

## EVALUATION BRIEF

March 2025

# Texas Change in Mind Learning Collaborative: Adding Racial Equity to Change in Mind

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**Presented by:**

NORC at the University of  
Chicago

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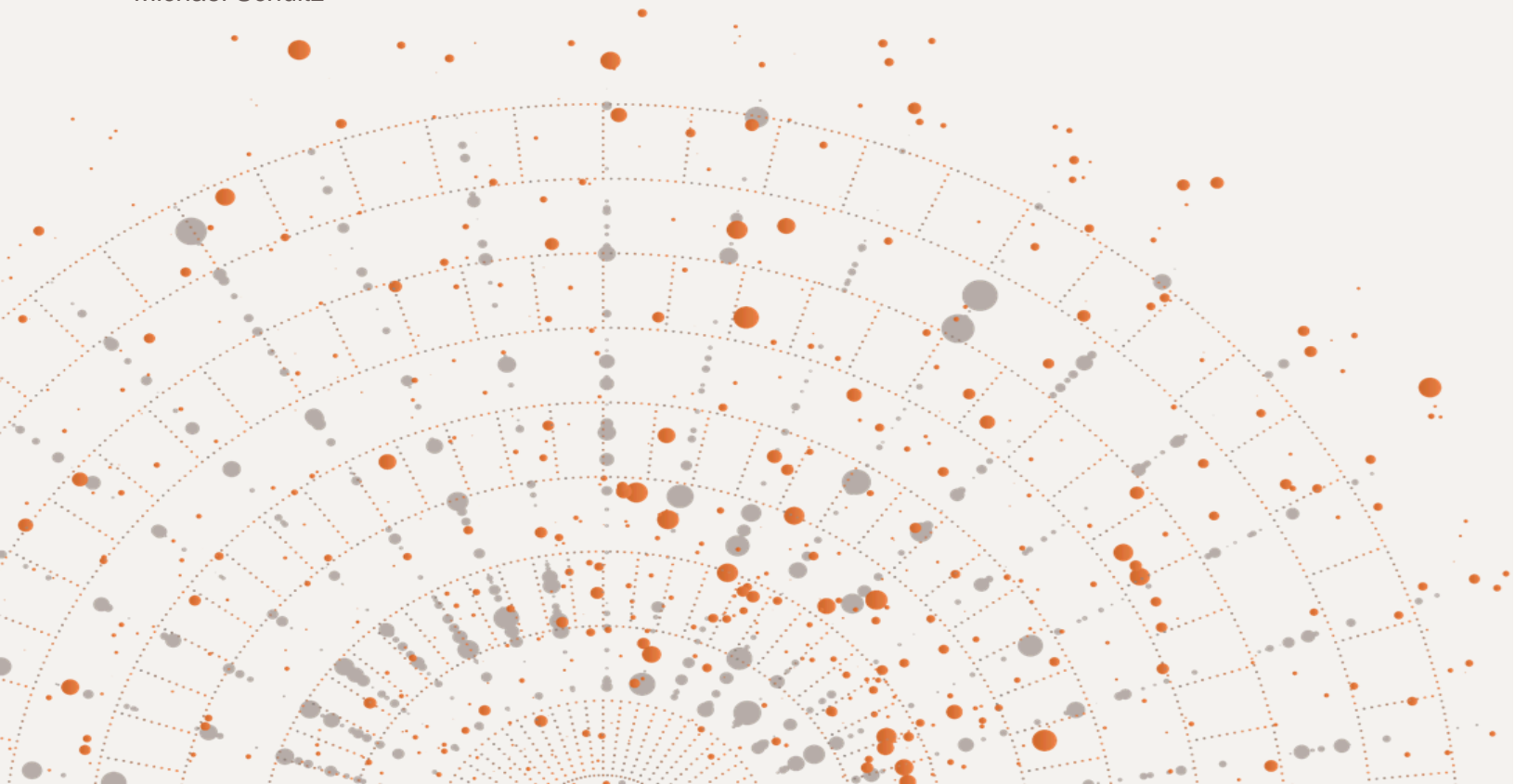
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**Presented to:**

Social Current



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# Introduction

## Change in Mind Origins

In 2005, the Palix Foundation, a private foundation in Alberta, Canada (previously the Norlien Foundation), initiated a multi-phased strategy to mobilize and apply scientific knowledge connecting early brain and neurological development to later mental health, addiction, and physical health outcomes. This activity laid the groundwork that led to the development and testing of the original Change in Mind initiative (2015-2017) and the replication of CIM model in Texas (2020 – 2023).

**Change in Mind Learning Collaborative (U.S.-Canadian Cohort).** In November 2014, the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities was awarded funding to launch the initiative, Change in Mind: Applying Neuroscience to Revitalize Communities”. The initiative’s resources included a \$1.7 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), and additional funding from the Palix Foundation and AFWI. The Harvard Center on the Developing Child provided additional conceptual and logistical support. The CIM initiative was designed as a learning collaborative to infuse brain science knowledge and evidence into organizations while gaining new insights into how to facilitate and accelerate change at multiple levels to prevent and mitigate ACEs, address trauma, and build resilience.

In 2015, the CIM initiative created a two-year peer learning community cohort of 10 healthcare, mental and behavioral health, early childhood, and social service organizations from the United States and five sites from Alberta, Canada. Over a two-year period (2015- 2017), the initiative provided the U.S.- Canada cohort with access to leading experts in neurosciences, communications, and evaluation, who helped the sites accelerate their learning and translation of brain science concepts into action at program, organization, systems, and policy levels to prevent and mitigate ACEs, address trauma, and build resiliency.

## Texas Change in Mind Overview

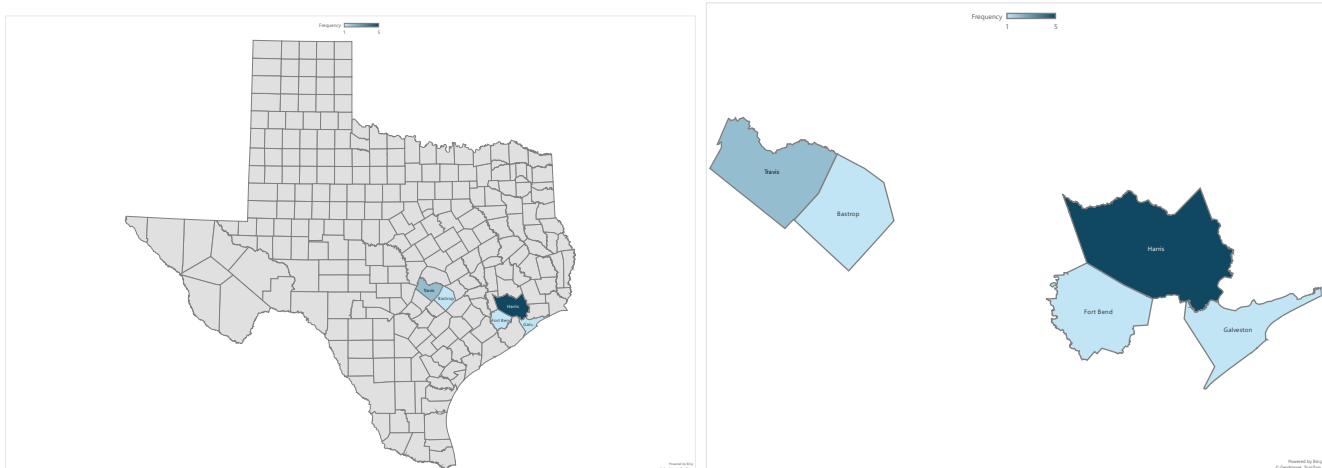
In 2021, the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities launched a Texas cohort of the Change in Mind Learning Collaborative Model. The two-year Texas cohort (2021-2023) was intended to replicate and rigorously evaluate the CIM model with ten human service organizations located in central and eastern Texas. The goal of the Texas cohort was to help cohort sites embed brain science and other competencies into their work at multiple levels through six areas of activity: 1) a focus on brain science, 2) a focus on organizational change, 3) a focus on community systems change, 4) a focus on racial equity, 5) a messaging focus, and 6) an evaluation and learning focus. These areas were reorganized into competency areas (brain science and racial equity, framing and messaging, and developmental evaluation) and pathways of change (program, organization and system).

Four donors financed the project – three foundations in Texas and an anonymous donor from Alberta. The Episcopal Health and Powell Foundations collaborated to fund the implementation and operation of

the Texas cohort. The Alliance’s Change in Mind Institute received more than \$727,000 each from both The Powell Foundation and Episcopal Health Foundation for the Texas initiative. In addition, St. David’s Foundation provided over \$310,000 to add a racial equity component to the initiative. The anonymous donor funded developmental, formative, and summative evaluations of the initiative.

