



DECLARATION OF INCLUSION

A Vermont Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Initiative

Table of Contents

Purpose.....	01
Goal Statement.....	02
Historic Roots.....	03
Background.....	05
Read the Declaration of Inclusion.....	06
Declaration of Inclusion Initiative.....	07
Adopting the Declaration.....	08
Presenting the Declaration.....	10
Declaration Talking Points.....	12
Implementing the Declaration.....	15
In-Depth Implementation.....	16
On-Going Implementation.....	17
Professional Resources.....	18
Contact Us.....	20
Support for the Declaration of Inclusion.....	24
Proclamation of Inclusion.....	25
2022 Inclusion Week Proclamation.....	27
Letter of Support (Rutland Young Professionals).....	28
We Are One Rutland (Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region).....	29
Statement of Equity & Racial Justice (Middlebury, Vermont Selectboard).....	31
Declaration of Inclusion (South Burlington City Council).....	33

Purpose

The purpose of the Declaration is to:

- Highlight the fact that we as Vermonters are not fully aware of the systemic racism that is present in our majority “white” society
- Raise consciousness about the importance of diversity, the positive effect that diversity can have on our economy, and on equity and justice
- Emphasize the importance of preparing our youth to live and prosper in the more diverse society in which we all will soon be living
- Tell the world at large that Vermont welcomes all people to our state, which is struggling to maintain its population and its ability to fund basic programs for its citizens
- Attract people with myriad skills and traditions to Vermont to live, work, and raise families in a state that values and encourages diversity in its population
- Focus attention on examining employee manuals, police protocols, and hiring practices to promote fairness and equity in applying legislation, ordinances, etc., within our towns and the state as a whole
- Employ best practices in coaching municipal and state employees, including police, to value and respect all citizens

Goal Statement

The purpose of this document is to provide information necessary for each Vermont municipality to adopt and implement a Declaration of Inclusion. *Adopt* means formal approval by the municipality's governing body. *Implement* means the enactment and furtherance of plans, policies, programs, procedures, and relevant training that support and advance the intent and spirit of the Declaration.

"The fact is if we want stronger, more economically secure communities, we need more people and more diversity in Vermont. I hope this effort sends a message to anyone who wants to live and work in a safe, healthy and welcoming state."

- Governor Phillip B. Scott



Historic Roots



Ernie Royal and Willa Royal were the creators and owners of Royals Hearthside Restaurant and Royals Market in Rutland. Ernie was the Principal Chef and Willa managed the front of the restaurant and the gourmet food Market. Their Vermont story - in brief - is an outstanding example of diversity and inclusion, how it works, and why it is important to Vermont's growth and prosperity.

Ernie developed his initial culinary skills at a world-class restaurant in Boston; was recruited to bring them to a fine restaurant in Springfield, Vermont; and was subsequently encouraged to come to Rutland in 1964 by three local businesspersons who connected him to the business and financial communities. Over almost 30 years, Ernie and Willa built a Michelin-rated restaurant and established a gourmet food retail and mail order business which was one of the first such establishments in Vermont.

Ernie was Vermont's first Black restaurant owner. He was recognized in *Who's Who in Black America*; served as a board member of the National Restaurant Association and the Culinary Institute of America; was selected as a member of the U.S. Culinary Olympic Team and was inducted into the African American Hall of Fame. He was a mentor to many aspiring young Black restaurateurs and others who subsequently became restaurant owners in Rutland.

Historic Roots

In 1984 both enterprises were sold to Al and Pat Wakefield, a former corporate executive and international consultant, also African American, who had dined at the restaurant and was considering a move from New York City to Vermont. Duplicating his own experience, Ernie introduced the Wakefields to other local businesspeople who encouraged them to relocate to Rutland.

A year later, restless and still with loads of energy, the Royals re-purchased the restaurant which they operated successfully until Ernie's death in 1994. Willa died a year later.

A life-sized sculpture of Ernie and Willa is scheduled for completion and dedication in late 2023.

The Royal's story of coming to, remaining in, enriching, and bringing international attention to the Rutland community, while mentoring others for future success, establishes the foundation for the Declaration of Inclusion initiative.

Background

Distressed by recent catastrophic events unfolding across the country relating to human rights, justice, and equality, Bob Harnish, a long-time resident of Pittsford, decided to do something. His concern led him to Al Wakefield, a former businessman in the Rutland area, who shared similar distress and felt a need to do something “hands-on.”

The intent of the Declaration of Inclusion is to indicate and reinforce the message to all visitors, residents, and those thinking about or planning to come and stay, that:

- Vermont is a welcoming community
- Vermont invites all to bring their families and friends, as well as their talents and skills
- Vermont is a community of people who will treat them fairly, provide encouragement and support for their interests
- Vermont will bring the full resources of the state, cities, and towns to ensure their well-being and security



Pictured from left to right; Norman Cohen, Al Wakefield, Bob Harnish.

