

RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE



## RSJI TRUTHS

### **Truth 1: Colonialism is at the root of white supremacy.**

Our current racial landscape is the end result of ongoing colonization that seeks to exploit, erase and invisibilize Indigenous peoples. Government is established through colonialism and has created and continues to maintain racism.

### **Truth 2: We live in a highly racialized society – i.e. race matters.**

This is evidenced in people's stories about their lived experiences and in all the data about life outcomes related to racial advantage and disadvantage – economic, health/life expectancy, education, criminal justice, housing, the environment and more.

### **Truth 3: Racism is based on the legal and social construction of whiteness.**

When talking about race and racism, we also need to talk about whiteness: the construction of whiteness, how a preference for white was created, how it has been maintained for generations and how it functions.

### **Truth 4: We're all part of the picture. None of us asked for this and we all have roles to play.**

It's not possible to live in the United States and not experience the impacts of colonialism, structural racism, and other intersecting forms of oppression (unearned advantage or disadvantage) on our lives. None of us are responsible for the past; but all of us are responsible for the present and to some extent, the future.

### **Truth 5: Our health and wellbeing are interconnected, our liberation tied.**

White supremacy disconnects us from ourselves, each other and all living systems. Our anti-racist work must include attention to the inherent interconnection of all living systems and the reality that our health and wellbeing are collectively defined. We organize for our co-liberation. Anti-racism is a lived practice that integrates our mind, body, heart and spirit.

### **Truth 6: We honor and lift up BIPOC organizers.**

Generations of Black, Indigenous and People of Color have created the path to our organizing today. Our work is only sustainable when the health and wellbeing of those most impacted, those leading the work – Black, Indigenous and People of Color – is centered.

### **Truth 7: Government has a responsibility to be anti-racist.**

Racism and other intersecting forms of oppression are embedded and manifest throughout government, from our policies, practices and procedures to our culture and the ways we do our

work. As City employees it is our responsibility to understand, challenge and work to dismantle racism and replace it with an anti-racist reality in which we all can thrive.

**Truth 8: Comprehensive solutions require examining all 4 levels of racism.**

Interpersonal, institutional, structural and internalized racism are constantly present and reinforcing one another. We must analyze the different impacts at each level and make decisions that integrate that holistic understanding.

**Truth 9: Internalized racism affects all of us.**

Effective, multi-racial, anti-racist organizing requires attention to the internalization of racism and its unique impacts on BIPOC and white people. How we internalize other forms of oppression – colonialism, sexism, classism, Christian dominance, heterosexism, ableism, nationalism, elitism and more – affects our internalization of racism and how we move through the world.

**Truth 10: Relational culture makes change possible.**

We embrace and cultivate a relational culture, one that counters the dehumanizing, transactional norms of white supremacy culture. Far from a checklist, anti-racism is an orientation, to ourselves and the world, which we nourish and grow through our daily actions and reflections. The work of decolonization, anti-racism and co-liberation is necessarily creative and emergent, asking us to listen deeply to each other, adapting and responding with presence in the moment as a collective, multi-cultural and multi-generational movement.