**Texas Cohort Sites.** In early 2021, the Texas CIM project director, Jennifer Jones, worked with an advisory committee to recruit and select a diverse cohort of ten organizations from within the greater areas of Houston and Austin – the funders’ catchment areas. The sites were selected based on eight criteria: 1) having a sufficient budget and sustained resources to carry out their transformation plans, 2) a clear vision for their work plans related to brain science and ACEs, trauma, resilience, or racial equity concepts, 3) organizational support and goals for their projects, 4) staff capacity to design, test, and evaluate their programs and to participate in the external evaluation of the Texas cohort, 5) experience collaborating with internal champions and allies to change their own or other organizations or institutions or systems, 6) experience collaborating with others, including clients and community members, to make changes in their own organizations or to advocate for change in local, regional or statewide policies, 7) the quality of their plans for transformative changes of their organization’s culture, programs, policies, and practices, and 8) the diversity and demographics of the children and families served or assisted by their organization.

**Exhibit 1.** Map of Texas Change in Mind Sites



Note: The color gradation indicates the number of sites in each county. Five sites were in Harris County (Houston), two sites were located in Travis County (Austin), one in Bastrop County, one in Fort Bend County, and one in Galveston County.

The ten sites selected for the Texas cohort were in two geographic areas (see Exhibit 1). Seven sites were in the greater Houston area: AAMA, Boys and Girls Club of Greater Houston, Children’s Museum of Houston, Family Service Center of Galveston County, Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services, New Hope Housing, and Santa Maria Hostel. The other three sites were in the greater Austin area: the Austin Public Education Foundation, Bastrop County Cares, and the Texas Center for Child and Family Services. These organizations provided a wide range of services, including a county

collaborative, a children’s museum, and early childhood, K-12 education, housing, youth development, and social services (see Appendix A – Texas CIM Sites).

**Comparison Sites.** The NORC evaluation team conducted data collection activities in all ten CIM sites and with three matched comparison sites that participated in the Cohort Outcome Study (see Appendix A – Texas CIM Comparison Sites).

These three sites applied for the Texas cohort and met the cohort’s capacity-related qualifications but were not selected for other reasons. For example, one site was outside the funders’ catchment area. The three comparison sites participated in two evaluation assessment surveys: 1) the Organizational Assessment survey and 2) the Community Collective Capacity (C3) network survey. Each comparison site identified the sample of participants for the two surveys and followed up with survey participants to increase the number of completed surveys and associated response rates. In return for participating as comparison sites in the Cohort Outcome Study, each comparison site received \$500, as well as two site-specific reports of the survey findings.

**Table 1.** Texas CIM Participant Sites

Site	Geographic Region	Setting	Type
<b>AAMA</b>	Greater Houston	Community Organization	Non-Profit
<b>Austin Public Education Foundation</b>	Greater Austin	School District	Non-Profit
<b>Bastrop County Cares</b>	Bastrop County; Greater Austin	County partnership	Non-Profit
<b>Boys and Girls Club of Greater Houston</b>	Greater Houston	Youth Organization	Non-Profit
<b>Children’s Museum of Houston</b>	Greater Houston	Children’s Museum	Non-Profit
<b>Family Service Center of Galveston County</b>	Galveston County; Greater Houston	Mental Health Counseling	Non-Profit
<b>Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services</b>	Fort Bend County; Greater Houston	County Behavioral Health Services	Government
<b>New Hope Housing</b>	Greater Houston	Housing	Company
<b>Santa Maria Hostel, Inc.</b>	Greater Houston	Residential and Outpatient substance use treatment	Non-Profit

Site	Geographic Region	Setting	Type
Texas Center for Child and Family Studies	Greater Austin; Statewide	Statewide organization	Non-Profit

## Texas Change in Mind Context

The Texas CIM cohort experienced major setbacks throughout the life of the project. At a national level, prolonged COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions that were issued in March 2020 were not lifted in many states until August 2022. The Texas CIM cohort responded to this situation by virtually conducting their first two convenings in June 2021 and October 2021. The last three convenings in April 2022, October 2022, and April 2023, were conducted using a hybrid in-person/virtual format, with most participants attending in person.

At the state level, policies enacted by the Texas Governor to ban or limit EDI (equity, diversity, and inclusion) programs, policies, and practices, negatively affected the implementation of the cohort's racial equity competency component. The Texas cohort responded to this situation by adding communications sessions that taught sites how to adapt their messages to reframe racial equity as an issue of fairness and justice.

At an organizational level, the director of the CIM Institute and the Texas cohort initiative left the Alliance in February 2021 to take another position outside the state. The CIM Institute and Texas Cohort project recruited and hired Karen Johnson as the new director for the CIM Institute and Texas Cohort project in June 2021. She stepped in and provided valuable leadership to the Texas cohort project, with significant support from Kelly Martin, Social Current's Director of Practice Excellence. Together, they used their knowledge, experience, and perspectives to revise the curriculum, updating and adapting the brain science, messaging, and evaluation competency areas and fit them to the Texas context. What emerged was an enhanced adaptation of CIM model principles, rather than a replica of the original CIM model.

In October 2021, the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities announced that it had joined together with the Council on Accreditation (COA) to become Social Current. The announcement followed a nine-month integration process and a prior year-long exploration and due diligence process overseen by both organizations. Social Current represents a network of thousands of social sector organizations working together to activate the power of the social sector. The organization's mission is to advocate for and implement fair and just solutions to society's toughest challenges through collaboration, innovation, policy, and practice excellence. The organization works across the full spectrum of the human and social services sector: social, public, for-profit, educational, and institutional, healthcare, and for-profits, with individual community advocates.

## Texas Change in Mind Leadership Perspective

The collaborative and robust approach to the funding of this initiative allowed Social Current to expand the Change in Mind model to include a new emphasis on race equity and anti-oppression. As noted in the introduction, three foundations supported the Texas Change in Mind Learning Collaborative, and the grant from the St. David's Foundation was specifically focused on ensuring that race equity was a central component of the curriculum.

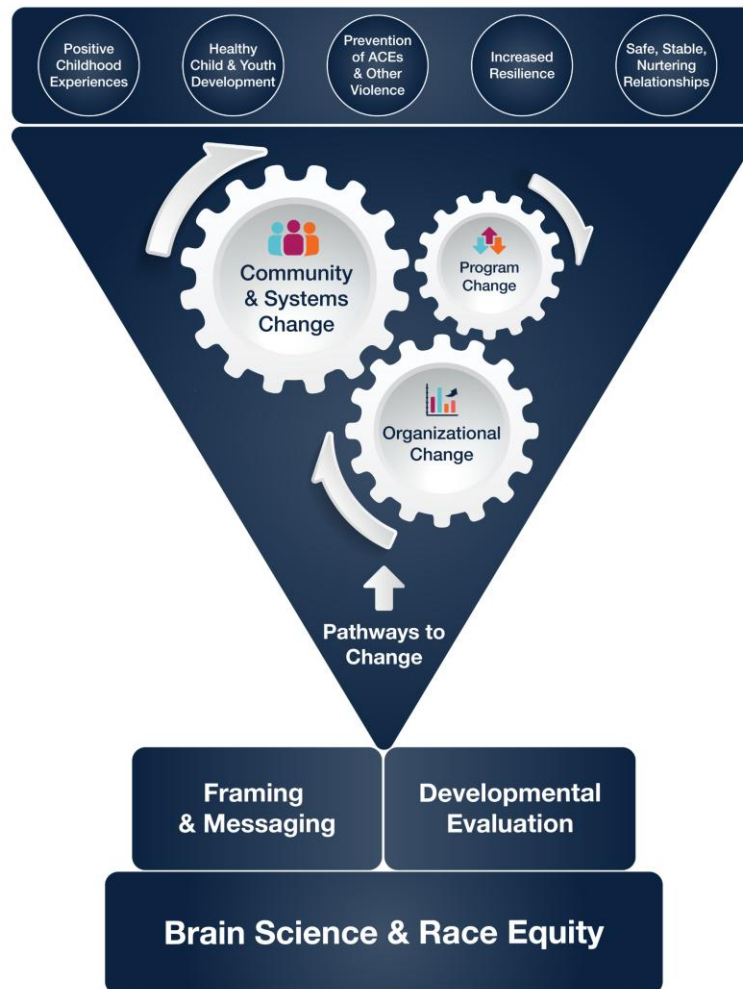
The details about how this was operationalized into learning activities throughout the cohort are found in the remainder of this report below. In addition to the impacts that this had on participant experience, this emphasis on anti-racism also had a critical impact on the Social Current team as the backbone organization and facilitators of this work. This impact was centered around the notion that trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches cannot be disentangled from anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion. You cannot focus on one without focusing on the other, and yet often these two spheres of work remain separate in the human service sector.

The Texas Change in Mind leaders sometimes referred to Social Current as the '11<sup>th</sup> site' in the learning collaborative, as they learned right alongside the participants, especially in this area. Drawing on the wisdom, thought leadership, and embodied work of scholars like Dr. Resmaa Menakem and organizations like PACES Connection, many learning (and un-learning) activities during the cohort experience pushed Social Current to further explore and spread the mindsets and practices that bridge the trauma-informed movement with the anti-racist movement. For example, the entire fourth convening was devoted to this topic, a decision informed by participant feedback and a shared desire to go deeper into this issue. Additionally, after the TX CiM learning collaborative was over, the Social Current team developed a learning series called *Hardwired for Fear, Hardwired for Connection* that was offered to the broader Social Current network of human service leaders. This approach – the integration of neuroscience and anti-racism – will continue to guide the work of Social Current in the months and years ahead, and would not have been possible without the Texas Change in Mind Learning Collaborative.