Read the Declaration of Inclusion

The Town of _____ condemns racism and welcomes all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, disability, or socioeconomic status, and wants everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community.

As a town, we formally condemn all discrimination in all of its forms, commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community, and will strive to ensure all of our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commitment.

The Town of _____ has and will continue to be a place where individuals can live freely and express their opinions.

By the _____ Selectboard on _____ 20__.

Declaration of Inclusion Initiative

Ultimately the goal is to increase diversity in Vermont and to abolish discrimination against all marginalized cultures, groups and individuals and to replace it with the general acceptance and respect by the public for the dignity of all people.

The Declaration of Inclusion being adopted by towns and the Governor's Proclamation on inclusion provide recognition but not strategic direction, policy sustainability, or operational guidance.

Diversity in our population is an important component required for vital and dynamic town, city, and state economies but how to achieve that diversity and the way to gain acceptance by the largely white population are equally important aspects to consider.

Community leaders at all levels in Vermont must prioritize equity, diversity, and inclusion in their decision-making and we should require them to step down if they are unwilling to address their own or the community's biases before making decisions. Municipal leaders and law enforcement officials must engage effectively with community members on the subject of systemic racism, racial justice, public safety, and law enforcement. They need to engage the public in conversations on these and other issues important to an increasingly diverse population.

Community and state leaders can work closely with the many organizations already existing, organizations such as Rutland Forward, Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity, Vermont's Local Solutions and Community Action Team, the Vermont Equity Caucus, Project VISION, Vermont Council on Rural Development, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and many more. In addition, and very important, is the Vermont Office of Racial Equality and its Executive Director, Xusana Davis.

The difficult work is just beginning but the rewards will be enormous.

– Bob Harnish

Adopting the Declaration

Why Adopt a Declaration of Inclusion?

A town or city adopting a Declaration of Inclusion is making a statement to its citizens and to others that it is a town that believes in treating everyone fairly, recognizing that “everyone” does not look or act alike, that we expect our municipal government to abolish any language in ordinances, hiring practices and police protocols that favor the white majority or diminish the rights of others.

A town or city may not necessarily be reacting to a prior incident or situation but, in most cases, will just be doing what is right and fair for all citizens – present and future. A welcoming town thrives because it encourages diversity, which brings new vitality to the economy and increased tax revenue.

Evidence of Commitment

Town Level

Inclusion in the town’s website, employee manuals, police protocols, newsletters, economic development marketing materials, etc.

State Level

Inclusion in major addresses by leading state officials, printed materials used to welcome visitors, policies and operating procedures, external communications, public relations pieces, etc.

Organizational Level

Inclusion in policies, operating procedures, and similar documents used by labor unions, law enforcement agencies, and academic institutions and other organizations throughout the state.

Adopting the Declaration

Guidelines For Adoption

Recently, some municipalities have adopted Declarations which we feel do not reflect the level of spirit, scope, and intent we seek. For that reason, in order for a municipality to be listed as having adopted a Declaration of Inclusion, its Declaration should meet and adhere to the following guidelines:

- A strong welcome for all people to the town
- A condemnation of discrimination against members of marginalized groups
- An enumeration of marginalized groups
- A commitment to fair and equal treatment of all residents
- A commitment by town leadership to review and act on town policies, activities and operating procedures to ensure they are free of bias.

Rewording the Declaration

The organization may wish to change the wording. This is acceptable provided the basic thoughts are preserved, the designated groups are considered, and they continue to be included. Please refer to the Guidelines for Adoption, above.

Presenting the Declaration

Following are some ideas to consider as you prepare to present the Declaration.

We know that each town or organization is different and that the strategy for gaining adoption and implementation of the Declaration may be different.

01

HOW TO PRESENT

Depending on the Selectboard or group, you may want to present it at one meeting and return to it at the next meeting and request a motion to adopt.

02

FIND AN ALLY

Prior to the second meeting, you may be wise to approach a friendly member to support the Declaration of Inclusion, speak to it, and make the motion to adopt. We recommend that you be present at both meetings for support and to answer any questions.

03

REWORDING THE DECLARATION OF INCLUSION

The organization/Selectboard may wish to change the wording. This is acceptable provided the basic thoughts are preserved, the designated groups are considered, and they continue to be included.

Presenting the Declaration

04

THE GOAL

The goal is to have statewide adoption, including at the state level. Governor Scott issued a Proclamation of Inclusion in May 2021. You can read it in the Support for the Declaration section on page 22.

05

HAVE A CONVERSATION

Speaking with those who may be reluctant, do not see a need for the statement, or even oppose the Declaration may be useful as well. Doing so provides an opportunity to discuss and hopefully resolve statements such as: "We don't have those problems here" and "I am not a racist. Why do we need such a statement in our town?"

