



Music Venues Strategy Session

Joyce James Consulting

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The Problem

“Institutional and structural racism are at the core of racial inequities in helping systems. Thus, the solution requires a systemic response that transforms the culture and holds all levels of the institution accountable.”

-- Joyce James (2010)

Remember the Contract

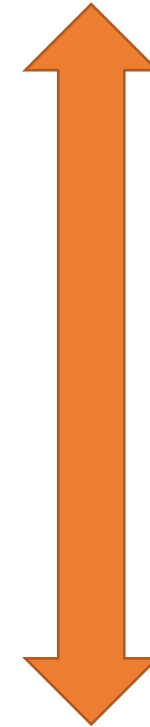
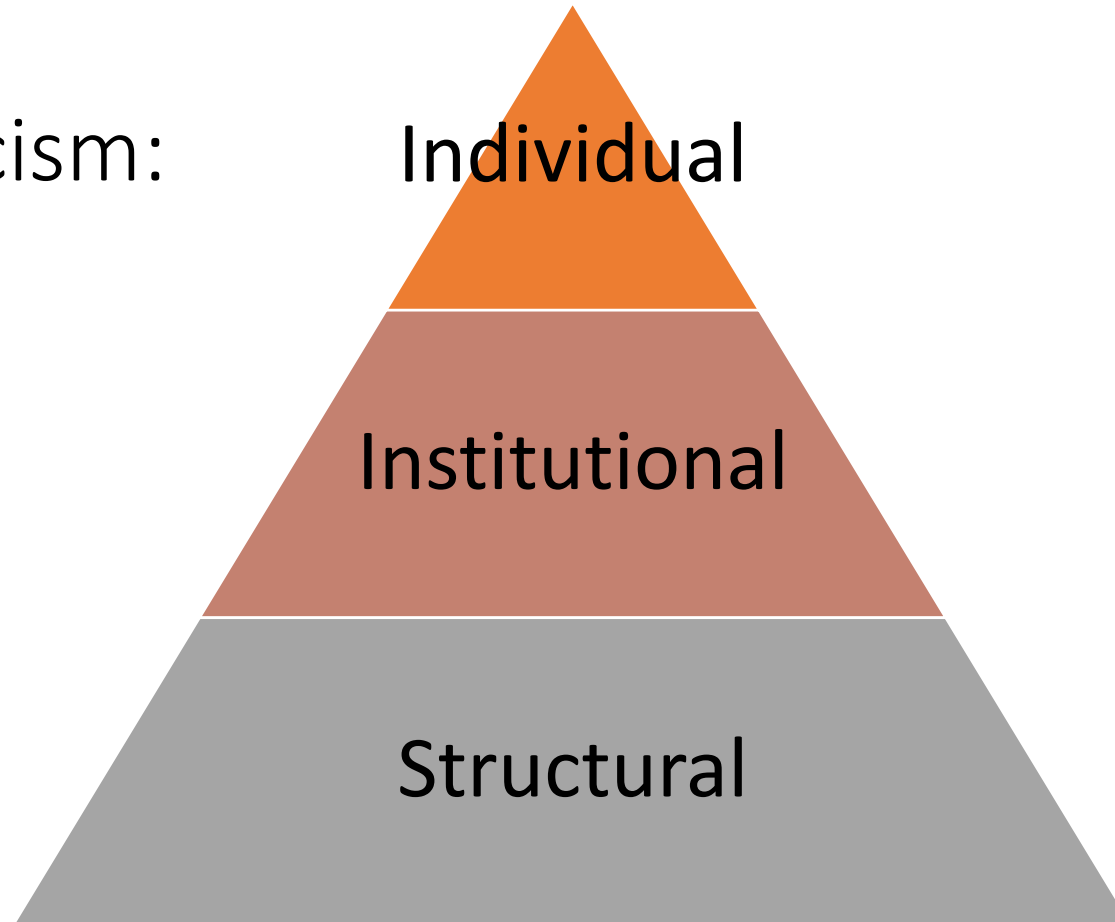
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Listen
- ✓ Participate (all)
- ✓ Liberated Space
- ✓ Growing Edge
- ✓ Institutional Racism
- ✓ No Quick Fix
- ✓ No Judgments
- ✓ No Hierarchy
- ✓ Your Truth
- ✓ Silence
Phones/No
Notetaking
- ✓ Stay the Whole
Time
- ✓ *Vegas* Rules