## Texas Change in Mind Theory of Change

Change in Mind was designed as a learning collaborative to bring teams of peers and subject matter experts together to learn from each other and apply brain science concepts to improve programs, policies, and practices at three levels: program, organization, and systems/community. Theories of change are used in complex interventions to describe how multiple pathways of change interact in ways that lead to a range of outcomes. Because Texas CIM is a multilayered intervention, theories of change were developed at both cohort and site levels.

In late 2020, work on a new theory of change began for the Texas cohort. The two-year cohort (2021-2023) was intended to replicate and rigorously evaluate the CIM learning community model for a new cohort of ten human service organizations in central and eastern Texas. The revised theory of change is designed as a set of competencies that are implemented through program-, organization-, and systems-levels pathways. Brain science is integrated with race equity in a combined competency, as it became clear that it is not possible to focus on one without focusing on the other – they are inextricably linked. The messaging competency added an equity-informed framing. The developmental evaluation competency incorporated culturally responsive equity evaluation (CREE) and systems and complexity-informed evaluation (SCIE) methods. These competencies and pathways of change are designed to contribute to positive childhood experiences, healthy child and youth development, safe, stable, and nurturing relationships, and increased resilience at a population level (see Exhibit 2).

**Exhibit 2.** Texas CIM Cohort Theory of Change**Texas CIM Site-level Theories of Change**

The ten Texas sites were coached to develop a customized CIM theory of change for their organization, identifying and prioritizing outcomes targeting change at population, programmatic, organizational, and system levels. Each site's Theory of Change described three pathways of activity: 1) aligning their organization's programming with brain science and racial equity (focusing on clients and families, 2) aligning their organization's culture and process with brain science and racial equity, and 3) aligning their systems with brain science and racial equity. The sites selected and refined strategies that could bring about sustainable changes that embedded brain science and a racial equity lens to their organizations' ongoing professional development processes and other program practices. Within each pathway, the sites identified and prioritized key values, mindsets, processes and resources that needed to be aligned to achieve the organization's desired impacts.

With technical assistance, the sites designed and launched a developmental evaluation plan to test, gather feedback, and improve the strategies they designed to bring about their prioritized Theory of Change outcomes. Although the sites' theories of change were unique, they shared some patterns of

activities within and across pathways. Similar patterns involved gathering input from families to design programs (6 sites), using culturally responsive organizational processes to develop programming (5 sites), using family engagement to influence organizational change (2 sites), and using workforce development as a precursor to other change strategies (3 sites). One site worked with their program alumni to advocate for policy and systems change.

## Texas Change in Mind Cohort Activities

The Texas cohort's learning activities included the five convenings, plus webinars, coaching, and peer networking. The CIM leadership team designed these activities to align with the cohort's equity-informed theory of change. The activities were created to help develop and implement the sites' brain science, race equity, messaging, and evaluation competencies through program-, organization-, and systems-level pathways of change. They expanded and updated the content of the convenings to integrate the new racial equity competency into the curriculum. They added to the curriculum more interactive, site-specific coaching on theory of change development, community member engagement, and other topics. They expanded the webinars' content to cover all competency and pathway areas. They also designed the convening sessions for more peer interaction to compensate for the loss of in-person networking time during the first year. They formalized and documented the revised CIM curriculum in Change in Mind Institute Curriculum Participant and Facilitator's Guides, which were distributed to participating sites as workbooks.

### Texas Cohort Convenings

The Texas CIM sites received grant funding (\$25,000 per year) to participate in the Texas cohort's convenings, programming, and evaluation activities. The Texas cohort offered two online convenings and three hybrid (in-person and online) convenings between June 2021 and April 2023. At each convening participants completed feedback surveys. The CIM leadership team was responsive to the feedback, adapting subsequent convenings. For example, when Convening 3 participants asked for more content on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles and practices, a full-day workshop with an external consultant was added to Convening 4.

Each convening included a focus on the Racial Equity (EDI) competency component and its integration with other CIM competencies and pathways of activity.

- The first virtual convening was conducted over four days (two half-days per week) between June 15 and June 24, 2021. Convening sessions featured sessions on topics such as the intersection of early childhood development and anti-racism, defined systems and theories of change, how to apply a racial equity lens to developmental evaluation, and peer working sessions organized by topics of interest and geography.
- The second virtual convening was conducted on October 27-29, 2021. Sessions focused on multiple competencies, including messaging (how to frame communications across differences), EDI (how to

move from theory to action at the intersection of racism and brain science), and evaluation (review of sites' draft theories of change). Regarding the theory of change session, one commented, "It was helpful to see how other organizations have included EDI and brain science into their programs."

- The third convening was conducted in-person at the Children's Museum of Houston on April 6-8, 2022. The meeting provided an opportunity for sites to share their draft theories of change for peer feedback, identified new strategies for moving forward with applying and integrating racial equity and brain science, focused on integrating assessment into sites' work, and of course, enabled increased connections among participating sites given that this was the first in-person convening. The convening included multiple learning and working sessions focused on framing and messaging, covering topics such as: using asset-based framing of messages and reducing executive functioning burden for clients. Finally, the third convening provided attendees with information and tools to conduct spatial mapping of racialized equity gaps and child development measures at a population level in their communities of interest. .
- The fourth convening was conducted in-person in Austin, at an event space coordinated through the networking of attendees from Austin Ed Fund, on October 18-20, 2022. The primary focus of the fourth convening was a full-day workshop on advancing EDI and anti-racism facilitated by Ingrid Cockhren, CEO of PACES Connection. Workshop topics included effective ways to talk about racial equity in participants' organizations and in the Texas cohort, how to make EDI practices come alive within the context of the dynamics present in the Texas context, and how to use EDI assessment results to operationalize next steps for sites' organizations.

The full-day session reviewed the social determinants of health, the connections between equity, inclusion, diversity and belonging, how institutional racism and historical trauma create present day disparities, definitions of race and racism, and critical race theory – a practice of interrogating the role of race and racism in society. The workshop clarified the difference between equity and equality, the roles of collective and intergenerational transmission of trauma, the importance of social location in adverse childhood experiences, and the development of racial identity and socialization. The workshop ended with a segment on pathways to achieving a just society.

- The fifth and final convening was conducted in person at the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Houston on April 18-20, 2023. The meeting's goals and activities were designed to increase connections among cohort sites, strengthen knowledge of the Texas cohort's organizational focus, strengthen sustainability plans for the participating sites, and increase knowledge around somatic and embodied approaches to healing- and equity-centered work.

## Racial Equity Competency Activities

**Texas Cohort Racial Equity Activities.** The topic of racial equity was not designated an area of focus in the 2015-2017 U.S. – Canada cohort. In the aftermath of the national protests of the murder of George Floyd in the summer of 2020, the Texas cohort received a grant to integrate a racial equity competency component into the curriculum. Social Current's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

training and consultancy practice led this work, incorporating its activities into the cohort’s schedule of convenings, webinars, and coaching activities (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Race Equity Competency Activities

	Activities
<b>Survey</b>	EDI Staff Assessment – Spring 2022
<b>Webinars</b>	Introduction to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) webinar – September 2021
	IDI Assessment: Individual Debriefs - Dec. 2021 – March, 2022
	EDI Leadership Coaching - Dec. 2021 – March 2022
<b>Convening Sessions</b>	Convening 1 - Applying the Lens of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
	Convening 2 - Panel Discussion: Intersection of ACEs and Racism: Moving from Theory to Action
	Convening 4 - Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti- Racism in Texas Change in Mind
	Convening 5 - EDI & Anti-Racism in TX CiM: Reflections and Sustainability Somatic and Embodied Approaches to Healing-centered and Equity-focused work

Convenings and workshops. Each convening included a focus on racial equity. Convening 1 (June 2021) provided two sessions: “Research Brief: The Intersection of Early Childhood Development and Anti-Racism” and “Applying the Lens of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion”. Convening 2 (October 2021) included a panel discussion on “the Intersection of ACEs and Racism: Moving from Theory to Action”. Convening 3 (April 2022) presented one session, “Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism in Texas Change in Mind.” Convening 4 (October 2022) provided a full day workshop on anti-racism. The final convening (April 2023) included two EDI sessions: “Somatic & Embodied (SE) Approaches to Healing-centered and Equity-focused Work” and “EDI & Anti-Racism in TX CiM: Reflections and Sustainability” (see Table 2). In addition to the convening sessions, in September 2021, sites participated in a foundational webinar, “Introduction to EDI”. Seven sites reported that most team members attended, and three sites reported that some team members attended.

EDI leadership coaching. The Social Current EDI team provided leadership coaching in two rounds. Between December 2021 and March 2022, sites participated in EDI leadership coaching. Two sites reported that all team members attended, one site reported that most team members attended, and seven sites reported that some members attended. The second round occurred between December 2022-March 2023, which three sites reported that most team members attended, and seven sites reported that some team members attended. Other EDI activities included a Cultural Humility workshop (July 2022), and an Implicit Bias workshop (October 2022).

