

## United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County Anti-Racism Policy

In alignment with local and national trends to dismantle racism in its various forms, United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County (UWABC) has developed an Anti-Racism policy. This policy is intended to create organizational accountability around anti-racism in the workplace and in our work, create guidelines around what the Organization will and won't tolerate, clarify the reporting process, foster an anti-racism workplace that improves our workplace culture, and reflect our commitment to recognizing and challenging the dominant culture narratives, norms, and power structures that prevent all people from belonging and thriving.

This policy prohibits racist behavior by or targeted at any person in our workplace, including employees, interns, volunteers, visitors, donors, vendors, contractors, board members, or other third parties. Conduct prohibited by this policy is unacceptable in the workplace and in any off-site work-related setting, such as during work-related travel, meetings, or social events. It is everyone's responsibility to notice and learn how our own actions may affect others.

We recognize that the organizational commitment to preventing racist behavior is an ongoing process that does not end with putting a policy in place. This is a living document that may be updated or amended over time. It is intended to be effective and compassionate. Please help us fulfill this part of our promise by contacting Human Resources with your questions, comments, and concerns.

### **What are Racism and Anti-racism?**

We acknowledge that racism can be unconscious, implicit, or unintentional, and that identifying racism as an issue does not automatically mean those involved in an act of racism are racist or that they intended to have a negative impact. As an anti-racist organization, we purposefully identify, discuss, and challenge issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, and racism and the effects they have on employees, the organization, internal and external stakeholders (including donors and the Board of Directors), and the greater community.

Racist conduct is often compounded by other forms of discrimination (for example, discrimination based on gender or disability), and this policy acknowledges the importance of taking the intersectionality of racism and other forms of discrimination and bias into account in programs aimed at eliminating racial discrimination, harassment and/or vilification.

Our overall goal with the definitions below is to ensure that our workplace models respect, civility, and common decency and that employees understand this policy.

**Racism:** Racism is a system of privilege, inequality, and oppression based on perceived categorical differences, the value assigned to those differences, and rewards and punishments based on the assigned differences. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

*Racism is further defined as follows:*

- Racism is the unequal treatment or vilification, passive or active, intentional or not, based on the color of someone's skin or perceived racial origin.
- It may be verbal, non-verbal, written, or physical, and it may overlap with harassment or discrimination.
- Racism can include victimizing, rudely embarrassing, intimidating, or threatening a person, regardless of intent and regardless of the seniority of the people involved.
- Racist behavior includes epithets, slurs, microaggressions (defined as comments or actions that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally express a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group), jokes, pranks, or other forms of negative stereotyping, as well as threatening, intimidating or hostile acts directed at or concerning any individual or group of people, present or not, or that of the individual's relatives, friends or associates, based on that individual's or group's race. It also includes the display or circulation of written, graphic, or recorded material that denigrates or shows

hostility or aversion based on someone's actual or assumed race, such as derogatory posters, cartoons, drawings, e-mail, computer screen backgrounds, audio recordings, videos, graffiti or photographs.

**Racism is not:**

- Personality conflicts.
- Voicing opinions or views about the workplace.
- Differences in approaching work or interacting with others (e.g., preferences for fast-paced group brainstorming versus individual work in solitary spaces).
- Disciplinary measures conducted in accordance with our policies.

**Anti-Racism:** In our workplace, anti-racism is the work of actively opposing racism with our actions and words. Anti-racism involves consistently identifying racist behavior and the structures of racism and then addressing and dismantling them. It is the commitment to fighting and opposing racism wherever and whenever it is found.

**Our Commitments**

We will take people seriously. We value listening deeply, with empathy, to each other; supporting each other; and being accountable to each other. We provide multiple options for making reports, as outlined in this policy. But regardless of how an incident is reported, our first responsibility is to listen fully, and with compassion.

We will work to resolve issues about how people are treated in the workplace regardless if there is a violation of official organization policy. We will work in good faith to find a solution. Not every report or concern shared with a manager or Human Resources will be a policy violation. However, each concern reflects a problem that is affecting at least one employee and may have an impact on that person's experience here. We will look for solutions that make sense for each situation. We will follow up on complaints in a timely manner and ensure appropriate communication with the employees involved.

