation in the program. While this is the case for many providers regardless of race or immigration status, it is particularly challenging for immigrant providers, the overwhelming majority of whom are women of color, whose home language is not English. According to the Migration Policy Institute, "…the foreign born also make up a disproportionately large share of groups with lower levels of digital skills" (Cherewka, 2020). Providers with *no computer experience* are more likely to be immigrants who speak a language other than English in the home (21% compared to about 5%) (Cherewka, 2020). Therefore, foreign-born providers, predominantly women of color, face more barriers to professional development and career advancement, particularly during a pandemic, than their white and native-born counterparts due to technological barriers as well as racialized oppression.

2E. WHAT ARE THE ROOT CAUSES OR FACTORS CREATING THESE RACIAL INEQUITIES?

Root causes of racial inequities are numerous and complex, and include multiple structures (governmental, financial, educational, etc.) that are founded on racism. Some root causes specific to the racial inequities listed above are as follows:

Barriers to Career Advancement and Professional Development: Providers of color face barriers to career advancement due to discrimination, lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate support and a privileging of college credentials over community-based training and professional experience. According to an article by Young Hwa Kim and Karen M O'Brien in the Journal of Counseling Society,

> All groups of women of color reported higher career barriers due to racism and higher educational barriers due to racial discrimination than White women. The results also demonstrated potential differences in salient barriers for women of color (educational barriers due to lack of confidence/skills for Asian women, career barriers due to sexism and racism for African American women, and educational barriers due to financial concerns for Latina women)' (O'Brien & Kim, 2018).

In Washington's early learning professional development system, this often manifests in BIPOC providers' relative lack of advancement into positions like center director or lead teacher. According to the Department of Early Learning (now Department of Children, Youth, and Families) Racial Equity Report, white providers are

more likely to be directors or supervisors than their peers of color, as illustrated in Figure 5 below. Nationally, Black early childhood professionals are "disproportionately represented among the ECE workforce who teach infants and/or toddlers, while Hispanic and white/Caucasian early educators closely match the overall breakdown of the ECE workforce as a whole", which matters because "the younger the child, the lower the pay" (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley, 2018). As previously noted, state-approved trainers and college instructors who speak East African languages are less common compared to their English-speaking counterparts. Training opportunities, assessments, and professional development materials are largely provided in English, as noted by all LFCCPs who have primary languages other than English. This means that increased educational requirements without proportionate increases in educational opportunities that are accessible and supportive result in providers facing barriers to maintaining their current positions, let alone advancing to new career opportunities.

Figure 5. Race/Ethnicity of Active Early Learning Workforce, 2016
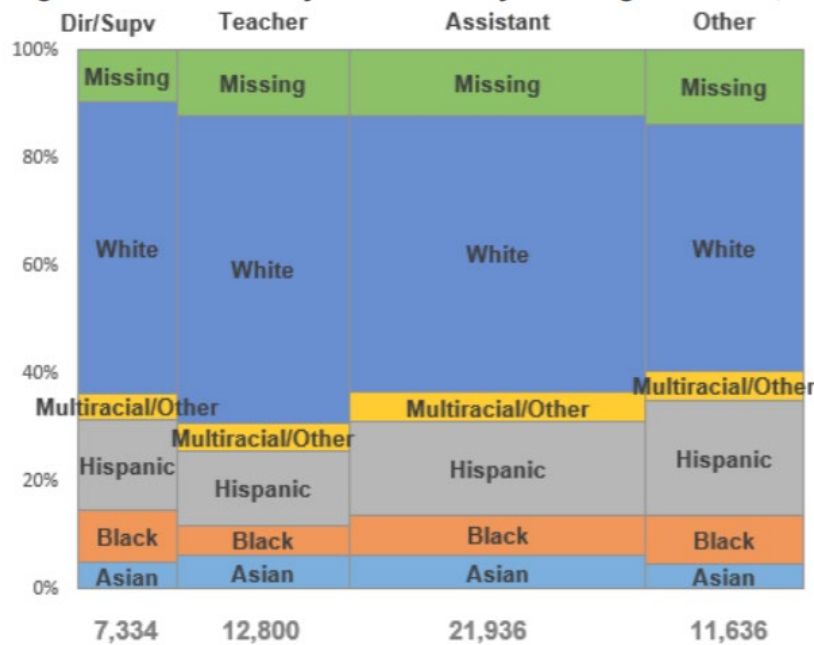
Data Source: MERIT, ELMS, Famlink
All racial groups reported as non-Hispanic

