

Steps towards Building an Antiracist Community

Policy: “Written and unwritten laws, rules, procedures, processes, regulations, and guidelines that govern people” (page 18)

Activist: “An activist produces power and policy change, not mental change” (page 209)

Tangible Actions to Change Policy:

- 1) First, know what local government is and does, and make sure others in your life do, too. Know what municipality you live in and who your appointed and elected officials are.
- 2) Dig into the data and make sure everyone in your personal community knows it
 - Census QuickFacts: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/roanokecityvirginiacounty>
 - Spend more time with Dr. Ackley’s presentation here: <https://bookcityroanoke.files.wordpress.com/2020/09/rca-session-2-ppt.pdf>
 - Learn more about Roanoke College’s Center for Community Health Innovation: https://www.roanoke.edu/about/news/center_for_health_innovation_announcement
- 3) Invest in neighborhoods where disparities exist. Consider donating to organizations that serve those neighborhoods, and lobby local leaders to provide more funding to areas facing inequities. Some of our favorite local nonprofits include:
 - Girls Rock Roanoke: <https://girlsrockroanoke.org/>
 - Kids Soar: <https://www.kidsoar.org/>
 - The Making Foundation: <https://makingfoundation.org/>
 - The West End Center for Youth: <https://www.westendcenter.org/>
- 4) Engage in municipal planning efforts
 - Dig into the comprehensive plan themes and encourage others to do so too <https://planroanoke.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/11/Theme-Fact-Sheets.pdf> (Draft Executive Summary: <https://planroanoke.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/06/Executive-Summary.pdf>)
 - Participate in comprehensive city, neighborhood and organizational planning. Locally, find out how to get involved at <https://planroanoke.org/get-involved/>
 - Neighborhood Plans: <https://www.roanokeva.gov/1096/Neighborhood-Area-Plans>
 - Question patterns and existing conditions
- 5) Look at the local school board policies through the lens of antiracism. Then, go to school board meetings to lobby for antiracist policy change.
 - Roanoke City Public Schools policies are available at: <https://roanoke.ss7.sharpschool.com/cms/one.aspx?objectId=693661> and <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/roacps/Board.nsf/vpublic?open>
 - When reviewing policies and practices, ask: does this cause harm to our most vulnerable children, or does it help them?
 - The ACLU has some guidance on how to successfully advocate for school policy change: https://www.aclunc.org/docs/parents_guide_to_school_board_advocacy.pdf as does the Virginia PTA: <https://www.vapta.org/44-committees/legislative-education>

- 6) If you live in a more a neighborhood with a well-funded PTA, consider adopting another school to support. See a list of schools at www.rcps.info, or check www.greatschools.org for demographic information about local schools, including equity overviews.
- 7) Ask local schools and service organizations what they need—it may not be money or books, but could be your time
- 8) Join a Council-appointed board:
 - Full list of vacancies: <https://www.roanokeva.gov/1066/Vacancies>
 - Apply to join the Equity and Empowerment Advisory Board (applications are currently closed) <https://www.roanokeva.gov/2615/Equity-and-Empowerment-Advisory-Board>
- 9) Actively engage in the shaping of policies. Insist that the candidates you elect do the things they intended to do. You can do this by attending Council meetings, contacting your elected officials, and, of course, voting.
- 10) Advocate for the removal of Confederate monuments. For more about the history of these monuments and the names of public spaces, read *Whose Heritage?* <https://www.splcenter.org/20190201/whose-heritage-public-symbols-confederacy>
- 11) Encourage others to vote in local elections.
- 12) Support businesses and leaders committed to antiracism.
 - The Humble Hustle: <https://thehumblehustle.org/>
 - Points of Diversity: <https://www.pointsofdiversity.org/>
 - Roanoke Diversity Center: <https://www.roanokediversitycenter.com/>
 - Standing for Equity in the Roanoke Valley (SERV): <https://www.facebook.com/StandforEquity>
- 13) Support organizations that are bolstering young artists, scientists, entrepreneurs, etc. including local arts organizations or bigger ones like Alvin Ailey or Black Girls Code
- 14) Shake up your regular routine.
 - If you go to church, go to a different church once a month (in person or via Zoom)
 - Go to an event in a neighborhood you don't typically visit
 - Subscribe to both the Roanoke Times and the Roanoke Tribune <https://theroanoketribune.org/>
- 15) If you're part of an organization, seek opportunities for that group to interact with similar groups led by people of color
 - Ex: Church Women United
- 16) Be mindful of the language you use in your day-to-day life and be aware of the ways others use language
 - If you conduct hiring or recruitment, think about the way the language on your job postings and job interviews skews
- 17) Set the example. Be the change and others will follow. Have the stomach to make it happen

Questions to Ask Along The Way:

- 1) When considering a policy, ask: For whom is this policy good? Does this policy cause harm to anyone? Does it help?
- 2) Think about things that seem race neutral. Ask what the racial impacts of this policy might be.

- 3) When considering your own activism, the answer is often “Yes and.” Think about the outcome you’d like to achieve and think backwards from there. What needs to happen to achieve that goal for everyone?