06

THE PATH FORWARD

There may be doubt about the ways to implement, monitor, and assess progress on the Declaration. Turning words into action is not the easiest. Since each community is different, with different needs and different stages of socioeconomic development, we suggest follow-up discussions led by a skilled discussion leader. He/she/they may be a respected member of the community, a professional facilitator, or a competent consultant. We can help identify those potentially interested in working with you.

Declaration Talking Points

As you are preparing to present the Declaration of Inclusion to your town or group, you might consider some of the reasons and suggestions below and put these thoughts into your own words.

I believe that this town has always treated people respectfully and fairly so we should say it with a forceful statement. By stating it, it then becomes a message that we welcome all people and we thrive when we have a diverse population. Think of the Irish, Italian and Polish immigrants who came here to work in the marble and granite industries and the important heritage they brought with them. Vermont would not be the culturally rich state it is without these immigrants and many more. These people all brought skills, ambitions, religious traditions, interesting food, unique customs, and so much more.

The United States as a whole is the most diverse country on earth and the most successful by almost any measure. And, it is no coincidence that Burlington and Chittenden county have the most dynamic economy in Vermont, as well as the most diverse population. Diversity brings creativity that leads to solutions and a richer life for all.

Historically Vermont has been one of the least diverse States. In its annual poll of 50 states, a July 2022 CNBC survey of 50 states rated Vermont as the top place to live in in the United States. It highlighted Vermont's voting rights, child care, health care and air quality as major attractions. It noted, not surprisingly, that Vermont's inclusiveness did not measure up to its other assets. By encouraging and promoting diversity in our towns, schools, public and daily lives, we can prepare our children to comfortably thrive in a community of people of all cultures, backgrounds and beliefs.

Declaration Talking Points

We all want our cities and towns (and our state) to grow in a healthy way, to increase our tax base, and fund our schools and roads. To make this happen we need to welcome all people. We need to reach out, proactively, to the world at large, with the message that **WE WELCOME ANYONE** who wants to live, work and add richness to our state. Currently, the population in Vermont is static or declining with low fertility rates and young people leaving the state. The remaining population is aging and putting a strain on underfunded state resources.

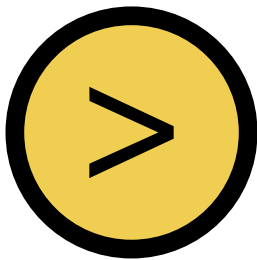
With remote work becoming well accepted, people are moving to Vermont, bringing with them jobs, new skills, and capabilities. They embody the way our world will look in 10 to 20 years and their presence may inspire other talented folks to move to our town and state. These new residents will be remodeling homes and building new ones, their tax dollars paying for better-funded services. With a more vibrant and interesting economy, more of our young people will want to stay, work, and raise their families in Vermont.

A Declaration of Inclusion is another tool in the “toolbox” of those responsible for the town’s economic development, that is, their toolbox of reasons why someone should locate a business here, perhaps choosing our town (or state) over another.

Declaration Talking Points

A Declaration such as this would mark the town and its leaders as a forward-thinking community of people, stepping out in front for what we know is right and deeply rooted in the values that America and Vermont say they champion.

America has been built by people of many diverse origins, cultures, races, appearances, customs and practices, many of them not initially welcomed with open arms. Let's take this small but affirmative step towards the American ideal as stated in our Constitution.



Add your own thoughts to these reasons and end by urging adoption of the Declaration of Inclusion or something similar and making it an integral part of the guiding principles of the town.

Be prepared to provide copies of the Declaration to Select Board members, town managers, and others.

Implementing the Declaration

The following information is intended for use by cities and towns in Vermont for taking steps toward implementation of your Declaration of Inclusion.

Small steps to inform your residents of the wording of the DOI and the reasons behind adopting it:

- Add the Declaration to the town website or hang a framed copy in the Town Clerks office and include reasons why the Select Board believes this is an important step forward for the town.
- Print the Declaration in the Town Newsletter along with the reasons for adopting. Perhaps this is the first of a series of articles.
- Include in the Towns Annual Report along with a report of the broader role that Inclusion, Diversity and equity are playing throughout the State of Vermont and the far-reaching implications of the 2020 Census which show that Vermont has a dwindling and aging population.

ON - GOING IMPLEMENTATION

Steps for engaging partners now and in the future:

- Work with school administration to bring inclusion and diversity into the classroom in art, poetry, drama, debate club, etc.
- Work with faith leaders in the community to guide their congregations to embrace diversity as the human and humane way to treat our fellow citizens of this planet.
- Engage the town's library director to arrange a speakers series, discussion groups, reading groups, film series etc. and include students in these programs and their planning.
- Create a "concierge service" to assist new people in town or those considering a move to the town, with housing options, and the many other questions that a new arrival might have.