(Department of Early Learning, 2017)

Lack of Access to Capital: The concentration of capital in white households, particularly in the form of homeownership, is the result of carefully planned policies designed by public and private institutions since Europeans began colonizing North America. The United States' economy was founded on chattel slavery, which in 1860, represented about 3.5 billion dollars of wealth or 110 billion in today's dollars (Coates, 2014). Jim Crow racial apartheid and white racist domestic terrorism like the Tulsa Race Massacre further impacted Black Americans' ability to generate and accumulate wealth (Lynn & Thorbecke, 2020). Later, the 20th century's large

scale welfare initiatives like the GI Bill, were designed to purposely exclude Black veterans and their families (Blakemore, 2019). The effects of these de jure and de facto policies and practices remains today. According to the Joint Economic Committee's analysis of the "Economic State of Black America in 2020":

> The data reveal a much different story, with leading indicators of social and economic well-being showing that, on average, Black Americans face much more difficult circumstances than their White counterparts. For example, Black Americans take home less income, are far less likely to own their homes and live shorter lives than White Americans (Congressman Don Beyer, 2020).

Lack of Digital Access and Skills: Access to wealth largely dictates access to technology and access to technology supports technological skills acquisition. Therefore, the root cause of this inequity is wealth hording and inequity both locally and abroad. Immigrants from the Global South, specifically from counties that have been colonized and exploited for their resources, are less likely to have had sustained access to technology (Poushter, 2016) and other technology and are therefore less likely to have acquired digital skills. According to the Migration Policy Institute, digital access requires things like a "consistent connection to the internet" and the ability to afford "multiple recurring expenses over time" (Cherewka, 2020). Alexis Cherewka writes, "For example, an individual may have inconsistent access due to the constant need to add prepaid mobile airtime or replace and repair technologies. Families might also share a single device between multiple individuals, which limits each person's access" (Cherewka, 2020).

STEP 3. DETERMINING BENEFIT AND/OR BURDEN

3. HOW WILL THE POLICY, INITIATIVE, PROGRAM, OR BUDGET ISSUE INCREASE OR DECREASE RACIAL EQUITY? WHAT ARE POTENTIAL UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES? WHAT BENEFITS MAY RESULT? ARE THE IMPACTS ALIGNED WITH YOUR DEPARTMENT'S COMMUNITY OUTCOMES THAT WERE DEFINED IN STEP I?

INCREASED RACIAL EQUITY

Imagine U Seattle has funded the creation of 16 new child care businesses in the city of Seattle, 94% of whom are BIPOC-owned. Based on preferred language data, 87% of the new LFCCPs created through Imagine U Seattle are immigrants. The Imagine Institute predicts these trends will continue throughout the duration of this project. The impacts of this program supports increased racial equity in the following way:

1. Business ownership generates wealth (Economic Opportunities Program, 6). The Aspen Institute cites "low levels of business and financial assets" as one contributor to the racial wealth gap between Latinos and Black Americans as compared to white Americans (Economic Opportunities Program, 6). Business ownership provides "greater diversification and higher average returns over time than tangible assets such as homes and cars" (Economic Opportunities Program, 6). The Center for Financial Household

Stability at the Federal Reserve Board of St. Louis found that the "white-black wealth gap is 10 to 1" and the "white-Hispanic wealth gap is 7.6 to 1" (Emmons, 2019) and fewer of their assets are in the form of business assets (Economic Opportunities Program, 6). This matters because, self-employed heads of household had a median net worth five times greater than those employed for someone else (FIELD at Aspen Institute, 2017).

