Key Symposium Themes and Proposed Actions
Introduction and Overview


The Symposium focused on racial equity in New Hampshire, while highlighting similar issues throughout the entire region and the nation. A year in the making, the Symposium came at the request of people across the Granite State who are working to make their communities welcoming and equitable places for all people choosing to live, learn, work and play in NH.

The Inaugural Symposium’s activities and work were determined by three goals and three guiding questions.

Goals:
- To build relationships for more effective partnership
- To create a shared understanding of current social, economic and political conditions impacting racial equity in NH
- To identify shared work for an inclusive and equitable NH

Guiding Questions:
- How can our institutions and organizations create relationships built on trust and an ability to see the effects of systemic racism?
- What more do we need to know about systemic racism to have an impact on ending it?
- How might we work together to move the needle in NH so that as we diversify, we also unify around fairness and equity?

Symposium participants representing a wide range of racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds attended from throughout New Hampshire and other New England states, including Maine, Vermont, and Massachusetts. Attendees participated in one of six breakout groups, divided into specific sectors:
- Civic Engagement
- Economic Development
- Education
- Government
- Health
- Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice

The groups worked collaboratively to examine concerns, challenges, opportunities and actions steps to address issues of race and equity in each sector. Thirty-eight facilitators helped to moderate the breakout groups.
Discussion and Outcomes from the Six Breakout Groups

Morning breakout groups focused on building relationships to enable participants to partner effectively and create a shared understanding of current social, economic and political conditions impacting race and equity in New Hampshire.

“As a state, we are finally awake to the profound changes taking place. We see that inequities are present, and we understand the need to take action both individually and collectively.”

-Symposium participant

Afternoon breakout groups focused on identifying shared work towards a more inclusive and equitable state. Key areas of challenge and need, as identified by each group, are listed below followed by recommendations for proposed next steps and actions to consider. This information will inform ongoing work over the next twelve months, followed by the second Symposium on Race & Equity in NH.

The following feedback from each sector breakout group represents collective input from Symposium participants. These recommendations will inform future work with leaders and allies as well as subsequent convenings in the Race & Equity in New Hampshire series.
Civic Engagement

Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. (Source: Symposium Fact Sheet-Civic Engagement)

Areas of Challenge/Need:
- People hold to the myth of “colorblindness” or that they are “colorblind”
- Lack of practical, deliberate plans to fight racism
- Need for government officials to better understand and use tools that enable their constituencies/communities to better use their voices to effect change
- Lack of accountability for government officials to effect positive change in their constituencies
- Need for a call to action that motivates people to go out and do what they can, wherever they can, to reduce racial inequities
- Equity and equality need to be better distinguished and defined

“We must not remain silent with the knowledge of racial inequities. We have a platform and must use it.”
-Symposium participant

Proposed Next Steps/Actions to Consider:
- Create more community and statewide opportunities for engagement and collaboration
- Involve greater diversity and participation in activities – especially representation from communities and groups we are trying to help
- Ask who is not at the table in order to bring people together in true diversity
- Document practical and systemic barriers to civic engagement such as transportation, scheduling and compensation issues to name a few.
- Engage with potential voters to counteract voter suppression, especially among marginalized populations
- Highlight ways in which NH residents can influence the discussion about race equity, especially at the local government level
- Access and work with the media as part of the necessary leverage to promote civic engagement and create societal change
Economic Development

Economic Development is a long-term endeavor to create conditions for economic growth and improved quality of life by expanding capacity of individuals, firms and communities to use talents and skills to support innovation, lower transaction costs, and responsibly produce and trade valuable goods and services. (Source: Symposium Fact Sheet-Economic Development)

Areas of Challenge/Need:

• Lack of data on diversity representation in local and statewide companies, funding organizations, other business areas
• Education needed; increase understanding on how companies and businesses can benefit from recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce?
• Need for academic curricula that examines/discusses historical and current economic racial inequity and racism.

“We need more people of color in office in New Hampshire, equipped with skills to create change.”

-Symposium participant

Proposed Next Steps/Actions to Consider:

• Create opportunities for organizations and individuals to collaborate on economic development with an eye toward racial equity
• Consider multi-sector solutions and build relationships to address economic justice
• Create policies that support economic development with collaborative approaches involving a diversity of organizations
• Create access to capital for marginalized individuals and communities, emphasizing the importance of self-determination
• Develop methods/strategies to highlight the economic benefits of inclusion, diversity and equity
• Collaborate with academic institutions including high schools, colleges and universities to develop courses on economic racial inequity, economic racism, white privilege and other related topics
• Promote financial literacy education
• Create opportunities for individuals/companies to apply an “equity lens” to examine bias and be more intentional about diversity and equity
• Host/encourage conversations on white privilege among business leaders to reduce ignorance about racism
Education

Education is the process of teaching or learning and includes early learning, primary school, secondary school, college/university and apprenticeships. Education can take place in informal or formal settings and can occur across the lifespan. (Source: Symposium Fact Sheet-Education)

Areas of Challenge/Need:

- NH Department of Education needs to develop more transparent, intentional race equity benchmarks
- The State’s effort to reduce racial inequities in education is scattered. It needs to be better coordinated
- Current and future teachers need to better understand issues of race and racism in education
- Students need to be better empowered to become active stakeholders and advocates for their needs
- Mentoring representation needs to be diversified, especially for the growing diversity of students in NH schools
- Better collaboration is needed among educational and other sectors to support efforts to address race and equity

“It’s a sensitive topic with no simple solutions, yet interacting with others who care about this issue creates hope for real change.”