IN-DEPTH IMPLEMENTATION

Steps requiring more thought and time:

- Form a Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee, perhaps including a high school student, with a mandate to guide the town in its effort to become more diverse and inclusive and to report back to the Select Board. An important early objective of the committee will be to review the town's official policies, programs, ordinances and procedures to be sure they are free of implicit or institutional bias.
- Task the committee with researching, gathering and overseeing the most effective ideas for creating a more welcoming community and to issue periodic reports to the Select Board and the town.
- Review economic development, recruitment and employment policies to ensure they are welcoming, supportive and reaffirming of commitment to inclusion.
- Assess the need for “implicit bias” training for city or town staff, police and fire departments.
- Brainstorm with other adopting towns for creative ways to reach out to marginalized groups, individuals and new arrivals to give them a sense of belonging and value within the community.
- Assess current work environment for town employees; do they feel safe, welcome and appreciated? Update policies to clarify how workers can have grievances heard and reviewed in a timely, fair and comfortable manner.
- Urge local schools, non-profits, corporations, etc. to adopt a statement of inclusion and offer bias training.

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

For more specific information, guidelines, and assistance on implementation, the following are excellent resources:

State of Vermont, Office of Racial Justice

The Vermont IDEAL Program. IDEAL stands for inclusion, diversity, equity, action, and leadership. IDEAL is a coalition of Vermont municipalities dedicated to advancing racial and other forms of equity across the state through shared learning and tangible action.

For further information contact:

Xusana Davis, Executive Director of Racial Equity for the State of Vermont
xusana.davis@vermont.gov, 802-828-3322

Vermont League of Cities and Towns, Equity Resources for Vermont Municipalities

The VLCT has two initiatives designed to help cities, towns, and village leaders create and maintain welcoming communities. These are:

- The Municipal Equity Toolkit, an online ten-part resource that covers everything from creating a municipal equity committee to building a framework and action plan to listing equity-related books, podcasts, and videos.
- VLCT Welcoming and Engaging Communities Cohort, a partnership with the Abundant Sun consultancy that offers municipal leaders' participation in the firm's Ethical Performance Improvement Campaign. This is a 6-month, 8-two-hour virtual workshop on topics that include equality, equity, diversity and inclusion.

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES CONT.

Vermont Community Foundation Grants - Equitable and Inclusive Communities

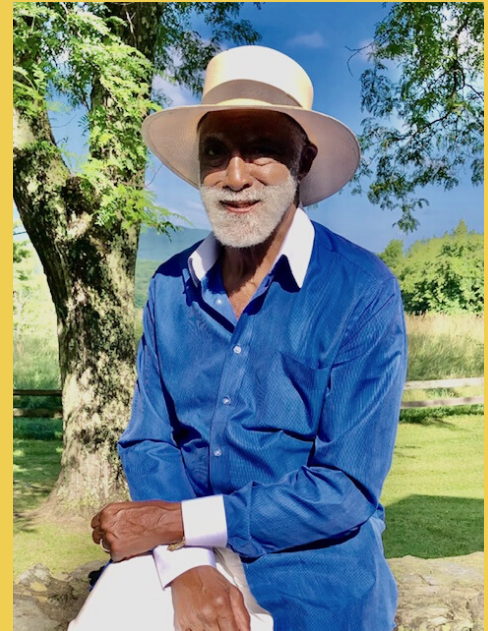
The Vermont Community Foundation awards grants of up to \$10,000/municipality from a fund of \$200,000 to support Vermont villages, towns, and cities engaged in local efforts to foster inclusion and belonging for people of all races and backgrounds.

Contact the grants and community impact team at grants@vermontcf.org or 802-388-3355 opt.6 with questions.

Contact Us

J. Alvin Wakefield

Al Wakefield has been a resident of Vermont for over 35 years, most of that in Mendon. As many others have done, Al and his family came to the community to ski, enjoy the great outdoors, and the more relaxed life that Vermont affords.



During their first visit here, the Wakefield's dined at Royal's Hearthside Restaurant, met Ernie and Willa Royal, and subsequently acquired both the restaurant as well as the newly established Royal's Gourmet Food Market.

Al's visits with the Royals and, subsequently, with Preston Smith, Frank Punderson, and Otto Lannanatuoni – all long-time residents and successful business owners – convinced the Wakefield's that they would be accepted and could continue to build their dreams here.

After two years, the Wakefield's sold the enterprises and Al went on to build an international executive search firm, operating from Mendon and New York City.

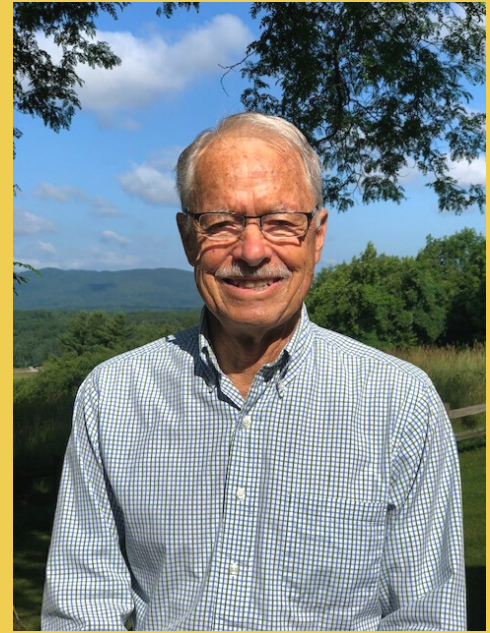
Contact Al

al@wakefield-global.com

Contact Us

Robert (Bob) Harnish

Bob Harnish moved to Vermont in 1964 in response to the lure of skiing after college and a three-year tour in the Air Force. He and his wife, Breda, purchased Summit Lodge, which they later sold to buy the Cortina Inn.