2. **Child care facilities who represent the communities they serve are best able to provide affirming care environments for their children.** Outcomes are better for children who have educators who share their racial identity. According to Seth Gershenson, Cassandra Hart, Constance Lindsay, and Nicholas Papageorge in their paper, "The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers":

   > ... assigning a black male to a black teacher in the third, fourth, or fifth grades significantly reduces the probability that he drops out of high school, particularly among the most economically disadvantaged black males. Exposure to at least one black teacher in grades 3-5 also increases the likelihood that persistently low-income students of both sexes aspire to attend a four-year college. (Gershenson, Hart, Lindsay, & Papageorge, 2017)

   But what about early learning environments? Several studies have shown that same-race teachers have a positive effect on Black children: "African American teachers are liable to see African American children in a more positive light and have higher expectations for African American children than do Caucasian teachers" (Downer, Goble, Meyers, & Pianta, 2016). These studies also found that African American teachers in pre-kindergarten "reported less growth in problem behavior for African American boys than did Caucasian teachers" (Downer, Goble, Meyers, & Pianta, 2016). LFCCP are much more likely than other educators to reflect the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of King County, with people of color comprising 56.5% of the county's early learning workforce (Department of Early Learning, 2017). Approximately 40% of this workforce also speaks a language other than English and can therefore provide native language instruction to the children in their care (Department of Early Learning, 2017), which research shows is critical to the social-emotional health of a child (Bradley, 2017).

3. **Supporting more providers of color to become state approved as trainers and mentors means that these providers are able to transform the type of professional development their peers receive.** The Imagine Institute plans to work with our provider-trainer team to deliver anti-racist and trauma-informed curriculum that was cocreated with providers in our curriculum committee to state-approved mentors. Hundreds of providers throughout the state have already received this critical training that will allow them to better mitigate the toxic effects of racism on children.

POTENTIAL UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

It is inherently difficult to predict unintended consequences, but the practice of gaming out potential unforeseen consequences can meaningfully prevent these consequences from occurring. Some potential unintended consequences include:

- Potential for compounding trauma and/or exacerbating existing feelings of isolation, especially for participants of color, currently due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Since a significant amount of funding is involved, participants who are not successful in the program can face financial consequences if they planned on the program's financial incentives.

- Participants' strong negative reactions to suspension from the program for lack of completion has occasionally caused damage to Imagine's relationship to mentors.

- Since recruitment is largely through word of mouth, existing demographic gaps can be compounded because existing businesses are not connected to the community members who are already not participating in the program.

BENEFITS AND ALIGNMENT WITH PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Table 1. Imagine U Theory of Action

Imagine U is designed to…	Participants will…	Therefore, program outcomes will include…
Publicize opportunities for training, resources, and community services Provide compensation during program training Facilitate learning about business support services Facilitate Learning how to promote program graduates' businesses	Understand and be aware of opportunities and resources for becoming licensed, and for professional engagement and advancement Acquire skills to establish, promote and maintain a thriving child care business	Increased number of culturally diverse high-quality licensed family child care providers accessible to families with low income. Reduced structural and institutional barriers that prevent participation in peer-mentorship and career advancement, especially for communities of color

Provide financial support in the form of awards	Be prepared to establish child care businesses with sufficient start-up funding	Strengthened formal and informal networks that provide ongoing professional (business and marketing, technology, access to information, etc.) and personal (self-care, friendships) support to providers from racially/culturally diverse backgrounds
Offer curriculum and instruction in three languages and help with translation of key documents frequently accessed by LFCCPs.	Engage in learning in their primary spoken language, thereby removing a critical barrier to successful learning	
Weekly training and regular follow-up mentoring	Attend weekly training and acquire knowledge of new concepts in smaller chunks.	
Facilitate acquisition of key computer competencies and provide weekly ad hoc tech support	Increase computer skills and receive ongoing support to use necessary technology	
Align instruction to state competencies and help LFCCPs navigate training and certifications/licensure requirements	Know how to use tools to navigate City and State requirements for licensing	
Offer differentiated supports for learning and demonstration of knowledge and skills	Form relationship of collegial support with peers	
Convene peer-led professional learning communities facilitated by paid mentors & Imagine staff or experts from the field	Pursue appropriate next steps to becoming state approved trainers	
Support mentors in becoming state approved with areas of specialization	Develop skills in areas of specialization (finance, caring for children with specialized behavioral needs, etc.)	
Offer and promote a variety of opportunities for participant advancement of racial equity in the field of early childhood	Be aware of ways to advance racial equity within the profession	

4. HOW WILL YOU ADDRESS THE IMPACTS (INCLUDING UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES) ON RACIAL EQUITY? WHAT STRATEGIES ADDRESS IMMEDIATE IMPACTS? WHAT STRATEGIES ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES OF INEQUITY LISTED IN Q.6?

