



June 2021

The City of Vancouver is located on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selílwitlh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations who have lived on these lands since time immemorial. Our work on anti-racism and cultural redress continues to be informed by our [commitment to Reconciliation](#).

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the community of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation and Indigenous communities across BC as we join them in mourning the children whose remains were confirmed to be on the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. We remain committed to aligning our work with the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls to Justice, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

[For our full statement on this national tragedy, please visit our website.](#)

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the first edition of our quarterly Anti-Racism and Cultural Redress newsletter about the City's work to confront and eliminate racism in our city and to work within our organization, with partner organizations and residents to have greater impact across Vancouver as a whole. We are

grateful and humbled to do this work in service of all Vancouver residents and alongside communities most impacted by systemic racism.

Our anti-racism and cultural redress work that shapes policy and programs, and impacts Vancouver residents is being led by the Arts, Culture and Community Services Department through the Social Policy team, alongside and on behalf of Vancouver residents.

Internally, the Equity Office is leading the development of an organizational plan and approach to institutional and culture change that enables us to attract, welcome and fully support employees that represent the diversity of the communities we serve. The Equity Office also works with departments to integrate and strengthen an equity and justice lens in our delivery of services to the public.

Here are highlights of the our latest anti-racism actions:

- National Indigenous Peoples Month
- COVID-19 racist incident response
- Response to Ontario hate crime and Anti-racism resources
- Hiring of Black and African Diaspora Communities Anti-Racism and Cultural Redress Planner
- Access Without Fear policy
- Komagata Maru apology

This newsletter will provide a short update on topics we are working on. [For a more details please visit our website.](#)

National Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day

June is National Indigenous History month and today, June 21, is National Indigenous Peoples Day, an official day to recognize and celebrate the culture and contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in Canada. In June and throughout the year, we give thanks to the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and sə́lílwətaʔt (Tseil-Waututh) peoples who have inhabited and stewarded these lands since time immemorial. We also recognize the contributions of urban

Indigenous community members and the profound ways that Indigenous peoples have contributed to the city's rich culture and vibrant communities.

We invite the public to recognize National Indigenous Peoples Day and the Downtown Eastside by joining Carnegie Community Centre and UBC Learning Exchange's online event. The event will feature both livestreamed and pre-recorded performances from Carnegie's own lexwst'i:lem drum group, Children of Takaya dancers, and more. Details about performances and how to access the accompanying online learning kit will be available on [Carnegie's National Indigenous Peoples Day Facebook event](#).

We also urge you to [visit our website to read the final reports on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#), and familiarize yourself and act on the Calls to Justice and Actions for all Canadians as a part of your learning and action on Reconciliation.

COVID-19 racist incident response

We are deeply saddened and angered by the 717% increase of anti-Asian hate crimes reported to the VPD in 2020. Estimates suggest that over 90% of racist incidents remain unreported.

Follow the links below to read our two statements on anti-Asian racisms:

- [City speaks out against anti-Asian racism and violence](#)
- [No place for hate in Vancouver: City responds to anti-Asian hate crimes and findings of Bloomberg report](#)

We understand that current systems were built and grew from historic foundations of anti-Indigenous, anti-Black and anti-Asian discrimination. We know that stereotypes, bias, and prejudice lead to violent incidents that affect our whole community. We must name and address these incidents and their impact to reduce further violence and harm. We commit to improving our own response to hate and racist incidents involving City staff, services, and programs.

As part of this work, we are hosting focused conversations with community

leaders and City Advisory Committees to build on what the community has already told us:

- Racist incidents are interpersonal, systemic, and institutional in nature
- Victims/targets of racist incidents are further targeted and/or isolated when they come forward
- There are limited resources to support those who are targeted directly and impacted indirectly
- There is limited understanding about what to do when someone experiences and/or witnesses a racist incident;
- There are limited redress mechanisms for those who are victimized/targeted by racism
- There is limited understanding about who to follow up with when a racist incident occurs
- There is limited accountability for perpetrators/victimizers

These discussions will clarify priorities for the City in moving forward with action and we invite partners to engage with us in addressing racism in our city.

Do you have experience reporting a racist incident? We would like to hear your feedback. [Complete our COVID-19 Anti-Racism Response Plan survey.](#)

Response to Ontario hate crime and Anti-racism resources

We are once again standing with community in condemning Islamophobia, violence and hate, in the strongest of terms following the attack that killed four members of a Muslim family in London, Ontario.

We stand united in our grief and in our support for Muslims everywhere. We know that racist and hate incidents rarely occur without prior stigmatization and attempts to dehumanize targeted groups.

Visibly Muslim people, and many other marginalized groups, often experience more subtle forms of hatred just walking down the street. All of us who see that happen have a role to play when it comes to addressing Islamophobia and all forms of hate, racism, and discrimination. Learn more about how you can help address racism when you see it with our [bystander intervention guide](#).

We have also put together a preliminary list of resources to support you if you have experienced or witnessed a racist or hate incident. [Follow this link to view anti-racism resources.](#)

Hiring of Black and African Diaspora Communities Anti-Racism and Cultural Redress Planner to create an anti-Black racism action plan

We are thrilled to announce that Joy Walcott-Francis joined the City in May as the Black and African Diaspora Communities Anti-Racism and Cultural Redress Planner.

In addition to a Doctorate of Philosophy in Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies from SFU, Joy brings over 10 years of experience in advancing initiatives related to anti-racism, discrimination, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Joy will work with community partners and across departments to lead the creation of an Anti-Black racism plan and recommendations to Mayor and Council.

Access without fear policy

We're currently developing the guidelines to help us and our partners, including you, implement the Access Without Fear policy internally and externally. This policy has the objective of supporting access to City services by Vancouver residents with uncertain or no immigration status.

[Read the full Access Without Fear policy PDF file \(59 KB\)](#)

There will be opportunities to engage City partners in the roll-out of this important work. Email equity@vancouver.ca if you are interested in being involved in this work.

Komagata Maru apology

On May 18th the City of Vancouver formally apologized for the Komagata Maru incident, wherein in Vancouver City Council discriminated against 376 passengers travelling from British India on board the Komagata Maru ship in 1914 forcing passengers to remain on board for two months, without sufficient access to medical aid, food and water, because the passengers were of South Asian descent.

The apology for the City's role in the Komagata Maru incident is part of a larger South Asian apology and redress work to come, which arises from a 2019 Council decision to address historical discrimination against people of South Asian descent in Vancouver.

The City is in the process of hiring a South Asian Redress Planner to create a plan and recommendations for redress to Mayor and Council through engagement with South Asian communities.

[Learn about the Komagata Maru incident, and read the City's apology.](#)

Do you have any questions or comments about our Anti-Racism and Culture Redress work? You can share them with us at equity@vancouver.ca

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