



Greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce 21 Day Challenge

Thank you to the **Essex County Community Foundation** for allowing the Chamber to use their 21 Day Challenge. Certain language is updated to reflect the Chamber as an organization, and internal reflection within our work and serving the Greater Cape Ann region businesses and community. For organizations, businesses and community members that would like to use this challenge, we encourage you to tailor it to your respective business or organization.

Day 1: Racial Identity Formation

“Not seeing race does little to deconstruct racist structures or materially improve the conditions which people of colour are subject to daily. In order to dismantle unjust, racist structures, we must see race. We must see who benefits from their race, who is disproportionately impacted by negative stereotypes about their race, and to who power and privilege is bestowed upon – earned or not – because of their race, their class, and their gender. Seeing race is essential to changing the system.” - Reni Eddo-Lodge

We cannot cease in confronting our country's history and relationship to identity. It is time for us to take a closer look at the inequities that are deeply rooted in our systems and institutions and work together to create an America where every individual has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion, and identity. Over the next 21 days, we will explore difficult topics, like structural racism, segregation, and privilege, to open up dialogue on how we can be champions of equity in our personal and professional lives.

Today's Challenge:

- Watch one or more of the [short videos and reflections from the New York Times](#) on racial identity in America.
- Listen to this short 3-minute segment on [“Why All Parents Should Talk to Their Kids About Social Identity”](#) (the transcript is provided as well).
- *Bonus for parents:* Watch the [Town Hall by CNN and Sesame Street](#) about race in America with your children.

Reflection:

Journal about your own racial identity. You might consider:

- When did you first become aware of your racial identity?
- What messages did you learn about race from your school and family? Did they align with what you've seen in your life?
- When has how others perceived your racial identity affected how they treat you?

Day 2: Understanding and Reflecting on Our Bias

“Worse than being less than you, is if you are perceived as a threat” - [john a. powell](#)

[We all have biases](#) - it is a function of the brain. Our brain sorts information into categories both to keep us safe and to help sort through the level of external stimuli we receive each day. For many of us, though, those biases are completely unconscious and are activated involuntarily.

Research shows that years of structural and cultural constructs have deeply embedded stereotypes into our culture, and consequently into our own subconscious. For example, [according to a recent study](#), companies are more than twice as likely to call minority applicants for interviews if they submit “whitened” resumes than candidates who reveal their race.

But, [research also shows](#) that we can actively rewire these neural associations by being more intentional about acknowledging our biases. Today’s focus is on personal reflection - taking the time to uncover some of our own biases and reflecting on how we take control of these unconscious constructs.

Today’s Challenge:

- Take [Project Implicit's Hidden Bias tests](#), created by psychologists at top universities, to uncover some of your own unconscious biases. Remember, having biases doesn’t make you a bad person—it only makes you human. *TIP: Proceed as a guest to access their library of tests and find out your implicit associations about race, gender, sexual orientation, skin tone, and other topics*
- Watch [Verna Myers’ TED talk](#) about unconscious bias entitled “How to overcome your biases? Walk boldly towards them.”

Reflection:

Journal about your own biases. You might consider:

- What are your thoughts about unconscious bias?
- Do you have an idea of what your bias(es) might be?
- How do you think bias has impacted your decision making in the past? What do you think you can do moving forward to help decrease making biased-based decisions?

Day 3: What is Privilege?

“Positive affirmations of whiteness are so widespread that the average white person doesn’t even notice them” - [Reni Eddo-Lodge](#)

Privilege is the unearned social, political, economic, and psychological benefits of membership in a group that has institutional and structural power ([source](#)). There are many types of privilege that different groups have in the US. We commonly hear about privilege because of race or gender, but privilege also exists for different groups based on religion, sexuality, ability, class, education level. Read more about [5 common types of privilege](#). Having privilege can give you advantages in life, but having privilege is not a guarantee of success..

Today's Challenge:

- Take this eye-opening [privilege self-assessment](#) by BuzzFeed to discover where you are on the spectrum.
- Watch this short, powerful BuzzFeed [video featuring a privilege walk](#). See how privilege shows up differently for this group of co-workers. *Note: this video may be triggering for some people of color.*
- Watch this short [video featuring Robin DiAngelo and Ibram X. Kendi](#), both bestselling authors about issues of race, as they discuss privilege, why it persists and how it impacts Black people.

Reflection:

Journal about your own privilege. You might consider:

- What are your thoughts about privilege?
- What did you think while you were completing the self-assessment? Did it change how you viewed the concept of privilege?
- How do you think privilege impacts your life? What about the lives of those you serve?

Day 4: Talking About Race Is Challenging for Some. Here's Why.

Have you heard of the term “White Fragility”? For white people, “White Fragility” refers to their discomfort and avoidance of racially charged stress, which perpetuates racial inequity. Many people of color, multiracial, and Indigenous people are familiar with this concept, but may not be familiar with the term.

[Dr. Robin DiAngelo](#) describes White fragility as a state of being for White people in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves can include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors shut down conversations, and inhibit actions which, in turn, function to reinstate White racial equilibrium.

Today's Challenge:

- [Take a quick quiz](#) from the publisher of “White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism,” Robin DiAngelo, PhD, to see if you exhibit “White Fragility” traits. *Want to dive in further? Read a [short article by Dr. DiAngelo](#) that unpacks how we continue to reproduce racist outcomes and live segregated lives.*
- Review this list of [28 common racist attitudes](#) and behaviors that indicate a detour or wrong turn into White guilt, denial or defensiveness.

Reflection:

- Journal about White fragility and why it is challenging to talk about race. You might consider:
- Has it been challenging for you to talk about race? Think about a specific time - why do you think it was challenging? What feelings came up for you? How did you navigate the conversation?
- How can you make these conversations easier to have? Do you think it is important to have these conversations? Why or why not?
- How can you facilitate having these conversations in your circles or organization?
- If you identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color), what do you wish White people knew about race?

