

RASEC Responses to Questions from the Town Council about DEI Education

1. What assumptions about the attitudes of town residents underlie proposals for individual DEI education versus community education and what is the goal and value to each participant for each program?

Assumptions include:

1. That the town leaders were sincere in their promise contained in the resolution “Acknowledging Washington Grove’s Racially Exclusionary Past and Committing to an Equitable and Inclusive Future” to ‘commit to further engage in **individual** and collective work to understand biases and, therefore, want to provide this help to the Town
2. That town residents who expressed support for the resolution were sincere in their desire to ‘commit to further engage in **individual** and collective work to understand biases.
3. That the town survey data revealed a need as evidenced by the following:
When asked if there was an issue with discrimination or bias in Washington Grove, 40% responded “yes” and 38% responded “unsure”
Three Word Clouds (N = 13, N = 15, N = 31) recorded **individual** comments about discrimination or bias toward outsiders and unfair application of rules. Examples cited were the soccer field, the lake, and the shared-use path
Word cloud (N = 16) comments wanting to define discrimination and bias and wanting to discuss DEI
4. Reports of 2 racial profiling incidents at the lake
5. Denial and debate by some residents about whether Washington Grove was a Sundown Town. The lived experience of Emory Grove residents who remember their parents warning them to get out of Washington Grove by dark has been dismissed and the demand for written proof persisted even though historians note that a town does not have to be on a list to qualify and that if a town through deliberate actions has an overwhelmingly white population, it is considered a Sundown Town.

Goal and Value of each program:

An individual assessment helps those who are interested uncover in a private, confidential, non-judgmental, and personal way where their unconscious biases are (we all have them), where they are today on the inclusion path, and how they can move forward, should they want to. That is a harder thing to do in a community assessment as you are not getting clarity on where *you* are today. The proposed IDI assessment takes less than 30 minutes and your confidential report is delivered to you quickly, typically in a week. The IDI process also includes a half day workgroup for those who took the IDI to understand where that group stands in total (no individual information, of course).

Community education allows for group discussions and an opportunity to define and discuss concepts as a community.

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- 2. Assuming that existing corporate and institutional DEI/IDI education/training/workshops will be used for the Town, how will they be adjusted to meet the needs of WG's volunteer government, volunteer workforce, and residents?**

The IDI assessment is individual and not related to a work environment so it needs no adjustment. The proposed community DEI education is intended to be a much larger group conversation to build awareness, engage in mutual learning, and recommend actions that will foster a thriving, inclusive, and diverse community, per the proposal. The facilitator is skilled at customizing the education to suit the setting. Whereas in a work environment DEI training is typically mandatory and there are consequences for not changing behavior, our proposed offering for the Town is obviously no more mandatory than other things the Town funds and offers, e.g. attending the Jazz Brunch, using the tennis courts, or using playground equipment.

- 3. What does RASEC think of first addressing community education, to be followed by offering individual DEI education opportunities? If RASEC had to choose between the individual and collective programs proposed, which is a higher priority?**

The order is less important than offering both as they accomplish different things toward the Town's goals. Both are equally important.

- 4. If the town only chooses to do the collective program, is there a way to add more individual reflection time or education to this program to engage in both individual and collective work without having to hire two separate consultants? That is, can community DEI awareness education/training/workshop be used to further individual work to understand bias? If so, how?**

The private individual assessment and the community assessment are very different things. Participants in the community work will likely grow individually during the day, which is wonderful. Individuals' growth will be more significant with the personalized understanding of individual unconscious biases. You can think of this in terms of a health initiative. A community conversation about the importance of living a healthy life and how the community can move towards that is helpful, of course. But it is made particularly meaningful if you know your *own* personal health measures, strengths, and weaknesses ("I've learned things about myself I didn't realize and I want to focus on my cholesterol, blood pressure, brain health, muscle mass, etc.") going into the community conversation so you can choose what you want to take away from the conversation for your personal growth.

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5. Regarding the proposal for individual education at the Town's expense:

a. How does the Town benefit from this approach?

If community leaders and even a few interested residents take advantage of this individual assessment and suggestions for growth, they will have raised their awareness and their ability to communicate concepts, and through behavior serve as community models. We also discussed the possibility of exploring ways to use those who take the individual assessment in the group education.

b. Do the intentions expressed in the anti-racism resolution require Town spending in the proposed manner or is there an acceptable alternative of facilitating access to programs for interested persons?