Using an Equity Lens

...allows us to uncover the policies, practices, and behaviors that sustain unequal outcomes

3 Forms of Racism:
In Focus



Individual Racism

- Individual racism can include face-to-face or covert actions toward a person that intentionally express prejudice, hate or bias based on race.

Institutional Racism

- Institutional racism refers to the policies and practices within and across institutions that, **intentionally or not**, produce outcomes that chronically favor, or put a racial group at a disadvantage.






Structural Racism

- A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.
- It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with “whiteness” and disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt over time.



Structural Racism

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- Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice.
 - Instead, it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist.



Structural Racialization

- A different way of understanding inequitable conditions, the policies and practices that created disparate racialized outcomes in our communities, and the cultural norms and institutional arrangements that maintain these racialized outcomes.
- Structures unevenly distribute benefits, burdens, and racialized meaning.

Opportunity is Racialized

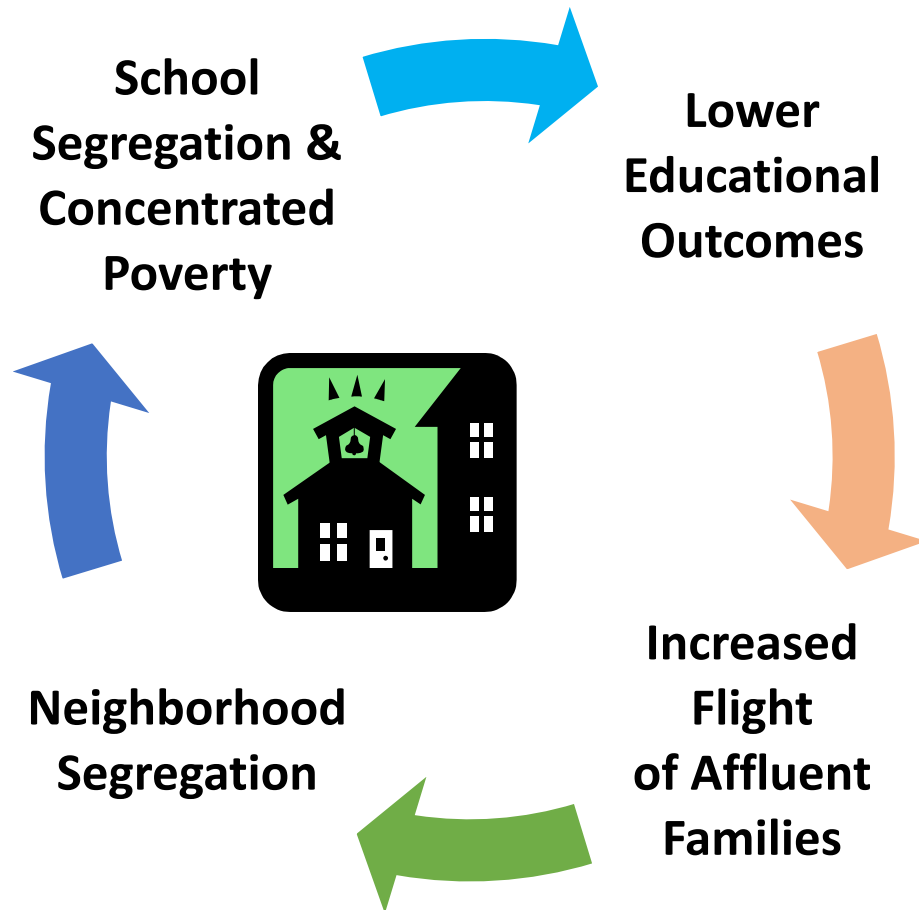
In **1960**, African-American families in poverty were **3.8 times** more likely to be concentrated in high-poverty neighborhoods than poor whites

