

The Northampton Council on Aging is opposed to all forms of racism, discrimination, and bias. The Black Lives Matter movement has brought to the forefront our attention to the many ways in which Black people are treated unfairly in society and the ways in which institutions, laws, and policies help to perpetuate that unfairness. We recognize that such social injustices affect people across the lifespan. This is reflected in one of the BLM's guiding principles which encourages us to cultivate an intergenerational and communal network free from ageism with a belief that all people, regardless of age, show up with a capacity to lead and learn.

In accordance with this stand, we advocate for programs and services at the Northampton Senior Center that support personal dignity, learning, and encouragement of communication between people we serve, so that we all broaden our understanding of the evidence of systemic racism that continues to persist in our country and community. To this end, we propose to:

1. Provide educational opportunities for our members and staff to gain awareness of and challenge personal biases while building empathy,

2. Make efforts to reflect the racial diversity of the Northampton and area community when hiring or seeking volunteers, program leaders, and staff,
3. Continue focused outreach to older residents in our community to grow a membership that reflects the diversity of the city,
4. Foster an environment at the Senior Center that respects diversity and inclusion and challenges discriminatory language and behavior,
5. Periodically evaluate and update our progress in all of these efforts as part of our larger charge of ensuring that all Northampton seniors are treated with equal dignity and respect.