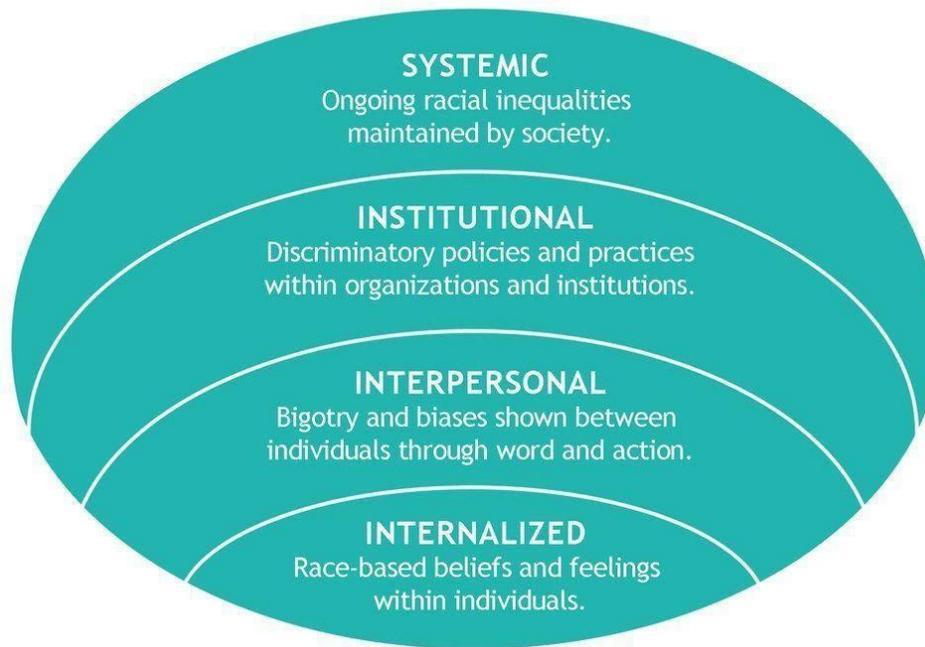
Day 5: Levels of Racism

“Americans believe in the reality of ‘race’ as a defined, indubitable feature of the natural world. Racism—the need to ascribe bone-deep features to people and then humiliate, reduce, and destroy them—inevitably follows from this inalterable condition. In this way, racism is rendered as the innocent daughter of Mother Nature, and one is left to deplore the Middle Passage or Trail of Tears the way one deplores an earthquake, a tornado, or any other phenomenon that can be cast as beyond the handiwork of men. But race is the child of racism, not the father.” - [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)

As we near the end of our first seven days, we hope you’ve taken the opportunity to look inside yourself and expand your mind through the different challenges offered. As we move into “week two”, prepare to shift your focus from the personal reflection that we’ve been exploring to a broader view of racial equity and social justice.

Are you seeing and addressing how racism operates at different levels? [Dr. Camara Jones](#), Senior Fellow at the Morehouse School of Medicine, says that in order to address racism effectively, we have to understand how it operates at multiple levels. Often what people think of first and foremost is interpersonal racism. Only seeing this level means that we fail to see the full picture that keeps the system of racism in place. The graphic below illustrates all [the domains in which racism operates](#).

LEVELS ON WHICH RACISM EXISTS



Challenge:

- Watch Dr. Jones’ TED talk on the [“Allegories on Race and Racism”](#) where she shares four short stories to help us understand privilege and racism.
- Read this [article](#) about the impact of institutional racism versus individual racism.

Reflection:

Journal about the various levels of racism. You might consider:

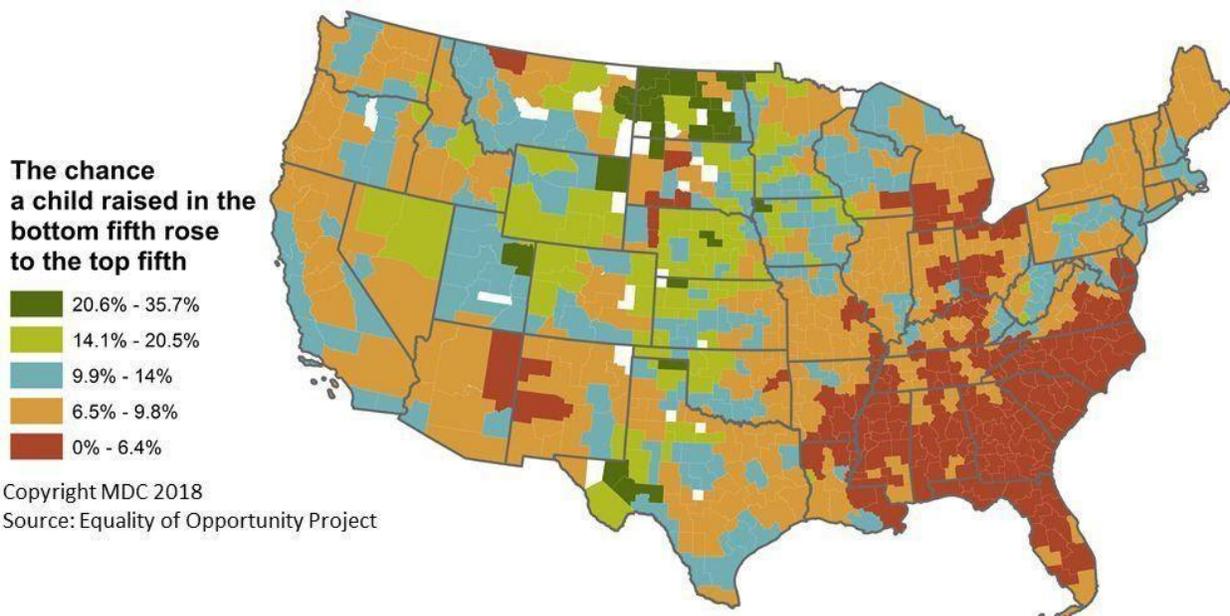
- Think about the area(s) you work in - how does racism impact the systems you work with?