In **2015**, they were **13.3 times** more likely compared to **2.19%** of poor Whites

Whites make up **44%** of the nation's poor, but account for just **18%** of the poor people living in concentrated poverty

Poor blacks are almost **5** times as likely to live in extremely poor neighborhoods as whites

Poor Hispanics are more than **3** times as likely



Re-Introductions

- ▶ Who you are?
- ▶ What you do?
- ▶ What new reflection, observation, or experience since the debrief, can you share that pertains to undoing racism in Music Venues?



Reflections since the workshop as they relate to deeper understanding and analysis of institutional and structural racism:

- I had a three-hour open discussion with my staff which was very helpful for everyone.
- I've been focusing on what we learned.
- We don't see a lot of people of color applying for bar jobs. I decided to go out and find them rather than waiting for them to come to us.
- Trying to attract more events that feature non-White cultures.
- I've been looking at media and news articles differently, such as excessive force. The things they talked about were the things we discussed, so I see the information through a different lens.
- Members of the board are interested in the content of the workshop, and the framework of your communication approach in particular.
- We've opened our stage to all different types of music. Our approach to outreach has widened. JJC: Outreach will be a key component of the strategy session as community engagement. That also involves the internal engagement so external people feel welcome.
- Even though our venues haven't re-opened, we'd had meetings and employees seem very receptive to expanding our racial equity lens.
- We're going to continue to chip away at the pyramid.
- We have made it very clear with our staff that we have a zero tolerance policy for racism

Reflections since the workshop as they relate to deeper understanding and analysis of institutional and structural racism:

- We were one of the clubs that closed during the Texas relays. People are quick to judge, but they don't know why. APD closed the exits to downtown. I had a total breakdown for my musicians to be able to get close to the venue. APD caused incidents that were unsafe because of pepper spray. I felt that the City didn't have our back. It caused traffic snarls and required customers to walk long distances to get to my venue. JJC: This discussion is about more than Music Venues. There has to be collaboration with other institutions; law enforcement in particular. We have to identify the other systems that have an impact on what we want to achieve. How do we create space to hear voices like this? Where is that space and how can we maintain it?
- Pushback against anti-racist educational resources in schools is an example of what we've been talking about
- When we think about how deep it is, it's mind-blowing
- How do I become more appealing as an employer to all races and creeds? That's what I want to learn more about.
- Do I want to just service the rhetoric, or are we walking the walk? We can't judge from the clothes potential employees wear or the way they look. If not us, who?
- I knew a lot of the stuff, but renewing it again with colleagues was really impactful.
- When you do something naturally, you really don't think about it. What is the City going to do? We can do our part to help the system, but when there is the corruption in the City is a tough fight. We're spending time telling us what we already know: gentrification is proceeding at a rapid pace that requires millions to open a venue. In addition, there is a pile of paper work
- It was good to be reminded to keep an open mind and have the courage to step outside your comfort zone.

Reflections since the workshop as they relate to deeper understanding and analysis of institutional and structural racism:

- I spend more time researching the backgrounds of artists so that we're not bringing the wrong folks to spread the wrong message. JJC: Can there be a collective hub for some blue ribbon groups? Having some way to communicate about that would be great. Once a group is identified as anti-racist, is there a way to share their availability at other venues when they're not performing at your venue? Can we rate their inclusivity through the Governor's office?
- That's not a real idea. Why would we share our artists/contacts with our competitors?
- That's the way you create culture and community. Can create a portal through the City or the State.
- Deep introspection on how IR can be present in our venues without us being unaware.
- What a missed opportunity by not applying the concepts of institutional and structural racism in high school and middle school. This should be required learning for all students.
- I had many conversations using the word equity, which is not a common term in many circles.
- I didn't realize that the institutional and structural side isn't something that just started. I thought about how it affects our business; who we put on stage, and so forth.
- I appreciate approaching racism from the systemic side in order to educate employees and have conversations from that vantage point.