The Town Council needs to decide where to put our financial resources based on where our priorities lie and our level of commitment to the approved resolution. All the volunteer committees have budgets. No resolution states the Town must pay for any offerings, yet the Town funds buying new trees at great expense demonstrating that as a priority. The carving of one tree stump for \$5,000.00 (only \$1,000.00 less than the combined DEI education) was approved with little discussion. The Town now offers rebates of \$1500 for residents who purchase an electric car or hybrid and \$1500 or \$1000 for residents who replace fossil fuel-based heating systems on a first come, first served basis. Only residents who can afford to pay upfront and get in line first will be able to take advantage of this program. Yet there does not seem to be scrutiny about how only a few residents will be served. (see 5a)

To be clear, RASEC supports the above-named expenditures; it is hard to understand the need for RASEC to justify this program expenditure considering the benefits that have been delineated several times and in the absence of council requests for other committees to justify their expenses to the extent that has been requested of RASEC.

Of course, residents can search online for DEI programs, but the Resolution clearly states that the Town commits to further engage in individual and collective work to understand bias.

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6. Regarding cost:

- a. **As a practical matter, extrapolate the total number of individuals each program might ultimately engage and the estimated cost.**

The IDI assessment is priced individually but we cannot know how many people would want to take advantage of it until we ask the Town. The community conversation is open to all at one flat rate.

- b. **If individuals were to pay for the IDI assessment and education (or if they town wanted to subsidize a certain percentage of the cost), how much would the individual program be per person?**

Although the total cost was based on 20 participants, there is a cost of \$110 per individual plus the half-day group session at \$750 for the assessment-taking group to understand the IDI results in general and to see where they, as an assessment-taking group, stand collectively (no personal scores or information shared, of courses). The following example was given in the proposal and discussed in earlier meetings. If the Town covered the total cost for 20 people it would be \$2,950. If the participants were asked to cover 10% of the cost, the Town would pay \$2,730.

7. Regarding metrics and outcomes:

- a. **What are the metrics used to select the educator(s)?**

We looked at their past work, their ability to deliver against the goals we outlined in the proposal to the Town Council, and their costs and timing for doing that. Likely the same process that is used by other committees to evaluate vendors for other Town spending of this size.

- b. **What are the metrics used to ensure that the education/training/workshop is at the appropriate level, detail, and length to accommodate the intended audience? (i.e., TWG residents, TWG officials, committee volunteers).**

It is based on the expert vendors' perspective and our perspective as the recommending committee. Residents have a range of needs which is why IDI is as relevant as group training for those interested, but all benefit from the group training as well. Do other committees match every aspect of the audience's range of needs with every activity offered?

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c. What is the expected goal/outcome for any education/training/workshop, and what metrics can the Town use to measure individual and community progress?

The goals were listed in the proposal to the Town Council several months ago.

DEI is a multi-faceted journey. We believe we should work with a qualitative approach that asks questions before and after the DEI training to effectively understand the impact of the suggested programming.

Pre-program questions can include:

1. What are your expectations of the training?
2. What do you hope to get out of the training?

Post-questions can include:

1. Did the training meet, exceed, or fall below your expectations? Please share your thoughts.
2. What did you learn about yourself?
3. What did you learn about our community?
4. What will you personally do to effect change?
5. What are your thoughts on past inclusion efforts of our community now that you have taken this training?
6. How will you continue with your growth, learning, and teaching?

It would be good to pose these types of questions in a forum made up of those who participate in both the IDI and the collective training. This will result in a growth opportunity because of the discussion and sharing of thoughts and ideas.

d. If data to assess the program outcomes needs to be collected, what privacy policies and controls will be used to protect the confidentiality of the data and analysis?

IDI Consultant Policy: The IDI company follows standard and appropriate data and privacy rules. Those who take the IDI assessment are the only ones besides the facilitator who see their data, and the facilitators have a legal commitment to not share any of the information with anyone but the individual.

Washington Grove Approach: When residents are invited to participate in this program, they will be informed that a) feedback will be requested before and after the program so we can understand its impact; and b) feedback will be summarized before sharing; and c) there will be no specific statements or attribution shared about the feedback received.

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RASEC Feedback

Importantly, related to what sounds like the Town Council's work to find alternate DEI education vendors to the ones proposed by RASEC, it does not make sense for us both to be spending time and energy on this. As a volunteer committee trying to achieve the goals set for us and use our expertise in the best and most efficient way, it is disheartening to have our recommendations replaced by yours. If the council chooses a vendor, RASEC will pass the baton to the council for the planning and accompanying education work to eliminate this duplication of effort and reduce frustrations on all sides. We will, of course, participate in the individual and collective work that you set up and we look forward to learning and growing from it.