
The Cleveland Pledge

Systemic racism is everyone's problem. In Cleveland's continuing fight for racial equity and inclusion, we have a singular history and have played a progressive role on a national stage. Prominent African American leaders throughout Cleveland's history and today, have been instrumental in pushing us into the forefront. What we have learned over time is that this is not a fight of one race but rather a fight of one community – our Cleveland community.

Standing united, we are today voicing our strong support of recent legislation passed by Cleveland City Council to declare Racism a Public Health Crisis. Still, this is not enough.

Rectifying a system of structural racism will take much more than words. Work has been done, and, while incremental change is apparent, we need to do much more – and we need to do it now. We must act, stand with justice and work together across our community to do our part to both heal and begin to undo the endemic racism that has and continues to disproportionately hurt our city – emotionally, physically and in terms of reputation.

This legislation can enable and empower us to take this issue head on. It can provide a platform rooted in policy that can initiate substantive care and sustainable change, beginning at a governmental level and then cascading throughout our community.

What we do now to collectively hear the voices of pain, loss, and fear can initiate the actions we take to heal, change and unite our city to define us for years to come.

As leaders of institutions that all seek a better future for Cleveland as a whole, we are all fully committed to this charter and pledge our individual and collective resources to set forth tangible actions to undo structural racism. This is our commitment to our greater Cleveland community, and we ask that you join us as partners in this critical endeavor – and this day forward, let our actions speak louder than our words.