Reflections since the workshop as they relate to deeper understanding and analysis of institutional and structural racism:

- Reflecting on how to set an example, and educate staff to expand racial equity lens.
- Most people on this call are White. Equity among music venue owners is a concern.
- Trying to be aware of, understand, and accept my privilege
- The equality/equity illustration was educational. I took it to my managers, and it needs to be discussed a lot more. It was eye-opening to me. Many think that they are similar or the same.
- Being Black makes all inequities worse, as those who advocate for trans and feminism can attest
- In Austin, those who received the vaccine and who haven't is inequitable.
- I have increased awareness when interacting with employees
- "Privilege may not be the presence of perks, but the absence of barriers."
- That all of us are gatekeepers
- Using language that clarifies what racism and equity mean
- I will learn from my employees about what we can do differently

Other comments

- Insurance companies red-line hip hop acts because they are actuaries and base their pricing on the anticipated act based on their experience. JJC: The insurance industry is also affected by how we have been socialized, just as education and other systems are. We're not calling individual insurance agents racist, but there is racism in the insurance industry.
 - There are built-in barriers when we renew our insurance. We list our genres, and are told that hip-hop will be more expensive. JJC: When we dig deeper beyond the next strategy session, the insurance agency should be at the table. A question to ask in cross-systems collaboration: Has the insurance agency looked at their data in terms of whether the higher insurance premiums were warranted, or is their pricing based on history and disproportionate law enforcement data? Maybe their basing their pricing on tainted data.
 - Code and land use has been used to disproportionately affect Black people. Code compliance, architecture, and so forth are unfriendly regarding the creation of new venues for this mostly White group. It's exponentially worse for Black people.
- Some are talking about general insurance renewal and some are talking about special events. JJC: Would group insurance be feasible? A: I think everyone would jump on that.
 - The summary of workshops reinforces thoughts and puts us all collectively on the same page. JJC: It would be great to keep the collective momentum going.
 - Years ago, club owners used to get together socially. The old camaraderie had a genuine interest in each other. That somehow stabilized them. If that could return on some level, it would promote more sharing of knowledge and ideas. JJC: Also, the City could be asked to support those in this process by periodically checking in as a group. Asking what else you need to go forward.
 - There hasn't been a forum for club owners to talk to the Mayor and City leaders. That would help so much.