IDI assessments. In November 2021, five leaders from each site completed Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessments.<sup>1</sup> The CIM staff completed individual Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment. The IDI assessment is a widely used and effective cross-culturally valid assessment for building intercultural competency. This involves developing a deeper cultural self-understanding (how we make sense of and respond to cultural differences in our own culturally learned perceptions, values, and practices) and a deeper cultural other-understanding (different ways people from other cultural groups make sense of and respond to cultural differences). The IDI assessment measures individuals' and groups' placement along a five-point continuum from 1) *denial* (missing differences, polarization (judging differences)), 2) *minimization* (de-emphasizing differences), and 3) *acceptance* (deeply comprehending differences) to 4) *intercultural acceptance* (deeply comprehending differences) and 5) *adaptation* (bridging across differences).

Individual IDI assessments produce four scores: 1) perceived orientation, 2) developmental orientation, and 3) the orientation gap between the perceived and developmental scores. Group IDI results are shown as the group's range of scores. The Social Current EDI team conducted IDI assessment debriefs for individuals between December 2021 and March 2022. Group IDI assessment debriefs were conducted between the spring and fall of 2022. Of the ten sites, two sites reported that all their team members attended a debrief, two sites reported that most team members attended one, and six sites reported that some members attended.

## Social Current's EDI Approach

**Four Stage EDI Journey.** Social Current's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) framework is designed as a four-stage EDI journey that starts with building an inclusive organizational culture: developing shared definitions for talking about EDI, creating the conditions for making positive change by developing psychological safety and welcoming spaces where people can bring their whole selves to work, and learn how to apply EDI concepts in their daily work environments. The process includes implementing a baseline EDI organizational assessment and coaching participants to establish structures, such as setting up a Core Implementation Team, which will support their ability to plan and execute their racial equity implementation strategies outlined in their CIM theories of change.

The EDI journey advances through four developmental phases. The phases are:

1. *Exploring:* lack of a clear goal and focus for EDI, single voices and grassroots efforts without momentum, and information without action,

2. *Committed*: support from senior leaders or CEO, a designated leader and at least one other person, is focused on addressed explicit barriers and not on building an EDI culture,
3. *Competent*: a financial commitment, active participation from leadership, a growing number of EDI champions, EDI is a means to achieving a mission or vision, and is incorporated into employee lifecycle, metrics, communications, and culture, and
4. *Embedded*: EDI is embedded in organizational culture, equity decisions are built into decision making at all levels, deep partnership with community, and addressing structures and programs that do not serve equity.

These phases occur at three levels:

1. *A personal level*: individual commitment to learn, reflect and apply learning for personal growth,
2. *An organizational level*: the organization as a whole works over time to address processes, strategies, and culture to embed EDI- called the EDI journey, and
3. *A systems level*: the systems within which each organization works to offer opportunities to work collaboratively for deeper change.

Social Current's EDI approach teaches and coaches participants to develop skills in key areas:

- Having difficult conversations. At an individual level, the CIM EDI curriculum teaches participants multiple strategies for how to engage successfully in difficult conversations. This skill can be used at different phases of an individual's personal journey. Staff and supervisors can use this technique to help their organization develop racial equity strategies and to work with other organizations to advance racial equity within their larger environment.
- Cultural humility. The liberatory consciousness or cultural humility framework and skillset is for professionals integrating a practice of self-reflection, personal accountability, and reducing power imbalances to provide opportunities to engage with people from all backgrounds and perspectives in respectful ways to advance EDI in the workplace. The CIM curriculum provides participants with a working knowledge of cultural humility practices and how to apply them using strategies for collaborating with culturally diverse groups.
- Implicit bias. The CIM curriculum includes information about how to understand the multiple ways in which implicit bias, racism, and incivility can show up in their daily lives and working relationships in unconscious ways. Building on brain science research and behavioral science, Texas CIM participants learn how mental processes and culture can create bias traps, what causes these traps, and what can work to reduce or eliminate them. They learn that by understanding their own biases and how to disrupt them, they can develop cultural competence in working across differences.
- Racial equity in child welfare systems. In 1935, the United States Child Welfare System was created to promote safety and protection among children, youth, and families, especially in

vulnerable populations. Organizations that work with families who are involved or at risk of becoming involved in child welfare systems need to understand what equity looks like in these systems and how the effects of implicit bias have created disproportionalities (disparities faced by children of color) in the child welfare system. The EDI curriculum provides intentional strategies that organizations can use to support these families. These strategies include addressing the ethical issues of working in these systems and understanding the connection between social conditions and poverty.

At an organizational level, the EDI curriculum provides a series of workshops and coaching sessions on developing effective skillsets and strategies to advance organizational change strategies and overcome challenges and roadblocks to organizational change. These skills include:

- Building an Intentional EDI organizational culture. This workshop focuses on the foundational elements of an EDI-centered culture, which involve developing shared definitions for talking about EDI and working to create conditions of psychological safety and a welcoming work environment of authenticity that allows people to bring their ‘whole selves’ to work. The development of organizational belonging and inclusivity involves four stages of psychological safety: inclusion safety (accepted to be for who you are), learner safety (feeling safe to make mistakes), contributor safety (feeling safe to contribute your gifts), and challenger safety (feeling safe to challenge the status quo).<sup>1</sup>
- Adaptive Leadership in EDI. This workshop features the core components of adaptive leadership and how to apply them to the challenge of advancing an EDI organizational change strategy. Defined by Ron Heifetz as “the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive, and addressing complex, adaptive challenges rather than just technical ones”, this approach requires leaders to foster learning, encourage diverse perspectives, and empower individuals to find solutions.<sup>2</sup>
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Recruitment and Hiring. This workshop focuses on addressing the technical and adaptive challenges that go beyond recruiting, hiring, and onboarding new employees, by creating inclusion throughout the employee lifecycle. Successful strategies include using inclusive recruitment activities, job descriptions, and employee selection processes that overcome current barriers and create new opportunities to build a more diverse workplace.
- Developing Alignment with EDI plans. This working session targets organization leaders and teaches the principles of a ‘high action, high alignment approach” to taking frequent and impactful actions that are aligned with an organization’s mission, vision, and strategic objectives. The approach calls for strong communication and collaboration across teams and

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Timothy Clark – 4<sup>th</sup> CIM Convening Workshop Session 4.

<sup>2</sup> Heifetz, Ronald A., Marty Linsky, and Alexander Grashow. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Harvard Business Press, 2009.

departments to ensure that everyone is working toward the same EDI goals, creating alignment around the organization's EDI plan.

- Change Management for EDI. This working session focuses on strategies and tools that are used to support organization-wide change management processes. These tools include organizational readiness assessments, political mapping and framing of key policies, and initiatives to create and sustain employee buy-in and support for organizational changes in EDI policies and practices.

**Integrating Racial Equity with Brain Science.** A core component of the Texas cohort's brain story curriculum is the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative's Brain Story Certification course, which connects brain development to adverse child experiences, addiction, and mental health.<sup>3</sup> Since its use in the original U.S.-Canada CIM cohort, the course's 19 self-paced modules have been streamlined and translated into French, with a new bibliography, a new glossary, updated videos, and reflective questions in each module.

For the Texas CIM cohort, Social Current's CIM leadership team updated and adapted CIM's brain science, messaging, and evaluation competency areas to fit the Texas context and to integrate a racial equity competency area with an EDI focus. In the revised CIM theory of change, brain science was linked to race equity in a combined competency. New brain science content was added to the curriculum showing how brain development science can be used to build resilience, reduce toxic stress, and treat the primary and secondary trauma and toxic stress that results from racial inequities.

For example, in the fourth CIM convening, the session, "Brain Science Application and Workforce Resilience" presented by the CIM leadership team, Karen Johnson and Kelly Martin, reviewed four core workforce resilience concepts and resilience-related practices: 1) advancing understanding of brain science in the workplace, 2) building psychological safety, 3) prioritizing a positive workforce culture, and 4) increasing connection. As they facilitated this conversation, they made it clear that EDI and anti-racism was not its own topic, but rather, is woven throughout all four concepts.

- Understanding brain science. This session describes positive, tolerable, and toxic stress through the Arousal Continuum – an escalating activation of the stress response system from a calm/alert state – thinking, learning, planning, inhibiting, and analyzing (the cortex) to alarm – emotional reactivity and sexual behavior (the limbic system), fear – affecting sleep, appetite, and motor regulation (the midbrain), and finally terror – affecting your body temperature, heart rate, and blood pressure (the brainstem).

