Recognizing and removing systemic racism to create an anti-racism culture is a journey. Your company is an integral part of the social and economic fabric of our county and region. As you work to enrich your company culture, please be aware that your culture is defined by the standards you set, the behavior you encourage, and the behavior you tolerate.

Cultural change is most effective when:

- It starts at the top of the organization and is modeled by top leadership.

- Creating a safe environment for everyone to learn, grow, and thrive is a company-wide imperative.

- Measurable objectives that are monitored as part of key company metrics are required to re-enforce the culture you are trying to create.

Here are some actions you can take related to each charge. Though you are responsible for your company, this is not solitary work. You can find many experts and resources that can help you and your company on this journey on the **A Better Wake** resource page.

As a part of A Better Wake, your charge is to:

- Strive for diversity at all levels throughout the company, especially at the executive and leadership levels.

- Develop a safe space for change by adopting non-retaliation policies.

- Respect and value cultural differences.

- Build inclusiveness and empathy into our organizational culture.

- Diversify our pool of vendors and contractors.

- Use your collective voice to advocate for anti-racist efforts.

- Identify and eradicate any policies that perpetuate racism.

- Support organizations that are working on social justice reform.

- Encourage authenticity in the workplace.

A BETTER WAKE
DISMANTLING SYSTEMIC RACISM

1. Strive for diversity at all levels throughout the company, especially at the executive and leadership levels.

a) Make the DEI executive a part of the core decision-making team (C-Suite). If you do not have an executive whose sole responsibility is DEI, charge a member of the current C-Suite with this responsibility.

b) Establish DEI objectives and initiatives add them as an agenda item at every board meeting.

c) Actively recruit for diverse employees at every level. Intentionally invite POC/African Americans to apply for positions. Commit to interview at least one woman and one African American for each executive opening.

d) Create mentorships with a DEI focus. Partner with area HBCU's to provide mentorships and paid internships to introduce a more diverse hiring pool.

2. Develop a safe space for change by adopting non-retaliation policies.

a) Create safe processes for reporting discriminatory or racially insensitive events and practices. Then follow the response to these reports to make sure they are resolved and that there is no retaliation.

b) Give employees a safe learning environment so that they can learn how to recognize biases and how to speak up in the most constructive way.

c) Implement race awareness and bias training. Take the burden of educating fellow employees off the shoulders of the historically underrepresented employees by making this education available to everyone and from an expert resource.

3. Support organizations that are working on social justice reform.

a) Establish a donation goal for these organizations.

b) Provide information to employees about organizations and allow time (such as paid community service hours) to work with those organizations.

4. Build inclusiveness and empathy into your organizational culture.

a) Require DEI training for all executives, then have them champion the training with their direct reports. Set DEI training proliferation goals throughout the organization.

b) Executives model a commitment to anti-racism in their own behavior and what they tolerate in their organization.

c) Have all employees rate the organization and their supervisors on diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. Share the results with the organization, set goals for the results for future.

5. Diversify your pool of vendors and contractors.

a) Use certified minority databases to find a more diverse pool of vendors.

b) Establish minority contractor minimums. Then make sure they are not treated like maximums.

c) Intentionally network with other business groups to identify and work with diverse partners, vendors, and collaborators.

6. Use your collective voice to advocate for anti-racist efforts.

a) Celebrate your authentic and true diversity and anti-racist actions/accomplishments in publicly-facing communications vehicles. Celebrate and share the actions you are taking.

b) Recognize and celebrate culturally significant dates like MLK's birthday, Juneteenth, Black History Month, Hispanic History Month, Women's History Month, etc.

7. Identify and eradicate any policies that perpetuate racism.

a) Give employees a way to identify policies that perpetuate racism.

b) Address written and unwritten discriminatory policies and practices like banning braids, locks, and other cultural expressions in grooming.

c) See item 2 above.

8. Respect and value cultural differences.

a) Recognize different cultures each month. Provide information on how those cultures contributed to quality of life in America. If you have employee affinity groups, help them be more visible so that they can highlight their cultural/racial/gender focus.

b) Make race conversations a part of the company culture by modeling this at the highest levels of leadership and by including updates on DEI initiatives in employee communications.

9. Encourage authenticity in the workplace.

a) Offering courses on topics like communication, cross-cultural competency, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution can give employees the basic tools they need to interact with each other in the workplace in an open (but respectful) way.

b) Give employees the tools (Myers Briggs, Strengths Finder, etc.) to understand themselves better, so that they can appropriately be their authentic selves at work.

c) When onboarding new employees, encourage authenticity. New hires find it difficult to gauge the personality and culture of their workplace, and that learning curve makes it hard for them to feel comfortable enough to expose their true selves.