

ANCA 2020 Annual Meeting: Racial Equity



Program Guide

Friday, September 18, 2020, 1:00-3:30 p.m.
Virtual via Zoom



Meeting Agenda & Contents

Annual Meeting Agenda

- 1:00-1:15 p.m. Welcome by **Jim Sonneborn**, ANCA Board President
Opening remarks by **Kate Fish**, ANCA Executive Director
Introduction by **Nicole Hylton-Patterson**, Adirondack Diversity Initiative (ADI) Director
- 1:15-1:55 p.m. "Structural Racism in the U.S. Food System," presented by **Dr. Adam Dewbury**, ANCA Local Food System Coordinator; moderated by **Nicole Hylton-Patterson**, ADI Director
- 1:55-2:35 p.m. "Clean Energy: Equitable Workforce Development in the Clean Energy Industry," presented by **Bryana DiFonzo**, Director of New Economy at PUSH Buffalo; moderated by **Jerrod Bley**, ANCA Clean Energy Program Director
- 2:35-2:40 p.m. Break
- 2:40-3:20 p.m. "Racial Equity in Developing and Maintaining Sole Proprietorships" presented by **Valerie D. White**, Executive Director at Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) NYC, moderated by **Dani Delaini**, ANCA Business Transition Program Coordinator
- 3:20-3:30 p.m. Closing remarks
- 3:30 p.m. Meeting adjourns

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ANCA Board Resolution on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

WHEREAS, as the host organization for the Adirondack Diversity Initiative, and in the wake of national coalescing around the Black Lives Matter protests and actions, ANCA has committed to intentional action to disrupt 400 plus years of racism and to dismantle the structural inequities that plague our region and our nation, and

WHEREAS, human diversity can be defined as differences in race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical and/or mental capabilities, and religious beliefs, and

WHEREAS, equity is providing fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people; eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of all groups; and

WHEREAS, inclusion is creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate; and

WHEREAS, ANCA is committed to building a community of staff, board members, advisors, donors, interns, fellows and volunteers, and partners that holds diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values; and

WHEREAS, this commitment strengthens the organization, improves our overall effectiveness, and helps ensure the policies we advance and programs we implement promote an equitable transition to a New Economy that Works for All

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Adirondack North Country Association hereby endorses diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values of the organization; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Adirondack North Country Association establishes a Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to work closely with the Adirondack Diversity Initiative on the development and implementation of new policies and programs pursuant to its core values and to hold the organization accountable and to engage in continuous cultural consciousness development.



Message from the Executive Director

Recognition

ANCA recognizes that America faces an inflection point, demanding intentional language, intentional strategies, and intentional action to disrupt 400 plus years of racism and to dismantle the structural inequities that plague our nation.

As the host organization for the Adirondack Diversity Initiative, and in the wake of national coalescing around the Black Lives Matter protests and actions, ANCA is addressing this front and center in our strategies. It is an overwhelming moral imperative. It is also a matter of survival for the Adirondack Park, which continues to suffer from multiple countervailing forces that harm regional socioeconomic and cultural development. Largely rural, white, laced with vast pockets of poverty, facing a higher than average median age (8 years older than NYS), declining school enrollment (from 2003-2013, the Park's public school population declined by 21%, twice the rate of decline in communities outside the Park) and overall population decline (projected to decline to 1970 levels by the year 2030, a loss of 17,000+ residents), the future of the Park is in jeopardy.

Our Position

ANCA focuses on promoting systemic change in food systems, clean energy, and the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Northern New York. We are committed to addressing systemic racism and the structural inequities in our region that affect everyone. In doing so, we recognize that as a predominately White-run organization, in a predominantly White community, we must approach this work with humility, listening to and centering the voices of Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and other marginalized peoples across the region. Therefore, we are undertaking important conversations about changing how we do business today and how we design and launch new programs and products in the future.

While many of ANCA's staff have lived and worked in other countries, indeed most of us did not even grow up in the Adirondack North Country, and we benefit from diversity in both gender and age (79% female; 14% Boomer; 50% Gen X and 36% Millennial), we are 93% White, reflecting the utter lack of diversity in the region. Until we change this dynamic through our own recruitment and hiring practices, and through the cultural consciousness work we do within our organization and with our partners and constituents, the harmful dynamic in the region will not change.