The Three R's Framework (Regulate, Relate, and Reason Sequence of Engagement) developed by Dr. Bruce D. Perry, provides bottom-up strategies (from the brainstem to the cortex), and top-down strategies (from the cortex to the brainstem) and relational strategies to

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<sup>3</sup> AFWI Brain Story Certification Course. See <https://www.albertafamilywellness.org/training/>.

reduce stress, increase self-regulation, and build resilience. He explains, “Regulation gives us the ability to put time and thought between a feeling and an action.”<sup>4</sup>

- **Building psychological safety.** Psychological safety is defined as creating a workplace climate in which people are comfortable expressing and being themselves. This comfort involves developing self-compassion (being loving toward ourselves instead of being self-critical), sharing a common humanity (no one is perfect – you are not alone), and mindfulness (notice our struggles without overreaction).
- **Prioritizing a positive workforce culture.** Staff culture encompasses staff values, beliefs, customs, practices, and behaviors. To prevent compassion fatigue, focus on the present and on what we can influence or control, set expectations that are reasonable, practical, and achievable, and check whether our behaviors match our values.
- **Increasing connection.** Compassion fatigue can spiral from zealotry to irritability, then withdrawal, and to becoming a ‘zombie’ and leaving your profession. This can be countered through increased resilience and compassion. The Compass Model of Wellness focuses on your heart (healthy relationships and handling emotions), your spirit (spirituality, rest, and play), your strength (stress resilience and care of your body), and your mind (being organized and getting the most out of education, work, and volunteer opportunities).

In the fifth CIM convening, the session, “Somatic and Embodied (SE) Approaches to Healing-Centered and Equity-Focused Work” presented by Becky Murillo reviewed foundational concepts of SE work, and introduced SE practices and strategies, including polyvagal therapy, which works on the autonomic nervous system that regulates physiological, and emotional responses to stress, trauma, and social engagement, particularly in relation to safety and connection.

The session provided a framework for using mind-body practices to uproot unconscious bias that involved: 1) introducing the science of the vagus nerve and its impact on the body’s social engagement system, 2) helping participants examine their sociopolitical identities and unpack bias-related somatic experiences, 3) introducing physical movements that discharge trapped energy from identified bias triggers, 4) guiding regulated breathing practices that help participants balance their nervous system and move toward self-regulation, facilitating evidence-based mindfulness practices and visualizations to increase compassion and social engagement, and 6) combining journaling and small group reflections to use the healing power of storytelling to interrupt unconscious bias.

**Integrating Racial Equity with Messaging.** The FrameWorks Institute provided training on how to reframe equity issues. The messaging competency added an equity-informed framing. The second convening included an introductory messaging session on how to frame communications across differences. The FrameWorks presenter, Julie Sweetland, talked about how different audiences have different levels of comfort with the concept of equity; the term is not widely understood and may have

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<sup>4</sup> What Happened to You?: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing (2021), by Oprah Winfrey and Bruce D. Perry/

been politicized and singled out. If so, other terms such as “fair and full”, “fair and just” can be used to replace the word ‘equity’.

The FrameWorks Institute shared a ‘starter elevator speech’ explaining the Texas Change in Mind initiative in a way that is designed to reach different audiences. The speech emphasizes that the goal of Change in Mind is to help organizations to consistently work toward fairness by developing resources where there are higher risks and fewer supports. These supports for families work best when they incorporate the latest science on how our brains are built and how they are shaped by adversity. Texas CIM is helping ten agencies to rethink and redesign different elements of their work so that they integrate brain science. At every step of the way, they are looking to strengthen their foundation of fairness.<sup>5</sup>

The third convening’s messaging session, “Framing to Convey Respect and Clarity” identified new strategies for moving forward with applying and integrating racial equity and messaging. The session talked about inclusive language that respects all individuals, promotes belonging, and disrupts the social norms that perpetuate inequity. The session offered two theories of policy change: 1) policy is changed via a change in the policymaker’s mindset or 2) when public mindsets create pressure on a policymaker to make a different decision. Effective solution frames were described as: 1) collective, community-level, and amenable to policy, 2) concrete, specific, descriptive, and possible to visualize or grasp, and 3) conceivable, feasible, and realistic.<sup>6</sup>

The FrameWorks presenter also provided a Cultural Models Research approach showing five ways to re-examine your communications to interact with the public’s existing pattern of thinking.<sup>7</sup>

- Look for ways that your communication might trigger individualism – the idea that problems, solutions, and outcomes are matters of personal choice and experience. If so, reframe the communication to advance the idea that collective decisions have created this context.
- Ask, are there ways your communication might trigger fatalism – the idea that improvement is impossible? If so, reframe the message to say that we have a problem, but solutions are within our reach.
- Might your communication trigger otherism – the idea that a social problem is caused by undesirable social groups with misguided values or behaviors? If so, revise the message to communicate that we all have a shared stake in this issue and a shared responsibility to address it.
- Are there ways your communication might trigger fixed hierarchy thinking – the idea that racial disparities are regrettable, but we can only do so much about it? If so, reframe the message to

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<sup>5</sup> Frameworks and Social Current, “Explaining Texas Change in Mind: A Starter Elevator Speech.” 2022.

<sup>6</sup> See also The Frameworks Institute, “Talking about Racism in Child and Family Advocacy: Framing Strategies”. January 2023. Sponsored by Prevent Child Abuse America. \

<sup>7</sup> The FrameWorks Institute. “Mind the Gaps and Traps! Reviewing Communications in Light of Cultural Models Research” 2022.

show that the systems we have designed create and continue these disparities, and we need to design these systems so that they work for everyone.

- Might your communication trigger rescue squad thinking – the idea that paints social services as saving participants from their struggles. If so, revise the message to say that good outcomes can become the new normal, with a solid approach that gets at root causes.

**Integrating Racial Equity with Developmental Evaluation.** Developmental Evaluation (DE) has been a core CIM competency since the first CIM cohort in 2015-2017. Created by Michael Q. Patton PhD in 2010, DE is an evaluation approach that provides real-time feedback to support the development and adaptation of innovative initiatives in the changing dynamics of complex environments.<sup>8</sup> It uses measures that are quickly developed and adapted as outcomes emerge or change, and provides rapid, user-friendly feedback to nurture learning.<sup>9</sup>

Systems Change Evaluation Framework. For the Texas CIM cohort, the NORC evaluation team added racial equity competency to DE, by incorporating the Equitable Systems Evaluation and Learning Framework (ESELF), which combines DE, culturally responsive and equitable evaluation (CREE) and other systems and complexity-informed evaluation (SCIE) methods.<sup>10</sup>

The ten-step evaluation process starts with creating a diverse evaluation and learning team (step 1), using systems thinking and an equity lens to understand the systemic and structural root causes and potential leverage points for addressing racial inequities (step 2), clarifying the initiative's equity-focused strategies and theories of change (step 3), while assessing and building the initiative's capacity to carry out its plans (step 4). The next five steps incorporate CREE, DE, and other SCIE approaches into designing the evaluation (step 5), creating evaluation metrics (step 6), collecting data (step 7), analyzing and interpreting data findings (step 8), and reporting and using the findings (step 9), through iterative cycles of learning, reflection, and adaptation action (step 10).

Equity-focused evaluation coaching. The Texas cohort's developmental evaluation convenings, webinars, coaching, and assessment activities, were conducted by the NORC evaluation team in partnership with subject matter experts Erin Watson (Weaving Change) and Efren Aguilar (UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities). Erin Watson designed and led the convening presentations and coaching sessions on including racial equity competency in sites' theories of change and developmental evaluation practices to support early childhood development.<sup>11</sup>

Community indicators of equity-related systems change. Efren Aguilar designed and led a foundational webinar, site-specific coaching sessions, and a convening 3 session, "Population-level Indicators of Systems Change" on using GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping and spatial analysis to

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<sup>8</sup> Patton, Michael Quinn. "Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Advance Innovation and Use (2010) by Michael Quinn Patton.

<sup>9</sup> See Better Evaluation: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/approaches/developmental-evaluation>

<sup>10</sup> Hargreaves, M, Coffee-Borden, B., and Jones, C.D. "Systems Change Evaluation Framework: (Revised 2025). NORC.

<sup>11</sup> Watson, Erin, "Mapping Causal Loops and Leverage Points within Early Childhood Development Systems to Guide Strategy Design" April 2024. See <https://ecdan.org/session4-event/>

identify and address geographic inequities in community outcomes, to help the sites understand the differences in the social distribution of adversity across income, race, and place, in their communities. The session described the ways that community efforts and systems can produce racialized inequality, identified strategies to increase resilience through collective action, and how to devise new equity strategies centered on marginalized populations' lived experiences. The session also identified new governance and design models to apply to internal organizational structures and programs. The session ended with a demonstration of how to use Texas-based local population-level data to assess racialized equity gaps and patterns of resilience.<sup>12</sup>

After the convening, he created a portfolio of GIS maps and spatial analyses for each CIM site to use and share with their community partners to develop policy-based approaches to remedy structural causes of childhood adversity. Some sites, such as Bastrop County, shared their maps with community partners and used the data to inform and update their strategies.