CAREER ADVANCEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Key Strategy: Translate Imagine U program materials and provide interpretation. Translate professional development materials and assessments.

The Imagine Institute recognizes the skills and knowledge of current workforce and has developed the program to support career advancement as paid mentors and trainers who support a culturally and linguistically diverse community. The Imagine Institute seeks mentors and trainers that are experienced family child care providers and can meet the diverse culture and language needs of the community, creating accessibility to professional development to those who share the same language. Increasing access to training and materials in a language that supports the learner will promote opportunities for meaningful professional development and a system that continuously advances the role of the BIPOC, immigrant, and refugee communities into positions of leadership.

In addition to training and leadership, the Imagine Institute is committed to continuous evaluation of the materials that are translated, honoring the needs of the community. While the Imagine Institute has focused its efforts on verbal and written materials in multiple languages for training, through our evaluation process, we learned that written materials such as our surveys, even when translated, were a barrier for deep understanding and engagement. In response and to gain authentic feedback in the evaluation process, the Imagine Institute changed the practice to incorporate both verbal and written evaluation surveys to engage in the most authentic and meaningful evaluation process. To continue this process, the Imagine Institute will plan to schedule additional verbal evaluation tools throughout the program with support to complete the survey and still have the answers remain confidential.

Key Strategy: Support peer-led groups using paid mentors to strengthen ongoing relationships, promote cultural competency, solve problems, and strengthen quality (in coordination with existing coaches).

This recommendation is truly the cornerstone of Imagine U. Paid lead mentors guide cohorts of peer mentors through Imagine U. Mentors are paired with Intern applicants who match their culture and language and geographical location to promote the best possible outcomes. In turn, these mentors guide their interns through the program to licensure. This will increase the opportunities to gain knowledge and experience in a licensed child care setting, as well as support from a mentor who is familiar with their language and culture to conduct the planning and development of the programs philosophy in educating young children.

Key Strategy: Offer and promote a variety of opportunities for participant's advancement of racial equity in the field of early childhood.

The Imagine Institute will continue to offer career advancement opportunities throughout the city and support those that are interested by promoting training options, technical assistance and communities of practice that share culture and language as well as reflective practice and continuous evaluation. The Imagine Institute is committed to advancing anti-racist, trauma informed care through culturally competent instruction.

Key Strategy: Add more training options (such as using assessments, supporting children with special needs) and provide follow-up mentoring to help with implementation.

All mentors are trained to conduct observations and assessments of their interns, growing transferable skills they can use for observations of enrolled children and staff. Through observations, feedback and goal setting, mentors will utilize the cycle of inquiry to support learning focused conversations that will support goal setting and positive outcomes for interns, staff, and children. Imagine U provides mentors and interns training on caring for children with special needs and observing children for developmental milestones to continuously promote the value of observation. Mentors submit a reflection assignment each month and meet with their peer groups regularly and may receive follow-up coaching from their lead mentor and Imagine's Relationship-Based Program Specialist when appropriate.

Key Strategy: Help LFCCPs navigate new requirements. Help LFCCPs prepare to implement new requirements from other agencies (e.g., attendance training).

Imagine will create tools and assign staff to help LFCCPs navigate agency requirements such as completing the online licensing application, applying for a statewide vendor number, subsidy billing and attendance training, CCAP Vendor Services Agreement and, completing the application for Early Achievers in order to ensure they are as successful in their business as possible.

Key Strategy: Publicize opportunities. Help LFCCPs learn about programs useful to them and the families they serve.

