When it comes to racial equity, Media Consortium outlets start at a wide variety of points, from outlets that focus primarily on race (like Colorlines and Race/Poverty/Environment) to outlets that historically have produced content by, for and about white people. The Race Forward workshop on February 19 in Philadelphia is designed for everyone on this spectrum. The workshop has two primary purposes:

1. To give all Media Consortium members a common language so that we can talk to each other, as a network, about how to address the challenge of institutional racism iin progressive media;

2 To help you identify ways to make your outlet more just, inclusive and racially equitable.

Here are some issues you may want to bring to the workshop to discuss/troubleshoot with your peers. (These are examples: not all of these issues will be relevant for your outlet):

* We are experts on issues like income inequality, money in politics, climate change—issues that affect people of color. But people of color aren’t reading us, and we are getting complaints that we are “too white.”
* We do a great job of reporting on race, and have developed a significant audience of people of color, but our donors/funders are still 100% white and don’t seem as invested in race as the rest of our audience. How do we bridge this gap?
*  We have been trying to hire reporters of color while juggling limited budgets and resources, but are struggling with low retention/high turnover of staff of color and the uneasy feeling that these reporters are “diversity tokens.”
* We’d like to work with local news outlets that reach communities of color—but editors and reporters at these outlets don’t trust us and won’t work with us. (or vice versa—we are local outlets that reach communities of color and would like to work with national progressive outlets, but they don’t trust us and won’t work with us.)

How will a one-day workshop address issues like these? The experts at Race Forward will begin by helping us develop shared concepts and language on racial justice matters. We will cover key definitions and distinctions (like how racial equity is different from diversity or equality) and explore equity approaches and strategies to help address institutional bias. We'll learn about tools for institutional change and practice the application of racial equity approaches and equity conscious decisionmaking.

In the afternoon, with these tools in hand, we will break into work groups designed to help you focus on the issues most relevant to your organization. In a hands-on planning session, you'll brainstorm specific areas of intervention at your organization that can lead to institutional change.

This workshop is meant to be a start, not an end. Think of it as strategic planning, but around racial equity rather than economic sustainability. As you know, the first strategic planning session usually identifies core challenges, which is a necessary step to identifying solutions. The Media Consortium is working to develop multiple means to support your outlets in using these strategies to produce solutions through the course of the next several years.