Day 6: Opportunity in Essex County

With 789,000 residents, Essex County is home to many prosperous institutions and individuals. However, it is also home to a number of people who are struggling economically – 38% of residents live below the living wage and 10% have incomes below the poverty level. What’s more, the county is highly segregated racially and economically, and prosperity and opportunity are not evenly distributed. It matters a great deal where you live, as the county contains both neighborhoods of great wealth and neighborhoods with large concentrations of poverty. The cities of Lawrence and Lynn, for example, had the highest percentages of residents living below the poverty level at 22% and 16%, respectively, including 8% and 7% of residents in extreme poverty (having incomes less than half of the poverty level). ([Impact Essex County](#))

Facing some of the highest housing costs in the country, poor residents of Metro Boston encounter enormous hurdles. Black and [Latinx](#) [see [video](#) and [article](#) for more] communities are over two times as likely to live in high-poverty neighborhoods than are poor Whites. Even Black and Latinx households with incomes over \$50,000 per year are two times as likely to live in high-poverty neighborhoods than are White households with incomes less than \$20,000.

The socio-economic composition of one’s neighborhood has well-documented impacts on economic, educational, and social opportunities. Residents of Metro Boston’s poverty neighborhoods are three times more likely to be unemployed and to have dropped out of school than are those in non-poverty neighborhoods. ([Civil Rights Project](#))



Economic mobility is the ability of an individual, family or some other group to improve (or lower) their economic status—usually measured in income and/or wealth. It is the concept of the American Dream. The above map shows how hard it is to move up the income ladder in various parts of the country.

Below are findings from a Boston Fed report that found that while White households have a median wealth of \$247,500, Dominicans and U.S. Blacks have a median wealth of close to zero.

Metro Boston	Median Family Income	Median Family Wealth
White	\$90,000	\$247,500
U.S. Black	\$41,200	\$8

Dominican	\$37,000	\$0
Puerto Rican	\$25,000	\$3,020

We know that where you live and where children are raised can have a strong influence on opportunity. We also know that when these factors are combined with race, people of color are disproportionately impacted. Over the next few days, we will be exploring how race and other factors impact a person's housing, health, education, financial stability, and more.

Challenge:

- [Read more about economic mobility in Boston and Massachusetts](#) and the factors that make it challenging to move up the income ladder.
- Explore the interactive [Opportunity Atlas](#) to examine how opportunity manifests across geography. Explore how your neighborhood compares to others.
- Read this [New York Times article](#) debunking widely held beliefs about income inequality and exploring the disproportionate impact race has on Black boys.

Reflection:

Journal about how the data and stories in today's challenge compare with the commonly told story that the United States is a land of opportunity. You might consider:

- When you think about the American Dream, what comes to mind? Prior to today, how easy did you think it was to achieve?
- Why do you think it's so challenging for our neighbors of color to move out of poverty in Essex County?
- What do you think the Greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce can do to help improve opportunity in its five communities?

Day 7: Segregation in Massachusetts

Institutional Racism is defined as "the systematic distribution of resources, power and opportunity in our society to the benefit of people who are white and the exclusion of people of color." -- [Solid Ground](#)

Present-day racism was built on a long history of racially distributed resources and ideas that shape our view of ourselves and others. It is a hierarchical system that comes with a broad range of policies and institutions that keep it in place. Policies shaped by institutional racism that enforce segregation include redlining, predatory lending, the exclusion of Black veterans from the G.I. bill, and the forced segregation of neighborhoods by the Federal Housing Authority. As a result of institutional racism, racial stratification and inequities persist in employment, housing, education, healthcare, government, and other sectors. ([Source](#))

In response to decades of racial segregation, in 1974, Boston Public Schools were required to integrate the city's schools through busing. Court-mandated busing, which continued until 1988, provoked enormous outrage among many White Bostonians, and helped to catalyze racist violence and class tensions across the city throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Anti-busing protests and iconography became national news in these years, and cemented Boston's reputation as a city plagued by racial and socioeconomic strife.

Though racial segregation was not codified by law in Boston, as it was in many Southern cities, it was an unofficial policy in the city, one reinforced by the Boston School Committee's districting decisions and stark residential segregation. Schools in African-American neighborhoods were badly underfunded, underequipped,

and understaffed, eliciting protests from enrolled students and their parents. Schools that served Black children received about two thirds of the amount of funding received by schools in White neighborhoods. ([Boston Research Center](#))

Challenge:

- How did color-coded federal policy shape prosperity and opportunity in Massachusetts? Watch a 3-minute video on [redlining in Boston](#).
- Check out the [Mapping Inequality website](#) to explore what redlining looked and sounded like in [Essex County](#) and across the U.S.
- Why are cities/towns still so segregated? Watch this [video where NPR's Code Switch](#) looks at the factors contributing to modern-day segregation.
- Browse the [Equal Justice Initiative's Segregation in America website](#).

Reflection:

Journal about segregation. You might consider:

- How does it feel to know that Massachusetts and the U.S. is still segregated?
- What do you think you or GCACC can do to help Cape Ann be less segregated? Do you think it is important? Why or why not?
- Think about the racial makeup of your neighborhood and/or city/town. Is it racially diverse?
 - If not, what are some ways that you could authentically connect with people across racial lines?
 - If so, what are some ways that you've interacted meaningfully with people across racial lines in your neighborhood and/or city/town?