The couple had no children of their own, but over the years they “took underwing” a Puerto Rican boy, George Valentin, and two Hmong (Laotian) kids, Sheng and Maisian Vang. All three have moved on, after getting college degrees, to have families and impressive careers. These relationships have made clear to Bob the struggles faced by people in the BIPOC and AAPI communities in Vermont as well as other states.

Hospitality is in Bob’s DNA. This goes beyond innkeeping to the whole of Vermont as a state that will benefit enormously in terms of diversity, culture, vibrancy, tax dollars, and much more by letting the world know that people of all backgrounds are welcome. Bob resides in Pittsford.

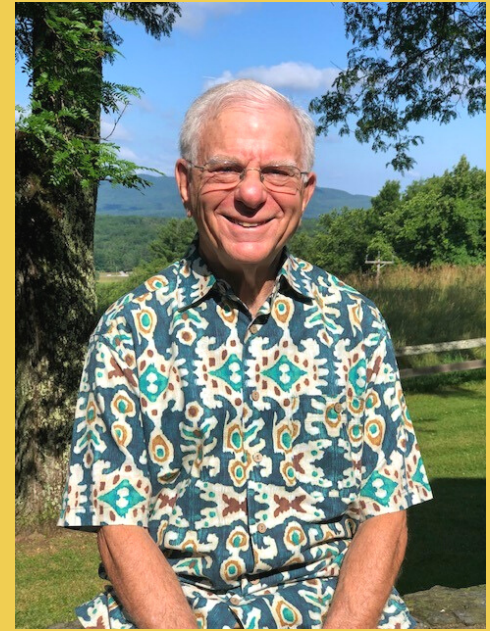
Contact Bob

rharnish24@gmail.com

Contact Us

Norman Cohen

Norman Cohen, a Washington DC native, has lived in Rutland County since 1969 when he joined the Office of the United States Attorney. He lives in Rutland as does one of his daughters. He entered private practice in 1973, formed the firm of Cohen and Rice in 1985 and retired in 2019.



Norman has served on several public and non-profit boards: Rutland Town School Board, Vermont Achievement Center, PEG-TV and Mentor Connector. Currently, he serves on the Rutland Town Planning Commission. He is building his second home since retirement with Rutland County Habitat for Humanity.

His legal experience and “word crafting” acquired from six years of sports writing adds depth to our team.

Contact Norman

norcoh26@gmail.com

Contact Us

Barbara Noyes Pulling

Barbara Noyes Pulling has been employed by the Rutland Regional Planning Commission since 2013 as a Senior Planner. As a native Vermonter, her roots extend to the 1790s. She attended St. Johnsbury Academy and

graduated from the University of Vermont in 1976 with a degree in Political Science. She spent the next 35 years in public radio and television broadcasting as a reporter and producer. Her career took her to public radio and television stations in Alaska, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Maine and the Metropolitan Washington DC area, garnering awards for programs on such diverse topics as Aquaculture, the Idaho outdoors and financial irregularities in religious organizations.



After 35 years in public broadcasting, she obtained a master's degree in public policy from George Mason University in 2013 and returned to Vermont. She brings her exceptional communications skills and her intimate familiarity with public affairs and public issues to our Initiative. Barbara lives in Rutland Town with her spouse Jeannine and their two German Shepherds. She has served as Chair of the Rutland Town Planning Commission for seven years.

Contact Barbara

barbaranoyespulling@gmail.com

Support for the Declaration of Inclusion

As of September 15, 2023, 121 towns and cities, home to 71% of the population have adopted the Declaration of Inclusion.

