

Prioritizing Equity in Nutrition Research

The Challenge

Disparities in nutrition and food access are deeply rooted in structural inequities. This extends even to the evidence base meant to inform programs and policies geared towards supporting families in accessing healthy foods.

HER's Role

HER applies an intentional equity lens to all funded projects. All funded research teams must demonstrate the relevance to diverse populations disproportionately affected by nutrition inequities. Ideally, funded projects will address the root cause determinants of health and promote fair access to nutritious foods.

- Collaborated with leading health equity expert, Shiriki Kumanyika, PhD, MPH, to develop the landmark “Getting to Equity in Obesity Prevention” *framework* and toolkit. This resource provides a roadmap for understanding and addressing the social, political, and environmental factors that perpetuate inequities in nutrition and health and a tool to assess the potential equity impact of research proposals.
- Provides equity-focused learning opportunities to grantees and researchers, helping them integrate racial equity principles into their methodologies.
- Prioritizes the inclusion of diverse researchers through targeted funding opportunities and technical assistance.

Impact

- **Diversifying the Field:** Funded early career researchers from underrepresented and historically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Coaching Early Career Researchers:** Launched the Early Stage Investigator Work Group to provide professional development, funding, and collaboration opportunities for junior investigators who were within 10-years of receiving their terminal degree.

Why it Matters

To ensure widespread access to healthy food, policies and programs must be driven by research that explicitly addresses and aims to improve the structural inequities that make it harder for diverse populations to get enough nutritious food to feed their families.