Day 8: Housing Inequity in Essex County

The reality is that housing affordability and who experiences homelessness is largely influenced by our country's history of racism, and Essex County is no exception. Homeownership is one of the most powerful wealth-building tools available to families, yet it is still a White dominant institution. Essex County had greater racial and ethnic disparities in homeownership rates than the nation. Nationwide, homeownership was substantially higher among African American and Hispanic residents, at 42% and 47%, respectively, compared to Essex. In 2015-19, 69% of White residents and 66% of Asian residents owned their homes. These rates were more than twice as high as those for Black or African American residents (33%) and Hispanic residents (29%). ([Impact Essex County](#))

Zoning laws in the U.S. originated in the early 20th century, and for many cities, these zoned areas were specifically segregated by race. When Black war veterans returned from World War II, the Federal Housing Administration did not allow them to obtain mortgages. Despite fighting — and in many cases, dying — to support the U.S. mission, Black veterans were explicitly discriminated against because they were viewed by banks and the federal government as “higher risk” loan applicants. What's more, in order to obtain federal funding, local developers were required to include in their codes a refusal to sell to people of color. From zoning to redlining to discrimination against Black veterans, the U.S. housing system has contributed to significant inequities across racial lines.

Affordable Housing in Massachusetts

In order to afford a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the state without paying more than 30% of income on housing, a person needs to make \$36/hour, almost triple the state's current minimum wage. In fact, Massachusetts recently ranks as the 3rd least affordable state in the country. ([National Low Income Housing Coalition](#)) to live in the U.S., due to the limited and increasingly expensive supply of housing.

Homelessness in Massachusetts

Because of the affordable housing crisis, [family homelessness in Massachusetts is on the rise](#). As of January 2019, Massachusetts had an estimated 18,471 people experiencing homelessness on any given day ([USICH](#)). Of that total:

- 3,766 were family households
- 917 were veterans
- 480 were unaccompanied young adults (aged 18-24)
- 2,370 were experiencing chronic homelessness.

Public school data during the 2017-2018 school year shows that an estimated 23,601 public school students experienced homelessness over the course of the year (U.S Dept. of Education).

Challenge:

- Watch the short [Segregated by Design](#) video. ‘Segregated By Design’ examines the forgotten history of how our federal, state and local governments unconstitutionally segregated every major metropolitan area in America through law and policy.
- Explore the [State of Homelessness: 2020 report](#) created by the National Alliance to End Homelessness.
- Read this [article](#) by Reveal News about a specific barrier to Black homeownership - banks.

Reflection:

- Journal about housing and homelessness. You might consider:
- What are some of the preconceived notions or biases you have towards people experiencing homelessness?
- Have you witnessed neighborhood opposition to new developments (aka the Not-In-My-Backyard sentiment - [NIMBYism](#)) in your community? In what ways has NIMBYism perpetuated racist practices? What can be done to counter it?
- Did you realize how systemic racism exists in housing policies? How do all of these things make you feel? What can be done to address or remedy these inequities?

Day 9: How Your Race Affects Your Health

Health disparities in the COVID-19 crisis call attention to [long-standing inequities](#) that pervade the health care system and society at large. While COVID-19 is a novel disease, it has unmasked long-standing underlying health disparities. Early on in the pandemic, data from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) showed that the Black community made up 13% of the U.S. population, but represented a third of people hospitalized with COVID-19. In Illinois, members of the Latinx community had nearly seven times the rate of COVID-19 cases compared to White people. In New Mexico, Indigenous people comprised about 11% of the population yet accounted for more than half of COVID-19 cases. Health disparities during COVID-19 reflect two important patterns of inequity. First, communities of color have a high likelihood of contracting the virus by living in urban areas and disproportionately working in higher-risk environments. Communities of color also experience higher rates of chronic medical conditions, including obesity, diabetes, and kidney disease, which are risk factors for severe illness from COVID-19.

According to the NY Times 1619 Project, [“racial health disparities are foundational as democracy itself.”](#) Socioeconomic status and institutional racism lead to disparities across living conditions, limit access to quality health care, and contribute to chronic stress. These factors lead to shorter life spans and a higher likelihood of

adverse health outcomes for people living in poverty and people of color. The infant mortality rate for Black babies is twice as high as the rate for White babies. A Black woman with an advanced degree is more likely to lose her baby within the first year than a White woman with less than an eighth-grade education.

Healthcare costs also make up a significant portion of a household's annual budget, placing additional stress on families that may or may not have insurance and access to quality care.

- A recent study found that [millions of Black people have been affected by racial bias in health-care algorithms used by many U.S. hospitals](#), resulting in Black people being less likely than White people who were equally sick being referred to programs.
- A study by the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) notes that "[the poverty in which black people disproportionately live cannot account for the fact that black people are sicker and have shorter life spans than their white complements](#).... racial and ethnic minorities receive lower-quality health care than white people - even when insurance status, income, age, and severity of conditions are comparable."

Challenge:

- Watch [David R. Williams, a public health sociologist, on the TED stage](#) as he discusses why race and deep-rooted systemic racism have such a profound impact on health.
- Read about how COVID-19 has laid bare how [racial discrimination drives health disparities](#).
- Check out this [Fact Sheet from the American Psychological Association](#) exploring the compounding impact of socioeconomic status and race on health.
- Review the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's [racism and health webpage](#).

Reflection:

Journal about race and health. You might consider:

- Far from being a "great equalizer," the COVID-19 pandemic is intensifying health inequities. Those already most vulnerable face the greatest impact physically, psychologically, economically, and socially. Thinking about what we know of [individual versus systemic racism](#), how should these inequities be addressed?
- Think about your last interaction with the healthcare system.
 - Did you feel seen, heard and valued by the clinical staff?
 - Did you receive care from a racially diverse staff? For BIPOC folks, were there members of your racial group reflected in your health care team and what was their position of influence?
 - What do you think it would feel like to have a different experience?
- How do you think this particular discrepancy impacts the communities GCACC seeks to serve? Beyond physical health, what are other long-term consequences of these cumulative health inequities?

Day 10: What is Environmental Racism?