We also recognize the value of diverse perspectives on nonprofit governing boards. As such, ANCA is actively recruiting Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) persons and working with the entire board to expand cultural consciousness on implicit bias, micro-aggression, and creating inclusive spaces that are intentionally anti-racist, collaborative and equitable.

Our way forward articulates a rigorous, continuous, and transparent diversity, equity and inclusion strategic vision that centers racial equity as a critical component of everything we do.

Strategic Vision & Milestones

- **Five Year Strategic Objective:** More diverse, equitable and inclusive policies, practices, and procedures that engender culture change for "A New Economy that Works for All."
- **Measures of Success:** Workforce development, Expansion of service to underserved populations, Increased access to business opportunities and financing for BIPOC, etc.
- **FY20 Action:** Initial Welcomeness Audit

Message from the Executive Director

ANCA's five-year DEI process will fully engage the ADI's Cultural Consciousness Program, starting with a comprehensive Welcomeness Audit of all ANCA's internal and external policies and practices. The subsequent report will be used to assess our positionality, gaps, and cultural consciousness/competency development needs. The process will unfold as follows:

- Step 1: Identify needs and/or areas of concern based on audit
- Step 2: Address policies and practices affecting DEI
- Step 3: Design strategies that align with our business objectives
- Step 4: Identify and align business objectives with DEI
- Step 5: Implement internal and external strategies
- Step 6: Communicate the plan, objectives and outcomes
- Step 7: Measure objectives and communicate results
- Step 8: Assessment and continuous audit of strategies

Implications for ANCA and the communities we serve

In July, 2020 ANCA launched its organizational five-year strategic plan. Our vision is **"A New Economy that Works for ALL."** Using the word **ALL** is intentional. It means ALL people, not just White people, and ALL of nature, not just human-created systems. By centering racial equity throughout our organization, ANCA is doing its part to ensure that ALL people can participate, prosper and reach their full potential in the North Country.

Our mission is to **"Build Prosperity across Northern New York."** Sustained prosperity only happens when the goals of diversity, equity and inclusion are part of a region's intentions, actions and outcomes. Research overwhelmingly indicates "a strong and very long-lasting impact of diversity on county-level economic development." More diversity resulted in "a surge of new ideas and a newfound dynamism that was quickly translated into lofty, short-term economic gains." This is the goal of ANCA — to make diversity, equity and inclusion an inextricable part of the economic systems in the North Country.



Food Justice Program

Theme: Racial (In)Equity in the Food System

Our food system in the United States rests on a foundation of structural racism, the legacy of 400 years of settler colonialism and racial capitalism. Working towards racial equity in such a system is an uphill battle, a hard row to hoe. The crucial first step in this process is to gain a critical understanding of race and structural racism and how these became suffused within our food system. This session explores these topics, beginning with a discussion of basic concepts such as race and racism, and showing how structural racism manifests in the food system.

Challenges

Our analysis will foreground the role of dispossession and consider how Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) have been dispossessed from land and wealth. This has historically been a violent process, beginning with European colonization, flourishing again in the post- Civil War era, and extending into the present: the legacy of violence with impunity against BIPOC is especially salient today. In addition to horrific physical violence, dispossession has also been brought about through the structural violence of systemic racism, strongly contributing to the decline in numbers of U.S. Black farmers [from 14% to less than 2% between 1910 and the present.](#)

Goals

The goals of the plenary session are twofold. The first is to give participants a working understanding of the concepts of race and racism and how the Local Food System Program engages with these in its work. The second is to show how racism is structurally embedded in our food system so we may all begin to understand the magnitude of the challenge of centering racial equity in our work. This is a massive undertaking as it represents society-wide structural and cultural change. Surface-level understandings of the problem are insufficient. We need to develop a deeper critical consciousness so that we may identify entry points for interventions in the system.

How Will the Local Food System Program Do this Work?

