

Proposal re Equity Consulting Network

To: Amherst Town Council

From: Councilors Bahl-Milne and De Angelis

RE: AMHERST TOWN COUNCIL: RETHINKING RACISM FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE TRAINING Submitted by Equity Consulting Network – Annie Rodriguez, Consultant-Racial Equity Training & O.D

Training Dates: April 10 and 11 from 9 to 5 with a ½ day follow-up to be scheduled on May 8th from 9 to 12 with an option of staying longer if the group has additional questions.

We are proposing that the Council participate as a body in an anti-racism training with the Equity Consulting Network (ECN) The virtual training would take place over a two-day period, with a 3-hour follow up meeting two to three weeks after the training. While the training is for Council members, we have invited the Town Manager and the Clerk of the Council to participate. The cost, which would be paid for out of the Council Budget line, is \$9,000.

Equity Consulting Network (ECN) is a team of Professional Development Consultants, Trainers, Community Organizers, Social Workers and Mentor/Life Coaches who represent a racially and culturally diverse network of people with expertise in providing organizational development consulting, racial/social justice & equity training, personal/professional coaching and a range of other consulting services.

ECN works with clients to strategically develop deep learning, engaging strategies, and transformative experiences by providing tools and resources to help tackle the underlying biases and systemic inequities in the workplace, community, and people's lives. ECN is committed to supporting organizations that are willing to invest the time, energy, and resources necessary for strategy implementation. Organizations doing this work move from understanding the underlying conditions, to developing genuine concern and to focusing on correcting problems.

The question for the Council is whether we are willing to do the hard work necessary to change widespread attitudes, assumptions, policies, and practices.

Training Description:

AMHERST TOWN COUNCIL: RETHINKING RACISM FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE TRAINING Submitted by Equity Consulting Network – Annie Rodriguez, Consultant-Racial Equity Training & O.D

Activity	Dates / Remarks	Outcomes
DAY 1: Rethinking Racism Part 1: ReThinking Individual Power: Conscious Level	REMARKS: All participants need to attend the	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examination of social biases in relation to social justice work & the value of individual relationships to power. Explicit/Implicit biases.• Understanding how socialization produces worldviews that blames individuals for institutional

1 ReThinking Institutional Power: Conscious Level 2	entire training with video camera on	failures and limits our ability to be effective. • Socialization biases regarding issues of community disempowerment. • Understanding implications of role of gatekeeper. PEOPLE UNAWARE OF POWER/DISEMPOWERED LEADS TO SOCIAL INJUSTICES: • Definition of Racism with a historical perspective that bridges social/class injustices that lead to U.S. racialized classifications that empowers/disempowers groups within present day context.
DAY 2: ReThinking Racism Part 2: ReThinking our individual blind spots and institutional blind spots. Conscious level 3: Organizing for Social Justice		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDENTIFYING OF BLINDSPOTS: Identifying individual & institutional blind spots using a race conscious relationship building lens • Understanding Internalized Racial Oppression Inferiority & Superiority and how it manifests within our work as a collective. • RETHINKING CULTURAL RACISM: Engage in a discussion about cultural • RETHINKING the relationship of Individual Acts, Institutional Policies & Cultural Values & Norms of Racism: examine imposition/disempowerment & relational vs. white (organizational) culture. • RETHINKING COMMUNITY: Identifying and understanding community to establishing community engagement. • Rethinking Racism to organize for social justice – Group discussion
Follow-up session: ReThinking Racism	It is recommended that the follow-up is scheduled no later than 4 weeks after the session (a date should be scheduled by the time the training occurs) and should be at least 3 to 5 hrs.	<p>The follow-up session will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow for participants to check in about where there are within the framework of the analysis and get clarity about anything that may have come up after training • begin to develop strategies to examine power (individual, institutional, & cultural) dynamics. Possible Goals: • Develop an Accountability Plan • Development of short term and long-term goals/strategies for action.

Drawing strength from the participants to build trust and respect, and to break down barriers through the commitment to engage in this work, we will use tools and methods tailored to the organization that challenge old ways of being and doing, and cultivate an environment of inclusion, engagement, leadership, and relationship development that will lead to the creation of an Racial Equity Framework that will inform your practices, policies, and serve as the resource for anti-racism organizational change. We recognize that there are many intersecting oppressions and will touch on our social identities and how they impact us within subordinated/power positions, which will connect all oppressions, with a focus on race and the injustices that stem from racialized history and belief systems that are reflected in American culture and institutions. Our approach to the work is to develop the concept of anti-racism based in theory and practice to action. It is an active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional, and systemic racism. Our anti-racism theory analyzes and critiques racism (including how it operates) and provides a basis for taking action. Various training and development models are used to provide insight, structure, and relevance that enables

participants to identify and understand defined implications around varying perceptions that may exist in the organization.

