



Town of Stow Select Board Anti-Racism Statement

Adopted September 26, 2023

Racism is not new in America, but the last decade has renewed a focus on race in our country. Actions have ranged from protests to community conversations to new laws being enacted and everything in between.

They were sparked at the national level by high profile killings of Black men and women, but these atrocities occurred on a foundation of centuries of decisions and actions that have been deeply embedded into our laws and culture. Conflicts over policies including desegregation, voting rights, redlining, criminal justice, and education have contributed to the racial tension we see today. We share the responsibility to learn about the history of race in America, to challenge ourselves to identify and correct areas of inequity, and to help address injustices so that we can work towards dismantling racism within all aspects of our community.

The Select Board recognizes and acknowledges several facts:

- We know from the direct experiences of our friends and neighbors that racism has and does occur in Stow.
- We know that many forms of racism are subtle and unconscious.
- We know that many forms of racism are systemic.
- We know that Black, Hispanic/Latine, Asian, and Indigenous peoples are underrepresented in regional municipal workforces.
- We know, despite the complexity and discomfort, that racism must be addressed proactively: it cannot be ignored if we wish to build a stronger community.

Acknowledgment of facts must be backed by action if they are to have meaning. We are proud of recent actions, including the Board's proclamations for Black History Month, Pride Month, and Native American Heritage Month and the formation of the employee Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion group and their awareness activities. The Select Board believes a workplace that attracts and retains diverse personnel will allow it to serve its citizenry more creatively, strategically, and productively and supporting the employee DEI program will ensure these objectives, goals, and priorities are maintained. While these steps are important, we know that there is more to do.

The Stow Select Board commits to continuously improving all town policies and procedures to address these challenges head on. We commit to a culture where everyone is welcome and everyone can thrive, regardless of their race. We also acknowledge that racism is often connected to a person's gender, age, sexuality, religious beliefs, class, or ability, and that our policies should account for those intersectionalities.

The Select Board does not act alone: Anti-Racism work must be carried out by the community. Policy is shaped by many hard-working volunteers and staff members. We encourage residents to continue this conversation, provide feedback, and serve on town boards and committees. Together we will continue building a town we are proud to call home.