

Racial Impact Assessment: A Tool to Address Implicit Bias in Decision-Making to Eliminate Disparities and Disproportionality Across Systems

What is Implicit Bias?

“Implicit or unconscious bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Much of the literature suggests that these biases are activated unconsciously, involuntarily and/or without one’s awareness or intentional control.”

-Kirwan Institute-State of Science, Implicit Bias Review

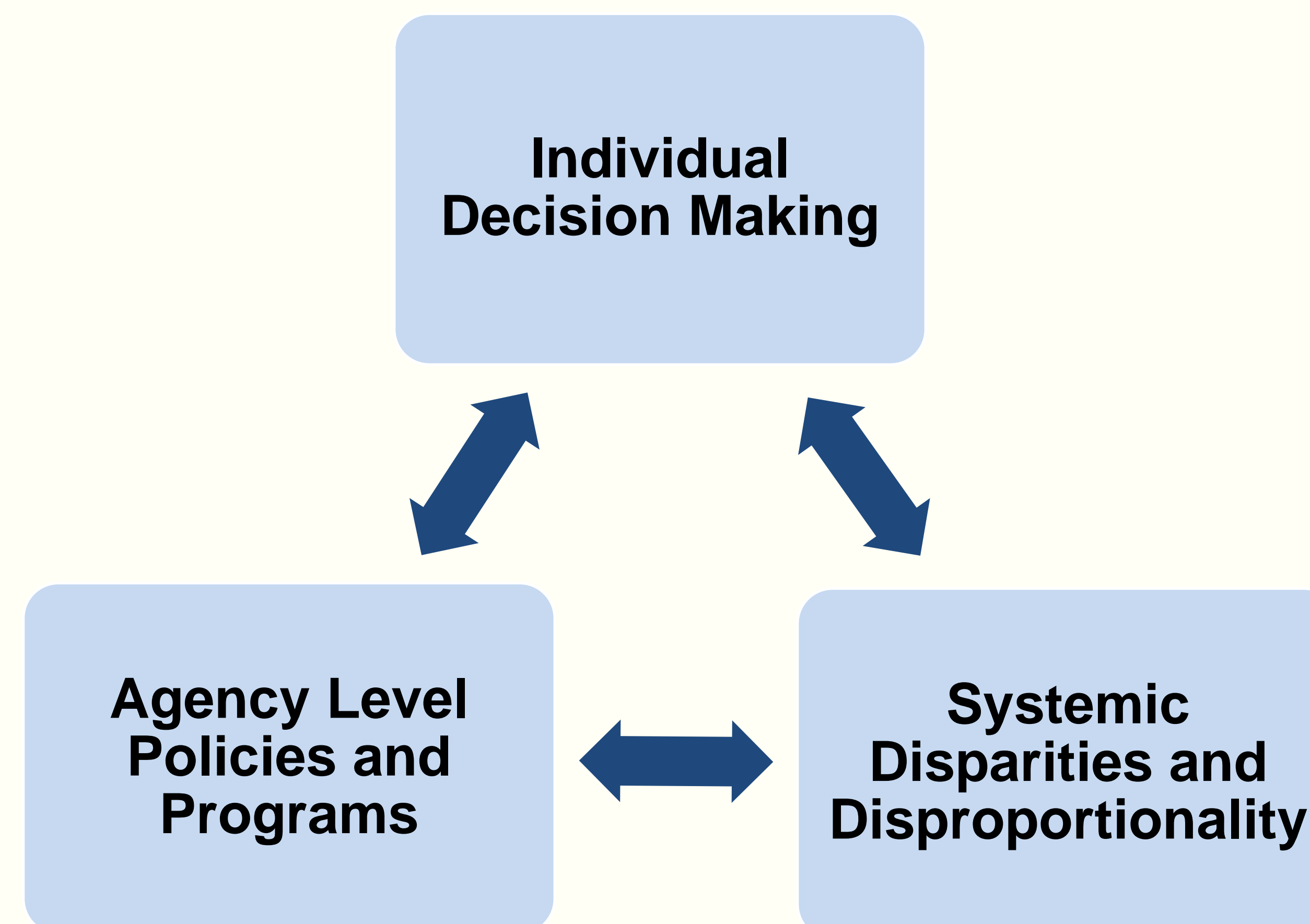
Implicit Bias in Decision-Making

- Concept was developed in 1995 by doctors Anthony Greenwald and M.R. Benaji
 - Arose conceptually as a way to explain the persistence of discrimination.
 - Posited that it was possible that our social behavior was not completely under our conscious control.
 - They developed the IAT (Implicit Association Test) to measure implicit bias.
- Also referred to as hidden or unconscious bias

Impact of Implicit Bias

- Implicit bias can effect our perceptions, priority setting, policy development, resource allocation, outreach, service delivery, marketing strategies, customer service and decision-making at all levels or the organization.
- Bias distorts how we see people and how we react to people.
- Implicit Bias affects how we behave, how we interpret the facts, how we hear the facts, and who gets the benefit of the doubt.

**“IN ORDER TO GET BEYOND RACISM,
WE MUST FIRST TAKE ACCOUNT OF RACE.”**
Justice Harry A. Blackmun



Racial Impact Assessments

- Racial Impact Assessments (RIA) provide a mechanism to systematically examine the impact on and unintended adverse consequences for racial and ethnic populations that may arise from proposed actions and/or decision-making processes
- Similar to fiscal or environmental impact statements
- Enables policy and/or decision-makers to anticipate and address racial or ethnic disparities arising from implicit bias and systemic racism and discrimination
- Considers alternative policies to accomplish the goals of proposed legislation without causing or contributing to avoidable racial and ethnic disparities

RIA: Two Key Questions

1. Are there potential unintended consequences for racial and ethnic populations?
2. What is the appropriate alternative course(s) of action?

California RIA Tool

Five Main Components:

1. Project Details
2. Key Considerations within Organizational Domains
3. Determining Impact for Racial and Ethnic Populations
4. Certification of Racial Impact Statement
5. Recommendations for Next Steps

Benefits of RIA

- Identification of potential adverse impacts of policy proposals and program development.
- Enhanced ability to meet the needs of all racial and ethnic populations.
- Improved quality of policies, and the public services, for which you are responsible.
- Reduced disparities and disproportionality.

Implementation in California

- RIA Tool and User Guide Developed by the CA State Interagency Team’s Workgroup to Eliminate Disparities and Disproportionality
- Collaborative workgroup efforts includes representatives of Social Services, Education, Public Health, Health Care Services, Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Programs, Corrections and Rehabilitation, Developmental Services, and Employment Development, as well as the Health and Human Services Agency, Emergency Management Agency, the California Children and Families Commission, the Workforce Investment Board and the Administrative Office of the Courts
- Purpose of RIA Tool: To help decision-makers assess the racial impact of decisions about policies, procedures, and programs

Application Across Organizational Domains

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| ➤ Public Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative Action | ➤ Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation |
| ➤ Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental Policies & Procedures • Legislative Analysis • Regulations | ➤ Stakeholder Involvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Committees • Community Planning Processes |
| ➤ Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal Management & Budget • Grants and RFPs • Contracts • Staffing & Human Resources • Staff Development | ➤ Research & Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Collection • Data Informed and Evidence-Based Practices • Outcomes & Indicators |
| | ➤ Compliance & Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audits • Enforcement |
| | ➤ Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Social Media |