



# Applying a Racial Equity Lens in Learning Health Systems Research

**Margo Edmunds, PhD, FAMIA**  
**Vice President, AcademyHealth**

Learning Health Systems  
K12 Leaders Series

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## Goals

- Describe the work of the Academy Health Coordinating Center for the VA HSR LHS Advanced Fellowship Program
- Define the landscape of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) initiatives at AcademyHealth (AH)
- Describe the forthcoming report *Roadmap for Researchers: Navigating the Research Process with an Equity Lens*
- Discuss future challenges and opportunities for DEIA more broadly



# HSR LHS Fellowship Sites

Site Locations
Boston-Bedford, MA
Charleston, SC
Denver, CO
Durham, NC
Houston, TX
Indianapolis, IN
Iowa City, IA
Los Angeles, CA
Minneapolis, MN
Portland, OR
Providence, RI
Salt Lake City, UT
Seattle, WA
West Haven, CT

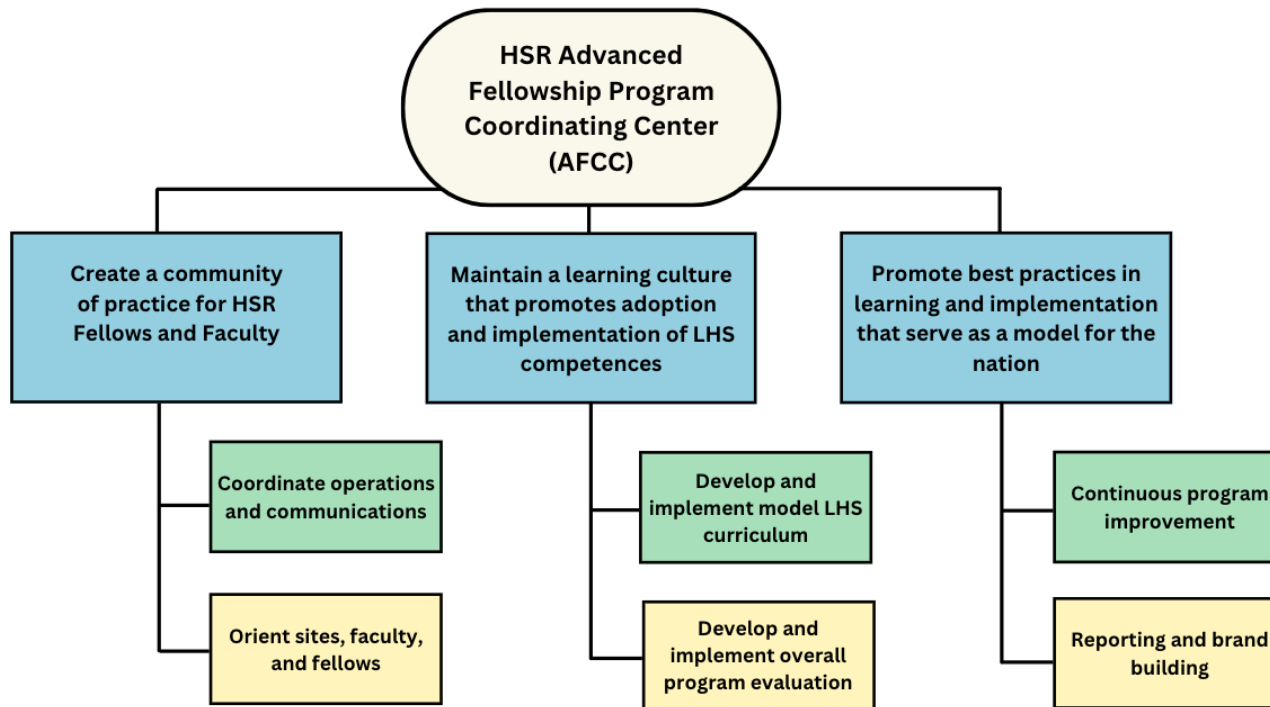


U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration





# AFCC Connects the LHS Fellowship Sites



# LHS Core Competencies: Toward a National Curriculum for VA HSR Fellows

Equity and Justice

## Foundational (Research)

Research Questions and Standards of Scientific Evidence

Research Methods

Ethics of Research

## Variable Across Programs (Applied)

Informatics and Data Science

Leadership and Research Management

## HSR Priority Approaches

Engagement Science

Improvement and Implementation Science

Systems Science

Professional Development and Navigating the VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration



# The DEIA Journey at AcademyHealth: In Progress

### Warm up Questions

On a scale of 1-10 (1 being "just starting" and 10 being "we have arrived") how far along is AcademyHealth on its DEI journey?

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On a scale of 1-10 (1 being "not committed" and 10 being "fully committed") how dedicated is AcademyHealth to improving DEI within the organization?

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What are you looking forward to discussing the most during this session? (Bookmark these and circle back to them in the last 15 minutes ensuring we have touched on the key items participants called out here)

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What supports or resources are missing that could enhance AcademyHealth's DEI programming?

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### PRESENT

How do you personally experience DEI in your everyday work at AcademyHealth?

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What is going well within the organization specifically around DEI initiatives?

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Does AcademyHealth foster a community of inclusion and allyship?

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What steps has AcademyHealth taken to be more diverse, equitable, or inclusive?

