



Adirondack Diversity Initiative (ADI) News | February 2024

Welcome to Our New Newsletter!

A place to learn about ADI's work, events, resources and tools, and learning opportunities to help you engage in the struggle for equity and justice.

ADI's operating philosophy honors the lived experiences of members of the community in all aspects of our work. This stems from our belief that communities must play a central role as actors and stakeholders in articulating, facilitating, mobilizing and executing efforts that advance justice.

Our program interventions seek to mobilize transformational change in the Adirondack North Country region. Our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) work focuses on building culturally conscious communities, businesses, and organizations by expanding cultural and critical consciousness around issues of systemic racism and structural oppression. We empower communities with the tools and strategies needed to take action, while expanding access to unique Adirondack opportunities for historically marginalized groups.

Working with community members, local organizations and regional stakeholders, ADI creates tools, strategies and interventions that reduce the impact of the legacies of systemic racism and structural oppression that continue to plague our nation and the Adirondack Park region impacting those who are the least well off politically, economically and socially. Each of our initiatives was born out of Adirondack constituencies identifying long standing issues and needs and engaging the community directly in the solutions.

ADI focuses our work on systemic and structural racism. These forms of racism are still pervasively and deeply embedded in systems, laws, written or unwritten policies, and entrenched practices and beliefs that produce, condone, and perpetuate widespread unfair treatment and oppression of people of color. We design our programs specifically to interrupt this type of racism. Examples of this work include our Community Policing and Emerging Stewards Initiatives.

We also provide tools for individuals to combat their own individual racism and bias. This racism includes the beliefs, attitudes and actions that support or perpetuate racism. This racism can occur on both unconscious or conscious levels. We refer to this work as becoming an ally and is crucial for community members to undertake if they want to truly work toward equity and justice. But this work has to be done by the individual. People have to choose to do the work to become a true ally.

As we wrap up Black History Month, we hope this newsletter will encourage, empower and engage you to continue the work year round. Some topics and items we share may make you uncomfortable or challenge you. We hope you sit with that with grace, as those feelings are part of the process of becoming an ally. This is not easy work but is necessary for true change.

*You can learn more about Tiffany and Melanie on the ADI website [Our Team](#) page.

ADI News

Do the Work Thursdays

Do the Work Thursdays launched this month. This is a platform for ADI to share weekly tips and resources to help you engage more deeply in racial equity and justice in your community. Check in on ADI's Facebook page every Thursday for resources for allyship and action.

[Join the Facebook Group](#)

Program Spotlight: Community Policing Initiative

The Community Policing Initiative was born out the Adirondack communities' collective call for accountability and reform after the death of George Floyd and Governor Andrew Cuomo's Executive Order #203. The initiative uses the New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative, as a starting point for creating an intervention that "eliminates racial inequities in policing...modifies and modernizes policing strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and develops practices to better address the particular needs of communities of color to promote public safety, improve community engagement, and foster trust."

In addition, ADI aims to strengthen the relationship between police agencies and the Adirondack communities they serve with specific focus on eliminating racial disparities that disproportionately harm Black, Indigenous (and) People of Color (BIPOC) and other marginalized residents and visitors, by engaging in a positive process that affirms the importance of police agencies in realizing communities that are safer, healthier and free of racism and inequity.

Key outcomes of the initiative include:

- Reduce racial inequities in policing;
- Reform and modernize policing strategies, policies, procedures and practices;
- Develop and implement practices to better address the particular needs of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and other marginalized communities to promote public safety, improve community engagement, and foster trust;
- Increase the cultural competence of police personnel in the Adirondack Park;
- Decrease negative relationships between police and BIPOC and other marginalized community members within the Adirondack Park.

ADI has contracted with RENZ Consulting, LLC (www.renzconsulting.net) a firm that specializes in strengthening police-community relations at the state and local level and within urban or rural settings. Working with the needs of our Adirondack communities they assess the needs of all stakeholders and identify strategies to address issues head on through training and workshops supported by empirically sound, evidence-based research in order to bridge the gap between police officers and the communities they serve.

Our first Cohort in 2021 trained 62 officers from eight different agencies across the Adirondack Park. As of December 2023 we have trained over 165 officers from 13 agencies including DEC rangers and NYS Troopers.