The methods will:

- be grounded in a conceptual analysis of racial and ethnic oppression using history as the foundation of creating a framework for understanding race and racism and racialized outcomes.
- be rooted in understanding issues of oppression and how racism manifest within individuals personal/institutional oppression
- Use a Power and “gatekeeper” model to understand the power that participants have over oppressed groups and communities in the positions they hold.
- providing language, definitions & conceptual framework for understanding the creation of race and racism
- support the need to acquire data and use it to move from individual to institutional understanding of racial & social inequities, to move to individual and institutional action.

References:

We (Pat and Shalini) have had a chance to work with Annie Rodriguez as one of the core trainers for the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISAB). Between the two and a half-day workshop for Undoing Racism and our conversation with her to explore whether she was a good fit for our town, we found her to be knowledgeable, skillful, and experienced in working with diverse groups to do the work of anti-racism, individually and collectively. After speaking with two of the three references provided to us, we are confident that Ms. Rodriguez will provide a customized anti-racism training that is critical for our leadership in town and will be worth our time and money. Below are summaries of our conversations with two out of the three references provided. We were unable to connect with Ms. Soto.

Brion Oak

Chief Equity Officer
City of Austin Equity Office
Austin, TX
(512) 974-7979

<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/equity-office>

Despite the recent tragedy and chaos in Texas, Mr. Oak took the time to call back and enthusiastically recommended Ms. Rodriguez. She has facilitated several workshops for their city that have included the Mayor, city councilors, city employees, and community members. They also work with GARE and said that Ms. Rodriguez was their favorite.

What made Ms. Rodriguez stand out for Mr. Oak is the fact that she's not just teaching anti-racism work but is also doing this work as an organizer in her community. She's knowledgeable about racism and brings a systemic lens to help leaders become "systems thinkers" instead of focusing on "individualistic interventions."

Among other things, their city hired Ms. Rodriguez to "normalize conversations around race and help people see that racism is systemic and institutional. They also had opportunities to explore the principles around empowerment and gatekeeping, see where the power is, and to look at the history of policy decisions from the perspective of their BIPOC community members. It has helped them create a shared language and move beyond "reform to transformation."

Amber Baker

PISAB Northwest - Portland Regional Office

360-852-7270

<https://www.facebook.com/peoplesinstituteptdx/>

As a core trainer at PISAB, Ms. Rodriguez worked with Amber Baker in the capacity of a mentor for the Undoing Racism training. She also worked with Ms. Baker's office, PISAB Northwest - Portland Regional Office, to create a structure for their local office to put anti-racism into practice in their community.

Ms. Baker wholeheartedly recommended Ms. Rodriguez. In Ms. Baker's words, "Annie went over and beyond what was expected of her as a mentor" at PISAB. She found Ms. Rodriguez to be very "committed to developing anti-racist leaders." Ms. Rodriguez has many years of experience in working with diverse organizations including City of Portland employees. She had many good things to say about Ms. Rodriguez including one of her strengths, "she doesn't pull back from what needs to be said, which is essential for this work."

Facilitators' Biographies:

Annie Rodriguez, M. Ed,

Senior Consultant - Equity Consulting Network

Social Justice and Institutional Change Consultant and Trainer

Trainer – C-Integral's Latinx Challenges Toward Racial Justice

Annie has a unique blend of Community Organizing, Training, and Organization Development Consulting. She works with institutions across the U.S. to influence racial consciousness, social justice and anti-racism change; working on the elimination of racial & social inequities.

Over the past 10 years, her work has mainly focused on racially equitable organizational development transformational solutions, racial/ethnic identity development and empowerment, and building authentic personal/community relationships that lead to systemic change.

Annie is Member of Undoing Racism Organizing Committee (UROC) of Western MA, and Diversity in Aquatics. Recently Completed Programs – Eskenazi Health Hoosier Heartland

Healing Collaborative's Professional Training Program in Mind-Body Medicine, Landmark Forum

She is the proud mother of three daughters and grandmother of five beautiful grandchildren. She currently resides in Jacksonville, FL

Ruth Killough-Hill, MSW an anti-racism consultant, trainer, and community organizer is a School Adjustment counselor working with schools, educators, families and children's programs using a racial equity lens.

Using a racial equity framework, she co-created an Ethnic Studies course for elementary teachers, reframing social studies content to include forgotten histories, culturally responsive teaching, and project-based learning. This includes challenging educators to examine whether they are helping students to be critical thinkers, and/or helping teachers to identify the imposition of White Supremacy Cultural Values & Norms in the classroom and embracing non-white cultural values.

Ruth is Co-creator of the Elementary Anti-Racism Curriculum, a member of Leadership Team-Undoing Racism Organizing Collective (**UROC**) of Western, Ma, Founding Member of Amherst Racial Equity Organizers (ARE), Member of White Educators for Racial Justice, and serves on the School Council for Racial Justice, District Racial Equity Team

She resides in Amherst, MA with her husband and has integrated anti-racism practices in the raising of her two grown sons, one still in the public education system.