

# Racism as a Public Health Crisis

## Durham County Board of Health

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# Outline

- Durham's Racial History
- Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities
- Racial Equity Lens
- Racial Equity at Durham County
- Racism as a Public Health Crisis Resolution
- Conclusion

# Durham County Timeline

A brief overview of significant events in Durham County's racial history

## First Nations

Eno/Shakori/Saponi  
Occaneechi  
Detribalization after  
Bacon's rebellion in 1676  
and subsequent treaties  
with British.

1800s

## Civil War

Johnston's surrender in  
Durham effectively ends  
war

1860s

1865

## Tobacco and Textile Mills

African-Americans  
migrated to Durham  
primarily to work in the  
tobacco factories and mills.  
Hayti neighborhood  
established, becomes  
center of black Durham.

Late  
1800s

## Antebellum Plantations

Large plantations  
established. Leigh,  
Hardscrabble, Cameron,  
Stagville  
30,000 acres worked by  
900 slaves.

## Tobacco

Union troops  
who had been in Durham  
sought more of the high-  
quality brightleaf.  
Washington Duke begins  
tobacco empire.



# Durham County Timeline

## Duke University

Trinity College moved from Randolph Co. endowed by Duke, land donated by Julian Carr. Duke and Carr have complex personal histories related to race

1892

1898

## NC Mutual Insurance

John Merrick founded the NC Mutual, the oldest and largest African-American owned life insurance company in America

1907

## Mechanics & Farmers Bank

known as the strongest African-American owned bank in the US.

1910

## NC Central University

Dr. James E. Shepard founded North Carolina Central University, the nation's first publicly supported liberal arts college for African-Americans.

## Black Wall Street

Parrish St. in Durham becomes well known as center of black business and wealth after visits and writings of W.E.B DuBois and Booker T. Washington in 1910 & 1912

Early-Mid  
1900s



# Durham County Timeline

## Durham Committee on Negro Affairs

beginning of the modern phase of the civil rights struggle in Durham. Its efforts in the 1940s to get blacks into jobs as policemen, managers of Hayti ABC stores, magistrates, and to have them registered as voters were the first steps toward much broader advances.

1935

## Durham Redevelopment Commission

Beginning of Urban Renewal in Durham. Initially supported by DCNA. Promised \$600,000 to redevelop 200 acre site in Hayti

1958

1959

## Duke University Desegregates

6 black students admitted to Duke in 1961, board of trustees allows for open application in 1963.

1963

1957

## Royal Ice Cream Sit In

A group of 7 African-American protestors lead by Rev. Douglas Moore held a sit-in at Royal ice cream parlor. The action prompted a court case upholding segregation; the Supreme Court refused to hear the appeal.

## School desegregation starts

McKissick case allows for integration with 8 black students entering white schools that year.





1970

### School Integration

Courts tire of Durham's delay and order school integration 16 years after Brown case.

1970S

### Urban Renewal & Hwy. 147

Construction of the Durham Freeway through Hayti.. 147 and six other projects grounded in Hayti cost a cumulative \$41.6 million, destroyed 4,057 household and 502 businesses across Durham which were condemned and forced to relocate. The project ended up taking roughly 14 years, with very few investors coming in to build. Those displaced not returned as promised.

1991

### City and County Schools Merge

County schools better resourced and higher performing after white flight in 1970s. Many county residents strongly opposed.

2000S

### Hispanic Immigration

From 2000 to 2015, the Hispanic population tripled in size. However, that expansion has slowed in recent years. From 2015 on, the Hispanic population grew by only 3 percent. The Latino population is particularly concentrated in East Durham.

Present Day

### Current Disparities:

- COVID-19 racial and ethnic disparities
- Black Lives Matter uprisings in response to police violence
- < 50% of residents native North Carolinians
- Aging population
- It is becoming more expensive to live in Durham.