Despite wanting the best for their families, people with limited means are often less geographically mobile and have fewer affordable choices when deciding where to live. This has led to residents with low incomes, often also people of color, to live in areas with high rates of air and water pollution, such as in industrial areas, near highways, or in close proximity to toxic waste sites. Additionally, because people of color in poverty tend to have less power, their neighborhoods often become places where unsafe or unclean businesses are located.

Challenge:

- Have you heard of environmental racism? [Watch this 3-minute video](#) on how numerous systemic issues contribute to differences in exposure to potentially harmful environmental conditions.
- Read [American Progress's article](#) about communities of color and environmental justice.
- Check out the [Principles of Environmental Justice](#) developed at the National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit with help from [Dr. Dorceta E. Taylor](#), University of Michigan professor and Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for The School for Environment and Sustainability.

Reflection:

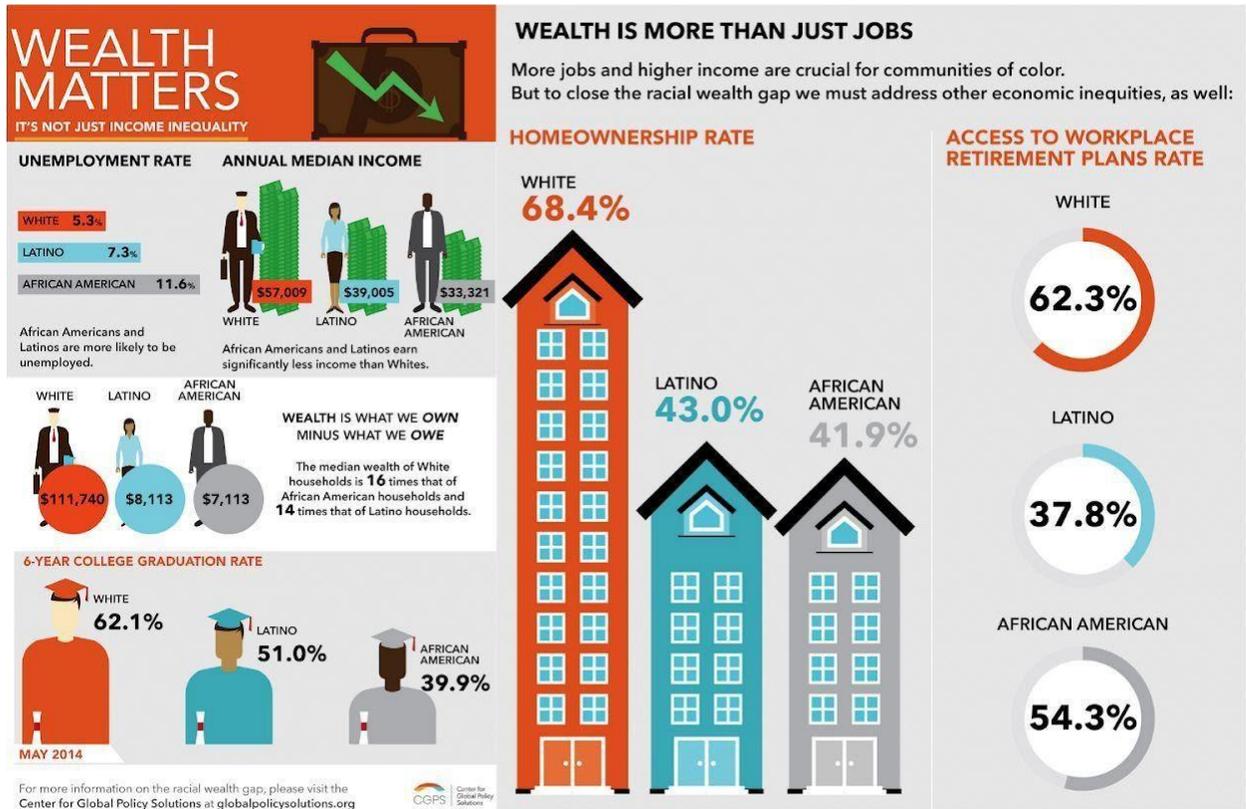
Journal about environmental racism. You might consider:

- When it comes to environmental racism, think about your house and neighborhood.
 - What images come to mind when you're out on a walk?
 - What modes of transportation can you easily access?
 - How does it feel to have neighbors whose living experiences are potentially jeopardized by environmental hazards?
- When thinking about the people GCACC serves, which live in areas impacted by environmental racism? How do you think that impacts them and their day-to-day life?

Day 11: The Racial Wealth Gap

"Here in Boston, a city known as a liberal bastion, we have deluded ourselves into believing we've made more progress than we have. Racism certainly is not as loud and violent as it once was, and the city overall is a more tolerant place. But inequities of wealth and power persist, and racist attitudes remain powerful, even if in more subtle forms. They affect what we do—and what we don't do." - [Boston Globe Spotlight](#)

According to a 2017 [Boston Globe Spotlight](#) report, Black people have a median net worth of \$8, compared to Whites, who have an average net worth of \$247,500 -- a gap that has deepened over the past decade. Earned income for top-tier earners has increased over the past 30 years, while earned income for lower- and middle-class workers has declined. As the income gap continues to grow in America, working households are struggling to meet their daily needs and find it difficult to build wealth through savings, investments, or homeownership. Nationally, about 44% of Black families own their [homes](#), compared with 74% of White families, according to U.S. government data.



Challenge:

- Watch a [Netflix/Vox video on the racial wealth gap](#), which breaks down an incredibly complex topic in just 15 minutes.
- Review the [Racial Wealth Gap within the African American Community Report](#).

Reflection:

Journal on your and your family’s experiences of work and money. You might consider:

- Reflect on the career that you currently have, or previously had. Reflect on your parent(s) career.
 - Do, or did, any of you work in a historically segregated industry? If so, how was that segregation maintained?
 - How did that affect your family’s earning power?
- Growing up, did your family own their home or are you a homeowner now? What role does housing play in building intergenerational wealth?

