



Mayor of Providence

Jorge O. Elorza

**EXECUTIVE ORDER
2020-13**

July 15, 2020

**DECLARATION ON TRUTH, RECONCILIATION, AND
REPARATIONS**

WHEREAS the City of Providence is committed to being a welcoming and inclusive city for all residents, specifically Black, Indigenous (Indian) People, and People of Color; and

WHEREAS the City of Providence is committed to eradicating bias and racism in our governing systems, policies, and structures that violate or jeopardize the safety of, justice for, and value of Black, Indigenous (Indian) People, and People of Color; and

WHEREAS on Friday, June 19, 2020, in honor of the nationally recognized Juneteenth, Mayor Jorge O. Elorza joined City elected officials, members of the Mayor's African American Ambassador Group and community members to sign an Executive Order removing the term "plantations" from all City documents and oath ceremonies; and

WHEREAS Mayor Jorge O. Elorza has convened community leaders to join the African American Ambassador Group to advance racial equity reforms in Providence; and

WHEREAS Mayor Jorge O. Elorza has identified the process of Truth, Reconciliation and Municipal Reparations as the process by which to address institutional and systemic bias and racism affecting Black, Indigenous (Indian) People, and People of Color.

NOW THEREFORE I, JORGE O. ELORZA by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Providence, pursuant to the Rhode Island General Laws and the City of Providence's Code of Ordinances, including, but not limited to, Title 45, Chapter 2 of the General Laws and Article 302 of the City of Providence's Code of Ordinances, do hereby order and direct the following process:

1. TRUTH: This process shall begin with Truth, first by identifying, compiling, and synthesizing, and understanding the institution of slavery, the genocide of Indigenous People, and the continued discrimination within the State of Rhode Island and the City of Providence; and

The Truth will include examination and documentation of the facts related to: the capture and procurement of enslaved Black and Indigenous (Indian) People; the transport of Africans to Rhode Island for the purpose of enslavement, including their treatment during transport; the sale and acquisition of them as chattel property in interstate and intrastate commerce; the treatment of them as enslaved people in Rhode Island, including the deprivation of their freedom, exploitation of their labor, and destruction of their culture, language, religion, and families; the extensive denial of humanity, sexual abuse, and chattel enslavement of persons and property, and the continued discrimination against those individuals, their descendants, and their communities in our state and city; and

The Truth will research, document and present for public awareness and education, the contributions of Black, Indigenous (Indian) People, and People of Color in the forming of Providence's economic, religious, and civic origins.

The Truth will examine the state and municipal laws that discriminated against Black, Indigenous (Indian) People, and People of Color from when they were deemed United States citizens to the present.

The Truth will examine other forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors against Black, Indigenous (Indian) People, and People of Color from when they were deemed United States citizens to the present, including but not limited to housing discrimination, barriers to homeownership, predatory financial practices, workplace discrimination, educational discrepancies, health disparities, mass incarceration, disproportionate experiences of police violence, disproportionate punishment in school systems, and disproportionate lack of wealth.

The Truth will examine how the institution of slavery, Indigenous (Indian) genocide, and seizure of Indigenous (Indian) lands, and other forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors contributed to the development of a system that perpetuates inequality including but not limited to disparities in health outcomes, home ownership, wealth, income, and educational attainment.

The Truth will document the experiences endured by Black, Indigenous (Indian) People, and People of Color and will ensure that their historical contributions to the City are accurately recorded and accurately portrayed.

The Truth will strive to be inclusive of the experiences of marginalized communities but will focus primarily on the lived experiences of Black people in our city and state.

The Truth will be compiled and be made openly and freely accessible to the general public.

2. RECONCILIATION: Once documentation has been compiled, the Providence community will be broadly engaged to digest and reflect upon the experiences documented in Phase 1.

The Reconciliation process will strive to help our community confront the past and recognize the continued ways that history shapes the present.

The Reconciliation process will strive to help our community appreciate the profound depth of the wounds that Black, Indigenous (Indian) People, and People of Color have endured.

The Reconciliation process will strive to help our community appreciate the remarkable strength and resilience of Black, Indigenous (Indian) People, and People of Color.

The Reconciliation process will find creative ways to engage organizations, institutions, and individuals to discuss the experiences in Phase 1 (Truth).

The Reconciliation process will strive to help our community more fully appreciate the shared dependency and connectivity that we have among our residents.

The Reconciliation process will strive to help our community heal and overcome the deep racial divisions that currently exist.

3. REPARATIONS: The city will designate a process whereby recommendations are made to reverse injuries caused by the experiences documented in Phase 1 (Truth).

Recommendations for Reparations should take the form most appropriate for the injuries, be they general or specific, documented in Phase 1 (Truth).

Recommendations for Reparations should be ambitiously scaled in order to make Providence a model city for racial and social justice.

Recommendations for Reparations should consider the most appropriate recipients, be they general communities or individuals, of such reparations.

Recommendations for Reparations should work to actively eliminate state and local laws and policies that continue to disproportionately and negatively impact Black, Indigenous (Indian) People, and People of Color.

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately and remain in full force and effect going forward.

So Ordered.



Jorge O. Elorza, *Mayor*