Other comments

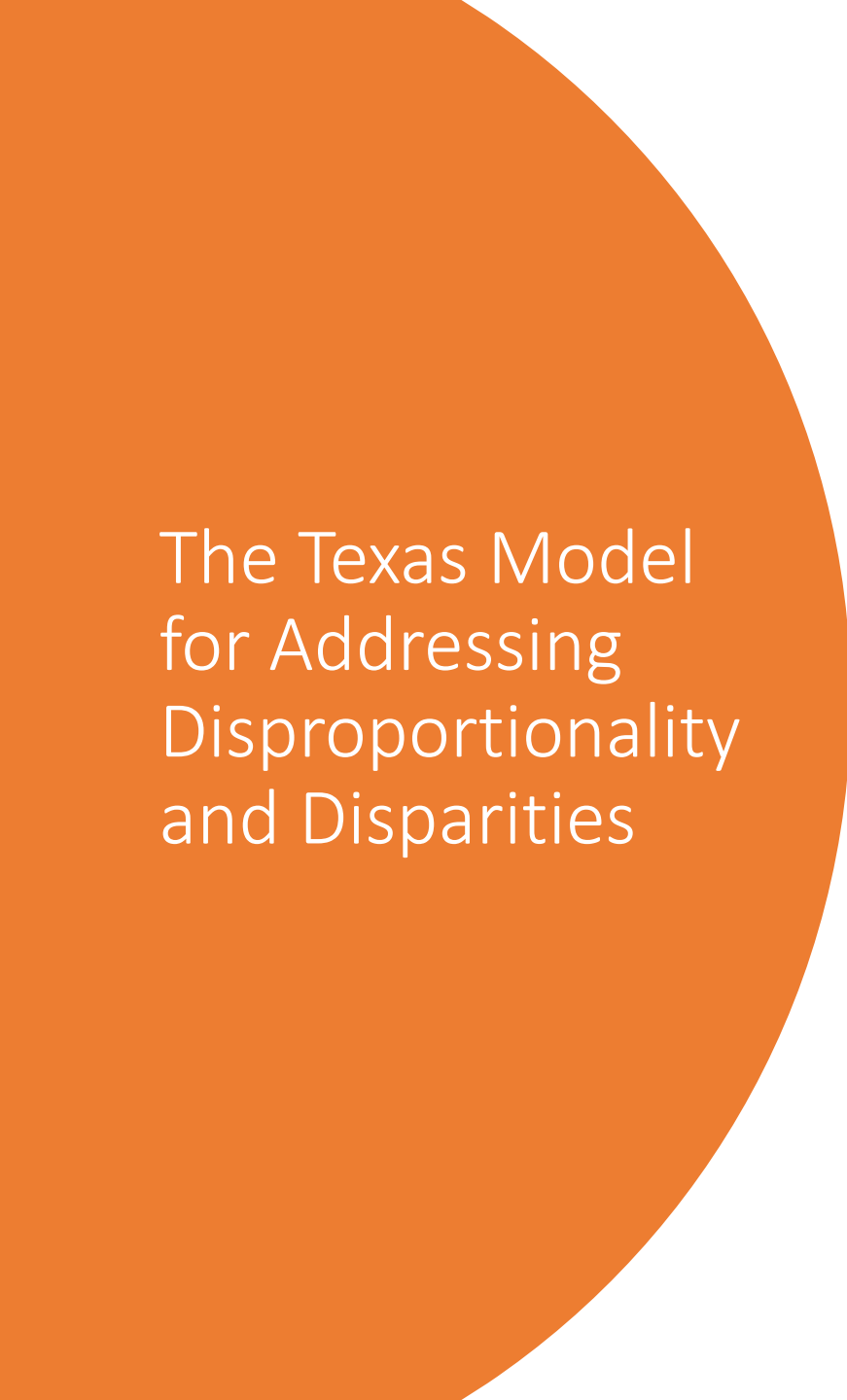
- We used to have successful under-age music events for kids 6-18. There are liability concerns, but it can bring the community together. For example: talent show on a Saturday afternoon.
 - Maybe college students who are studying marketing and music industry could be interns in music venues.
 - The lack of music programs in the schools creates a vacuum of ways to showcase talent pool. As a society, we've gotten away from it.
 - Having space between workshop, debrief, and strategy will give a chance to reflect and will contribute more to permanent change.
 - When you see equality, it seems equitable when it's not. Voter suppression laws are a great example: someone may not be able to get off work to vote by 4:00. You have to step outside your own experiences (privilege).
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- This is a cohesive group with everyone on the same page. Maybe the City recognized that we are a group that can get the word out about equity.
 - JJC: schools may welcome music venue reps into the schools.
 - JJC: Consider some type of community forum by the City
 - Many foundations are creating equity in schools where there is a lack of access.
 - Instead of giving tax breaks to corporations, perhaps put some of that money into educational system. JJC: For example, performers who come to Austin could do a master class or mini-performance at under-resourced schools.