Athens	Hyde Park	Shaftsbury
Bakersfield	Isle La Motte	Sharon
Barre City	Jamaica	Shelburne
Bellows Falls	Jericho	Shoreham
Bennington	Johnson	Shrewsbury
Berlin	Johnson Village	South Burlington
Bethel	Lincoln	South Hero
Brandon	Londonderry	Springfield
Brattleboro	Ludlow	St. Albans City
Bristol	Manchester	St. Johnsbury
Brookfield	Marshfield	Stowe
Brookline	Mendon	Strafford
Burlington	Middlebury	Sudbury
Calais	Middlesex	Sunderland
Cambridge	Middletown Springs	Swanton
Canaan	Milton	Swanton Village
Cavendish	Montpelier	Thetford
Chester	Moretown	Tinmouth
Chittenden	Morristown	Underhill
Clarendon	Mount Tabor	Vergennes
Colchester	Newfane	Vernon
Corinth	Northfield	Waitsfield
Danby	Orwell	Wallingford
Dorset	Pawlet	Warren
Dover	Pittsfield	Washington
Duxbury	Pittsford	Waterbury
East Montpelier	Plainfield	West Rutland
Essex	Plymouth	West Windsor
Essex Junction Village	Pomfret	Weston
Fair Haven	Poultney	Weybridge
Fairfax	Pownal	Williamstown
Fayston	Proctor	Williston
Franklin	Putney	Wilmington
Glover	Randolph	Windsor
Grand Isle	Richmond	Winooski
Guilford	Ripton	Wolcott
Hardwick	Rockingham	Woodstock
Hartford	Roxbury	Woodstock Village
Hartland	Rutland City	Worcester
Hinesburg	Rutland Town	
Huntington	Saxtons River	

Proclamation of Inclusion

State of Vermont Executive Department

State of Vermont Executive Department A Proclamation of Inclusion

- WHEREAS,** Vermont and Vermonters have a rich history of celebrating freedom and diversity, including the abolition of slavery in 1777, activism in the abolitionist movement, our embrace of European immigrants to work in mines and quarries, recognition of same sex marriage; state recognition of Abenaki peoples; and protection of undocumented immigrants from potentially overreaching federal enforcement; and
- WHEREAS,** despite Vermont's tradition of leadership in freedom and diversity, historically Vermont has been and still is one of the least racially and ethnically diverse states in the country; and
- WHEREAS,** one of the silver linings to be found after the pandemic may be that remote work may continue to be well accepted and people have moved and are moving to Vermont bringing jobs, new skills and capabilities and cultural and racial diversity; and
- WHEREAS,** people and families who have moved or who are moving to Vermont may inspire others to move as well, inevitably adding richness in diversity of history and experience to our State; and
- WHEREAS,** with more vibrant communities, businesses and restaurants and cultural activities, facilities and resources, more of Vermont's young people will want to stay, work and raise their families in Vermont; and
- WHEREAS,** it is essential for all to know, Vermont seeks to achieve equality and equity and to create a culture in which racial, ethnic and other cultural disparities are openly acknowledged and addressed and where no one person is more likely to experience society's benefits or burdens than any other person; and
- WHEREAS,** the State of Vermont is committed to growing and nurturing a diverse society in which we want our youth to live and prosper; and
- WHEREAS,** the State of Vermont is committed to identifying overt and implicit bias and systemic racism throughout State government systems and functions, and to eliminating racial, ethnic and other cultural disparities that may now exist within State government as one of the state's largest employers and as a provider of a variety of essential services to the public at large; and
- WHEREAS,** the State of Vermont has demonstrated leadership and has achieved notable and laudable success in addressing racial and other disparities through the work of the Director of Racial Equity and the Racial Equity Advisory Panel, as well as the Governor's Racial Equity Task Force working to address systemic bias in our State systems and institutions, examine existing law on hate crimes, evaluate systems of support and look to increase civic participation among racially diverse populations; the Agency of Transportation through its Office of Civil Rights; the Agency of Education through partnerships with professional associations in anti-bias efforts; the Human Resources Department through its work building more inclusive representation in the State government workforce; the State's Human Rights Commission; and the Office of the Attorney General's Civil Rights Office; and

WHEREAS,

the Department of Public Safety has provided leadership through its Fair and Impartial Policing Initiative, as well as comprehensive policy work on hiring and promotions, data collection, use of force, body worn cameras, greater transparency regarding improper conduct and attempts to achieve comprehensive law enforcement training modernization and cultural change.

NOW, THEREFORE,

I, Philip B. Scott, Governor, hereby proclaim as follows:

1. The State of Vermont formally condemns discrimination in all of its forms and welcomes all people who want to live and work and add richness to our State, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, or disability and will protect these classes to the fullest extent of the law.
2. Let the second week of May be known as Inclusion Week to emphasize these ongoing efforts to make Vermont a more inviting state for all people.
3. I call upon all Vermonters to denounce prejudice, to openly acknowledge and address our own implicit bias and welcome and celebrate all people, of all races, colors, religions, national origins, sex, gender identity or expression, ages, disabilities, and continue to work together to ensure every individual can live freely, equitably, and express their opinions free from fear, intolerance and prejudice.



Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Vermont on this 7th day of May, A.D. 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Scott", written over a horizontal line.

Philip B. Scott
Governor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brittney L. Wilson", written over a horizontal line.

