

APPR National Research Partner

Racial and Community Justice Committee

RTI International's Racial and Community Justice Committee

The **Racial and Community Justice Committee (RCJC)** is an internal committee of RTI International (RTI) researchers who inform RTI's work as the National Researcher Partner to the Advancing Pretrial Policy and Research (APPR) initiative.

The RCJC's role is to ensure that APPR's study of pretrial change is grounded in a commitment to equity and informed by people directly affected by pretrial systems.

"Systemic racism and its sequelae are among the world's most critical problems. RTI's vision includes a commitment to addressing global issues with science-based solutions in pursuit of a better future"

- **Stephanie Hawkins, RCJC Member**

RCJC'S GOALS

The RCJC's work arises from the understanding that vigorous discussions and debates about pretrial assessments raise important issues that can be examined through rigorous research. Guided by the RCJC, RTI seeks to produce transparent, accessible, and understandable research that:

- Sheds light on the impact of pretrial assessment tools and other pretrial changes on racial and ethnic disparities among people who are detained in jail.
- Resonates with and is responsive to the perspectives

of people with legal system involvement and their families and communities and advocates.

- Addresses the ways in which racism and inequity shape data, processes, and outcomes and fosters deeper understanding of how bias can be perpetuated in systems.

RCJC'S ROLE

In support of the above goals, the RCJC:

- Reviews literature, webinars, podcasts, and other media regarding research, practice, and current debates to keep RTI's researchers informed and updated.
- Consults with RTI researchers, develops racial equity plans for RTI's research activities, and assists in implementing these plans.
- Reviews RTI's reports, presentations, and other products to ensure they are aligned with the principles of racial and community justice.
- Ensures the inclusion in RTI's advisory board and qualitative research activities of people with current or former involvement in the criminal legal system and their families and communities and advocates.

RCJC'S MEMBERS

RCJC members are RTI researchers who have broad experience studying equity in the context of health and criminal legal systems. Beyond the APPR project, they are leaders in RTI internal organizations dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion and advancing racial equity.



MEGAN COMFORT is a qualitative sociologist whose research focuses on the repercussive effects of criminal legal involvement on the health, well-being, and close relationships of individuals and families. Dr. Comfort is committed to centering anti-racist theoretical approaches and methodologies, strengthening the programmatic and policy relevance of research, and contributing to an evidence base that advances equity and justice. She is a member of the RTI Applied Justice Research Division's Racial Equity Council.



STEPHANIE HAWKINS is a clinical psychologist with a passion and research focus on equity and understanding the context for optimal development among young people of color who reside in communities with limited resources and high levels of violence. She is dedicated to research that informs policy and policy that creates just and equitable communities. Dr. Hawkins leads RTI's Racial Justice and Transformative Research initiative.



JENN RINEER is a research psychologist who studies workplace/workforce issues. She has extensive research and applied experience focused on improving the health, well-being, and performance of employees, organizations, and the communities they serve. Dr. Rineer is most passionate about research that improves diversity and inclusion in organizations – specifically, identifying evidence-based strategies that remove barriers to success for disadvantaged groups and individuals. She is a member of the RTI Applied Justice Research Division's Racial Equity Council.



MONICA SHEPPARD is a research analyst with a background in Correctional Social Work. Ms. Sheppard has experience in evaluating criminal legal system reform initiatives and providing TTA for evaluation and sustainability projects. In addition to project work, Ms. Sheppard is a member of the RTI Applied Justice Research Division's Racial Equity Council, as well as the Diversity and Inclusion Committee whose mission is to attract, retain, develop and advance diverse talent.



ELIZABETH TIBADUIZA is a research public health analyst with extensive research and evaluation experience of initiatives and programs focused broadly on addressing social determinants of health and improving the criminal legal system. She is committed to conducting research that is culturally responsive and incorporates community engagement.

RTI International is the independent National Research Partner for APPR. For more information, visit advancingpretrial.org

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