

# REEMGVL

GREENVILLE RACIAL EQUITY +  
ECONOMIC MOBILITY COMMISSION

## REEM Racial Equity Glossary

**Purpose:** This glossary serves to help us create a shared language regarding racial equity and to provide context to our various focus areas. It was pulled together via various minds and resources from a variety of authorities in racial equity work, and has been finalized after a series of intentional conversations. This list is evergreen, as concepts related to race and racial equity are constantly evolving and shifting. As the dialogue and research evolve, so will this glossary. The REEM Commission hopes this glossary will serve to spark dialogue and learning around racial equity.

### General Terms

**ADOS:** American Descendants of Slavery. This term is used to refer to Black Americans who are the descendants of enslaved Africans brought to the United States. It differentiates ADOS from African immigrants or other members of the African diaspora.

**Ally:** Someone who makes a continued effort to educate themselves, assess their own privilege, and stand in solidarity with groups who have been marginalized.

**Anti-Blackness:** Attitudes, behaviors or systems that devalue and dehumanize Black people, Black culture, and Black institutions.

**Anti-racism:** Policies, practices, ideas, and behaviors that actively oppose racism.

**Belonging:** Feeling like you are an important member of a group.

**BIPOC:** Black Indigenous People of Color. As opposed to People of Color, BIPOC recognizes that Black and Indigenous people have experienced specific, government sanctioned forms of racism that other groups of people who are not white have not (ie. slavery, forced removal of Indigenous people from their tribal lands etc.)

**Code-switching:** The practice of shifting the languages you use or the way you express yourself in your conversations depending on your surroundings. Many Black people and other POC use this as a survival mechanism.

**Colonialism/colonization:** Some form of invasion, dispossession and subjugation of a people. The invasion need not be military; it can begin—or continue—as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban or industrial encroachments. Exploitation of the Global South including enslaving African peoples, extracting resources from much of Asia and Latin America, and enshrining cultural norms of whiteness as desirable both in colonizing and colonized nations.

**Color-blindness:** The racial ideology that posits the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or, ethnicity. This is not an effective way to move toward racial equity

**Critical Race Theory:** This theory provides a framework of understanding how racism is complex, ever-evolving, institutional and structural.

**Cultural Appropriation:** The use of objects or elements of a non-dominant culture in a way that does not respect their original meaning, give credit to their source, or reinforces stereotypes or contributes to oppression.

**Cultural White Privilege:** The assumption in larger American culture that cultural norms associated with white groups are better, normal, and/or more respectable than cultural norms of groups not defined as white. It demonizes cultural norms of these groups.

**Disenfranchised:** Deprived of some right, privilege, or immunity.

**Disproportionality:** Overrepresentation or underrepresentation of a racial or ethnic group compared to its percentage of the total population

**Diversity:** The point at which things differ.

**Equality:** The process by which groups or individuals are given equal resources regardless of whether their circumstances are equal.

**Equity:** The process by which groups and individuals are given resources based on their unique experiences and needs.

**Ethnicity:** The shared culture, language, and nation or origin of a group.

**Implicit Bias/Unconscious Bias:** Learned stereotypes and prejudices that operate automatically and unconsciously when interacting with others.

**Inclusion:** Intentionally bringing people from marginalized groups and their voices into spaces, policies, and procedures.

**Individual racism:** The expression of racism between individuals. It occurs when individuals interact, and their private beliefs affect their interactions.

**Institutional White Privilege:** Policies, practices, and behaviors of institutions -- such as schools, court systems, or government agencies -- that have the power to maintain or increase varied advantages for those currently defined as white, and maintaining or increasing disadvantages for those racial or ethnic groups not defined as white.

**Institutional/Systemic racism:** Discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and practices, inequitable opportunities, and impacts within organizations and institutions, all based on race, that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Individuals within institutions take on the power of the institution when they reinforce racial inequities.

**Internalized Racism:** A set of privately held beliefs, prejudices, and ideas about the superiority of whites and the inferiority of people of color. Among people of color, it manifests as internalized oppression. Among whites, it manifests as internalized racial superiority.

**Interpersonal White Privilege:** Behavior between people that consciously or unconsciously reflects white superiority or entitlement.

**Intersectionality:** Coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe when race, class, gender and other identities intersect to create a unique mode of oppression.

**Microaggressions** Brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward Black people and other People of Color.

**Oppression:** The systematic subjugation of one group by a more powerful group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful group.