We have begun to do this work at ANCA through our recognition that our food system is structurally racist, and our affirmation that we will strive to be antiracist in our food system work and pursue racial equity in all sectors of the food system. How will we practically center racial equity in our work? The first step is targeted outreach toward BIPOC owned farms and food businesses, as well as BIPOC who desire to start farms and food businesses, in ANCA's service area. It is well known that access to capital and land is a major barrier for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color. Helping open up access to capital and land and connecting BIPOC farmers and entrepreneurs with resources is one way ANCA can help move the food system toward racial equity. ANCA can also use its networks and reach to amplify the voices of BIPOC in the food system, including those outside of our area. Policy advocacy is the third way ANCA can work for racial equity in the food system. So much of the structural racism that our food system is built upon is the result of public policy- we must work to reverse this trend. Finally, ANCA can share knowledge with our partners in this fight, keeping racial equity foregrounded in our work with others.

Food Justice Program

Implications of Centering Racial Equity

There is a significant amount of research that compellingly argues for the economic benefits of racial equity. For example, if the wage gap between White and BIPOC employees was eliminated, [nearly 2 trillion dollars would be added to our GDP](#). A [recent study](#) from the WK Kellogg Foundation and Altarum found that the United States economy could be 8 trillion dollars larger if racial disparities in health, education, incarceration, and employment were eliminated. In Mississippi alone, an additional one billion dollars would be spent in the food sector if the racial equity gap was closed. Working for racial equity in our region will surely pay some of these dividends.

Diversity also begets resilience, which as the pandemic has shown is a critical element for survival and quality of life. The biggest benefit of centering racial equity in our work is simply that it is the right thing to do. We live in a nation and political economy that was built on the violence of settler colonialism and racial capitalism. Working against this history will be a difficult task, but ultimately the centering of racial equity will allow ANCA to truly meet its goal of building a New Economy that works for all.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Adam Dewbury

Dr. Dewbury is an economic and environmental anthropologist whose research interests include the relations between people, capitalism and nature; social and environmental conflicts; the interdigitation of conservation and development; and critical race theory. Adam earned a PhD in Anthropology from Cornell University and has published on scientific racism in early American anthropology and structural barriers to collaboration between Indigenous people and archaeologists.

Adam joined the ANCA team in March 2020 to lead our Local Food System program.



Clean Energy Program

Theme: Equitable Workforce Development in the Clean Energy Industry

There is an unsettling lack of representation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the clean energy industry, despite the fact that this industry is expanding both in New York State and throughout the country. Underrepresentation creates an unwelcoming atmosphere, thereby both limiting the pool of talented candidates and the effectiveness of programs that promote clean energy in BIPOC communities. The focus of our annual meeting plenary is to address racial equity within workforce development in the clean energy economy. The session will provide the opportunity for us to explore, together with the North Country community, strategies and tools to promote entrance into and improve retention within the clean energy industry for racially and ethnically minoritized persons.

Challenges

Across the nation, systemic racism and structural oppression have created obstacles for entry into, and upward mobility within, the clean energy industry for members of the BIPOC community. A 2019 study by The Solar Foundation and Solar Energy Industries Association found that, nationwide, although roughly a third of the solar workforce was comprised of Hispanic or Latino, Asian, and Black or African American workers, 88% of solar industry executives were White. In New York State in 2019, 73.2% of all clean energy workers were White, even though White individuals only account for 55.4% of the state's population. Data are not tracked on diversity in the clean energy industry in the North Country. However, the 2010 US Census put the average makeup of the seven North Country counties at roughly 90% White, which suggests, along with anecdotal evidence from ANCA's Clean Energy Team, that very little opportunity exists in our region for BIPOC individuals to access jobs of any kind in the clean energy industry, let alone leadership roles. The lack of representation in leadership and marketing, implicit bias in hiring practices, and unwelcoming or toxic work and community environments all are fed by, and perpetuate these national trends. These factors present significant barriers to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the North Country's clean energy workforce and in ANCA's Clean Energy Program.