Brittney L. Wilson
Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs

2022 Inclusion Week Proclamation

State of Vermont Executive Department

State of Vermont Executive Department A Proclamation

WHEREAS, Proclamation 21-061, A Proclamation of Inclusion signed on May 7, 2021, established the second week of May as Inclusion Week; and

WHEREAS, Vermont strives to be a leader in protecting hard-fought civil rights, and is committed to eliminating hatred and bigotry in all systems and institutions to improve outcomes for all Vermonters and build more multicultural and socially cohesive communities; and

WHEREAS, Vermont must create a culture in which racial, ethnic and other cultural disparities are openly acknowledged and addressed; and

WHEREAS, Vermont has demonstrated leadership in this regard through the creation of a Racial Equity Advisory Panel, Racial Equity Task Force and the hiring of the Executive Director of Racial Equity; and

WHEREAS, the State must and will continue to address the challenges of achieving racial and ethnic equity across Vermont and to nurture the diverse society in which we want our youth to live and prosper; and

WHEREAS, Vermont will continue to welcome all persons with myriad skills and traditions to work, live and raise families; and

WHEREAS, we must bring state and local leaders, agencies and interested parties together across Vermont to examine existing law on hate crimes, evaluate systems of support and look to increase civic participation among racially diverse populations; and

WHEREAS, we also urge those same leaders and all Vermont residents to denounce prejudice and welcome all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, or disability, and to protect these classes to the fullest extent of the law.

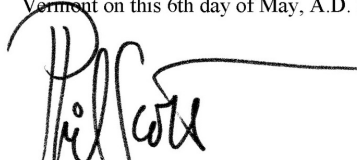
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Philip B. Scott, Governor, hereby proclaim May 8-14, 2022 as


INCLUSION WEEK

in Vermont.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Vermont on this 6th day of May, A.D. 2022.




Philip B. Scott
Governor


Brittney L. Wilson
Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs

Letter of Support

Rutland Young Professionals



The Rutland Young Professionals (RYP) Board of Directors is proud to support the Declaration of Inclusion created by Rutland County residents Al Wakefield, Bob Harnish, and several others.

Rutland Young Professionals is an all-inclusive organization focused on creating a vibrant Rutland Region. We engage with our community, create social and professional networking opportunities, and work to build a region that attracts and retains young professionals – young professionals of different races, ethnicities, genders, religions, sexual orientations, political affiliations, and more. Rutland Young Professionals is committed to making the Rutland Region a great place to work, live, learn, and play. We are also committed to doing our part to ensure that everyone – especially our diverse friends, colleagues, and members – feels comfortable and safe in our community.

We believe that diversity – in backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences – make us stronger as both a community and an organization. Our differences should be valued and embraced.

We know that there are many benefits to adopting the Declaration of Inclusion, but it is especially important for the demographic we serve, and Vermont as a whole. More young professionals are leaving the state every year. Vermont must continue to grow both culturally and economically in order to attract and retain young professionals. Vermont is home to the third oldest population in this country, so awareness and support of activities that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of its forms are critical to ensure that we continue welcoming young professionals in the Rutland Region and beyond. Our hope is that these individuals will choose to make their home in the Rutland Region, raise families here, start businesses, and become engaged in their respective communities.

For these and many other reasons, we strongly support the adoption of the Declaration of Inclusion – or an alternative version if deemed more appropriate – by all 27 towns and cities in the Rutland Region.

The Rutland Young Professionals Board of Directors

We Are One Rutland

Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region



Saying it was disturbed by national and local events related to racism, Rutland County's leading economic development organization on Tuesday took a stand on behalf of inclusion, diversity and community.

The Board of the Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region approved a resolution denouncing bias and discrimination and creating a new committee to ensure the organization does its part going forward.

"We have a social and moral obligation to lead," CEDRR said in a statement. "We can no longer remain silent and must in fact speak out to condemn discrimination of all kinds and embrace diversity in our communities. It makes economic sense, but far more important, it's the right thing to do."

The board unanimously approved the resolution, and directed the Executive Director Lyle Jepson to establish a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee that will be charged with, but not limited to, the development of a DEI Strategic Plan. The resolution requires the plan to include education, projects and activities to address bias, racism and discrimination as well as increase diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the CEDRR organization and the entire Rutland Region.

The resolution also directs the executive director to develop strategies that increase the understanding of systemic racism, equity, access to opportunity, diversity and inclusion among CEDRR staff, board members, committees, and members. It further encourages all members to support CEDRR and Jepson in this important and essential journey.

"We are alarmed, disturbed and concerned by national and local events and discourse relating to racism and intolerance of diversity," Jepson said.

"Remaining silent is no longer an option -- and we know words are not enough, so we are poised to examine our own implicit biases and root out barriers to opportunity for everyone within our membership and our community."

CEDRR Board Chair John Casella II said the resolution is critical for the community.

“This is a long overdue and needed period of transformation, and CEDRR believes that with a spirit of openness, humility, and respect, we can not only learn from one another, but we can create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community where all can feel safe and where all can feel they belong and can thrive,” Casella said.

“We are one Rutland,” Jepson said. “We are actively listening with our minds, our hearts, and with open arms. We are prepared for the ‘essential journey’ to an inclusive community and country.”

