



## **Racial Equity Team Charter Circle Yoga Cooperative**

### **PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Racial Equity Team is the steward of Circle Yoga Cooperative's racial equity work. The team is charged with imagining and working toward a more equitable Circle Yoga that is a place of belonging for all who wish to engage with us. The team carries out its work by:

- Facilitating inquiry and dialogue among teachers, staff, and students to understand both what is needed to ensure greater equity at CYC and what stands in the way of that goal.
- Educating ourselves and initiating brave conversations to deepen our understanding of how racism, privilege, oppression, and inequity show up at CYC.
- Building relationships with people and organizations who are typically not included or centered in yoga spaces to support a greater diversity of voices & perspectives at CYC.
- Ensuring that a respect for the roots of yoga and mindfulness are reflected in our teaching, programming, and business practices.
- Creating an equity plan that defines goals and metrics for equity at CYC, and conducting regular assessment towards those goals.
- Keeping the work of equity ongoing and continually responsive to the needs of the organization.

We have chosen to use an explicit race-based lens in the first phases of its work, recognizing that many of the tools and frameworks for addressing all areas of marginalization and oppression (including sexism, classism, ableism, sizeism, and more) grew out of the work and emotional labor of Black and brown scholars and activists. By starting with race, we can better build a foundation of shared understanding, language, and goals that will allow us to address inequity in all its forms in our community.

## MEMBERSHIP

Members of the newly-formed Racial Equity Team were appointed by the Executive Director in November 2022, following three organization-wide workshops held with Michelle Cassandra Johnson. Going forward, the recruitment and selection of team members will follow the guidelines and process outlined below.

**Size.** The core Racial Equity Team will be made up of no fewer than 5 and no more than 8 members. In addition, there will be opportunities for interested CYC teachers, staff and students to support or participate in Racial Equity Team projects or initiatives.

**Composition.** The Racial Equity Team will strive to compose itself with members representing a range of experiences, identities, organizational roles, and perspectives. Ideally, the team should include at least one member from each group of CYC stakeholders, including teachers, staff, and students. Membership should also include the Executive Director or another designated member of the management team. When deemed appropriate, the team may also include an external representative who brings a skill set that can help advance the work of the Racial Equity Team.

**Preferred Qualifications.** Members of the Racial Equity Team should ideally have:

- An understanding of the existence and impact of racism and other oppressions that perpetuate societal inequities;
- A commitment to self-reflection and challenging one's perceptions and biases;
- An ability to articulate the value and benefit of eliminating bias, discrimination, and institutional racism;
- An ability to stay engaged in difficult conversations on bias, racism, and privilege;
- The willingness to be courageous, take risks, ask questions, and speak truth to power; and
- Some previous experience with working on equity issues, either professionally or in community/group settings.

**Recruitment.** When there are vacancies on the Racial Equity Team, the team will recruit new members through both an open application process and targeted recruitment.

In the open application process, all worker members of the cooperative will receive an announcement by email. Those who wish to join the team will have the opportunity to nominate themselves and explain their interest and qualifications using an electronic form. Once nominations are received, the team will consider all candidates and select new members based on the preferred qualifications listed above and as well as current needs of the team. As noted

above, the team will recruit with an eye on representation across roles within the organization and experiences, identities, and perspectives.

**Term Lengths.** Racial Equity Team members are expected to serve a term of at least two years. At the end of each calendar year, the team will review its membership to determine if its composition can effectively carry out the work and if all members can maintain the required time commitment. If new members are required, the team will follow the recruitment options described above. Ideally, no more than half of the team will be new at any one time, so that onboarding and acclimation of new team members can be done with the support of existing members. Individual membership is limited to 6 contiguous years at a time. This term limit does not apply to the Executive Director or the designated representative from studio management.

**Compensation.** We recognize that members of the Racial Equity Team bring varying levels of emotional labor to the work, typically based on their social location and experiences with racism, privilege, oppression, and inequity. Circle Yoga is prepared to compensate any team members, not including the Executive Director, at a rate of \$25 per hour for team meetings and for any additional team-related work that has prior approval by the Co-Chairs. Team members who are interested in receiving compensation for their participation should email the Co-Chairs with their request. The team member will be asked to complete an annual contract and W-9 for IRS purposes. They should then submit team-related hours to the Co-Chairs by email before the last day of each month.

## TEAM STRUCTURE AND CULTURE

**Co-Chairs.** The team is co-chaired by the Executive Director (or a designated member of studio management serving on the Racial Equity Team) and one other team member who is elected by the Racial Equity Team. Co-Chairs will schedule meetings, prepare the meeting agenda, and ensure consistent and timely meeting documentation and meeting note distribution.

**Shared agreements.** Racial Equity Team members commit to [Shared Agreements for Engagement](#) that reflect the norms and expectations for participation in the group. These agreements should be reviewed regularly and may be amended by a vote of the team at any time. Shared agreements are intended to provide guidelines and support for the group, especially when situations of conflict and discomfort arise.

**Meeting facilitation.** Facilitation of Racial Equity Team meetings rotates, so each team member has the opportunity to facilitate. Prior to each meeting, the member tasked with facilitating will check in with the Co-Chairs to review the draft agenda and priorities for the meeting.

**Meeting format and duration.** The team opens each meeting with centering or a mindfulness bell. At the end of each meeting, we reserve a few minutes for feedback and reflection to capture threads of learning while they are fresh, flag items that need further consideration, or identify areas of conflict or discomfort that still need attention. In general, team members should

expect to commit 60 to 90 minutes for team meetings, once or twice per month, via Zoom.

## **DECISION MAKING PROCESSES**

**Decision making.** Core Racial Equity Team Members vote on decisions. A quorum is required to make decisions. Quorum is total membership minus two. When making decisions, we strive to reach consensus, a decision-making method where the group reaches substantial, though not necessarily unanimous, agreement on matters of overall direction and policy. In general, we strive to follow [Fist to Five Voting and Consensus](#) practices.

If the team is not able to reach consensus, the vote is finalized when we reach consensus minus two. Dissenters will be able to explain their dissent to the group and ask for a revote. Dissenters will also have the opportunity to document their dissent and the reasoning behind it in meeting notes.

**Communicating with studio leadership.** The Racial Equity Team brings recommendations and decisions to CYC staff leadership and/or the board of directors via email. The Executive Director or designated member of studio management helps to determine if communication should be with staff leadership, board membership, or both. CYC staff leaders or the board chair will follow up with feedback via email. The team discusses the feedback at their following meeting or via email. If the team is in agreement with the feedback, they confirm with CYC staff leaders and/or the board chair and draft messaging to staff and teachers. If the team disagrees, the team identifies and votes on possible solutions to discuss with staff or board leadership, and comes to resolution. Any communication from the team to all staff and teachers should be approved by the Executive Director before sending.

**Changing the Charter.** We expect the work approach of the Racial Equity Team to change over time based on the needs of the organization. When appropriate, this Charter can be updated with a vote by Racial Equity Team (consensus or consensus minus two) and approval of the Executive Director.

## **ADOPTION OF THIS CHARTER**

This Charter was adopted on February 21, 2024.

By:   
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Matthew Lyons, Board Chair  
Circle Yoga Cooperative

By:   
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Anne Kennedy, Executive Director  
Circle Yoga Cooperative