[Learn](#)

Events & Happenings

Upcoming Black History Month events:

- February 25: “[The Black Woods and Adirondack Exceptionalism](#)” talk by Amy Godine at the Whallonsburg Grange.
- February 25: “[Reflections on African American History](#)” talk by Connor Williams, hosted by JBL! in Lake Placid
- February 27: [Black History Film Festival](#) presentations and films hosted by SUNY Adirondack and partners in Queensbury and Glens Falls:

Additional Upcoming ADI Sponsored events:

Talking Rivers is hosting the [We Are All in This Together Symposium](#). The symposium is a series of three virtual events to discuss how we can expand the conception of environmental stewardship beyond the human, and unravel the historical roots of the climate crisis. The three virtual events take place on Feb. 28th, March 19th and April 9th. ADI is a sponsor of this symposium.

Partner events:

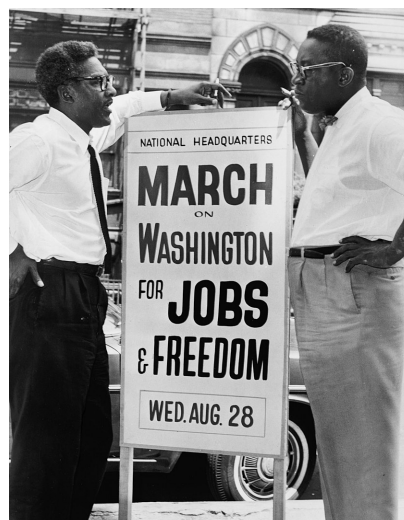
Nonprofit Westchester will be hosting a free, virtual program on Monday, March 4, from 2:00-3:15 pm titled "Pronouns, Allyship and the LGBTQIA + Community, What it Means and Why it Matters." The program is part of Nonprofit Assets, a monthly community education series, and will focus on how to promote inclusive and respectful work and community environments by honoring the chosen pronouns of others. Presenters for this event are Tejash Sanchala, Executive Director of the Westchester County Human Rights Commission, and Judy Troilo, CEO of the LOFT LGBTQ+ Community Center. [To register for this event, click here.](#)

What is ADI Reading/Watching?

The Black Woods: Pursuing Racial Justice on the Adirondack Frontier (Cornell 2023) by Amy Godine. Amy Godine is the curator of the "Dreaming of Timbuctoo" exhibit at the John Brown Farm and the author of several books, book chapters, articles and pamphlets with Adirondack content. Visit her website to learn more- amygodine.com

[Kicking Native People Off Their Land Is a Horrible Way to Save the Planet](#)- The New York Times opinion piece by Robert Williams

[15 Amazing LGBTQ People Whose Groundbreaking Lives Helped Shape Black History](#)- from The Root by Emell Adolphus
Learn about writers, singers, actors, and activists such as Bayard Rustin, Marsha P. Johnson, Audre Lorde, Willie Ninja and many more.



Bayard Rustin and Cleveland Robinson of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 7, 1963. By New York World-Telegram and the Sun staff photographer: Fernandez, Orlando, photographer

NYS Reparations Commission

December 2023 — Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation to continue New York’s leadership on

“We have a moral obligation to reckon with all

racial equity by creating a new commission to study reparations and racial justice. This commission acknowledges the horrific injustice of slavery and will be tasked with examining the legacy of slavery, subsequent discrimination against people of African descent, and the impact these forces continue to have in the present day.

parts of our shared history as New Yorkers, and this commission marks a critical step forward in these efforts.”

~ Governor Kathy Hochul

[Read More](#)

ADI In the News

- [Quoting King: The Time is Always Right to Do What is Right](#) - ANCA's What's Up Blog, Jan. 23rd
- [Adirondack Diversity Initiative Reaches for More Inclusion](#) - Watertown Daily Times, Feb. 9th
- [Why the Confederate Flag is so Highly Problematic](#) (Letter to the Editor) - Adirondack Daily Enterprise, Feb. 14th
- [Truck with Confederate Flag Sparks Controversy](#) - NCPR, Feb. 15th



Support the Adirondack Diversity Initiative

ADI exists at the intersection of environmental and transformational justice, working to make the Adirondacks a more welcoming and inclusive place for both residents and visitors while ensuring a vital and sustainable Adirondack Park for future generations.

[Support Our Work](#)



Become an ANCA Member

ANCA members are growing our region's New Economy by building strong, resilient systems for local food, clean energy and small business. As home of the Adirondack Diversity Initiative, ANCA is committed to advancing equity and inclusion in the Adirondack North Country.

[Join ANCA Today](#)



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