

Berkshire Black Economic Council



Best Practices



Introduction

The Berkshire Black Economic Council recommends the following antiracist, economic justice, and *Diversity Equity Inclusion* and *Anti-Racist* guidance to increase Black supplier diversity and inform best & worst practices for working with Black entrepreneurs, businesses, organizations, and DEIA practitioners.



Best Practices

- 1.** Ideas and input from Black DEIA professionals are reflected from inception and sustained throughout the project/program design and implementation
- 2.** Project/program are aligned with the mission of the participating organizations and the Black population served
- 3.** Project/program will result in benefits for the Black constituents or Black stakeholders
- 4.** The Black entrepreneur(s) or Black DEI practitioner(s) will be offered a leadership role in administering the project/program budget, unless they wish to participate in an advisory role
- 5.** Engaging and working with and through Black companies, entrepreneurs, and residents who were raised or are raising their families in the Berkshires
- 6.** Bi-Annual Training (Bias, Cultural Competency, Anti-Racism, DEIA)

Best Practices

7. Compensate DEIA Professionals whenever they are engaged or working within the Berkshire Black community
8. Negotiation for equity and inclusion before entering contracts or agreements with Black enterprises
9. Black led organizations ought to manage funding when working with or alongside Black organizations; especially in the name of DEIA funding
10. Non-BIPOC applicants applying to DEIA funding; be it antiracism, economic justice, or otherwise, should apply as a secondary applicant, instead of the leading applicant
11. Encouraging your organization to practice by the 2024 Best Practices
12. Informing staff, colleagues, friends, and community of the mentioned BBEC's 2024 best practices

Unethical Practices

1. Back channeling, the likeability of a Black entrepreneur, business, practitioner, or consultant for funding, grant application(s), or any business related opportunity without the consent of the individual or the organization

2. Applying for funding or developing a grant, as the lead applicant, centered around DEIA when less than half of your organization's mission and strategic initiatives are focused on DEIA; and the staff, governing board and personnel do not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity inherent in the Black community and BIPOC communities.

3. Tokenizing Black individual(s) or entrepreneur(s) in order to reduce criticism and achieve a project/program by giving the appearance of serving the Black community by performatively hiring a Black individual and discrediting the value of their lived experiences

4. Engaging Black individuals to lead or play a major role in furthering an organization's DEIA efforts when they are not qualified DEIA professionals.

5. Hosting a project/program related to Black Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion without the presence of the Black population present and/or without Black practitioner(s) assisting the project's or program's design and/or implementation.

*** In short, “nothin about us, without us” and “the deeper the understanding of Berkshire Black lived experiences the better”**



Guiding Principles

On Anti-Racism

Antiracism is the active practice of identifying and opposing racism, in other words, defying “business as usual.”

On Economic Justice

People often ask us, what can be done about racism? One simple way is to support Black owned entrepreneurs, businesses, and nonprofits. Keep them in mind, and deliberately purchase and partner with us for their growth and prosperity. This is economic justice!

On Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Segregation was not just about segregating schools, water fountains, and public transportation. Segregation was the formal separation from the U.S. economy. Segregation is the classification discriminatory policies and practices imposed bias onto the Black economy.

DEI is the integration of “self determined” best practices from the Berkshire Black workforce, led and communicated, by the Berkshire Black DEI practitioners, who have demonstrated their commitment to community, and “place.” Let’s do DEI the right way, for a new community impact that will attract more Black families to the Berkshires!

One more thing. We don’t want a seat at the “executive” roundtable, we want seats at all of The Berkshire’s executive roundtables.



Resources

Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism

The BBEC has compiled this list of local Black DEI practitioners who are prepared to support and enhance the strategic planning of community organizations who have demonstrate their commitment to place, learning and re-learning, and Diversity Equity and Inclusion, by registering their certifications and connection to community with us:

Practitioners

Shirley Edgerton	Pittsfield, MA
Akilah Edgerton	Sheffield, MA
Gwendolyn Hampton-Vansant	Lee, MA
Dr. Alana Harte	Williamstown, MA
Dr. Eden-Reneé Hayes	Wayland, MA
Antony Haynes	Troy, NY
Dr. Leticia S. E. Haynes	Williamstown, MA
Dr. Frances Jones Sneed	North Adams, MA
A.J. Enchill	Pittsfield, MA
Dr. Emily Williams	—
Dr. Gina Coleman	—
Arlene Theodore	North Adams, MA
Rachel Hailey	North Adams, MA
Michael Obasohan	Pittsfield, MA
Andre Lynch	Williamstown, MA