



The Dayton, Ohio/Montgomery County Sankofa Project¹

An Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Dialogical Process of Historical Inquiry, Analysis, Learning, Strategic Planning and Implementation in and for Dayton, Ohio and Montgomery County

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Invited by Mayor Nan Whaley to design a “History Deep Dive” experience for the Equity Leadership Team, the following suggested framework attempts to respond both to this task as well as the Equity Leadership Team’s concerns with the disproportionate impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the African Americans and other marginalized and minoritized groups within and beyond Montgomery County.

I. Framework Pillars

- a. **Examination of History:** Engage in a critical examination and analysis of historical patterns of racist policies, practices and traditions that have functioned to cause, sustain and widen racial inequities (with purposeful attention to *intersectionality*²) as determined by numerous measures;
- b. **Contextualization:** Understanding these patterns and their impact relative to Dayton, Ohio’s and Montgomery County’s historical and current racial experience with emphasis on persistent racial inequities before the COVID-19 pandemic and those crystalized by the pandemics impact on African Americans and other marginalized and minoritized populations;
- c. **Affirmation of Collective Truth:** Identify what we’ve learned as a result of this process of examination and dialogue;
- d. **Application of Insights:** Taking what we learned in this process and applying these insights to the development and implementation of a broader comprehensive strategy to disrupt the structural causes and sources of persistent systemic inequities.

¹ The concept of *Sankofa* is based on a mythical bird with its feet firmly planted forward with its head turned backwards. Thus, the Akan believe the past serves as a guide for planning the future. To the Akan, it is this wisdom in learning from the past which ensures a strong future. (Source: The Carter G. Woodson Center, Berea College, <https://www.berea.edu/cgwc/the-power-of-sankofa/>)

² A theoretical framework for understanding how aspects of one’s social and political identities (gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, etc.) might combine to create unique modes of discrimination.

II. Process

- a. Facilitated Common Readings:
 - i. Suggested Text: [How To Be An AntiRacist](#) by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi
 - ii. Suggested Text: [White Fragility](#) by Dr. Robin DeAngelo
 - iii. Suggested Facilitator: TBD
- b. Reflection and Dialogue on Dayton and Montgomery County through the Lens of Dr. Kendi's book
- c. Identify Core Learning and Relevance to Dayton's/Montgomery County's Contexts
- d. Identify Key Principles that will Inform a Broader Comprehensive Equity Strategic Plan for Dayton/Montgomery County
- e. Sharing the Experience: Convene Town Hall Meetings to Share the Experience, i.e., Purpose, Learning/Insights, the Path Forward/Next Steps