Goals

Our vision for this session is to examine racial inequities in workforce development within the clean energy industry. Our goal is to focus on strategies for increasing participation at all levels for racially and ethnically minoritized persons. Guided by our keynote speaker, Bryana DiFonzo, we will explore opportunities for increasing access to, and participation in, the clean energy ecosystem by members of BIPOC communities. Questions that will guide our exploration include:

- How do we holistically recruit, retain, and support a talent pool that is racially and ethnically diverse in the North Country?
- How do we build relationships with schools from elementary through college to build a pipeline for members of the BIPOC community to view clean energy as an industry where their careers can flourish?
- How do we encourage those at the top to be accountable and show leadership in hiring, tracking employee demographics, and providing mentorship?

New York's ambitious clean energy agenda is bringing economic growth and job opportunities to communities across the state. With this we have an opportunity to remedy persisting and systemic racial and ethnic inequities by diversifying the clean energy workforce at all levels.

Clean Energy Program

How Will the Clean Energy Program Do this Work?

As we seek a path forward, ANCA's Clean Energy Program plans to convene a North Country collective of individuals and organizations who wish to work on issues of racial equity in an industry and a region that is overwhelmingly White. The collective will explore strategies, share resources, and think through challenges to promote equity and inclusion in the clean energy sector. We welcome all those interested to share in this work. A few actions we are considering include:

- Promote awareness of existing racial inequities in the clean energy workforce
- Investigate whether existing NYS workforce development programs address racial equity
- Advocate for equity and inclusion at all times from our "seats at the table"
- Examine and update our own practices

Implications of Centering Racial Equity

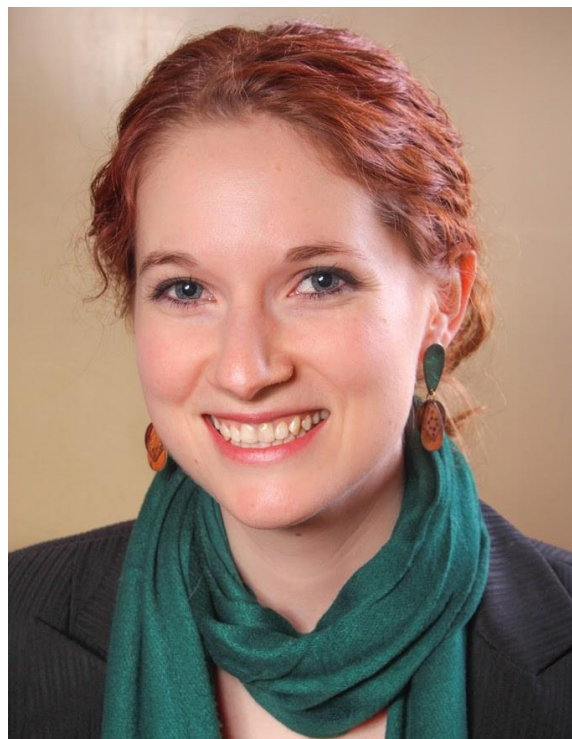
The North Country community stands to benefit from centering racial equity in the clean energy industry by increasing our ability to meet the needs of underserved or minoritized communities, highlighting environmental justice issues as they relate to clean energy, and encouraging diverse perspectives in clean energy leadership, regional planning and development. The people ANCA serves will benefit from the centering of equity and inclusion in our work by improving our understanding of energy needs for BIPOC communities and providing more effective targeted outreach. With this work, we hope to grow and strengthen the local clean energy workforce and talent pool, while establishing the North Country as a welcoming region for racially and ethnically diverse families.

Guest Speaker: Bryana DiFonzo

Bryana DiFonzo (she/her/hers) moved to Buffalo in 2009 not intending to stay long. Through AmeriCorps, she was connected to PUSH Buffalo. The people, places, and movements she met there

made a dedicated Buffalonian of her and set her on a course to pursue justice and transformation for and with her community. Her work within local nonprofits since then has included direct service, project management, public speaking, grant writing, volunteer management, volunteering, and board governance. She brings an MBA education and continuous self-work in anti-oppression to her work of managing social justice enterprises, consulting for nonprofits, and "practicing the future" in her community.