Through Imagine U, both mentors and interns will have the opportunity to connect with staff from the City of Seattle Nutrition Program, Early Achievers, and DCYF. Participants in Imagine U are often prioritized for pilot programs, advanced training opportunities and participation in various committees and workgroups. Imagine U participants will be the first to pilot the Imagine Institute's proprietary software that will guide them through building policies compliant with the new WAC.

Key Strategy: Help LFCCPs access other community services that enhance quality. Connect LFCCPs to other community organizations that provide helpful services (family support, literacy and math activities, etc.).

The powerful dynamics of peer groups that meet regularly include sharing ideas, supporting one another, and focused on advancing their skills that support quality improvements and career advancement. Imagine is interested in continuing to build partnerships in the community and to embed quality supports within the program. For instance, Imagine is exploring ways to incorporate the University of Oregon's FIND program into Imagine U in partnership with Cultivate Learning so providers can increase positive interactions and support healthy brain development for young children.

ACCESS TO CAPITAL:

KEY STRATEGY: PROVIDE COMPENSATION DURING TRAINING.

Mentors are compensated for each month of direct mentorship that they provide to their intern along with wages stipend to support paying their intern at the rate of $20 per hour for up to 20 hours per month.

Key Strategy: Support LFCCPs caring for children with special needs and behavioral challenges. Expand child care health consultation and other supports for children with special needs and behavioral challenges.

Imagine U has an entire milestone dedicated to preparing interns to care for children with special needs. Training will include supports to reduce the number of expulsions from child care due to behavioral challenges, disproportionately effecting children, and families of color.

Key Strategy: Promote business support services. Advertise child care resources' and the City of Seattle business support services AND provide marketing support. Provide website development, referral, and other supports.

Promoting strong business practices is a central component of Imagine U. Participants will complete a comprehensive business plan while participating, including a three-year budget, cost benefit analyses, marketing plans and all required policies for program, parents, and staff. The Imagine Institute promotes community partners to share its resources with participants. As previously mentioned, business ownership is an important way BIPOC Seattleites can generate wealth.

Key Strategy: Provide more financial support at start-up. Provide financial support for beginning business, expanding, and preparing for Early Achievers (e.g., updating a bathroom, purchasing materials, etc.)

All providers who graduate from Imagine U will receive a $4000 grant to invest in their new businesses.

LACK OF DIGITAL ACCESS AND SKILLS:

Key Strategy: Support computer skills or provide computer setup and basics training.

Participants in Imagine U will learn how to navigate MERIT, Google Classroom, use email as a professional method of communication, build a budget in Excel or sheets and research WAC online. The Imagine Institute offers weekly and monthly technical assistance to build mentors' and interns' skills using computers and

navigating online tools that will help them acquire the technological skills they require to be successful in their careers.

Key Strategy: Partner with community organizations.

Imagine U has partnered with a variety of organizations in developing and monitoring progress on strategies to promote racial equity including: The City of Seattle, Department of Education and Early Learning, Service Employees International Union Local 925, Child Care Resources and Referral, Child Care Aware and Voices of Tomorrow.

HOW WILL YOU PARTNER WITH STAKEHOLDERS FOR LONG-TERM POSITIVE CHANGE? IF IMPACTS ARE NOT ALIGNED WITH DESIRED COMMUNITY OUTCOMES, HOW WILL YOU REALIGN YOUR WORK?

Ongoing evaluation is a core practice of all Imagine programming. Imagine has robust systems of data collection at work throughout the agency, many of which are networked with state databases. In addition, Imagine hires evaluation partners to help us strategically plan and execute all evaluative activities, including quantitative and qualitative data collection. However, data is only useful when it is turned into information and then into knowledge; this is where Imagine's stakeholders come in. They will be regularly asked to review and help make meaning of the data that Imagine collects. Based on what they learn from program data, they will help think through ways that the program can be adapted to better meet racial equity goals, and they will help identify gaps where more or different data need to be collected. The workgroup is committed to continuous review of program effectiveness. Positive outcomes are in alignment with goals of both Partner Community Organizations and workforce stakeholders and is thus motivating. A small stipend is disbursed to individuals to acknowledge their continued efforts and support.

