

## **A RACIAL EQUITY STATEMENT FOR THE TOWN OF NEEDHAM...**

Needham will be a community free of racism, racial bias, prejudice, and discrimination. Our residents, schools, businesses, organizations, and government will work together to identify barriers to racial equity and create solutions, opportunities, resources, and support for removing them.

1. We will work collaboratively and democratically toward a just, equitable, antiracist community.
2. We will work to identify and change current policies, procedures, practices, and cultural norms in Needham that prevent meaningful access to opportunities because of race.
3. We will create opportunities for the community to confront unpleasant truths and seek solutions that always amplify values of racial equity.
4. We will intentionally create spaces for respectful dialogue and difficult conversations toward racial amity.
5. We will actively engage with those who feel the impact of racism most directly, seeking their input, guidance, and honoring the wisdom of their experience.
6. We will commit as individuals to be intentional in our efforts to learn and practice anti-bias and antiracism, transforming our thinking, attitudes, and behaviors.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES...**

1. Racial equity in Needham means that the experiences of people of color are the same as those of the white majority – from day to day interactions, housing opportunities, interactions with the police and other first responders, employment, and educational opportunities, etc. On the path to racial equity...
  - a. People of color will see others of color in leadership roles in government, business, the school system, and civic groups.
  - b. Our community will have opportunities to learn a more complete version of American history and its relevance to today's challenges.
  - c. Students in schools will experience equity with regard to all aspects of their education (e.g. placement, acknowledgement, recognition, engagement, discipline, curriculum, and co-curricular involvement).
  - d. People of color will feel safe, validated, and treated equitably with respect to public safety (e.g. arrests, use of force, motor vehicle stops, traffic infractions, handcuffing, and criminal applications).
  - e. People of color will feel safe, validated, included, and treated equitably in all Town-related activities (e.g. town meeting/government, services, and events).
  - f. In the decision making process, the voices and experiences of people of color will be honored and respected as valid (e.g. equity in hiring, engagement and promotion, programs and events are inclusive and equity minded, intentional anti-bias efforts are employed in all considerations).
  - g. All races will want to live here – Needham will be a desirable community for everyone. The town will take proactive measures to support a more racially and economically diverse and inclusive population (e.g. housing access, mixed income, and diversity of housing stock).

2. A healthy and equitable community recognizes the harm created by implicit bias, intolerance and racism and strives to embrace diversity and inclusion by using a racial equity lens to promote anti-racist behaviors and attitudes in all aspects of civic and inter-personal living.
3. We value lifelong/ongoing self and group learning and critical social analysis to acknowledge and to further understand the dominance of white culture and privilege throughout US history, and the importance of disrupting racial structures that perpetuate it.
4. Becoming anti-racist means that we must tackle our own implicit bias, intolerance, and discriminatory lenses - thus, bringing about restorative justice, healing, and reconciliation to truly bring together the community we live in.
5. All members of the community commit to engaging with good will and respect in order to repair and build healthy relationships.

**SUPPORTING THE FOLLOWING INTENTIONAL PRACTICES WILL HELP NEEDHAM  
REALIZE THE VISION FOR RACIAL EQUITY...**

1. Seek to increase interactions and create/cultivate friendships across and among the various groups
2. Commit to self-education to have a better understanding of and be more informed about race, racism, racial equity, race amity, and race relations.
3. Foster safe environments for, and listen to residents who are, directly affected by racism and racial inequities.
4. Engage in meaningful and productive conversations on racial issues with town/community members.
5. Support those services, materials, expertise, scholarships, and organizations that advocate for racial equity.
6. Stand up, speak out, and act against racism and racial injustice.
7. Encourage vision, transformation and advocacy anchored in democratic action.
8. Encourage and build public understanding of the need to eliminate racial injustice.