

Race, Equity, and Inclusion (REI) at Vera

RACE, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (REI) is an intersectional approach infused in everything we do at the Vera Institute of Justice (Vera)—not just externally in how we develop programs, conduct research, and partner with those affected by injustices, but also internally, from recruitment and onboarding to career promotions and employee equity training.

To Verans, REI is not a box-checking exercise—it is part of our identity and one of our core values. To hold ourselves accountable in our quest for equity and justice, Vera has undergone three REI organizational assessments during the past six years.

REI's History at Vera

2017–2019

Racial Equity & Inclusion Initiative

- First racial equity assessment
- Racial equity pilot projects conducted with all departments
- Baseline racial equity trainings conducted with all staff
- REI Strategy & Action Plan drafted

2020

Investments in REI Infrastructure

- REI department established and staff hired
- REI Board Committee established

2020–2023

Action Plan Implementation Phase

- REI Staff Committee established
- Second organizational assessment conducted
- Action plan finalized and implemented (2021–2023)
- REI work at Vera moved from normalize to organize

2023–2025

REI Strategy Advances

- REI and engagement assessment conducted
- New REI strategy launches
- REI Learning Experience and Lexicon launches

2025–Present

Vera Stands Firm in Equity

- Vera signs on to DEI amicus brief
- Vera's third Annual Diversity Report published internally and externally
- REI goals included in all department and initiative annual plans
- Monthly all staff equity discussions

Framework for Antiracism and Equity Work

- **Normalize:** Through training, workshops, shared definitions, and shared priorities
- **Organize:** By developing internal infrastructure and external partnerships
- **Operationalize:** With data, strategies, and tools that change the way people work

Key Antiracist and Equity Principles

- Analyzing and shifting power
- Identifying and analyzing manifestations of racism and oppression
- Learning from history and seeing it in the present
- Maintaining accountability

Why REI?

Racism and other forms of oppression that produce inequities are at the core of injustice in the criminal justice and immigration systems.

What Is Equity?

Equity is realized when everyone has the opportunity to thrive and inequities are eliminated. To do this, we use an intersectional approach. We consider race *and* other identities, including gender, sexuality, ability, and more.

How Are We Striving for Equity?

We are developing people, programs, policies, and practices to advance equity, as well as the accompanying accountability mechanisms to track progress and learning, including an REI action plan, an REI Staff Committee, an REI Committee on the Board of Trustees, REI goals in department annual plans, resources for teams to advance equity internally and externally, an REI Essentials onboarding experience, and more.