

Acton Policy Against Racism – November 12, 2020

The Board of Selectmen hereby adopts the following policy concerning the Town's commitment to eradicating racism in our town.

The Board understands that implicit bias is unconscious and unintentional, and that systemic racism is embedded in societal practices that result in broader discrimination in criminal justice, education, employment, health care, housing, political power, and equal opportunity. As we endeavor to be an anti-racist and ethnically unbiased community, we will strive to identify, discuss, and challenge issues of racism and the impact it has on everyone who lives, works, goes to school, and passes through our community. The Board encourages all residents to join us in committing to:

Listening

- to voices of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color that inform the rest of us of the injustices they have long endured;
- by remaining quiet during moments of discomfort, when their stories challenge entrenched ideas and assumptions;
- throughout conversations about racism that require humility, courage, respect, and empathy.

Understanding

- the history of racism in the United States, and how it continues to operate today;
- how implicit bias and systemic racism affects our own ideology and actions, as well as the policies, programs, and practices in every sector of public and private life;
- white privilege and the inequities and disparities that give white people material advantages over People of Color.

The following objectives will be implemented under the direction of the Board, or the Board's designee if the Board designates responsibility to a staff member or existing committee, or creates a new committee:

1. The Town of Acton, in its actions, budgets, bylaws, hiring, policies, and purchasing decisions, will consider and strive to advance diversity, equity and inclusion.
2. The Town of Acton will oppose systemic racism in our community by implementing communication practices and other strategies and best-practices.
3. Informed by recommendations from the Town's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission, the Board of Selectmen will take specific actions related to addressing aspects of racism, and issues related to ethnic and religious groups. Implementation plans should involve the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, Town staff, Town boards, committees, and commissions, community groups, and members of the public. The process may be led by the Town Manager, the Board of Selectmen, or a board or committee designated by the Board of Selectmen. The Town will coordinate with the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Superintendent and School Committee, where appropriate.
4. This policy should be reviewed at least annually by the Board, Town Manager and other staff, and community stakeholders.