Day 12: Behind the Starting Line -Racialized Outcomes in Early Childhood

“We must acknowledge the broader diversity in and of the Black experience and celebrate that all Black children are born geniuses. Black students continue to pursue educational excellence despite the many unnecessary obstacles they face due to constructions and perceptions of race, class, gender, and sexual orientations in America”. -David J. Johns

From infancy through high school, children's educational outcomes are dependent on the quality of their learning experience. Quality early childhood education, in particular, has been shown to have a significant positive effect on future success, because brain circuits are developing actively then. In fact, 85% of the brain's development happens before a child enters kindergarten.

Social and emotional health are also key to children's development, and we know that poverty, trauma, and other [adverse childhood experiences \(ACEs\)](#) can have sustained, negative impacts on children's ability to succeed. [Dr. Roy Wade](#) notes that "We see higher levels of childhood adversity among minority populations, but we need to acknowledge the role that historical inequities and disenfranchisement play in creating the environment in which such traumatic experiences are more likely to occur."

Challenge:

- Read [this article](#) on how 'Education Inequality Starts Early' for children in households with low incomes.
- Watch this [2-minute CBS News report](#) on how systemic racism persists in early childhood education, where Black preschool students are disproportionately facing harsh punishments, like suspension.
- Read the [Institute for Child Success's article](#) on race and education entitled: "The Failed Equalizer: Thoughts on Race and Education."

Reflection:

Journal about early childhood education. You might consider:

- How might COVID-19-related inequities and disruptions be affecting childhood development? Who bears the brunt of these inequities and disruptions?
- How do you think decreasing the racial differences in early childhood education and experiences can help Black children and fellow children of color? How can it help White children?

Day 13: Education & School-Aged Children

Segregation persists in American communities. Our economically and racially divided neighborhoods are leading to inequitable educational environments and adverse academic outcomes for our youth. [Studies show that children from families with low incomes](#) enter high school with literacy skills five years behind and are over four times more likely to drop out than those from high-income families.

Students of color, who are more likely to attend under-resourced schools than their White counterparts, suffer because of teachers working in under-resourced school environments and large class sizes, which, when controlling for socioeconomic status, almost entirely explain [disparities in academic achievement](#) according to the Brookings Institute. Moreover, many children in the U.S. education system are not taught about major historical events, such as the [Tulsa Race Massacre](#) or [Juneteenth](#), the June 19 commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States.

Challenge:

- Watch [Boston teacher Kandice Sumner on the TED stage](#) discuss the disparities she sees in her classroom every day because of segregation in our school systems.
- *If you have more time*, listen to the [This American Life two-part podcast special](#) on how integration is needed to close the achievement gap.

Reflection:

Journal on your own early childhood. You might consider:

- Growing up, were you taught by educators who looked like you? Did the books you read have characters or stories that reflected your lived experience? Did your toys look like you?

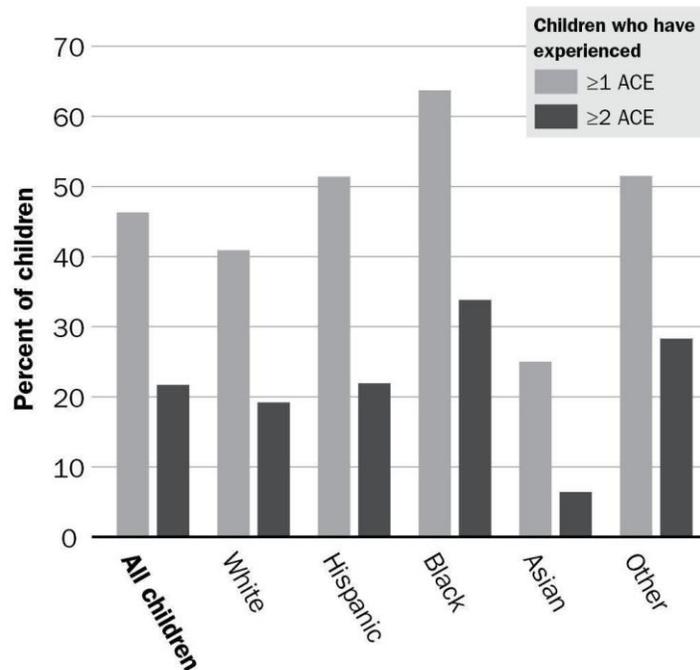
- What messages were you taught about race? How did those messages compare to what you saw around you?
- What kind of supports did you have access to (or not) during your education? (E.g. tutoring, after-school enrichment, summer programs, etc.) Thinking about the children in your life now, what kinds of supports do they have access to (or not)?
- Were you taught about the [Tulsa Race Massacre](#) or [Juneteenth](#) in school?

Day 14: Adverse Childhood Experiences

In order for children to meet developmental milestones, learn, grow and lead productive lives, it is critical that they be healthy. Good social-emotional and mental health is a key component of children’s healthy development. Poverty, trauma and inadequate treatment are three factors that have been shown to have a sustained, negative impact on children’s social, emotional and mental health. Recent studies have shown how exposure to racism, and other [Adverse Childhood Experiences](#) (ACEs), affect our health largely through the body’s stress response system. This “toxic stress” destroys critical regulation systems in our bodies and brains and can ruin our health over time.

Adverse Childhood Experiences show race/ethnicity disparity

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) happen most frequently among black children, according to The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative.



Source: THE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH MEASUREMENT INITIATIVE ZECHANG FU/Missourian

Source: *Missourian*; Original Data from *The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative*

Challenge:

- [Assess your Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) score](#) to see how childhood trauma may be impacting your life. Then, assess your resilience score and explore resources on how to support yourself and others by [building resilience](#).
- View this [infographic and text that explains how trauma, ACEs and toxic stress affect our lives](#) and society.
- Read more about the [trauma of racism](#).

