

January 21, 2021

**CPRA Update - A Journey to Address Systemic Racism and Discrimination**

In 2018, the CPRA Board, members and staff began a journey to increase understanding and knowledge on Truth and Reconciliation and the effects of Colonialism. We participate in meaningful learning opportunities at our Board meetings and ensure we put these learnings into practice through CPRA’s daily work.

In early 2020—in response to the *Black Lives Matter* movement across the globe—CPRA expanded that journey to increase our understanding of systemic anti-Black racism and the role our sector plays in perpetuating systemic anti-Black racism and inequality nationally. Rather than put out a public statement regarding global events related to racial discrimination, we decided to take a step back to first learn more about the issues in order to inform our actions towards widespread changes within our sector.

The CPRA Board, members and staff began a collective education process earlier this year through a systemic racism workshop led by Dr. Cheryl Teelucksingh from Ryerson University and Randolph Haluza-DeLay, a subject matter consultant. We followed this workshop with strategic dialogues on addressing systemic anti-Black racism for those who work in our sector and those who rely on our sector’s services. Individual members continue their path through additional research and readings.

In early 2021, the CPRA Board, members and staff will continue learning through Implicit Bias training with Dr. Rachel Zellars from Saint Mary’s University. The training will help us recognize the language and understandings needed to talk about difference and diversity in and outside of our daily environments, the ways implicit bias shows up both in individual actions and within institutions, and the steps we must take to meaningfully challenge and begin to change anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination within our organization/sector.

Through these ongoing activities and others, CPRA is developing a plan with specific actions and measurable outcomes to address the barriers that the Black community faces both working and participating in the parks and recreation system. CPRA is committed to promoting equitable access to participation, education and employment in the parks and recreation sector; inclusion is a key pillar of the *Framework for Recreation in Canada* and vital to optimizing the impacts of recreation and parks in Canada.

As we go through this learning journey, we intend to share the learnings with you—our partners and stakeholders. CPRA has applied for a federal government grant so we may expand this learning journey to you and provide community-level workshops and toolkits to support grassroots efforts to address systemic racism. Though our focus is currently on anti-Black racism, we want to broaden it in months and years to come to racism in the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and Persons of Colour) communities and discrimination of all marginalized communities.