Tangible Steps for Continued Learning and Growth:

- 1) If you are white, educate yourself about the Black experience in America. There are plenty of resources out there—don’t ask Black people to do the teaching or emotional labor for you!
- 2) Keep having these hard conversations with the groups you’re in. Talk about what kind of organization you want to be. If a policy is racist, say so.
- 3) Read and teach others about Africa
- 4) Read and teach others about our own history as a community. Some locally-focused resources are:
 - Visit The Harrison Museum of African American Culture:
<https://harrisonmuseum.com/>
 - Dr. Reginald Shareef’s book, *The Roanoke Valley’s African American Heritage: A Pictorial History*, available for sale at the Harrison Museum
 - Check out the Virginia Room’s digital collection, including the oral history project:
<http://www.virginiaroom.org/digital/>
 - *Black Roanoke: Our Story*:
<https://www.roanokeva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1537/Black-Roanoke-Our-Story?bidId=>
- 5) Take advantage of tours of Gainsboro:
 - Self-guided:
https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/roanoke/AFA-M-History-Tour95_8202c657-fc2d-4424-bccd-7b643a55bce3.pdf
 - Self-guided 5K of Gainsboro: <https://fbri.vtc.vt.edu/events/community-events/2020-09-14-self-guided-gainsboro-history-tour-5k-.html>
- 6) Sign up for Antiracism Daily: <https://www.antiracismdaily.com/>
- 7) Sign up for the Great Unlearn (has fees): <https://www.patreon.com/m/thegreatunlearn>
- 8) Participate in the #DoTheWork 30 day course:
<https://mailchi.mp/rachelcargle/dothework-course-all-30days>
- 9) Check out this extensive reading list, and the many others that exist online:
<https://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=2536936>
- 10) Explore the role of Confederate monuments in our society through the Southern Poverty Law Center and their *Whose Heritage? Community Action Guide*:
<https://www.splcenter.org/20160421/whose-heritage-community-action-guide>
- 11) Read books by writers of color. It doesn’t always have to be heavy-duty nonfiction! If you’re a fan of a certain genre, seek out authors of color who write in that genre. There are lots of lists out there!
 - BookRiot is a great places to start: <https://bookriot.com/>
 - Share books by and about people of color with the children in your life (We Need Diverse Books is a good resource)
- 12) Participate in Bryan Stevenson’s Equal Justice Initiative 30-Day Antiracist Table Program:
https://www.canva.com/design/DAEAqcFK5ho/3IcXyhvUJpy_jQkLnUqFzg/view?utm

[content=DAEAqcFK5ho&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=publishsharelink#1](#)

- 13) Participate in a Points of Diversity Study Circle: <https://www.pointsofdiversity.org/study-circles-1>
- 14) Join Sharon Salzberg's free book club
<https://www.sharonsalzberg.com/events/category/real-change-virtual-tour/>
- 15) Join the On Earth Peace book club:
https://www.onearthpeace.org/on_earth_peace_book_group
- 16) Remember that reading, talking, and posting on social media are conversation-shifting steps, but real change will come through policy change.

Guides for Activism and Advocacy:

National Museum of African American History and Culture (scroll halfway down the page to see guidance on antiracism at the institutional level): <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/being-antiracist>

Racial Equity Tools: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/act/strategies>

- Policy and System Change Page: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/act/strategies/policy-and-system-change>

Trying Together's Antiracism Tools (focused somewhat on Pennsylvania):
<https://tryingtogether.org/community-resources/anti-racism-tools/>

Community Tool Box Toolkit: Influencing Policy Development:
<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/influencing-policy-development>

Some Additional Resources:

- NEW: <https://roanokeva.gov/2196/Community-Engagement>
- 2020 Healthiest Community in America: <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/2020-healthiest-community-in-america-wellness>
- Becoming an Antiracist Educator: <https://soe.vcu.edu/community/office-of-strategic-engagement/becoming-an-antiracist-educator/>
- Brookings: Race in American Public Policy: <https://www.brookings.edu/topic/race-in-american-public-policy/>
- How Decades of Racist Housing Policy Left Neighborhoods Sweltering
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/24/climate/racism-redlining-cities-global-warming.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>
- Neighborhood Race and Home Values: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-09-21/race-gap-in-home-appraisals-has-doubled-since-1980#:~:text=Analyzing%20reported%20home%20values%2C%20Howell,from%20about%20%2486%2C000%20in%201980.>
- Nice White Parents podcast: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/23/podcasts/nice-white-parents-serial.html>
- Not Racist is Not Enough: <https://www.npr.org/2020/08/24/905515398/not-racist-is-not-enough-putting-in-the-work-to-be-anti-racist>
- Project Implicit: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

- The Racial Wealth Gap—Why Policy Matters: <https://www.demos.org/research/racial-wealth-gap-why-policy-matters#How-Homeownership-Contributes-to-the-Racial-Wealth-Gap>
- Southern Poverty Law Center—Whose Heritage? <https://www.splcenter.org/20190201/whose-heritage-public-symbols-confederacy>
- U.S. News Healthiest Communities: <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities>
- Virginia African American History Education Commission: <https://www.education.virginia.gov/initiatives/aahec/>
- We Need Diverse Books: <https://diversebooks.org/>