STEP 5. EVALUATE. RAISE RACIAL AWARENESS. BE ACCOUNTABLE.

5A. HOW WILL YOU EVALUATE AND BE ACCOUNTABLE? HOW WILL YOU EVALUATE AND REPORT IMPACTS ON RACIAL EQUITY OVER TIME? WHAT IS YOUR GOAL AND TIMELINE FOR ELIMINATING RACIAL INEQUITY? HOW WILL YOU RETAIN STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND ENSURE INTERNAL AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY? HOW WILL YOU RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT RACIAL INEQUITY RELATED TO THIS ISSUE?

Evaluation and Accountability: Evaluation is an essential component of Imagine U and it is not treated as a summative task; that is, it is an ongoing, developmental process intended not only to gauge the worth and merit of Imagine's programs, but also to improve them. All evaluation undertaken by the Imagine Institute are intended to further the cause of empowerment and liberation rather than to serve as an additional mechanism for oppression; this means that all evaluation activities must be done *with* and *for* participants/stakeholders, rather than done *to* them.

Because the elimination of racial inequity is a primary aim of the Imagine U program, many evaluation activities will be woven throughout the program. Activities will include:

- Monitoring program attendance (who is signing up and who is showing up) to ensure that equity of access and participation is achieved.

- Formatively gauging participants' reactions to the program (i.e., their perception of the program's value and their enjoyment of it) and participants' growth in knowledge/skill/dispositions. Data will be collected in both quantitative (i.e., survey and test questions) and qualitative (i.e., interview and open-ended questions) form.

- Outcomes for interns will be gauged using the Imagine Institute's Observation Rubric, grades workbook and with other evaluative activities such as formative check-ins and group interviews.

- Outcomes for mentors will be gauged using a combination of survey and interview approaches.

- Data generated from evaluation activities will be used with stakeholders (advisory group and participants) to help make sense of how the program can improve both in the long and short term. In addition to helping the program improve, this will also serve to deepen individuals' awareness of and sense of empowerment to affect racial inequities.

- Participants will be asked to help co-create generative findings and to participate in authorship and dissemination of reports.

Reporting Over Time: The Imagine Institute will report to the Stakeholders Workgroup up to three times per year the status of the key strategies and outcomes with a final report each year.

Goals and Timeline: The Imagine Institute will proceed in the second year of the RET to implement the changes recommended through program completion, evaluation, and participant experiences. We will continue to observe, evaluate, and report progress to our Stakeholder Workgroup and implement the changes recommended toward adapting, changing and creating an equitable experience over the next six years.

August 13, 2019	Initial RET Draft Meeting with DEEL
August 17, 2019	Stakeholders Workgroup Meeting
August 29, 2019	Stakeholders Workgroup Meeting
April 2020	Draft Racial Equity Toolkit

July 2020	Submit Draft for DEEL Approval
November 2020	Submit Final Report, RET Analysis and Implementation Plan for Year 2
February 2021	Stakeholders Workgroup Meeting
July 2021	Stakeholders Workgroup Meeting

*Considerable challenges were faced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In person meetings were no longer possible beginning in mid-winter and the program shifted focus to restructuring training and support for participants. Timelines for Imagine U and DEEL were changed as both organizations responded to major organizational issues related to stay at home orders.

Retaining Stakeholder Participation: The Imagine Institute will continue to share feedback and evaluation data following the key strategies in the Logic model and seek input from a diverse group of licensed family child care providers, some enrolled in Early Achievers, some past mentors and interns, DCYF, DEEL, Child Care resources, Child Care Aware, SEIU925 and Voices of Tomorrow.

Ensuring Internal and Public Accountability: The Imagine Institute will evaluate the performance targets of the program and submit financial reporting to the City of Seattle DEEL and publish approved findings on its website.

Raising Awareness: The Imagine Institute is in the process of developing user experience videos to share with the community, stakeholders, and community partners and has other videos available on its website. Word of mouth has been the primary mode of advertising this program.

5B. WHAT IS UNRESOLVED? WHAT RESOURCES/PARTNERSHIPS DO YOU STILL NEED TO MAKE CHANGES?