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### EVOLUTION

What are the current challenges AcademyHealth faces as it progresses through its DEI journey?

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Is there alignment between AcademyHealth staff and leadership on what the DEI priorities should be moving forward?

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### FUTURE

Are there DEI topics you would like to learn more about through competency and skills building programs?

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What are you hoping the new leader prioritizes with respect to DEI within the organization?

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What does DEI success mean for AcademyHealth? What does it look like in the short-term, 12 months, 24 months?

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### DEI Milestones at AcademyHealth

**2013**

AcademyHealth Board of Directors funds a new Center on Diversity, Inclusion, and Minority Engagement (DIME) to support training and mentoring for under-represented racial and ethnic minority (URM) researchers.

**2014**

AcademyHealth/Aetna Scholars in Residence Fellowship program is launched to provide research support, professional development, and networking opportunities for URM early career researchers to pursue HSR careers.

**2015**

Workforce Diversity 2025 roundtable releases report on the future of diversity and inclusion in the health services research workforce.

**2019**

Strategic Plan 2020-2025 includes diversity and inclusion as core values.

**2020**

New racial equity strategy is announced.

**2020**

AcademyHealth staff begin DEI training with True North EDI.

**2021**

AcademyHealth staff begin working with Equity Learning Lab coaching program.

**2021**

Workshop on Understanding and Eliminating Bias in HSR Methods gets more than 600 registrations.

**2021**

AcademyHealth releases report by Advisory Group on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in HSR.

**2023**

AcademyHealth releases an open access Equity and Innovation Resource Hub with vetted and curated DEI resources. A tool to eliminate racial bias in research is also released.

Clears for Future Success



## MODEL

### Assessing Ourselves

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Staff Training  
Brown Bag Discussions  
Hiring & Retention Policies  
Strategic Planning Priorities

## LEAD

### Working with Our Members & Partners

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Diversity Audit of Leadership Committees,  
Conferences & Vendors  
Center for Diversity, Inclusion  
& Minority Engagement  
Collection of Syllabi on Racism  
& Equity Topics  
Mentoring & Networking

## INFLUENCE

### Facilitating Changes in the Field

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Advisory Group on Diversity, Equity and  
Inclusion in HSR  
Education, Training & Publications  
Strategy to Reduce Bias in Data & Analytics  
Workplace Culture Survey Findings

# The Annual Research Meeting (ARM) is a Launchpad and Amplifier for DEIA Efforts



**Doubled No. of Diversity Scholars and Mentors in 2022-23**



**5th Annual Diversity Networking Reception**



**Supported 38 URM Mentees and Invited Speakers**



**Evaluating Mentoring Programs: Scholarship, Fellowship, and IG-initiated**



**61 DEI-relevant sessions (out of 185)  
7 of 11 Invited Methods Sessions  
All 6 Career Development Sessions**



**Launch of Equity and Innovation Resource Hub**

**With Support From the Aetna Foundation, AHRQ, Blue Shield Foundation of California, PCORI, PhRMA, RWJF, and Urban Institute**



# DEIA at AcademyHealth

AcademyHealth recognizes the influence of systemic biases in the field of HSR and works to promote representation and equitable engagement with individuals, organizations, and communities in everything we do.

## ■ ***Roadmap for Researchers: Navigating the Research Process with an Equity Lens (2024)***

- Addresses recommendations by DEI Advisory Group (2021):
  - Be a catalyst and resource for the field of HSR
  - Promote workforce diversity and representation
  - Elevate the importance of health equity research within HSR
  - Promote quality, accountability, and transparency of health equity data and research methods
  - Create guidance documents and trainings on anti-racist methods and increase roles of marginalized groups in research
- Lead author Margo Edmunds with contributions from Alyce Adams, April Joy Damian, Tara Fowler, Madeline McNeely, Ninez Ponce
- Approach: 10 steps across the research life cycle

## ■ *Roadmap for Researchers: Navigating the Research Process with an Equity Lens (2024)*

### PLANNING: BUILDING AWARENESS AND INTENTION

- **Step 1:** Make a commitment to equitable research practices.
- **Step 2:** Form a representative team that values communication, inclusion, and good management.

■ *Roadmap for Researchers:  
Navigating the Research Process with an Equity Lens*

**PREPARATION:  
FRAMING YOUR RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- **Step 3:** Collaborate in developing clear objectives and research questions.
- **Step 4:** Diversify references and data sources.

■ *Roadmap for Researchers:  
Navigating the Research Process with an Equity Lens*

**IMPLEMENTATION:  
DATA MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

- **Step 5:** Develop a plan to gather and analyze disaggregated data.
- **Step 6:** Recognize intersectionality in data collection and analysis.

## ■ *Roadmap for Researchers:*

### *Navigating the Research Process with an Equity Lens*

#### **EQUITABLE INTERPRETATION AND DISSEMINATION**

- **Step 7:** Collaborate in developing clear objectives and research questions.
- **Step 8:** Broaden your thinking about dissemination.
- **Step 9:** Approach dissemination and community engagement with cultural humility.

■ *Roadmap for Researchers:*  
■ *Navigating the Research Process with an Equity Lens*

**REFLECTION AND RENEWAL OF COMMITMENT  
TO A RACIAL EQUITY LENS**

- **Step 10:** Acknowledge and share professional and personal learnings.



Thank you !