Reflection:

Journal about adverse childhood experiences and childhood. You might consider:

- When thinking about your own ACE score, what thoughts and feelings come up for you?
- How do you think childhood trauma impacts the people and communities that GCACC seeks to serve?

Day 15: Race & the Criminal Justice System

People who live at the margins of race, class, gender identity and expression, sexuality, disability and so forth face increased risks with the criminal justice system. As a result, Black, Indigenous, and people of color across all genders are disproportionately targeted and incarcerated at higher rates than their White peers.

People of color are drastically overrepresented in Massachusetts state prisons. According to the Massachusetts Sentencing Commission's analysis of 2014 data, the Commonwealth significantly outpaced national race and ethnicity disparity rates in incarceration, imprisoning Black people nearly eight times and Latinx people at nearly five times that of White people. Moreover, Harvard Law School released a report about racial disparities in the Massachusetts criminal justice system that found that racial and ethnic differences in the type and severity of initial charge accounted for more than 70% of the disparities in sentence length. ([Source](#))

There are many factors in the criminal justice system that might explain why people of color are disproportionately represented in the prisons:

- Police are more likely to stop and frisk people of color and to arrest them for drug offenses, especially for minor offenses.
- Prosecutors are more likely to charge offenders of color under state habitual offender laws.
- Judges are more likely to give people of color longer sentences because they are perceived as threats to society who need to be locked away.

Challenge:

- Watch [Bryan Stevenson's TED Talk: We need to talk about an injustice](#). *If you have more time, watch the movie based on his book, Just Mercy.*
- Read more about [racial bias in the criminal justice system](#) via the *Washington Post*.
- Learn about [how incarceration affects women of color in the U.S.](#)
- To learn more about how LGBTQ+ identifying folks experience incarceration, read the executive summary from a recent report from Black and Pink - [Coming out of the Concrete Closet](#).

Reflection:

Journal about the criminal justice system. You might consider:

- When Bryan Stevenson said that our system treats you better if you are rich and guilty than poor and innocent, what came up for you? What did you think? How did it make you feel?
- How do you think the criminal justice system impacts your work and the lives of the people and communities GCACC seeks to serve?

Day 16: Equity & The LGBTQIA+ Community

Imagine not feeling accepted at home, in your community or at school because of your gender identity or sexual orientation. Like race and socioeconomic status, inequities for people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) can be seen across many dimensions, including healthcare, education, and in the workplace. To learn more about the term LGBTQIA+, [click here](#). Research from the [American Progress Institute](#) shows that LGBTQIA+ individuals experience widespread discrimination, often manifesting itself as getting passed over for promotions, being bullied in schools, being refused healthcare, or being denied equal treatment at a store or hotel.

The intersection of race and sexual orientation and gender identity also has compounding effects on individuals' well-being: [Black transgender and gender non-conforming individuals experience some of the highest levels of discrimination](#) and threats on their personal safety.

According to the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), there is an "epidemic of violence against Black transwomen. NCTE's U.S. Transgender Survey of about 28,000 respondents found:

- Nearly half (47%) of all Black respondents reported being denied equal treatment, verbally harassed, and/or physically attacked in the past year because of being transgender.
- Nearly one in ten (9%) were physically attacked in the past year because of being transgender.
- Black transgender women (14%) were more likely to be physically attacked in the past year because of being transgender, compared to Black non-binary people (8%) and transgender men (7%).

Challenge:

- Watch this quick video to [learn why using correct pronouns is so important](#). Add your pronouns to your [email signature](#), to show your advocacy for LGBTQIA+ individuals.
- Watch Ashlee Marie Preston on the [TEDx stage discuss effective allyship](#) and intersectionality from her perspective as a Black transgender woman. She discusses when and how to speak up, and what it truly means to be an ally.
- Read this [article exploring how schools are struggling to support LGBT students](#) and how we can work to create safe spaces for youth to thrive.

Reflection:

Journal on your own experience of feeling safe or unsafe based on your sexual orientation and gender identity. You might consider:

- What were you taught about gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality - either directly or indirectly? Have your views changed over time?
- If you were to get married, can you easily find someone to officiate your wedding? Can you hold hands or kiss in public? Can you find clothes that match your gender identity and body type? Can you openly display photos or talk about your spouse at work?
- What can equity regarding the LGBTQIA+ community look like at GCACC and on Cape Ann?

Day 17: Building a Race Equity Culture

“And I saw that what divided me from the world was not anything intrinsic to us but the actual injury done by people intent on naming us, intent on believing that what they have named us matters more than anything we could ever actually do.” - [Ta-Nahesi Coates](#).

Every day in the workplace, individuals face challenges being their authentic selves. As leaders and colleagues, we each have a role to play in creating inclusive workspaces. Diverse perspectives enrich our workplaces, and [studies show](#) that involving diverse voices improves performance, problem-solving and decision making. Yet, [people of color and women are underrepresented](#) in C-Suite, upper management, and Board roles compared to their representation in the overall working population. The culture of an organization provides insight into the racial dynamics and racial equity/parity within the organization. Today we will focus on how you can create a race equity culture at work.

Challenge:

- Read the Building a Race Equity Culture in the Social Sector [2-pager](#) or download the full report entitled [Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture](#) to read one or both of these excerpts:
 - Read the explanation of dominant culture in the context of building a race equity culture, found in the box on top of page 10.
 - Read the two-page executive summary on pages 2-3.
- Listen to this podcast featuring Harvard Business Review co-hosts Alison Beard and Dan McGinn responding to some [common challenges faced by businesses in promoting diversity and inclusion](#) in their workplace (transcript included). (For a question particularly relevant to today's times, jump ahead to the third question, 21:40)
- Review Racial Equity Tools' [Glossary of Racial Equity Terms](#), with over 60 terms and definitions. The words and language we use hold significant meaning; staying educated on these terms can help us engage in more inclusive and respectful dialogue.
- Watch this [3-minute video](#) shedding light on common struggles people face bringing their authentic selves to the workplace.

