

Dear Colleagues,

It is well documented that racism is a root cause of health inequities. To nurture and sustain healthy New Yorkers of all races and ethnicities, we must address racism and identify the root causes of unfair and unjust health outcomes. Centuries of racist policies and discriminatory practices create and sustain unfair and avoidable barriers to health, particularly for communities of color.

Racism does not operate alone. It intersects with all other oppressive systems, such as sexism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, compounding the oppression of communities of color. It is our responsibility as the Health Department to address these injustices internally and externally so that we can fully achieve our mission – to protect and promote the health of all New Yorkers.

To that end, in 2016, the Health Department launched Race to Justice to advance racial equity and social justice across all programs, policies and practices. Since its inception, Race to Justice has engaged staff across the agency to incorporate a racial equity approach into the agency's work. This has included four cross-division workgroups to develop recommendations and materials to strengthen our practices, as well as the Race to Justice Core Workshop, which educates all staff on how racism shapes health.

The Race to Justice Action Kit brings together materials from the Race to Justice Communications and Community Engagement workgroups to help programs and staff across all divisions strengthen their communications and community engagement, aligning this work with racial equity and social justice practices.

The Action Kit includes the following materials:

- Background information on how racism affects health
- Tips and guidance for how to communicate in ways that promote racial equity and social justice
- Glossary of key terms related to racial equity and social justice
- Tools for planning and assessing meaningful community engagement according to the Health Department's Community Engagement Framework

This kit is best used to plan and develop communications and community engagement strategies, including those focused on communications and staff engagement for internal operations.

We thank all the staff who volunteered over the past two years to develop these materials. We believe, if used consistently, they will be instrumental in shifting and strengthening our practices towards racial equity and social justice. We invite you to join us in committing to use the Race to Justice Action Kit in our daily work. Working together to advance racial equity, we can improve health for all New Yorkers and working conditions for all employees.

Sincerely,

The Race to Justice Communications
and Community Engagement Workgroups

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