-Symposium participant

Proposed Next Steps/Actions to Consider:

- Create a statewide movement to address racial inequities in education highlighted with a name/logo to increase awareness of the work and engage participation
- Create curriculum for future teachers, specifically addressing race and racism in education (curriculum, teaching methodology, etc.)
- Create continuing education requirements for license renewal for current and future teachers (all levels) on race and racism in education
- Create opportunities to introduce and educate students to issues of diversity, inclusion, equity and respect across cultures
- Create opportunities for people and institutions to share stories, successes and measurable goals towards racial equity in education
Government

Government is a group of people that sets and administers public policy and exercises executive, political and sovereign power through customs, institutions, and laws within a country, state, county or local city or town. Public sector organizations are owned and operated by the government and exist to provide services for its residents. (Source: Symposium Fact Sheet-Government)

Areas of Challenge/Need:

• Lack of data on the scope of racial inequity and racism in NH and its impact
• Lack of data on potential business opportunities and transportation access between cities across Northern New England, especially for marginalized individuals and communities
• The sociopolitical capital in NH needs to change to a focus on equity and inclusion training. A mindset shift is needed from a unique focus on individuals to the entire system – to improve racial equity in NH government
• Lack of knowledge on the part of government officials and constituents regarding best practices in racial equity programs and their cost effectiveness

“New Hampshire is not an “all white” state. There are people of color in leadership positions in our state. We need to partner with them to support their work.”

-Symposium participant

Proposed Next Steps/Actions to Consider:

• Research best practices – How to achieve increased representation of diverse populations at all levels of government in NH
• Mobilize, train, and recruit people from diverse backgrounds
• Lobby for representation of these groups within state agencies
• Mobilize communities around issues that affect everyone
Health Care

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Health is determined by the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. (Source: Symposium Fact Sheet-Health Care)

Areas of Challenge/Need:

- Lack of cultural competency in many health care organizations
- Need authentic engagement, training and recruitment of diverse populations
- Listen to diverse populations to define a vision for racial equity in health care and other sectors
- Lack of a messaging strategy to engage allies and non-allies in this work

“Everyone can play a role in integrating racial justice into their work and personal lives.”
-Symposium participant

Proposed Next Steps/Actions to Consider:

- Create more culturally effective organizations - Provide more trainings to organizations using proven strategies
- Support workforce diversification and employee cultural competence through training and awareness raising efforts
- Use behavioral interviewing in health care hiring – use an equity lens in addition to clinical qualifications
- Institute a “health care policy rating” for politicians
- Expand health and equity work to cover conditions in schools, housing and employment not just in traditional health care settings. Acknowledge the social determinants of health
- Find resources for primary care and mental health practices that can be used to identify, implement and sustain organizational practices that address health disparities
Criminal Justice is a system of institutions and practices aimed at upholding social order, deterring, investigating and mitigating crime, and/or sanctioning those who violate laws with criminal penalties or rehabilitation efforts. In the U.S. there are numerous justice systems that differ by jurisdiction. (Source: Symposium Fact Sheet-Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice)

**Areas of Challenge/Need:**
- Relationship/trust with law enforcement/criminal justice is broken in communities of color. It needs to be fixed at all levels: city, county, district attorney, corrections – not just the police
- A pattern of disproportionate minority contact and incarceration exists in NH
- NH lacks a systematic approach to addressing racial equity in the justice system – police, courts and corrections – although there are pockets of effort and progress
- The question of “race” precedes the question of “security” in communities of color/diverse communities
- Not all voices are heard in NH. There needs to be better platforms to ensure that everyone can speak up
- No mechanisms for residents to highlight inequities and raise concerns about racism rather than fear law enforcement or the consequences of speaking out
- Referral of students to security/law enforcement shows racial disparities

“We must diversify our institutions and our organizations.”  
-Symposium participant

**Proposed Next Steps/Actions to Consider:**
- Research, adapt and adopt best practices in racial justice training for law enforcement/criminal justice personnel in NH
- Promote leadership dedicated to addressing racism in the law enforcement/criminal justice system
- Expand education to cadets and current/long time officers, law enforcement/criminal justice personnel about racism and racial justice
- Encourage sensitivity training around issues of race and racism, especially for prosecutors
- Ongoing engagement and dialogue about these systemic problems is required
Next Steps

The Inaugural Symposium provided an initial forum for the new Race & Equity in NH Series. Through this ongoing work to address race and equity in NH, the Endowment for Health and its community partners hope to provide opportunities to:

- **Establish and Reinforce Connections**
  The Race & Equity in NH Series will play a connection-building and convening role offering opportunities for future collaboration and networking to support this work.

- **Expand Awareness and Engagement**
  The Race & Equity in NH Series will provide information and resources to expand knowledge and encourage engagement on local, regional and statewide levels.

- **Reduce Tensions and Build Proactive and Positive Action**
  The Race & Equity in NH Series will provide a forum to discuss challenging topics and issues and build proactive and positive action to effect change in NH.

- **Enhance Collective Endeavors and Acknowledge Diverse Voices**
  The Race & Equity in NH Series will examine ways to support collective work locally, regionally and statewide while recognizing the importance of diverse voices.

“There is a growing group committed to equity in NH ready to take action.”

-Symposium participant

**Coming Soon:** A call to action to join one of six workgroups based on the Inaugural Symposium’s sector breakout groups. Workgroups will use the “Areas of Challenge/Need” and the “Proposed Next Steps/Actions to Consider” outlined for each sector as a springboard for their work over the next twelve months, culminating in the second Symposium on Race & Equity in NH. Please join us for this important work!

For more information, or to participate in this conversation going forward please contact: info@endowmentforhealth.org