Reflection:

Journal about equity and GCACC's organizational culture. You might consider:

- How would you rate the racial equity of GCACC's culture currently? Are you happy with the current state of equity within GCACC's culture?
- What are two to three steps you can take to make GCACC more equitable in regard to race?
- What are the barriers holding GCACC back from achieving racial equity? Are any of these barriers able to be overcome? What role do you plan in creating, maintaining or eliminating these barriers?

Day 18: Being an Ally

"The Circle of Human Concern should include everyone, including those with whom we disagree," he said. "We are all a part of each other. We don't like it, but we're connected." - [john a. powell](#)

In a time when it feels like the world is becoming increasingly polarized, john a. powell asks, "How can we build bridges?" In his keynote at the [Othering & Belonging Conference](#), he says "We must hear other people's suffering and stories. Compassion means to suffer with others."

What does it mean to be an ally? An ally seeks to understand what it feels like for another person or group to be oppressed, and despite knowing you will never fully understand how it feels, is committed to valuing and supporting people who are marginalized.

We have opportunities to [practice allyship](#) every day:

- How much space are we taking up in conversations? In rooms? In organizing?
- How do we actively improve access to our meetings? Our efforts?
- How are our identities taking up space? Physically? Verbally?
- How much do we know about the people we seek to work with? What are our assumptions and from where did they originate?
- Who are we leaving behind?

Remember, being an ally is not an identity, it is a continual *process* – something you have to work at, be intentional about, and commit to day in and day out. For White readers, explore what active support looks like as an ally in Race Equity Tools' [Guidelines for Being a Strong White Ally](#).

Challenge:

- Read the [Do's and Don'ts](#) of Allyship that are important to know as you practice and evolve your role in supporting equity and inclusion.
- Watch this [short video](#) on empathy narrated by Brené Brown. Empathy can be a critical step in truly understanding the experience of those in marginalized communities.
- Check out a quick video on [5 Tips for Being An Ally](#).
- *If you have more time, listen to NPR's Code Switch explore the complexities of allyship on this [30-minute podcast](#).*

Reflection:

Journal about allyship in your company or organization. You might consider:

- Do you currently consider yourself an ally within your company or organization? Why or why not?
- What are two to three steps you can take to be more of an ally within your company or organization?
- If you identify as BIPOC, what support(s) do you need from White allies?
- What are the barriers holding your company or organization back from being an ally or being a more effective ally? Are any of these barriers able to be overcome?

Day 19: Tools for the Racial Equity Change Process



THE LONGER YOU SWIM
IN A CULTURE, THE MORE
INVISIBLE IT BECOMES

Over the past 19 days, we have learned how racial inequities permeate our community on individual, institutional, and systemic levels. We are all impacted by the system of racism in Essex County and therefore all responsible for dismantling the structures that allow it to persist. Change is possible and there are many tools we can employ as individuals and organizations to drive individual and community transformation. We will highlight a few of these tools below, but encourage you to explore [Racial Equity Tools](#), a comprehensive site of resources designed to support learning, planning, acting, and evaluating efforts to achieve racial equity.

Creating equitable outcomes also requires that we change the way we talk about members of our community, focusing on their aspirations rather than their challenges. In practice, this is called asset-framing and uses narratives to change the unconscious associations ingrained in our society. The opposite practice of deficit-framing, or defining people by their challenges, encourages continued stigmatization of groups of individuals.

Challenge:

- Read this [Beginner's Guide to Asset Framing](#), to learn more about how we communicate impacts our ability to achieve racial equity.
- One of the best ways to continue to build empathy and learn about race is to start a conversation. Read Race Forward's [10 Ways to Start a Conversation About Race](#) to learn more about how to start a conversation with friends, at school, at work, and more

Reflection:

Journal about making change. You might consider:

- What are two to three steps you can take to change the narrative and begin using asset framing when discussing the people and communities GCACC hopes to serve?
- What are the barriers holding GCACC back from changing the language it uses? Are any of these barriers able to be overcome?

Day 20: Chamber Reflections

Reflect on our Greater Cape Ann Chamber organization and membership, and what the challenge means to the Board and Staff as individuals and as an organization.

- How can we integrate what we have learned into the Chamber's best practices and messages as an organization i.e., Events, Membership Levels and benefits, Publications, Committees, website, etc.
- Continue to read and study our strategic plan and how DEI work can be implemented.
- What can we do in our own businesses and nonprofits, so we benefit from this challenge?
- Has the challenge been useful?

Day 21: Final Reflections

Today's challenge is to take time to reflect on your experience. Research shows that a critical component to learning is taking time to reflect or being intentional about processing the lessons being taught by your experiences.

Final Reflection:

- What are my identities and in what ways have my identities impacted my life? Are there identities of mine that have provided me higher social capital or privilege in certain environments, or vice versa?
- What were some of my assumptions about race and racial inequity before I started this 21 Day challenge? In what ways have these assumptions been challenged? In what ways have they been reinforced?
- Where have I seen evidence of racial inequities and systemic and structural racism in my community, at GCACC, or in the communities GCACC seeks to serve?
- What two to three shifts, changes, or actions can I take to create a more inclusive and equitable environment in my home, workplace, and community?

As you complete the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge, we encourage you to **write down a goal** you have moving forward. Research shows that when you write down your goals, you are more likely to commit to them and achieve them.

Congratulations on completing the GCACC's Racial Equity Challenge! Thank you for taking part in this journey and for making time to learn and reflect on racial equity. This learning and the feelings they evoke are not always easy, but making time and space for this and brave dialogue is one of many steps we can take towards advancing racial equity and racial justice at GCACC and beyond.