**Site-level Racial Equity Activities and Feedback.** Many of the sites prioritized EDI strategies in their site-specific theories of change, and actively engaged their staff in attending CIM convenings, webinars, EDI leadership coaching, and EDI assessments. For example, a Family Service Center of Galveston County team member noted that their organization sought to expand their EDI work. They administered the IDI assessment to every member on their staff. They hired a JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) consultant, and worked actively with the CIM EDI coaches to create and implement an organization-wide EDI plan. The Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Department developed values and corresponding behavior statements, which they embedded throughout their department. This work was grounded in the EDI learnings from the Texas Cohort coaching, webinars and convenings.

In convening feedback surveys, participants commented on how they were integrating racial equity principles and practices into their workplaces.

- After the second convening, participants made the following comments: Regarding the intersection of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and racial equity, one noted, "Our team enjoyed the in-depth dive into EDI principles," and "I had the biggest gap in my knowledge around equity. I will use what I learned during the convening as a springboard to gain additional knowledge in that area." Another reported, "I will be meeting with other leadership members on our team to discuss how to continue to implement EDI in our organization." A third commented, "We have created a DEI committee to work on our inclusivity statement and beyond."
- After the third convening, participants commented on the session on integrating racial equity principles and practices, requesting more information in future cohorts. One requested "more strategies for how to embed racial equity into systems that are historically inequitable." Another suggested, "A session on anti-racist work seems like it needs more than 30 minutes and would

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<sup>12</sup> Aguilar, Efen, "Unleash the Power of Equity Measurement and Collective Sensemaking to Uncover the Roots of Population Health Resilience and Flourishing" April 2024. See <https://ecdan.org/session6-event/>

be instructive to all.” A third requested, “Increase the diversity of presenters to reflect the population served (attendees).”

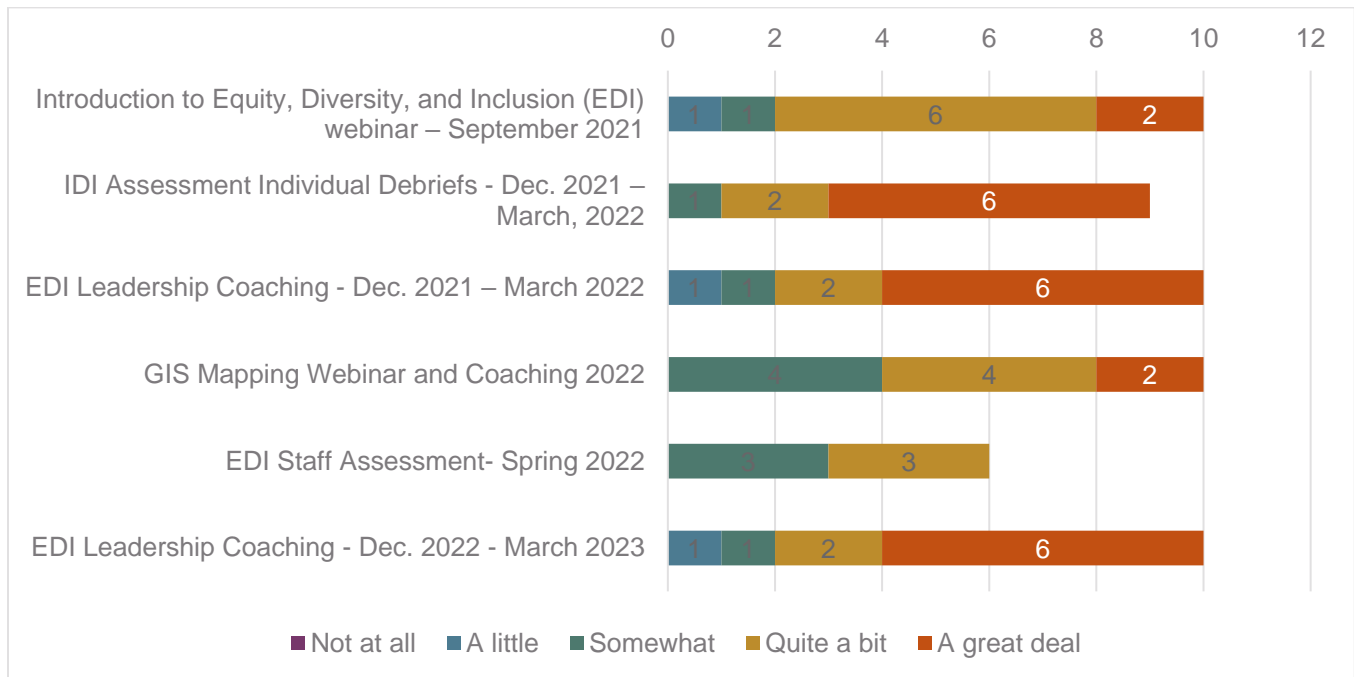
- After the fourth convening, which featured an all-day workshop on anti-racism strategies, in their open-ended responses to the convening’s feedback survey, participants noted their appreciation. One wrote, “Great group discussions. Good exploration of theories tied to race and DEI.” Another reported, “I love coming together and getting feedback from my peers. I learned some new strategies for our DEIB journey.” But others had suggestions on how to deepen the workshop. One participant noted, “We really needed some relationship-building practices embedded in the day before delving into such deep talks with strangers. Because everyone in the room is at different points and experiences in the DEIB journey, I wonder about discussions being held by affinity groups or other small groups to develop better relational ties and engage in deeper conversations.” One participant, however, was less sure about the content’s applicability to her work. She noted, “I appreciated it personally, but saw less application to my work situation.”

## Racial Equity Competency Results

**Utility of Racial Equity Activities.** In 2022 and 2023 progress reports, the Texas Cohort sites were asked to rate how useful the Texas cohort’s racial equity activities were to their organization’s learning. Most of the utility ratings of the site-specific leadership coaching and IDI assessment activities were higher than the utility ratings for the cohort-level webinars and presentations.

For the individual IDI assessment debriefs (December 2021 – March 2022) and the two series of EDI leadership coaching sessions (December 2021-March 2022 and December 2022-March 2023), six sites reported that they found these activities useful to their organizational learning “a great deal,” and two sites reported that they found these activities “quite a bit” useful to their organizational learning (see Exhibit 3).

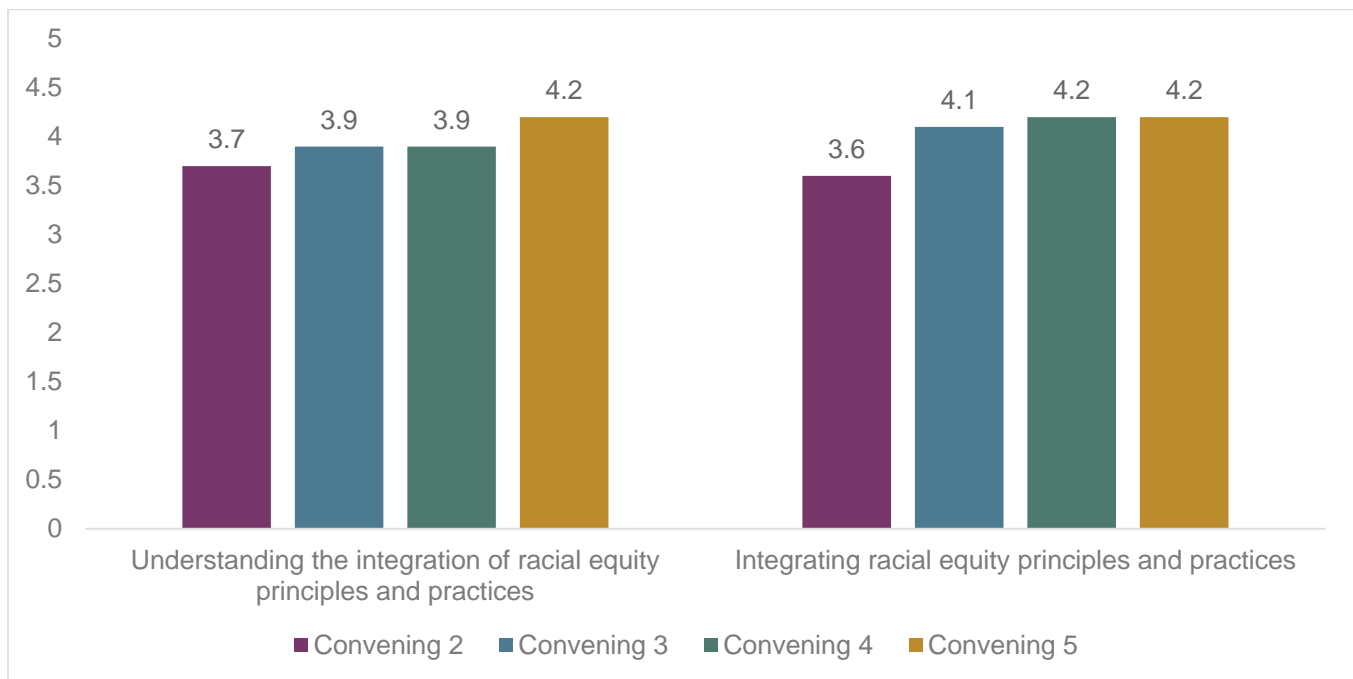
**Exhibit 3.** How useful were the following *racial equity* activities to your organization’s learning?