Participants expressed a need for information to be shared orally and in-person, rather than in writing. Somali participants in particular report that their engagement, participation, understanding, and responsiveness is higher when information is presented orally *and* by someone who has language and cultural skills matching their own. Identifying, assessing and providing more opportunities for differentiated participation is needed as well as support for development of leadership skills in Black and East African participants.

Participants predominantly expressed a great deal of appreciation for the professional and personal opportunities they have found through Imagine U. While this is positive, it indicates that information about racial equity and the purpose of the group may not be clear and more information about the work Imagine has done, is doing and will be doing is needed.

What do we know about our work in relation to racial equity during FY20?

Our Staff: Imagine has a staff of 12 people who represent Black, white, Latino, Somali, male, female and immigrant populations and prides itself on a commitment to diversity and working for equitable access to high quality child care. Imagine staff attended the Undoing Institutionalized Racism workshop In February 2020, and several other staff members have had additional training and education on anti-racism and colonialism.

Our Approach: Our current public systems (education, healthcare, criminal justice, housing, etc.) were not created to produce equal outcomes or experiences for everyone (Blakemore, 2019). And because these inequitable systems were not created by accident, they will not be undone by chance: new, liberating systems must be designed with conscious intention and a shared vision for a desired future based on transforming power and co-creation. Imagine plans to center equity in our actions and invite the voices and experiences of people, families, and communities that have been situated farthest from the opportunities to make key decisions about this program. Leading with equity requires us to redesign structures and processes to consciously redistribute power across role groups and institutions; co-creation acknowledges that we build *with* and not *for* others — we must invite, engage and design solutions and co-produce knowledge in partnership. The RET is intended to continuously evolve over time. It requires self-awareness, reflection, observation, evaluation and monitoring. The work is both important on an individual, program, and organization-wide level in order to begin dismantling racism, oppression, and bias.

Results: In fiscal year 2020, Imagine U outreached to 288 LFCCPs and 1034 current or previous Family Friend and Neighbor Providers (FFNs) and 103 potential or approved substitutes who have expressed interest in Washington State Early Childhood Education Substitute Pool across the state with an informational email about the opportunity to participate in Imagine U and become a licensed family child care provider. Race, gender, and geographical location within the city of Seattle were not a determining factor for those outreached.

From those living in Seattle, 21 of 71 intern applicants were accepted, 100% of whom were East African (n=19) and Black (n=2); 31 of 33 mentor applicants were accepted through the DEEL, 94% of whom were BIPOC, 82% East African (n=35) and 12% Black (n=2). In alignment with the projected contract deliverable, 16 BIPOC businesses are expected to open, creating as many as 192 new child care slots in the city.

What did we learn?

We formatively gauged participants' reactions to the program through an anonymous survey disbursed to all participants who completed FY20. Based on those who responded, the following information was gathered from the Imagine U city and statewide participants: Imagine U FY20 RET Analysis Data

Across demographics, over 80% of mentors reported that participation in the program increased their confidence, helped them connect with other LFCCPs, positively impacted their Early Achievers rating and helped them acquire new credentials. White mentors reported the highest level of increased confidence (100%), Early Achievers rating was most positively impacted for Hispanics (91%) and for both Whites and Blacks, over 90% felt they were helped to connect with other LFCCPs.

Similarly, across demographics, over 80% Interns reported that participation in the program supported them with classroom management skills, developing program policies, preparing an effective early care environment and developing a budget for their business. Noticeable differences were that Hispanic interns felt most successful in all areas (100% for policies and classroom management) while 20-25% of white interns disagreed that the program prepared them in these areas and 93% of Black interns reported that the program supported them.

Anecdotal and individual response data shows that many participants felt supported and were appreciative of the experienced guidance and meaningful connections that were established. Interns and mentors from all demographics reported the main challenges included the limitations for participation in their mentor's child care as well as the transition to virtual training because of the outbreak of COVID-19. Skills surrounding technology and navigating materials were especially challenging, most notably were accessing and attending on-line training and using the Policy Wizard interactive software designed to create program, family and staff policies for LFCCPs.