# Social and Economic Factors Drive Health Outcomes

| Economic Stability        | Neighborhood and Physical Environment | Education                 | Food                      | Community and Social Context | Health Care System                          |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Racism and Discrimination |                                       |                           |                           |                              |                                             |
| Employment                | Housing                               | Literacy                  | Food security             | Social integration           | Health coverage                             |
| Income                    | Transportation                        | Language                  | Access to healthy options | Support systems              | Provider availability                       |
| Expenses                  | Safety                                | Early childhood education |                           | Community engagement         | Provider linguistic and cultural competency |
| Debt                      | Parks                                 | Vocational training       |                           | Stress                       | Quality of care                             |
| Medical bills             | Playgrounds                           | Higher education          |                           | Exposure to violence/trauma  |                                             |
| Support                   | Walkability                           |                           |                           |                              |                                             |
|                           | Zip code / geography                  |                           |                           |                              |                                             |

**Health Outcomes:** Mortality, Morbidity, Life Expectancy, Health Care Expenditures, Health Status, Functional Limitations

<https://www.kff.org/policy-watch/health-disparities-symptom-broader-social-economic-inequities/>

# Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Durham

- The median incomes of the Black and Latinx populations are \$30,000 less than the median income of the white population.
- Over half of the white population has a bachelor's degree or higher while only a third of the Black population and less than 15 percent of the Latinx population can say the same.
- In 2017, 67 percent of white households lived in homes they owned. Only 41 percent of Black households and 32.7 percent of Latinx households could say the same.



# Racial Equity Frameworks & Measures of Racism

## *Theoretical Frameworks*

- Critical Race Theory
- Intersectionality
- Community Based Research
- Social and Structural Determinants of Health

## *Common Measures of Racism*

- Perceived Discrimination & Perceived Racism Scales
- Structural Racism Indices: segregation, mass incarceration, education



# Racial Equity Lens

Maintain and deepen our understanding of:

- The **struggle for freedom** among indigenous, American Indian/ Native American and Black/ African American people due to oppression stemming from U.S. history of colonialism, chattel slavery and white supremacy.
- The enduring **legacy of oppression and white supremacy** that is embedded into systems, infrastructures, institutions, social and cultural norms, and family and community relationships, resulting in inequities in health, education, wealth, law enforcement experiences among others (i.e. REI Groundwater Allegory\*).



*\*Hayes-Greene, Deena, and Bayard P. Love. The Groundwater Approach: Building a Practical Understanding of Structural Racism. The Racial Equity Institute. 2018*

# Racial Equity Lens

Maintain and deepen our understanding of:

- **Intersectionality of race, gender, disability, and class**, how to unpack them, and where/how they create overlapping systems of oppression and leverage points for addressing societal problems.
- **Power and privilege**, who holds it, how it manifests, and how it can be redistributed in conversations, actions, programs, policies, institutions, and structures across society.
- **Whiteness as a construct** that must be unpacked primarily by white people so that there is a comprehensive approach to racial equity whereby the consequences of inequities are recognized, and attempts are made to rectify injustices.



