For use with the video "Race and Public Policy: A Dialogue" --
youtube.com/watch?v=q0R8pPj0UaQ
(Length = 9:53)

The Applied Research Center (ARC) is a public policy institute advancing racial justice through research, advocacy, and journalism. Founded in 1981 to bridge efforts between analysts and activists, ARC has five program areas: Research, Public Policy, Media and Communications, Leadership Advocacy, and Journalism. Based in Oakland, California, with offices in Chicago and New York City, ARC also publishes ColorLines, the national newsmagazine on race and politics.


Feedback from audiences around the country suggests that the whole experience might be fun—as well as educational.
**DISCUSSION/TRAINING FORMAT**

**STEP 1**
**INTRODUCTION TO AUDIENCE**
(5-10 minutes)
For your discussion you need easel pad paper, butcher paper, or chalkboard.

**EXPLAIN PURPOSE**
This session has two purposes. The first is to surface a discussion about how public policies, even those that are seemingly “universal” or “race neutral” affect life chances for people of color. The second purpose is to examine how talking explicitly about the racial impact of a proposed policy will affect its success in the legislature. The video features activists from across the U.S., who are involved in policy struggles for racial equity.

Write a list of 6 to 10 policies for the group on butcher paper or on a blackboard.

Hints: Driver’s license legislation, new social security checks on all workers, exit exams/high stakes tests, language mandates, failure to pass racial profiling legislation, etc.

**STEP 2**
**WATCH DVD**
(10 minutes)

**STEP 3**
**Discussion Questions**
(15 minutes)

1. Did anything about the video surprise or jolt you?
2. Are there any points you strongly agree or disagree with?
3. Referring to the list of policies the group listed in the Introduction...
   - Did any of the policies listed talk about race directly?
   - Were the policies proposals successful?

**STEP 4**
**Small Group Session**
(15 minutes)
A number of activists in the video argued that “you can’t solve racism if you are unwilling to talk about race.” In small groups discuss the following two questions and list the top three answers.

1. Why are some organizations reluctant to explicitly address race in their policy work?
2. What are some reasons that an organization may want to “lead with race” in a policy fight?

**STEP 5**
**Debrief & Closing**
(15 minutes)
1. Have each small group list their top “reluctance”, second reason, etc. and write up responses. Do the same with reasons to “lead with race.” As a final debrief add any of the reasons listed in either category from the chart on the next page.
2. How can you build on this discussion to further your work?
   - List possibilities and thank participants.

For a shorter session, simply watch the DVD and discuss the following three questions:
1. Did anything about the video surprise or jolt you?
2. Are there any points you strongly agree or disagree with?
3. What are the ways that the video is relevant to your current work? (list)

**REASONS NOT TO ADDRESS RACE**

- Winnability: When addressing systemic racism, the policy or issue may seem unwinnable and there is a higher burden of proof.
- Difficult Frame: The frame goes against the common cultural myths of meritocracy, the level playing field and color blindness.
- Class versus Race: Racism is not viewed as a useful issue frame or handle for organizing campaigns - all inequality is viewed as primarily class-based rather than race-based.
- Too Complicated: “Racing” an issue makes it too politically charged, too complex, too loaded.
- Too Risky: Racism may be internally risky to address. There may be tensions simmering under the surface between different racial groups or there could be a backlash directed at the organization.

**REASONS TO LEAD WITH RACE**

- Promotes Equitable Policy Change: It addresses systems and structures of inequity, not simply the symptoms.
- Reveals Reality: Since racism is a major contributing factor to social inequities, leading with race provides an opportunity to dispel popular myths, clarify facts, challenge dominant cultural patterns and highlight values of equity.
- Can broaden the base of support for the issue—particularly in communities of color.
- Dispels myths, advances values. Exposing racial inequality can emphasize and advance values of equality, fair treatment, equal access, equity, civil rights, human dignity and justice.
- Build Movement Connections: Raising issues of race, if done thoughtfully and constructively, can unify, strengthen and expand organizations, coalitions, and the social justice movement as a whole.