Imagine U staff made note of frequent requests for support in understanding payment disbursement for both Somali- and Spanish-speaking interns and mentors, as well as a more organized system of processes ranging from how to apply to the program to when completion awards would be sent.

What will be our racial equity strategies in FY21? What resources/partnerships will we use to make changes?

For fiscal year 2021, we have developed an onboarding and assessment system to increase the number and diversity of qualified state approved trainers with which to contract in order to provide more training in the Somali language versus training delivered in English with Somali translation. A closely related programmatic change that was implemented is changing from large groups of interns and mentors to three separate cohorts organized by language preference with leaders reflecting language and cultural experience. There are now cohorts providing training, assignment support and review in English, Somali and Spanish, respectively. The three mentor cohorts are scheduled to meet all together monthly for multi-lingual/cultural reflective practice and review of program progress and updates.

Imagine added pre-requisites as a pre-acceptance requirement that will inform participants of some requirements that have become challenging to overcome when addressed as they neared program completion such as landlord approval for use of their home to provide child care as well as MERIT document submission. These pre-requisites were explained with support videos in 3 languages, English, Somali and Spanish, to ensure that interns understand and meet baseline criteria necessary for success before investing time in the program. The intended result is to identify their facility readiness to start a business that meets the DCYF licensing standards.

Data collection for fiscal year 2021 has been updated to specify demographics which will allow for more accurate tracking of progress toward racial equity for participants living in the city of Seattle, as well as more broadly across the state of Washington. Demographic data collected now includes recognition of cultural and geographic groups such as East/Southeast Asian, South/Central Asian, East African, North African, Middle Eastern and American Indian/Indigenous American, that define many of the program's participants more accurately than the broader labels of Black, Hispanic and White that were used previously. In addition, the Imagine Institute is gathering information on preferences in written and spoken languages as they often differ.

In support of clarity and understanding for all participants, supporters, staff, and contractors alike, the Imagine Institute is developing a comprehensive program outline with step-by-step breakdown of the following processes and timelines:

- Application and Pre-Requisites

- Intern Mentor Matching

- Technology Tools and Skills

- Participation Contracts / Requirements

- Mentor Training and Assignments

- Intern Training and Assignments

- Stipend / Award Payment Processes

- Training Schedule

- Priority Deadlines

In response to collected data and workgroup feedback, Imagine U will be engaging all mentors and interns in a revision of our most recent data collection process wherein our survey questions will be presented in a live, virtual group by trainers with language and cultural skills most relevant for participants. We are encouraged by this opportunity to gather input that will truly inform our work with authentic responses about who Imagine U interns and mentors are and what they value, need and wonder about the program.

A Program Logic Model will be utilized to provide a visual representation of the resources used, activities implemented and the intended outcomes, and guide the ongoing evaluation of progress toward racially equitable program practices. This logic model is a living document and continued input and collaboration with stakeholders is necessary as we revise our efforts in the coming years to support equitable outcomes for all who participate in our work toward increasing high quality child care in Seattle and across Washington. Click here for Imagine U RET Program Logic Model .

Through the partnership in collaboration toward achieving racial equity throughout Imagine U, Imagine will continue to work with our community partners and Stakeholders Workgroup and elicit feedback using the Imagine Institute's Observation Rubric, with other evaluative activities such as formative check-ins and group interviews. Imagine U will remain engaged with the stakeholder's workgroup to begin to answer the following key questions:

- Do all participants equitably benefit from the program, or are there some cultural/racial/language groups for whom the program works better/worse?
- Do all participants (mentors and interns) feel that their culture is meaningfully honored and included in the program?
- Do participants experience growth in their understanding of and appreciation for others from a race or culture different from their own?

FY21 TIMELINE:

October 8, 2020	Meet with stakeholders and community partners to review progress data and make formative adjustments to program.
February 2021	Meet with stakeholders and community partners to review progress data.
June 2021	Program post-assessment and progress update Prepare and evaluate data, feedback, and progress in order to: -Determine necessary changes plan next steps

	-Report back to DEEL and Change Team Leads

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