

## **ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee Resolution and Commitment to the Deconstruction of Systemic Racism within the 4-H Program**

As a 4-H committee dedicated to leadership of the 4-H Youth Development Program, the education, health, and safety of our 4-H members and all youth are our top priorities. In light of recent events in our country, we feel it necessary to reaffirm the core values of the 4-H Youth Development program. Let us be clear. The 4-H Youth Development program will not tolerate racism or discrimination of any kind. There are no limitations, restrictions, or qualifications to this statement. So, we say now, to our 4-H youth, families, and volunteers of color, we support you. We support your efforts to be heard as you call for action that will protect you and allow you to succeed. We support your efforts to be seen as you attempt to put a face on years of systemic racism. We support your efforts to live your lives in a more perfect union, one where you can be confident in your ability to secure the blessings of liberty.

We also express our support for our 4-H faculty and staff, as you find ways to support crucial conversations through the lens of race and engage with youth from diverse backgrounds, experiences and belief systems. We appreciate and admire the efforts you are making to keep these conversations going in this time of uncertainty and virtual programming.

And finally, to all of the Cooperative Extension Directors and Administrators, we stand with you as well and applaud your efforts to ensure that all 4-H programs are places where everyone feels welcome, heard, respected, and treated with dignity. We support your pledge to examine our curriculum, programming, and policies to ensure they support all of our youth. We can't pretend we understand what some of our youth have experienced in their lives. But we welcome the opportunity to listen to and learn from members of the 4-H community who feel marginalized or silenced. We commit to guaranteeing racial equity and justice through training, policy, and curriculum. And we hope that, with this statement, our 4-H members, families, and professionals will know they have the strength of the 4-H system not only behind them but also beside them, as we all work to confront racism and move our educational mission forward.

*Therefore, we invite and challenge the 4-H system to join us in the important work needed to put these commitments into practice and offer the following recommendations as possible steps in that direction.*

- National 4-H ECOP re-affirms its support of the National 4-H Equity Design team and commit to providing organizational support needed to implement its recommendations for next steps toward our institutional goals for equity and inclusion.
- We challenge all individuals involved in the 4-H program to actively pursue their own anti-racism education and awareness - see references below
- We recommend National 4-H Council serve as convener to invite dialogue between 4-H and other national youth organizations to share best practices and strengthen the impact of our work in addressing racial injustice.
- We challenge all land grants to require professional development that explicitly addresses and makes space for conversation around race and racism

- Coming Together for Racial Understanding  
<http://srdc.msstate.edu/civildialogue/index.html>
  - Navigating Differences <https://diversity.wsu.edu/navigating-difference-training/>
- We challenge National 4-H Council, NIFA/USDA and LGUs to prioritize fund development and resources in support of equity and inclusion initiatives. Moreover, all fund development efforts should include goals for diversity and inclusion.
- We recommend strategy sessions between the 1890s, 1862s, and 1994s on ways to target more minority youths for 4-H; and the hiring of a third-party with expertise in working with large institutions to help us create transparency and steps for accountability in working toward our equity, diversity, and inclusion goals.

### Books and other readings

- [\*White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack\*](#) (Peggy McIntosh)
- [\*Diversify\*](#), June Sarpong
- [\*How to be an antiracist\*](#), Ibram X. Kendi
- [\*Pedagogy of the oppressed\*](#), Paulo Freire
- [\*Teaching to transgress\*](#), Bell Hooks
- [\*White privilege: The myth of a post-racial society\*](#), Kalwant Bhopal
- [\*Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race\*](#), Renni Eddo-Lodge
- [\*You Wouldn't Understand: White Teachers in Multiethnic Classrooms\*](#), Sarah Pearce
- [\*White Fragility\*](#), Robin Diangelo
- [\*White Rage\*](#), Carol Anderson

### Podcasts:

- [\*Whistling Vivaldi\*](#) (NPR)

### Videos:

- [\*"I'm Still Here," by Austin Channing Brown\*](#) (Art of the Sermon)

### Articles specific to Cooperative Extension and her history with racism:

- Systematic Racism at the USDA Has Virtually Eliminated Black Farmers  
<https://www.americanprogress.org/press/release/2019/04/03/468211/release-systematic-racism-usda-virtually-eliminated-black-farmers/>
- Inside the Push to Bring Racial Equity to Land Grant Universities Academics and food systems advocates are working from within public universities to acknowledge and address 150 years of structural racism.  
<https://civileats.com/2018/05/30/inside-the-push-to-bring-racial-equity-to-land-grant-universities/>
- Winn, J. E. (2012). *Documenting Racism*. Bloomsbury Academic. African Americans in US Department of Agriculture Documentaries, 1921-42  
<https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/25787>
- Wright, Willie Jamaal. "Black Farmers' General and Gendered Strikes against the USDA." *Living Racism: Through the Barrel of the Book* (2017): 169.  
<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=ZDxCDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA169&d>

[q=racism+in+USDA+&ots=LdO-Bohbg-&sig=NuCR66P8kh02Cl0IKuMlodlvbrM#v=onepage&q=racism%20in%20USDA&f=false](#)

- The Great Land Robbery <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/09/this-land-was-our-land/594742/>
- Land-grab universities - Expropriated Indigenous land is the foundation of the land-grant university system <https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.4/indigenous-affairs-education-land-grab-universities>
- Land-Grant Institutions and Food Systems: Acknowledging historical disparities and exploring present-day equity initiatives <https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/land-grants-and-food-systems-disparities-webinar>