Other comments

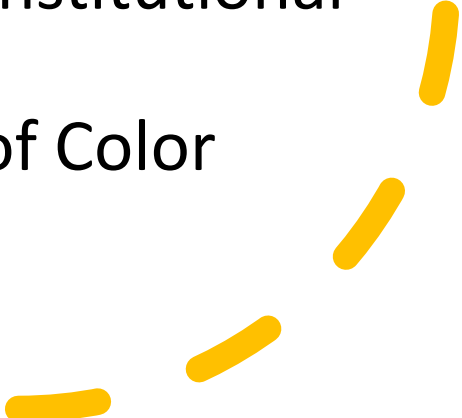
- How does the People's Fund, the Long Center funding, and so forth work? What is the algorithm? How much does UT get? How is \$15 million being disbursed? Who are the stakeholders? To whom are we presenting our strategy session? JJC: Will ask at beginning of strategy session.
 - Channel Austin, DirectTV and other groups could benefit more people. This group is wonderful, but too small to see results such as tax abatement, and better treatment overall. Our income brings financial outcome to the City, but we get very little in return. JJC: In the strategy session, we are going to recommend a listening session so other people can hear you.
 - JJC: What can you do to provide a safe space for employees to express the trauma that they're experiencing from everyday events.
 - Reducing liquor taxes for music venues could help pay bands more.
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- Collectively talk more and share experiences beyond getting a grant
 - Have a panel on SXSW
 - National Independent Venue Associations is exploring group insurance
 - Find ways to spread the word about the Big Easy. For example, the faith-based community would be a source
 - JJC: Explore ways for mentoring and tutoring middle and high school students to become a part of music venues

Other comments

- What can music venues do to attract more applications from people of color?
 - EQ Austin has a list of Black musicians. It may be outdated, but a place to start.
 - Artists can register with the Texas Music Commission - but it's a huge database like the white pages
 - Some musicians can be found on Pollstar and other international booking groups
-
- We have contacts for musicians who don't have an agent. We can encourage them to get on a database
 - Share email list of everyone. Have someone schedule structured monthly meetings to continue
 - Request that someone from Economic Development clarify what's needed in venue funding application process



The Texas Model
for Addressing
Disproportionality
and Disparities

- Data Driven Strategies
 - Leadership Development
 - Culturally Competent Workforce
 - Community Engagement
 - Cross-Systems Collaborations
 - Training Defined by Anti-Racist Principles
 - Understanding of the History of Institutional Racism and the Impact on Poor Communities and Communities of Color
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Data-driven Strategies:

Regularly collect, research, analyze, and evaluate data by race/ethnicity.

- Review and update the EQ Austin list of Black musicians
- Review and update the Cultural Mapping Project (Project CAP) that mapped all cultural spaces
- Explore ways to filter the huge Texas Music Commission database for musicians of color
- Search Pollstar and other international booking groups for musicians of color
- Encourage musicians who don't have an agent to join a database.
- What are the data benchmarks? Where do we start? How will the venues demonstrate that they're achieving the goals? What's going to be the evidence?
- Collect data on employees disaggregated by race as possible starting point.
- Make public the number of Black music venues (three?)
- Explore best practices in Pflugerville, Round Rock, and Manor regarding attracting Black people

*Leadership
Development:*
Develop both
systems and
community leaders
who are bold and
courageous

- Explore ways to become more appealing as an employer to people of all races.
- Move beyond rhetoric of racial equity and actually walk the walk with out-of-the-box strategies for hiring
- Inquire as to the status of potential group insurance. Request a seat at the table.
- Explore funding school music programs through foundations that are providing funding for schools where there is lack of access.
- Consider the feasibility of mixing genres, such as hip-hop and country
- Ask the City to “put their money where their mouth is” and financially support lesser-known bands of color
- Request that the Economic Development Board provide greater transparency regarding distribution of Long Center funds, for example

Culturally Competent Workforce: Develop workforce that reviews and examines its work through an anti-racist and humanistic lens.

