

## **THE CHALLENGE: TRANSFORMING AN ORGANIZATION VIA LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMATION**

- Leadership consisted of many deeply committed, smart individuals working in silos—often working in opposition to each other.
- There was a high level of mistrust in organization as a whole and across leadership as well.
- Deep division around race and equity in a continuing spiral of conflict caused questions if progress would ever be made, whose input was valued, and how race and equity integrated into mission.
- Toxic culture rooted in unaddressed performance issues and underperforming staff behaving poorly.
- Poor understanding and little process to support the cross-matrixed organization function.
- Conducted entirely under COVID-19-compliant, remote work conditions.

## **THE TECHNIQUE: TARGETED INTERVENTION TO STABILIZE LEADERSHIP AND BUILD BASIS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION**

- Build culture of trust by building a leadership team (not individuals) who trust one another.
- Trust was established in leadership team through clear agreement on day-to-day “basics” that are relevant, visible, and connect with every level of the organization:
  - Protocols for disruptive staff;
  - Mechanisms for staff input and innovation;
  - Consistency of response from all leaders; and
  - Buy-in to model the cultural norms and behaviors you want to see.
- Build a knowledge base and processes for a cross-matrix organization:
  - Who contributes to a project? When? How are they informed?
  - Agree upon and communicate to all staff how race and equity work integrate into mission-focused work.
- Define, develop, and coach individual leaders on high-visibility projects.

## **THE INTERVENTION**

- Bi-weekly 2-hour group coaching workshops held for a group of five key leaders. Workshops combined skills teaching, synthesis to their unique needs, and agreement of application.
- Five key leaders identified new workshop topics as their level of trust increased and the remote work environment triggered new issues.
- Individual coaching sessions conducted with each key leader, supporting individual challenges.
- Partner with race-and-equity program leads as consultant or coach to transform organizational activities around race and equity to a clear program.

## **THE RESULTS**

- Concrete agreements on day-to-day issues built a foundation for leadership to act as a team resulting in greater trust, and less effort wasted on conflict and miscommunications.
- With a consistent, visible race-and-equity program, leaders could speak consistently to its role, progress, and targets shifting the organizational dialogue around race and equity from continually re-answering the same questions, to raising new questions.
- Leadership noticed responsiveness and positivity in how staff engage with the new, modeled behavior of respect and inclusivity.