Note: Data from 2022 and 2023 Progress Reports

**Understanding and Use of Racial Equity Principles and Practices.** In the evaluation’s convening feedback surveys, participants were asked to rate their understanding and their application of racial equity principles and practices to their work. Across the five convenings, participants gradually increased their ratings of their understanding of these principles and practices and their ability to integrate racial equity principles and practices. Participants also often felt that their understanding of the topic was better than their ability to integrate these practices into their work (see Exhibit 4).

Participants noted that the conversation around racial equity principles and practices started the thinking process for their teams, and there were continued discussions on how to integrate this work into their agencies. Many participants commented on racial equity in their open-ended questions, noting that this was a topic they are continuing to learn about. Some participants noted that there were gaps in their knowledge around this topic or they are working on being more informed about racial equity. They appreciated learning from other cohort members. Participants noted that they “appreciated an equal focus on the racial equity aspect of this opportunity.” In Convening 4, participants were positive about the time dedicated to racial equity and integration into the lunch conversation, noting that “I am appreciative of the thought-provoking questions and opportunities to share as a table and out loud” and that lunch conversations helped to “break down pre-existing biases.” One respondent importantly noted that “racial equity is a lifetime work piece.”

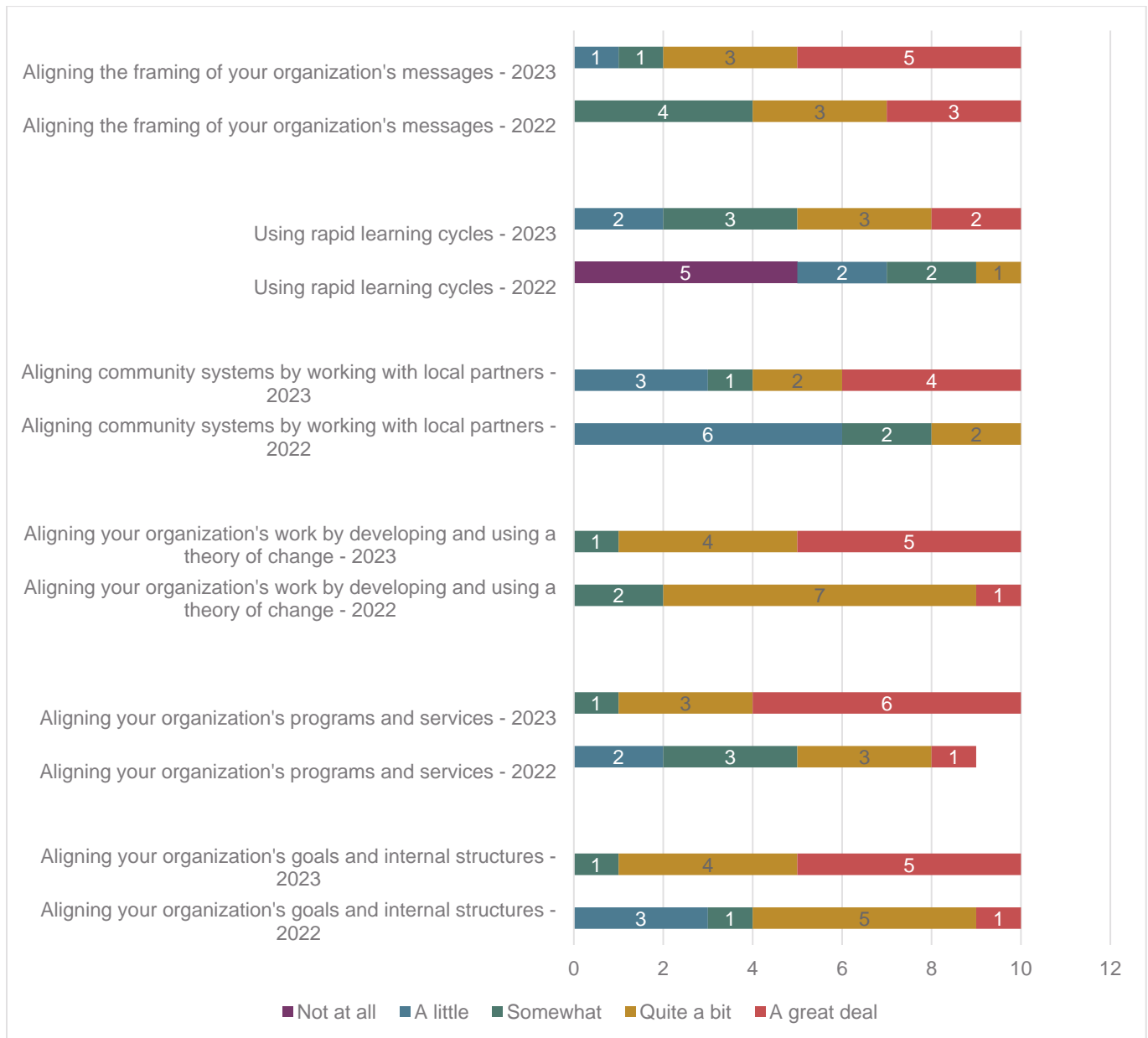
**Exhibit 4.** Understanding and Applying Racial Equity Research and Application

Note: Data from results of five Convening feedback evaluations

**Aligning Racial Equity with Other Competencies.** In the 2022 progress reports, sites were very spread out in their reported progress in aligning their organization’s EDI activities with brain science, with 4 sites reporting that they had made “a little” progress, 2 sites reporting “some” progress, 3 sites reporting “quite a bit” of progress, and only one site reporting “a great deal” of progress. In the 2023 progress report, sites were much more likely to report progress with 3 sites reporting “some” progress and 7 sites reporting “quite a bit” or “a great deal” of progress. The progress reports in 2022 and 2023 also indicated the organizations’ progress in incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion principles in the Change in Mind competencies. Across all competencies, *more organizations were reporting that EDI was incorporated “a great deal” in 2023 than 2022*, and in 2023 none were reporting “not at all.”

In their 2023 progress reports, the Texas Cohort sites discussed how they had made organizational changes including creating EDI workgroups/committees to discuss implementing EDI principles in the strategic plan. For example, in September 2023, the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services (TACFS) launched its Equity and Access Fund. The fund gave community-based and nonprofit providers to apply for full and discounted TACFS memberships and related conference scholarships. Other organizational changes included EDI onboarding training, sessions at staff retreats on EDI, and educational sessions around having difficult conversations and understanding diverse identities. Staff surveys helped identify these areas of need. One site wrote about how they had involved community-based partners to provide programming to their staff about understanding cultural differences in the populations they served. Three sites also mentioned updating their language to be more strengths-based and inclusive with the families and communities they served.

**Exhibit 5.** How would you rate your organization’s progress in the following areas with equity, diversity, and inclusion principles?



Note: Data from 2022 and 2023 Progress Reports

**EDI Assessment Findings** Social Current administered an EDI Staff Assessment to all 10 participant sites in 2022. After Change in Mind concluded, four of the ten organizations completed the EDI Staff Assessment again, providing Social Current with pre- and post-assessment data for analysis. The EDI Staff Assessment asked about seven domains: Psychological Safety; Sense of Belonging; Organization Culture; Organizational EDI Journey; Leadership, Directors, and Management; Human Resources; and Learning.

NORC analyzed the changes in the EDI assessment scores for each survey domain, comparing the baseline assessment scores to the post-project assessment scores across for the four organizations. For the four organizations together, **NORC found statistically significant positive changes in respondents' scores in four of the seven domains: 1) the Organizational EDI Journey domain; 2) the Leadership, Directors, and Management domain; 3) the Human Resources domain; and 4) the Learning domain.**

Overall, the four organizations showed the most growth in three areas: the Organizational EDI Journey and Leadership, Directors, and Management domains. The Organizational EDI Journey growth is particularly notable because it was the domain with one of the lowest means across the organizations in the 2022 pre-project assessment. This indicates that participating in the Texas Change in Mind cohort resulted in positive changes in how the sites' organizations understood, centered, and embedded EDI principals in their work.

Next, NORC analyzed changes across domains from pre- to post-program assessments for each of the four organizations. Note that the four organizations are not of equal size and that a larger number of respondents for an organization makes it easier to achieve statistical significance with the same numerical change in assessment.

For the Children's Museum of Houston, there were positive changes across all domains, and statistically significant positive changes for Leadership, Directors, and Management domain, the Human Resources domain, and the Learning domain. The positive score increases on the questions in these domains ranged from an increase of 0.4 to 0.6. points. The Organizational Culture and Organizational EDI Journey domains both had an increase in mean of 0.3 points, but did not reach statistical significance at the  $p < .05$  level.<sup>13</sup> For comparison, in the overall analysis of all four sites, the 0.3 change was enough to reach statistical significance, as all four organizations combined had a larger sample size.

TACFS showed positive changes for the Psychological Safety and Organizational EDI Journey domains, but neither of these changes was statistically significant.