- Incorporate racial equity language into the workplace for all employees
- Provide a safe space for employees to express the trauma that they're experiencing from everyday events.
- Provide more one-the-job training from a racial equity lens in all aspects of music venues, versus requiring school training.
- Assure that all customers feel welcome at the door. For example, one owner changed the name of security to hosts.
- Apply out-of-the-box thinking and risk-taking with respect to hiring non-traditional workers, such as the homeless or formerly incarcerated

Community Engagement:

Recognize strengths of grass roots community; hear its ideas; and include it throughout process

- Explore ways to find applicants of color for bar positions versus waiting for them to come to you
- Explore ways to book more events that feature non-White cultures
- Find ways to assure that internal community has a demeanor that welcomes external patrons of color
- Once a group is identified as anti-racist, is there a way to share their availability at other venues when they're not performing at your venue?
- Explore ways to increase the number of minority-owned music venues
- Re-establish under-age music events for 6-18 year olds. Example: Saturday afternoon talent shows.
- Explore ways to invite college students who are studying marketing and music industry to be interns in music venues.

Community Engagement:

Recognize strengths of grass roots community; hear its ideas; and include it throughout process

- Promote the re-establishment of music programs in schools
- Explore collaboration with schools for visiting musicians to provide day-time master classes in schools
- Request a listening session with the Mayor and City Council to convey racial equity concerns surrounding music venues and the community at large.
- Provide a panel discussion on racial equity at SXSW
- Find ways to spread the word about the Big Easy. For example, the faith-based community would be a source
- Advocate for and support the formulation of a grassroots music organization
- Decide who else to invite to the table to join the conversation. Include representative from 311 and the Mayor's office, and Economic Development. Who else?

*Cross Systems
Collaboration:* Share
data, training,
dialogue with
systems, institutions,
and agencies that
serve same
populations

- Explore ways for law enforcement to hear voices of music venue owners about the effects of street closures on their businesses, for example.
- Find ways the City to hear music venue voices regarding the effect of City policies and regulations on the viability of the music venues. Examples include property taxes in a gentrified East Austin, mountains of paper work, taxes on liquor, strict land use and code compliance issues, and so on.
- Establish a forum for club owners to meet periodically with the Mayor and other City leaders to discuss what more the City can do to assist, and what more the venues need to do to move forward. Topics of discussion should include effects of taxes, cost of housing, access to transportation, over-policing certain venues, and so forth.
- Ask insurance agencies if they have looked at their data in terms of whether the higher insurance premiums for hip-hop groups are warranted, or is their pricing based on history and disproportionate/inaccurate law enforcement data?

*Cross Systems
Collaboration:* Share
data, training,
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populations

- Ask for a seat at the table with National Independent Venue Associations to join the discussion about possible Austin Music Venues group insurance
- Explore ways for mentoring and tutoring middle and high school students to become a part of music venues
- Look for ways for music venue owners' voices to be heard regarding the need for affordable housing in order to attract people to Austin's music industry.
- Collaborate with law enforcement to assure that events are not over-policed based on location or genre.
- Collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce and other entities that market Austin to enhance marketing materials of music venues through a racial equity lens

Training Defined by Anti-Racist Principles:
Train ourselves and partners in principles that ensure we work at cultural and institutional levels.

- Provide training opportunities for all employees to expand their racial equity lens.
- Establish a mechanism for musicians of color to learn the legal and economic aspects of a music career.
- Explore the system that “incentivized discrimination” by saying that you can “raise the caliber of your clientele” by raising admission or charging a cover.
- Develop strategies to address challenges in marketing and promoting based on the observation that while White people aren’t afraid of Blacks on stage, when they start mingling with the crowd, their body language changes.

An Understanding of the History of Institutional Racism and the Impact on Poor Communities and Communities of Color: Develop common analysis of racism and history that led to current outcomes

- Assure awareness of the City of Austin's racial history, especially the 1928 Master Plan.
- Explore the Music history of Austin, and the role of Black people in building Austin's reputation as the Live Music Capital of the World. Compare and contrast with the effects of modern gentrification.
- Learn the truth about the role of Black people in the history of American music (blues, jazz, and R&B in particular)
- Take a deeper dive into the root causes for the exodus of Black people from Austin.

Quick Wins

- Share emails and promote bands on tour with multiple Austin venues
- Others?

Next Steps?



Joyce James Consulting

2401 Silent Brook Trail
Round Rock, TX 78665
409-553-0314

joycejamesconsulting.com