Coalition Race and Equity Committee notes and resources from August 17 meeting

(notes by Rosemary—missing some detail this far from the meeting):

We had a wide ranging discussion of equity issues related to regional planning responses to homelessness, the continuing priority of creating emergency shelter responses and even the needed permanent supportive housing (very expensive model) rather than taking on the more difficult and politically less popular work of creating real housing options for extremely low income residents who do not need services but who need low cost options. This of course will need to rely on public dollars,we need estimates of comparable costs to the current approach, and we noted the promise of pilot projects to build a different narrative about possibilities.

We reviewed some of the ideas from the Third Space Action Lab and the Next City webinar on “Stories we tell ourselves” that demonstrate why equitable community development is so difficult. (See invitation to this August 17 meeting for attachments of those resources)

We discussed the key issue of definitions of homelessness, and how the bureaucratic definitions that determine eligibility for any public funding exclude people who have no stable address but who are not homeless by the program’s definition. Carolyn noted research on those who are doubling up—living in situations of overcrowding, couch surfing, creating additional strains on low income householders who have taken in relatives and friends, and the reality that Black residents and Hispanic/Latinx residents report doubling up at much higher rates than White residents.

 Carolyn provided a link to Molly Richard's article on counting doubled-up homelessness: <https://www.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Quantifying-Doubled-Up-Homelessness.pdf>

We discussed the proposed fall event the Coalition is organizing to address housing options for those with incomes under 30% AMI, and the need to determine who should be explicitly invited –and what it would look like to “think big” about the things that need to change to move forward with changes that assume new definitions and active participation by more voices.

We discussed the CoC definitions of homelessness, and **what a difference it might make in plans for CoC responses to housing needs if “doubled up” was included as an official HUD definition of homeless.**  How about Pierce County being a leader in making this change? We also asked ourselves to think about what data we need to have to make effective arguments about the comparable costs of the current “homelessness response system” (emergency services, hospitalizations, per person shelter bed costs, policing, sweeps, etc), and an investment in attainable housing options that explicitly attend to racial equity.

**Here are Resource links from Carolyn Weisz that were sent prior to this 8.17 meeting:**

Yesterday, I virtually attended the closing plenary panel for NAEH conference in DC, and it was terrific.  A recording isn't available yet, but they often make recordings of special sessions like this available on Facebook sometime after the live event.  I'll keep my eyes open. There was a strong focus on racial equity. On the NAEH website, there are links to their equity-related work.  Here are some links:

<https://housingequityframework.org/blog/framework-project-launches-new-phase-of-work-to-support-a-more-equitable-homelessness-response>

<https://housingequityframework.org/>

<https://dandelion-flute-fa5x.squarespace.com/equity-based-decision-making-framework/>

I am also a big fan of the podcast "Understanding Homelessness" hosted by Dr. Marisa Zapata at Portland State University.  Most of the episodes focus on racial justice in some way. <https://www.understandinghomelessness.org/>

Another "go to" is John Powell's article on Targeted Universalism: <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/2022-12/Targeted%20Universalism%20Primer.pdf>

And I also appreciated the analysis provided by Heather McGhee in her recent book [*The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*](https://www.amazon.com/Sum-Us-Everyone-Prosper-Together/dp/0525509585/ref%3Dsr_1_1?crid=367SV1K5A27NC&keywords=the+sum+of+us+heather+mcghee&qid=1689875268&s=instant-video&sprefix=the+sum+of+us+heather+mcghee%2Cinstant-video%2C145&sr=1-1)

For an accessible coverage of unconscious bias (not directly related to homelessness), one go-to is Jennifer Eberhardt's book [*Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do*](https://www.amazon.com/Biased-Uncovering-Hidden-Prejudice-Shapes/dp/0735224951/ref%3Dasc_df_0735224951/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=509210011619&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrand=17545835656093579982&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9033482&hvtargid=pla-889195042525&psc=1)