We will not permit retaliation against employees for bringing forward an issue. A prohibition against retaliation is a key component of this policy, and any violations cut to the core of our ability to build trust in the process and to keep our employees safe from harm.

We will speak up in situations where racism occurs. We will encourage and provide support for staff to constructively point out incidents of racist behavior or language in the moment. Support may include training, the development of a shared language, and the encouragement of trust among colleagues.

**Responding to Incidents of Inappropriate Behavior**

If you feel you or anyone in the workplace has been subjected to racist conduct - or if you witness or are told (either directly or indirectly) about this kind of conduct or behavior - we urge you to speak up in the moment and report your concerns as soon as possible. This applies to both people who are directly the target of racist conduct and to bystanders. It also applies regardless of the offender's identity or position, even if they are not an employee. While we know it can be extremely difficult to come forward, no action can be taken unless managers or Human Resources are informed about the issue.

There are multiple avenues you can take to report a racist behavior or incident, depending on what feels most comfortable for you.

1. You can inform anyone in Human Resources, your immediate supervisor or the CEO. Please complete [this form](#) in order to submit an official complaint.

Throughout the process, Human Resources and management are committed to and responsible for offering support to the employee making a report as well as any others involved in an incident or an investigation. This support may take different forms depending on the employee's needs.

Human Resources has multiple responsibilities and takes a lead role in ensuring the Organization is meeting its commitments to anti-racism as outlined in this document. Human Resources will listen to employee complaints and concerns and act on them swiftly. It is also their job to ensure that managers have the knowledge and tools to support their teams and help prevent issues and incidents from arising and properly address issues and incidents if they do arise.

2. Any manager made aware of a complaint, concern, or other information relevant to an incident, policy, or practice involving racism must contact Human Resources immediately. If managers personally observe misconduct, they can take action directly—warning the employee that the conduct is inappropriate—but must also notify Human Resources as soon as possible.
  - a. If a complaint is about someone in Human Resources, then the person or manager filing the complaint should contact the CEO. The CEO will utilize the services of an HR consultant to investigate the complaint.

Human Resources will work with the manager making the report to determine next steps based on the nature of the incident, following the process for handling reports outlined in this policy.

It is critical that managers take all reports and concerns seriously and act promptly. Managers must also take action to prevent any retaliation and to prevent misconduct from recurring. Human Resources will work with managers to help make sure this happens.

Managers who knowingly tolerate racist behaviors, incidents, or practices that involve racism, including by not immediately consulting with or notifying Human Resources, are in violation of this policy.

### **What Happens When a Report is Made**

Every situation is different, and not every aspect of this process will apply to all situations. For example, different people may be involved in handling an investigation if there are conflicts of interest or similar concerns. Investigations will be done as discreetly as possible.

1. Once a report has been received by Human Resources (either directly, or through one of the avenues listed above), Human Resources will meet with the affected employee or the person making the report (as appropriate) to talk about the report.
2. Human Resources will review the report and determine whether an investigation will be conducted or the report may be resolved through other means. Legal counsel may be sought depending on the situation.
3. Human Resources will work with the managers on recommending appropriate action.
4. An investigation may also be conducted at a later stage if this more informal step is unsuccessful or if additional concerns come up at a later point.

### **Conclusion and Follow-up**

The specific corrective action will take into account (and may consider other factors) the severity and pervasiveness of the conduct, prior reports about the employee or vendor whose behavior is at issue, and the information that the team is able to gather.

Some of the specific corrective or disciplinary actions that may be recommended are:

- targeted training about workplace behavior.
- counseling referral and attendance.
- a reduction or change in job responsibilities.
- revision of policies or practices.
- suspension or termination.
- In the case of any third parties (e.g. vendors, visitors, board members) who violate this policy, their services or appearances may be canceled.

Human Resources will follow up with the affected person or the person making the report (as appropriate) to determine their satisfaction with how the matter has been handled, to see how they are doing, and to assess whether further intervention is appropriate.