**POC:** People of Color, referring, generally, to people who do not identify as white.

**Power:** Power is unequally distributed globally and in U.S. society; some individuals or groups wield greater power than others, thereby allowing them greater access and control over resources. Wealth, whiteness, citizenship, patriarchy, heterosexism, and education are a few key social mechanisms through which power operates.

**Race:** Socially constructed categories that are used to group people based on physical or cultural differences.

**Racial justice:** The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for members of all racial groups. It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to reach and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

**Racism:** Individual and institutional ways Black people and other People of Color have and continue to be discriminated against and systemically disadvantaged by white dominant culture.

**Social Justice:** A concept holding that all people should have equal access to wealth, health, well-being, privileges, and opportunity.

**Stereotype Threat:** When a person is worried about behaving in a way that confirms negative stereotypes about members of their racial, cultural, or identity group.

**Structural Racism:** A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequality. It is the presence of racial bias among institutions and across society. It involves the cumulative and compounding effects of societal factors including the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and policies that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage Black people and other People of color.

**White Guilt:** When White people recognize the systemic oppression of Black people and other People of Color and feel responsible for it or advantaged by it.

**White Privilege:** Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white.

**White Saviorism:** When a white person or group assumes the need to “rescue” Black people and other People of Color, thinking they cannot or do not want to help themselves or do so for self-serving reasons.

**White Supremacy:** A historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of Black people and other People of Color and their native lands by white peoples and nations of the European continent; for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege.

**Whiteness:** A constantly evolving racial category that is defined by socio-political perceptions, and enforced by power, privilege, and violence. Whiteness is a form of property in societies where the absence of it is a direct cause of oppression.

### Political Terms

**Southern Strategy** – A political process by which white Southerners were politically motivated to vote towards anti-Black legislation.

**Progress & Retrenchment:** The pattern in which progress is made through the passage of legislation, court rulings and other formal mechanisms that aim to promote racial equality. *Brown v. Board of Education*. Retrenchment refers to the ways in which this progress is very often challenged, neutralized or undermined. Some examples include the gradual erosion of affirmative action programs, practices among real estate professionals that maintain segregated neighborhoods, and failure on the part of local governments to enforce equity-oriented policies such as inclusionary zoning laws.

**Post-racial:** A theoretical environment in which the United States is free from racial preference, discrimination, and prejudice.

### Education Terms

**Achievement Gap vs. Opportunity Gap:** While the achievement gap puts ownness on Black students’ relative performance when compared to their white counterparts, opportunity gap recognizes that racist educational policies and disproportionate distribution of resources have stifled Black student’s academic opportunities. Opportunity Gap puts the ownness on the education system.

**Affirmative Action:** Positive steps taken to increase the representation of women and People of Color in areas of employment, education, and culture from which they have been historically excluded.

**Culturally Responsive Pedagogy:** A way of teaching that centers students' unique cultural backgrounds and integrates elements of these cultures into curriculum to help increase students' positive sense of self and community.

**Decolonization of Education:** The process by which some educational institutions actively eliminate white supremacist pedagogy from their curriculum.

**Ethnocentrism:** Centering whiteness and white culture as the predominant lens by which subject matters are taught

**Eugenics:** The belief that some racial groups hierarchically are inherently and biologically more or less intelligent than others. Eugenist theorist Francis Galton, cousin of Charles Darwin, originated the IQ test and the SAT.

**HBCUs:** Historically Black Colleges and Universities, many of which were founded by free Blacks, the formally enslaved, and white abolitionists in the years following abolition.

**School to Prison Pipeline:** A national trend where youth from marginalized groups, especially Black children, are disproportionately likely to become incarcerated or have a court record due to increasingly harsh school disciplinary measures such as suspension and expulsion.

### Criminal Justice Terms

**13<sup>th</sup> Amendment:** Passed by Congress on January 31, 1865, and ratified on December 6, 1865, the 13th amendment abolished slavery in the United States and provides that "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." The exception in this amendment led to Black men being swept into chain gangs in the years immediately following slavery for minor offenses and set the stage for generations of over policing and mass incarceration for the descendants of the enslaved.

**1994 Crime Bill:** This bill accelerated the U.S. prison boom by authorizing more than \$12 billion to subsidize the construction of state correctional facilities, giving priority to states that enacted "truth-in-sentencing" laws. These laws, which require individuals to serve at least 85 percent of their sentence behind bars, have been shown to expand prison populations by increasing individuals' length of stay.

**Abolition:** A political and social justice movement that pursues the abolishment of the prison industrial complex in exchange for a more holistically restorative form of justice for those who may have committed crimes.

