



# TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

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### Government Alliance on Race and Equity Update.

**Staff:**

Rae Buckley, Director Organizational and Strategic Initiatives  
Sarah Vinas, Assistant Director of Housing and Community

**Department:**

Town Manager’s Office  
Housing and Community

**Overview:** This memorandum provides information about the Town of Chapel Hill’s participation in the North Carolina [Government Alliance on Race and Equity <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/>](https://www.racialequityalliance.org/) (GARE) Learning Community and how it connects to ongoing Diversity Equity and Inclusion efforts and collaboration with Orange County, Hillsborough, and Carrboro.

☆ **Recommendation(s):**

That the Council receive a status report on the racial equity framework that will serve as a foundation for the Town’s Racial Equity Plan and a guide for how the Town of Chapel Hill will use a racial equity lens during decision making and resource allocation.

### Overview of the GARE Program and County-wide Racial Equity Framework

- The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) is a national network of government agencies working to advance racial equity. GARE brings together governments throughout the country to provide racial equity training, racial equity tools, sharing best practices, peer-to-peer learning, and academic resources to help strengthen work across jurisdictions.
- Orange County, Carrboro and Chapel Hill are enrolled with six other North Carolina municipalities in the 2020-21 GARE Learning Community. This is a program that uses training and team projects to learn how to build a Racial Equity Plan using GARE’s racial equity tools and strategies.
- The GARE leadership from Orange County, Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough are drafting a shared framework for building a racial equity program to be the foundation for individual Racial Equity Plans. The goal of this effort is to create a common language and set of principles to be the foundation for our racial equity work.
- We will organize principles and strategies in these categories:
  1. Organizational Capacity: Identify resources to undertake racial equity work.

2. Racial Equity Tool: Apply a racial equity lens to decision-making and resource allocation.
3. Racial Equity Index: Use data to develop strategies and identify gaps.
4. Community Engagement: Include the populations affected by racial equity strategies.
5. Accountability and Urgency: Establish change as a priority and set institutional commitments for accountability.

### **Additional Town Commitments to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

- Prior to engaging in the North Carolina GARE Learning Community, the Town invested in building an internal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion program. Going back several years, the Town held DEI training and learning opportunities for employees.
- More recently, in 2018, using employee feedback, the Town worked with VISIONS, Inc. to create a Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Plan. The goal of the plan is for the organization to fully embody the Town's RESPECT values in a way where all Town employees feel respected for who they are and are committed to achieving equity and inclusion in all Town programs and services.
- The two highest priority action items of the DEI Strategic Plan are:
  1. Create a Town-wide training for all employees to set safety expectations for the workplace and provide/teach skills for talking about DEI topics.
    - The Town contracted with Dr. Shirley Davis of SDS Global Enterprises, Inc. to provide an all employee training program. This training will be provided when we can have a safe (COVID-19) and productive learning environment for a 4-hour training accessible to all employees.
  2. Increase diversity at the supervisory and middle management level.
    - Staff is focused on gathering data to evaluate trends and set goals.
- In response to recent national events involving cases of police brutality and systemic racism, the Town's consultant, Dr. Shirley Davis held five virtual dialogue sessions open to all employees. Several departments also led listening and dialogue sessions. The Transit Department created a T-shirt for Town employees with the Town Logo and the language, "We stand for Racial Justice."
- In addition to these internal DEI efforts, the Town funds a variety of programs to advance Council's equity and inclusion goals, including:
  - Building Integrated Communities
  - Language Access Plan
  - Peoples Academy
  - Northside Neighborhood Initiative

**Fiscal Impact/Resources:** The funding for the NC GARE Learning Community and employee DEI training were encumbered during Fiscal Year 2019. At this time, we are not seeking additional resources to support the GARE planning process.

### **Next Steps**

- Staff will return to the Town Council with a draft of the shared framework and recommendations for objectives and actions to include in the Town of Chapel Hill Racial Equity Plan.

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**The Agenda will reflect the text below and/or the motion text will be used during the meeting.**

By accepting the update, the Council receives a status report on the racial equity framework that will serve as a foundation for the Town's Racial Equity Plan and a guide for how the Town of Chapel Hill will use a racial equity lens during decision making and resource allocation.