

Resources | Definitions



IF Definitions

The Indianapolis Foundation is intentional in the terms it uses to help remove stigma and negative stereotypes associated with words to describe our communities. To create a shared understanding of words and terms the Indianapolis Foundation utilizes in its work, see the terms and definitions below. This list is not exhaustive and will continue to be expanded and/or redefined as we continue this work.

Advocacy: Work and action to uplift community causes with a goal to shift use of resources, change policy, and how government is accountable to communities.

Authentic Engagement: Collaboration with shared goals, equitable work, and meaningful outcomes for all involved.

Authentic Partnership: Partnerships that are meaningful and intentional that center diversity, integrity, and truth where one’s lived experiences are integral to solutions.

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Community Investment: Diverse residents joining together in decision-making structures to proactively and effectively attract and infuse social and financial capital supporting the continued development of their communities.

Community Organizing: The collective power of diverse residents responsible for deploying inclusive strategies to disrupt status quo systems and influence policies affecting their lives and communities.

Cross Sector Partnerships: Collaborations with people and organizations who work in different fields or scopes of work. This work highlights that many social issues are interconnected, and these types of partnerships are essential in creating equitable systems.

Culturally Relevant: Incorporating awareness, understanding, and responsiveness to the beliefs, ideas, values, and customs of people based on ethnic heritage, life experiences, or identity.

Direct Service: Meeting and or responding to immediate community needs through direct action.

Dismantle (as in a system): To take apart an inequitable system which creates disparities in communities. Typically, this is the first step to creating an equitable system intended to replace the dismantled system.

Economic disparities: Inequity in wealth or socio-economic status due to the unequal distribution of income or opportunity based on social groups.

Environmental Justice: The just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people in environmental decision-making to ensure full protection from disproportionate environmental and health impacts and equitable access to a healthy, sustainable, and resilient environment.

Equity: The effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual’s or group’s needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes. Working to achieve equity acknowledges unequal starting places and the need to correct the imbalance.

Grassroots/Emerging: A community-based organization that has an annual operating budget of less than \$750,000.

Green Workforce: Jobs that advance a more sustainable society and transition from over-dependence on fossil fuels thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This maximizes an ethical and sustainable use of natural resources rather than the current destructive and polluting methods that have led to a state of global emergency.

Infrastructure Development/Building: The advancement of diverse-led entities through equitable access to diverse infrastructure building/organizational development resources.

Narrative Work: The social process of storytelling about one’s community to change how that community is viewed by society. It is a way to shift power and own one’s truth and experiences.

Power: The ability to define, set, or change situations. Power can manifest as personal or collective self-determination. Power is the ability to influence others to believe, behave, or adopt values as those in power desire.

Power Building: Recognizing that power or the lack of power shapes inequities, this aims to shift power to the people who experience inequities to create transformative change.

Racial Equity: To achieve racial equity, a person’s race will not have an impact on their ability to have equal access to opportunities, move through society, or their future.

Redistribute Power: An approach where power is shifted, specifically toward individuals and communities that have not had access to power as a result of inequitable systems. This work centers abundance, lived experience, and the knowledge of communities.

Resident Leadership: Diverse leaders embrace agency, shared power, and authentic relationships as they forge collective movements to advocate for and achieve the desired results on behalf of their communities.

Root Causes: The fundamental reason for an issue which, when addressed, will fundamentally change the system. Root causes are not always easy to identify and can be counter to assumptions of solutions to the issue.

System: A system is a complex network of institutions, structural and cultural norms, and rules that shape and, often, govern society. Systems encompass various aspects of life and include governance, housing, healthcare, education, environment, and economics. Systems play a critical role in the opportunities an individual can access.

System Involved: An individual who is or has been impacted by the legal or criminal justice system. The term system involved intentionally removes ‘justice’ to signify the system is not just as it disproportionality impacts BIPOC communities.

System Change: Work that targets the root causes or fundamental reasons that create social issues instead of addressing the issue itself through direct service. It aims to alter or shift underlying structures such as policies, mindsets, and power dynamics, which aims to create a new system with equitable outcomes.

Systemic Racism: Practices and policies, sometimes unspoken, which exist throughout society that perpetuate unequal support or barriers based on race.

Trust-based Philanthropy: This work centers building open, trustful, and authentic relationships between funders and grantees and/or applicants.

Undocumented: An individual who has moved to a country but is not recognized as a citizen because they have not obtained that country’s legal paperwork for residency or citizenship.

Unrestricted Funding: Grant funding that can be utilized by the organization without limitations. This provides an organization autonomy and power to decide where funding is most needed within their organization. Unrestricted funding is a trust-based philanthropy practice and is different from programmatic funding where an organization might feel as if they need to develop new programs to continue to receive funding.

What do we mean by ‘equitable systems’? Equitable systems are fair, just, and provide meaningful and diverse opportunities and outcomes for all individuals, regardless of their race, place or identity. Equitable systems root out discrimination and biases to ensure that resources are appropriately distributed with fairness and equal access for all – creating conditions for everyone to thrive.

What do we mean by ‘thriving community’? In a thriving community, residents experience a sense of well-being, belonging, and a high quality of life. It is a community that provides opportunities for social connection, economic mobility, safety, civic engagement, and a healthy built environment. Our collective efforts to advance equity, and particularly racial equity, in our city are in pursuit of creating thriving communities.