



## **Resolution** **Winooski Racial Injustice Statement**

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**Whereas**, the Declaration of Independence defined the United States of America as a democracy based on the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and government by the consent of the people; and the 14th Amendment instilled equality of the races into the US Constitution; and

**Whereas**, from slavery to Jim Crow laws to distorted and negative portrayals in the media we consume, to the New Jim Crow – mass incarceration, more than 400 years of oppression of people of color in America is ingrained in our culture, our institutions, our laws and our policies; and

**Whereas**, the history of Vermont includes additional oppressive actions such as the taking of land from the original Abenaki inhabitants, property deed covenants excluding non-whites, a history of eugenic studies at University of Vermont targeting people of color for sterilization, and continued overrepresentation of people of color in traffic stops, arrests and incarceration; and

**Whereas**, this history of racial oppression and white dominant culture has resulted in privilege for whites at the expense of people of color and we acknowledge this including here in Winooski; and

**Whereas**, the recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and countless other people of color before them, and the disproportionate infection rates and impacts of COVID-19 on our neighbors of color show that systemic, structural and institutional racism continues to threaten the well-being and very lives of people of color in our country and community; and

**Whereas**, the City of Winooski is supporting the most diverse community in the state of Vermont, has a responsibility to serve all of our residents equitably and is committed to actively working to effect change through anti-racist policies, equitable decision-making and service; and

**Whereas**, we work to include as many different members of our community in our policy and planning processes by engaging groups of residents in our policy advisory commissions, hosting public outreach events, community dinners, and tabling at local events to hear from all residents on key issues and investing in partnerships with key community organizations that support our residents such as the Winooski Housing Authority, Association of Africans Living in Vermont, USCRI and the Winooski Food

Shelf, and this has led to the creation of a community based [strategic vision and Master Plan](#) to guide decision making that meets the needs of the entire community; and

**Whereas**, [our community policing strategic plan](#) focuses on proactive engagement with all residents and neighborhoods in the city, supports a restorative justice program, works in tandem with a Community Outreach team to respond with resources and support for people experiencing mental health crises, participates in de-escalation and cultural sensitivity training, and operates under the most aggressive [Fair and Impartial Policing policy](#) in the state of Vermont; and

**Whereas**, City leadership has defined [tangible actions steps to address equity in our community](#) through equity training, an equity-focused summit of community leaders to learn and an equity dialogue series, and sought funding to enact these changes; and

**Whereas**, most recently we responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by offering financial relief of non-optional city service fees to any resident with no questions asked and ensured that community partners supporting our residents were integrally involved in outbreak response efforts to ensure response resources and materials met the needs of our diverse community;

**Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved** that the City of Winooski is committed to further developing anti-racist policies and services, improving equity in our community, making local government more accessible to and representative of all residents, bringing new voices to the decision making table, educating ourselves on the experiences of everyone in our community, ensuring that information and services meet the needs of every member of the community, proactively supporting deep engagement with all residents in the decision making process, and treating all human beings with dignity and value; and

**Be it Further Resolved**, The City will continue to strive to provide services that meet all of our residents' needs including efforts like sliding scale fees for community services and childcare, meal programs for youth and seniors including culturally appropriate choices, translation of public materials and voting ballots and on-demand live interpretation at community events and during day-to-day service, supporting a housing trust fund to create more affordable housing, home improvements and ownership; and

**Be it Further Resolved**, the City will continue to allocate resources to efforts that increase equitable governance and delivery of services to the entire community including furthering the work of the equity summit and dialogue as we work to serve and support all residents of Winooski.

Affirmative Vote:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilor

**City of Winooski**  
Vermont's Opportunity City

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**winooskivt.gov**

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Councilor

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Councilor

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Councilor

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Adopted

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Rejected

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Attest (City Clerk)

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Approved Date