Fort Bend County had positive changes across all domains except for the Learning domain. The site had statistically significant positive changes in the Psychological Safety domain (a 0.4-point change) and an especially large point change in Organizational EDI Journey (a 2.1-point change). There was also a larger positive effect for Organizational Culture, but the difference in pre- to post-project assessment scores is not statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level. There is no score for the Leadership, Directors, and Management domain as this site missed the "post" responses for this domain.

Santa Maria Hostel had positive changes for the Organizational EDI Journey domain, Leadership, Directors, and Management domain, Human Resources domain, and Learning domain. However, none of these domains had significant differences pre to post project. The largest score change was also on Organizational EDI Journey with a 0.4-point change but given the sample size of respondents at this

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<sup>13</sup>  $P < 0.05$  means that the probability of observing this difference in mean scores by chance is less than 0.05.

organization (smaller than Children’s Museum of Houston), this difference does not reach statistical significance at the  $p < .05$  level.

**Racial Equity Competency Evaluation Findings.** To assess changes in Texas CIM competencies over time, in 2023 the ten CIM sites and three comparison sites were asked to consider how much each statement described their organization “today and a year ago”. NORC calculated the mean for each 2023 statement and retrospective 2022 statement and compared them using a means comparison test (t-test). NORC found that all ten CIM sites reported higher mean scores across most of the survey’s indicators for 2023 compared to the retrospective 2022 statement on the same survey. These higher mean scores provide subjective evidence that the CIM sites increased their organizational brain science capacity over this period. In contrast, the three comparison sites reported no significant change in scores on from 2022 to 2023 using the 2022 retrospective questions.

Looking at the Sites’ Organizational Assessments, the **Texas Cohort sites reported significant increases in how well their organizations systematically worked to address inequities in service delivery (2023 mean=3.4 compared to 3.0), the extent to which enhancing professional development to improve staff’s cultural competence is an organizational priority (2023 mean=3.5 compared to 3.0), and the extent to which enhancing professional development to improve staff bilingual capabilities is an organizational priority (2023 mean=2.7 compared to 2.4).** There was a slight increase in the extent to which working with partners to achieve durable improvements in community conditions was an organizational priority (2023 mean=3.8 compared to 3.6), but this was not statistically significant.

The comparison sites showed no change in how well their organization worked to identify inequities in service delivery (2023 and retrospective means=3.1), and how much enhancing professional development to improve staff bilingual capabilities is an organization priority (2023 and retrospective means=2.4). There was a slight decrease in how much enhancing professional development to improve staff cultural competence was an organizational priority (2023 mean=3.1 compared to 3.2), and a slight increase in how much working with partners to achieve durable improvements in community conditions was an organizational priority (2023 mean=3.9 compared to 3.7). Neither of these changes was statistically significant.

## Conclusions and Implications

### Racial Equity Competency Conclusions

#### How did Texas Change in Mind adapt to include a focus on racial equity?

With a timely gift of additional grant funding in 2021, the Texas cohort was able to add an important racial equity component to the CIM model at the start of the project. However, at the same time, the Governor of Texas imposed state-level EDI restrictions that challenged the Social Current leadership

team to work around the restrictions and integrate the racial equity competency component into the Change in Mind curriculum. These adaptations helped the participating sites develop EDI strategies that were effective in the Texas context.

The Alliance for Strong Families and Communities/Social Current launched the two-year Texas cohort of the CIM Model during a challenging time, experiencing major setbacks at national (pandemic restrictions), state (EDI restrictions), and organizational (project director turnover and organizational merger) levels throughout the life of the project.

The project adjusted by hiring a new CIM Institute and Texas cohort director who worked with Social Current's Director of Practice Excellence to update and adapt the brain science, messaging, and evaluation competency areas to fit the Texas context and to integrate a racial equity competency area with an EDI focus. What emerged was an enhanced CIM adaptation, rather than an exact CIM replica.

The CIM leadership prioritized the content of the convenings to integrate the new racial equity competency into the Texas curriculum. The cohort's learning activities included five convenings, webinars, coaching sessions, and peer networking activities. The CIM leadership team designed every convening to include sessions on brain science, racial equity, messaging, and developmental evaluation competency topics at program, organization, and systems pathway levels.

***Overall, the sites were quite satisfied with the learning activities and considered them useful for their organizations' learning, including racial equity competency.*** For brain science activities and messaging activities, nine of ten sites rated the activities as "a great deal" or "quite a bit" useful. For racial equity and developmental evaluation activities, nine or more sites rated the evaluation coaching and EDI coaching as "a great deal" or "quite a bit" useful. Other activities such as completing evaluation surveys and IDI assessments, received lower ratings. Among activities, the third convening received the highest utility and satisfaction ratings, possibly because it was the first in-person convening in the cohort or had the best content.

**What were the outcomes of the Racial Equity Competency Component of the Texas CIM model?**

***The success of the CIM sites in increasing the racial equity competency of their organizations is corroborated through organizational assessments conducted by Social Current's EDI team, and through NORC's external evaluation.***

Social Current administered the EDI Staff Assessment to all 10 organizations in the Texas Change in Mind cohort in 2022. After Change in Mind concluded, four of the ten organizations completed the EDI Staff Assessment again, providing Social Current with pre and post assessments for analysis. Overall, the four organizations showed the most growth in three areas: the Organizational EDI Journey and Leadership, Directors, and Management domains. The sites' organizational EDI Journey growth is particularly notable because it was the domain with one of the lowest means across the organizations in the 2022 pre-project assessment. This indicates that participating in the Texas Change in Mind cohort resulted in positive changes in how the sites' organizations understand, center, and embed EDI principals in their work.

**NORC's rigorous evaluation documented the Texas cohort's success in increasing the competency of participating sites in all four competency areas – brain science, framing and messaging, developmental evaluation, and racial equity.** Among the Cohort's components, the integrated brain science and racial equity competency areas were the most important. Across the five convenings, participants gradually increased their ratings of their understanding of racial equity principles and practices and their ability to integrate racial equity principles and practices. Participants also often felt that their understanding of the topic was better than their ability to integrate these practices into their work.

In the 2022 progress reports, sites were very spread out in their reported progress in aligning their organization's EDI activities with brain science, with 4 sites reporting that they had made "a little" progress, 2 sites reporting "some" progress, 3 sites reporting "quite a bit" of progress, and only one site reporting "a great deal" of progress. In their 2023 progress reports, sites were much more likely to report progress with 3 sites reporting "some" progress and 7 sites reporting "quite a bit" or "a great deal" of progress. Across all competencies, more organizations were reporting that EDI was incorporated "a great deal" in 2023 than 2022, and in 2023 none were reporting "not at all."

In 2023, the ten CIM sites and three comparison sites were asked to consider how much each statement described their organization "today and a year ago". The Texas CIM sites reported *significant increases* in:

- how well their organizations systematically worked to address inequities in service delivery (2023 mean=3.4 compared to 3.0),
- the extent to which enhancing professional development to improve staff's cultural competence is an organizational priority (2023 mean=3.5 compared to 3.0), and
- the extent to which enhancing professional development to improve staff bilingual capabilities is an organizational priority (2023 mean=2.7 compared to 2.4).
- There was a slight increase in the extent to which working with partners to achieve durable improvements in community conditions was an organizational priority (2023 mean=3.8 compared to 3.6), but this was not statistically significant.

***In contrast, the three comparison sites showed no change in how well their organization worked to identify inequities in service delivery. (2023 and retrospective means=3.1), and how much enhancing professional development to improve staff bilingual capabilities is an organization priority (2023 and retrospective means=2.4).***

There was a slight decrease in how much enhancing professional development to improve staff cultural competence was an organizational priority (2023 mean=3.1 compared to 3.2), and a slight increase in how much working with partners to achieve durable improvements in community conditions was an organizational priority (2023 mean=3.9 compared to 3.7). Neither of these changes was statistically significant.

## Implications for Future Cohorts

The Texas CIM cohort learned three racial equity lessons that have implications for future CIM cohorts.

First, the addition of the racial equity component to the CIM model created an opportunity for the participating sites to review the social, economic, and geographic distribution of adverse and positive childhood experiences in all three child, family, and environmental realms of ACEs. They were able to use this information to review and adjust their goals, strategies, and theories of change to improve the lives of all residents and expand the reach of their work to more families with service needs.

Second, the success of the Texas cohort depended, in part, on the dedicated and active engagement of the participating sites, including their senior leadership. Sites' leadership preoccupation and focus on the pandemic and related turnover among sites' staff, may have limited their engagement, reduced their understanding of key concepts, limited their uptake of specific skills, and hindered the implementation of their EDI action plans. More site-level capacity and commitment to meet the Texas CIM initiative's participation requirements might have prevented or mitigated some of these issues.

Third, the success of the racial equity competency component was achieved under challenging circumstances. The pandemic's social distancing rules led to the virtual implementation of the first two convenings. The Texas Governor's EDI restrictions limited the use of racial equity-related language in schools and other settings. At Social Current's organizational level, turnover at the CIM director level meant that the new leadership had to reconstruct or reinvent existing program components with relatively little prior documentation, while developing a successful curriculum for the new racial equity competency element. Now that new CIM program manuals have been created, the task of replicating and adapting the Texas CIM model for future cohorts will be much easier.