



Glossary of Terms

Anti-Racist – The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.

Backbone – The backbone staff of Norwalk ACTS is the coordinating body of the partnership. They provide cornerstone capacity, convene and facilitate meetings, and align the efforts and resources of members and community partners who work to improve agreed upon community level outcomes.

Collective Impact – Bringing people together, in a structured way, to achieve social change. Rooted in the belief that no single organization alone can create large-scale, lasting social change on its own.

Community – The residents (children, young adults, adults, and seniors) who live in Norwalk and the people and organizations who work to help make Norwalk a better place.

Community Advocate (CA) – A volunteer 14 years or older who is representative of the Norwalk population. CAs listen and lead discussions about lived experiences, develop solutions to address challenges and barriers, share Norwalk ACTS information, and recruit other key grassroots community members to advocate at the city and state level for or against specific policies affecting Norwalk children and families.

Community Engagement – Consistent and persistent engagement with an entire community for the purpose of establishing a foundation of partnership, trust, and empowerment.

Cornerstone – The key 'ingredients' embedded into all of our work along the cradle to career continuum. They are essential elements to moving the needle on population level changes.

Cradle to Career – A continuum of development from birth to early adulthood during which intentional steps are taken to prepare children and young people for education, work, and life success.

Data Culture – Collective behaviors and beliefs of people who value, practice, and encourage the use of data to improve decision-making. As a result, data is woven into the operations, mindset, and identity of an organization.

Data Infrastructure – Delivers performant, usable, reliable, and efficient platforms and end-user tools for the collection, management, and analysis of data to help teams make data-driven decisions and support data-intensive applications.

Data Literacy – The ability to read, understand, create, and communicate data as information. Data literacy focuses on the competencies involved in working with, and understanding data.

Disaggregated Data – The presentation of data broken into segments, for example test scores for students from various ethnic groups instead of in the aggregate, for the entire student population.

Disproportionality – Disproportionality reflects an over-representation or under-representation of a racial/ ethnic group in a specific category in relation/comparison to their overall representation.

Equity – The quality of being fair and impartial.

Implementation Team (IT) – “Leadership Team” of the various parts of the systems change work – micro, mezzo, macro along the cradle to career continuum with the cornerstones and Initiatives. IT members are cross-sector partners who provide strategic guidance, decision making, and advocacy in support of NACTS.

Initiative – Groups of cross-sector partners and community members who work to improve a selected community-level outcome using continuous improvement strategies. Each of our initiatives spans sections of the cradle to career continuum.

Intersectionality – A sociological term coined by Kimberle Crenshaw that identifies various forms of discrimination and disempowerment based on intersecting and overlapping identities such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, and religion.

Oppression – Systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm; when some people are denied something of value, while others have ready access.

Policies – Laws, regulations and other rules that guide actions taken by organizations, institutions, and/or local, state, and federal governments.

Power Structures – Individual or groups of people with the ability and authority to make decisions and influence policies and practices.

Practices – Everyday actions and decisions of individuals, organizations, and institutions.

Race – A social construction based on historical categorization of people based on appearance and shared culture.

Race Equity – A process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone. It is the intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems, and structures by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of people of color.

Racism – A system of social structures that provides or denies access, safety, resources, and power based on race. Racism is different from discrimination or racial prejudice. Racism is race discrimination plus power. Its complexity and structural nature has allowed racism to recreate itself generation after generation, such that systems that perpetuate racial inequity no longer need racist actors or to explicitly promote racial differences in opportunities, outcomes and consequences to maintain those differences. It is a form of oppression based on the socially constructed concept of race exercised by the dominant racial group (whites) over non-dominant racial groups.

Racism is defined as operating at the following four levels:

- **Internalized Racism** – The set of private beliefs, prejudices, and ideas that individuals have about the superiority of whites and inferiority of people of color. Among people of color, it manifests as internalized racial inferiority. Among whites, it manifests as internalized racial superiority.

- **Interpersonal Racism** – Occurs between individuals when we bring our private beliefs into our interaction with others.

- **Institutional Racism** – Discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and practices, inequitable opportunities and impacts within organizations and institutions, based on race.

- **Structural Racism** – A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing, ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.

Resources – Supplies or sources of money, materials, staff, and other assets that can be drawn on by a person or organization in order to function effectively.

Social Justice – The view that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities. **Systems** – A group of related parts that work together.

StriveTogether

Norwalk ACTS is a member of the StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network. StriveTogether partners with 70 communities across the country to advance equity so local success stories can become the reality for every child, everywhere. Together, we transform systems through a proven, data-driven framework for change to close disparity gaps in education, housing and more. The StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network reaches 14 million young people, more than half of whom are children of color.

Systems Change – Addressing root causes of social problems through an intentional process designed to fundamentally alter the components (resources, practices, policies, and power structures) of a system that cause the system to behave in certain ways.