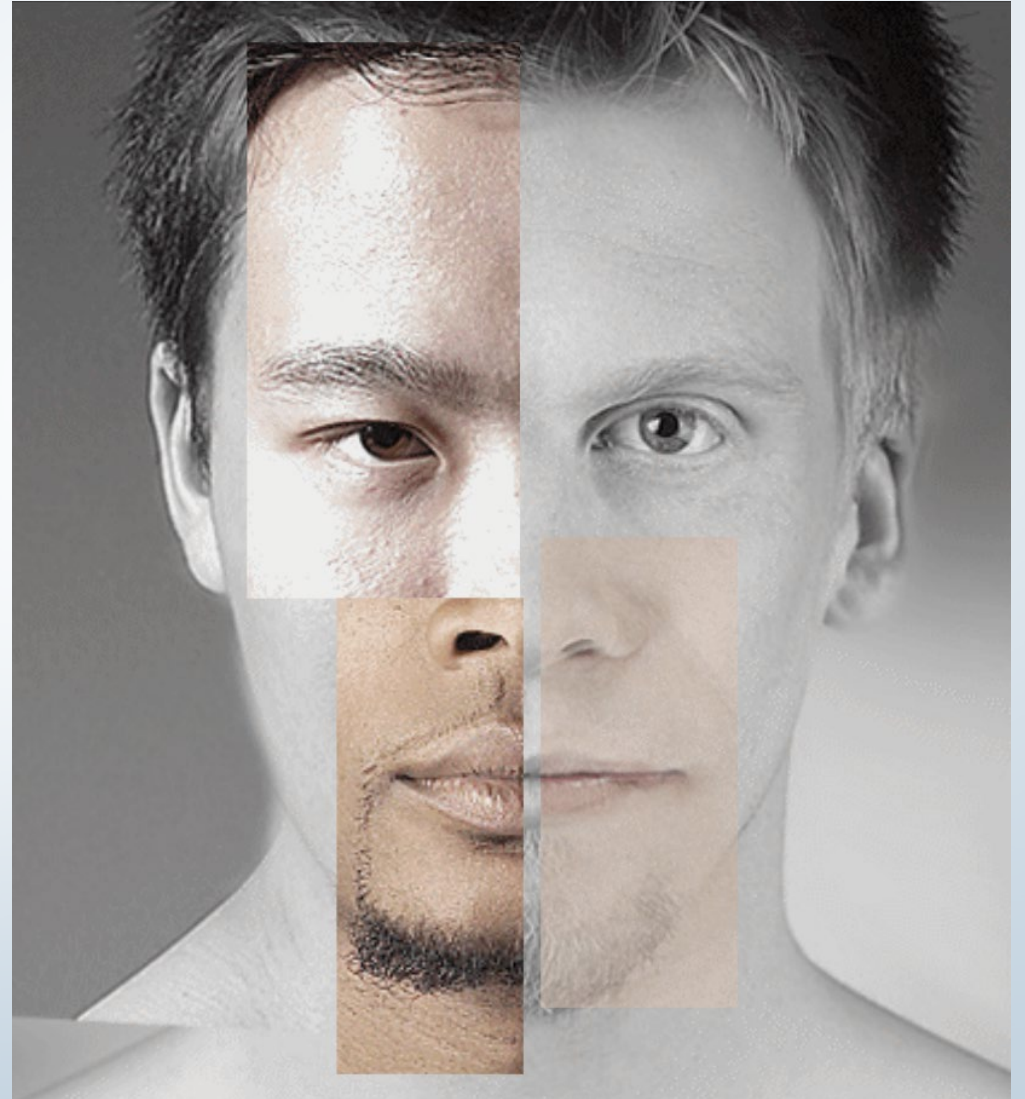
# So What is Racial Equity?

**Racial Equity:** when racial identity cannot be used to predict individual or group life outcomes (e.g. wealth, income, employment, criminal justice, housing, health care, education, etc.) and outcomes for all groups are improved.



**RACISM** is a system  
that structures  
opportunity and  
assigns value based  
on how someone  
looks.

*-Dr. Camara Jones,  
Past President of the American  
Public Health Association*



*[understandingrace.org](http://understandingrace.org)*



# Three Levels of Racism

**Structural Racism:** racial bias among interlocking institutions and across society, causing cumulative and compounding effects that systematically advantage white people and disadvantage people of color

**Institutional Racism:** institutions and organizations such as schools, businesses, and government agencies that adopt and maintain policies that routinely produce inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people

**Individual Racism:** Pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race





# Government's Role in Advancing Racial Equity

- Historical reminder of government's role in perpetuating racial inequities in education, housing, employment, health, criminal justice, etc.
- Therefore, it is government's responsibility to address structural and institutional racism, a root cause of racial inequities.



# Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)

## FRAMEWORK

- Normalize conversations on race
- Operationalize new policies, practices and organizational cultures
- Organizing across sectors and with community to achieve racial equity



# Durham County's Leadership Commitment to Advance Racial Equity

- Racial Equity Trainings for Staff, Volunteers and Community Partners
- County-wide GARE membership
- Hiring of County's First Racial Equity Officer
- Adopting 'Racism as a Public Health Crisis' Resolution
- Racial Equity Employee Survey Launched