Statement of Equity & Racial Justice

Middlebury, Vermont Selectboard

Human diversity can be defined as differences in race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical and/or mental capabilities, and religious beliefs, among other differences; and all of these vast diversities exist among and between the residents of The Town of Middlebury.

The Middlebury Selectboard stands with our community and commits to being more visible, vocal, and supportive in our efforts to ensure equity and racial justice and to directly address systemic and overt racism and implicit bias. We are ready to assist and, with Town staff, will do our best to make a difference.

As leaders, the Middlebury Selectboard commits to strengthen the trust in our community by employing Town staff team members who reflect the values of integrity, compassion, and respect for the diversity of all individuals, and demonstrate these high moral values every day.

What follows are concrete ways that we are addressing these issues. We will continue to add to this list throughout the coming months. We welcome your input.

COMMITTEE. The Selectboard has formed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Workgroup composed of three Selectboard members – Farhad Khan, Dan Brown, and Lindsey Fuentes-George - tasked with vetting our options for moving forward with our DEI work. The Selectboard is also considering converting the DEI Workgroup to a full Committee, which would potentially include staff members as well as members of the general public.

PARTNERSHIPS. The Selectboard commits to broadening our partnerships in ways that will amplify all of our efforts and help effect real change around these critical issues.

REPRESENTATION. The Selectboard encourages diverse candidates to apply for staff and board positions. We will work to implement new ways to broaden and enhance this outreach.

EDUCATION. The Selectboard commits to investing in additional staff and board training around topics related to implicit bias, racism, and equity at the municipal level. We will also share these resources with the public.

RESOURCES. The Selectboard will work to identify and partner with experts, affected communities and organizations to provide a digital toolkit of resources, including reporting mechanisms, and information available to members, partners, and staff.

REPORTING. The Selectboard will publicize avenues for community members and staff to report racist or discriminatory incidents.

COMMUNICATIONS. The Selectboard commits to including diverse voices, perspectives, and imagery in our messaging and publications.

Brian R. Carpenter, Chair

Heather Seeley, Vice Chair

Nick Artim

Declaration of Inclusion

South Burlington City Council

The South Burlington City Council recognizes that our community is strongest, most connected, and best served when trust is held between city government and the community; when all feel they can participate in policy making and municipal programming; when all have equitable access to city services; and when all believe that their leaders are actively working to breakdown hundreds of years of systematic racism. More civic engagement, community connection, and mutual trust is critical as we rise to the challenges South Burlington, Vermont, our nation, and the world face today.

To that end, the South Burlington City Council condemns racism, sexism, classism, ableism, ageism, religious intolerance, and homophobia, in all its forms. We welcome all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, or physical and/or mental capabilities, to participate in governance, and we will make every effort to provide a safe and welcoming community for all.

The South Burlington City Council stands with our community and commits to being more visible, vocal, and supportive in our efforts to ensure equity and racial justice, and to directly address systemic and overt racism, sexism, classism, ableism, ageism, religious intolerance, homophobia, and implicit bias. We will work together with the City Manager and City staff, to ensure all of our actions, policies, and operation procedures reflect this commitment.

As leaders, the South Burlington City Council commits to strengthen the trust in our community by employing City staff team members who reflect the community we serve as well as bring values of integrity, compassion and respect for all individuals, and demonstrate these values every day.

The City Council recognizes that a Declaration of Inclusion is only the first step towards addressing the impacts from centuries of historic systems that have marginalized many members of our community. This work will take dedicated anti-racist initiatives that we bring into our everyday decision making. What follows are concrete ways that we are addressing these issues in the coming months and years. We will continue to add to this list in the future.

DEDICATED STAFF. The City Manager has formed a cross-departmental working group of city staff members who will provide input, vet initiatives, and provide recommendations to both the City Manager and City Council.

PARTNERSHIPS. The Council commits to forming new partnerships that will amplify all of our efforts and help effect real change.

REPRESENTATION. The Council strongly encourages all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, or physical and/or mental

capabilities, to apply for staff, committee, and elected positions. We will work to implement new ways to broaden and enhance our recruitment.

EDUCATION. The Council commits to investing in additional staff and Council/committee training around topics related to implicit bias, racism, classism, ableism, ageism, religious intolerance, homophobia, and implicit bias at the municipal level. We will share these resources with the public as available.

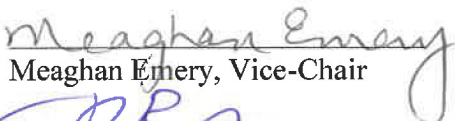
COMMUNICATIONS. The Council commits to including all voices, perspectives, languages, and imagery in our messaging and publications.

Dated this 18th day of July, 2022.

SOUTH BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL



Helen Riehle, Chair



Meaghan Emery, Vice-Chair



Tim Barritt, Clerk



Tom Chittenden



Matt Cota

Updated September 15, 2023