**Defund the Police:** A movement to legislatively reallocate funding currently allocated towards policing budgets towards public education, health and wellness, and social service programs.

**Foster care to Prison Pipeline:** Policies and practices that funnel youth who age out of the child welfare system into the criminal justice system. Black children are more likely to be placed into foster care and less likely to be adopted than their white counterparts.

**Mandatory Minimum Sentencing:** A sentence, created by Congress or a state legislature, which the court must give to a person convicted of a crime, no matter what the unique circumstances of the offender or the offense are.

**Mass Incarceration:** The unique way the US, when compared to other developed nations, has put a vast population of its citizens in jails or prisons, disproportionately imprisoning Black and Latinx communities.

**Over Policing:** An overrepresentation of police in Black communities resulting in higher rates of crime, arrests, and incarceration.

**Plea Bargain:** An agreement in criminal law proceedings, where the prosecutor provides a concession to the defendant in exchange for a plea of guilt.

**Restorative Justice:** system of criminal justice which focuses on rehabilitation through reconciliation with victims and the community at large.

**Returning Citizens:** A term used to describe individuals who were formerly incarcerated as they are reintegrating into society. This term serves to humanize these individuals and is an alternative to terms like felon, or ex-con.

**School to Prison Pipeline:** A national trend where youth from marginalized groups, especially Black children, are disproportionately likely to become incarcerated or have court record due to increasingly harsh school disciplinary measures such as suspension and expulsion.

**Super Predator:** A myth perpetuated by US politicians in the 1990s that suggested that there are some impulsive juvenile criminals who are willing to commit violent crimes without remorse.

**War on Drugs:** A campaign, led by the U.S. federal government, of drug prohibition, military aid, and military intervention, with the aim of reducing the illegal drug trade in the United States. Drugs that were more readily accessible to poor Black communities, like crack cocaine, were more heavily criminalized than those of the same form used in wealthy white communities, like powder cocaine. Marijuana possession also became increasingly criminalized. The War on Drugs is one of the direct causes of Mass Incarceration.

### Income and Wealth Terms

**Gentrification:** A process of neighborhood change that includes economic change in a historically disinvested neighborhood —by means of real estate investment and new higher-income residents moving in - as well as demographic change - not only in terms of income level, but also in terms of changes in the education level or racial make-up of residents.

**Racial Stratification:** A system of structured inequality, where access to scarce and desired resources is based on racial group membership.

**Racial Wealth Gap:** The disparities in total wealth and household holding of Black and white families.

**Redlining:** A discriminatory practice by mortgage lenders when they refuse to lend money or extend credit to borrowers in certain areas of town due to the racial demographics of the area. It can also apply when real estate agents follow similar practices in showing homes.

**Reparations:** A movement to provide financial retribution to the descendants of enslaved Africans.

**Reverse Migration:** Oftentimes middleclass Black Americans who are the descendants of those who migrated to the North during the twentieth century returning to the Southern region of the United States, impacting the economic and political fabric of Southern states.

### Health and Wellness Terms

**Biological Racism:** The pseudoscientific belief that real biological differences exist among the races making some races inferior to others from a medical lens.

**Food Desert:** An area with limited access to affordable healthy foods.

**Food Swamps:** Communities with a high density of outlets selling high-calorie, ultra-processed food, such as fast-food restaurants and convenience stores, compared with ones that sell healthy food; have a stronger association with obesity than communities that only lack supermarkets

**Health Disparities:** Preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by social disadvantaged populations.

**Health equity:** The absence of unfair and avoidable or remediable differences in health among population groups defined socially, economically, demographically, or geographically.

**Health inequity:** Differences in health status or in the distribution of health resources between different population groups, arising from the social conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age.

**Health Literacy:** The degree to which an individual has the capacity to obtain, communicate, process, and understand basic health information and services in order to make appropriate health decisions.

**Infant Mortality:** The death of an infant before their first birthday. Black babies in the US are at a higher risk with 10.8 deaths per 1,000 births, compared to a rate of 4.6 white babies per 1,000 births.

**Maternal mortality:** Black mothers are 3.3 times more likely than white mothers to die from pregnancy-related complications.

**Preventable death:** Deaths which could have been avoided by public health interventions focusing on wider determinants of public health, such as behavior and lifestyle factors, socioeconomic status and environmental factors.

**Social determinants of health:** The economic and social conditions that influence individual and group differences in health status.

**Vulnerable population:** A group of people with whom because of systemic and environmental reasons are more likely to be at risk for certain health conditions.

## Resources

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