# Racism as a Public Health Crisis Resolution

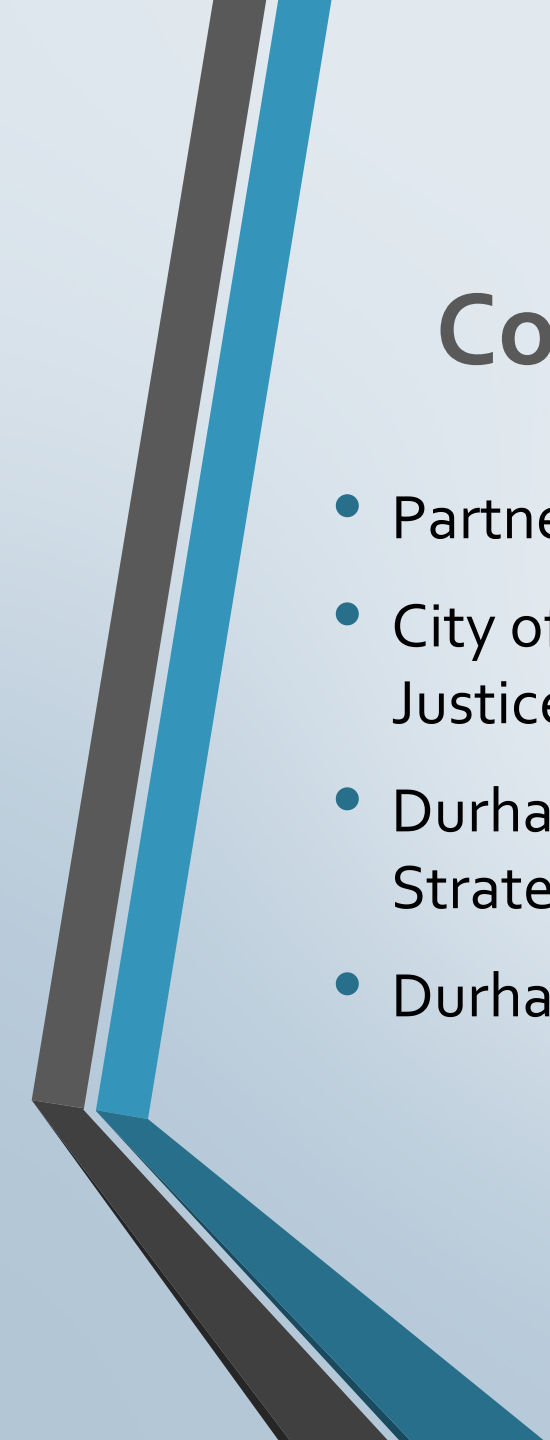
1. Assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire county
2. Work to progress as an equity and justice-oriented organization, with the Board of Commissioners and its staff leadership continuing to identify specific activities to further enhance diversity and to ensure antiracism principles across Board of Commissioners leadership, staffing and contracting.
3. Promote equity through all policies approved by the Board of Commissioners and enhance educational efforts aimed at understanding, addressing and dismantling racism and how it affects the delivery of human and social services and economic development.
4. Support community efforts to amplify issues of racism and engage actively and authentically with communities of color wherever they live.



# Racism as a Public Health Crisis Resolution

5. To always promote and support policies that prioritize the health of all people, especially people of color by mitigating exposure to adverse childhood experiences.
6. Ensure on-going antiracism, racial equity training with the goal of reaching all members of the Board of County Commissioners, county leadership and staff.
7. Encourage current racial equity training among all community partners, grantees, vendors and contractors.
8. Identify clear goals and objectives, including periodic reports to the Board of Commissioners, to assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity.





# Community Engagement and Alignment

- Partnership for Healthy Durham, Racial Equity Taskforce
- City of Durham Racial Equity Taskforce Report, Health and Environmental Justice Workgroup Recommendations
- Durham County Communications and Engagement Comprehensive Strategy
- Durham City-County Planning Racial Equity Toolkit



# Seeding Future Racial Equity Efforts

- Racial equity efforts must be **fully resourced**.
- Racial equity efforts should **engage communities** most impacted by disparate outcomes in order to **prevent doing harm**.
- **Racial equity tools** should be utilized to direct **shared decision-making** and **power shift** to fully establish anti-racist institutions and systems.
- Racial equity work should be **visible and transparent** in its **accountability** to all Durham residents.

# Thank you!

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