Bryana's work in the New Economy department brings together PUSH's efforts to build power through family-sustaining jobs that address the climate crisis, and to transition assets to community members in a way that improves their well-being and follows regenerative principles. For PUSH Buffalo, building the New Economy means restoring old cultural traditions of caring, sacredness, and cooperation that have existed in the economies of Indigenous peoples, communities of color, and other marginalized communities for thousands of years. We do this by working alongside our community to create and support social justice enterprises that center ecological restoration, community resilience, and social equity.



Small Business Economy

Theme and Focus

At ANCA and within our Small Business and Entrepreneurial support program, we will be exploring the theme of racial equity in developing and maintaining sole proprietorships, which we will refer to under the umbrella term of “solopreneurship”.

The focus of our session will be the centering of racial equity in providing technical business support and access to capital for BIPOC individuals engaged in the hard emotional and intellectual labor of operating a business on their own. This is a difficult task for anyone, especially within economic systems undergirded by systemic racism in predominantly White, rural spaces such as the North Country.

What is Solopreneurship?

ANCA works with many solopreneurs in the Adirondack North Country. Solopreneurs are those engaged in capital ventures by themselves, often without the intention of hiring employees. Labor statistics for these ventures are incomplete because many solopreneurs operate their business in addition to paid labor and choose not to register their business as a sole proprietorship. They may instead opt to use their social security number as a Tax ID or not report their business activity at all having made little taxable income. Whether a “side hustle” or full-time enterprise, solopreneurship is critical to our thriving local economy and maintains the livelihoods of North Country families.

Being a solopreneur is a struggle. We hear from our constituents regularly about the fewer and less comprehensive financial resources available to support solopreneurship. This has become increasingly evident in 2020; where COVID-19 aid programs favored businesses with employees. Solopreneurs also contend with the difficulties of having little to no time off, a heavy decision-making burden, high level of personal liability, responsibility for all debt, a lack of like-minded coworkers, low chance of business succession and adequate valuation, lack of investment potential, and often

poorly-equipped workplaces such as garages or basements.

National Challenges for BIPOC Solopreneurs

Minoritized and BIPOC solopreneurs face all of the above challenges compounded by systematic racism at all levels of our national educational and economic systems. The majority (95%) of Black-owned businesses are sole proprietorships (blackdemographics.com). As of 2012, The U.S. Census Bureau reported that 30% of Black-owned businesses nationally had sustained for over 10 years, compared to nearly 50% of white businesses ([Channel 3000](#)).

Black people are much less likely to:

1. Have a relationship with a bank or financial professional — In 2017, 16.9% of Black households were unbanked compared to just 3% of White households (FDIC.gov).
2. Have access to a Black commercial banker, insurance agents and other business professionals who can better serve or understand their unique needs (Blackoutcoalition.org).
3. Have a seat on a board or executive level leadership that gives them the power of the pen to write checks. In 2018, of 1,033 Fortune 500 board seats, “80.7 percent were filled by Caucasian/White directors, with 59.6 percent filled by Caucasian/White men” (corpgov.law.harvard.edu).
4. Have credit history or a positive credit score. Despite [denial by FICO](#) that credit scores have racial bias, credit inequality exists ([Washington Center for Equitable Growth](http://WashingtonCenterforEquitableGrowth) and the [National Fair Housing Alliance](http://NationalFairHousingAlliance))).
5. Have generational wealth -- At \$171,000, the net worth of a typical White family [was] nearly ten times greater than that of a Black family (\$17,150) in 2016 ([Brookings Institute](http://BrookingsInstitute)).

Small Business Economy

Regional Challenges for BIPOC Solopreneurs

A Tourism-Based Economy: [Tourism is a \\$1.5 billion industry in the Adirondacks](#) but the region's residents and those that visit are predominantly White. This presents challenges in attracting and retaining entrepreneurially-minded BIPOC individuals. The future demographics of tourism and business owners are likely to change with the changing demographics of our nation. Of the millennial generation, 44% are non-White ([Brookings Institute](#)).

Access to Financial Support: The 2012 US Census Bureau data notes that Black-owned businesses create the smallest number of jobs compared to other races and earn the least annual revenue. Most state, federal and regional grants and programs rely on job creation as the single most important factor in decision making. This over-reliance on job creation metrics creates a negative feedback loop of practices that omit solo Black business owners from financial opportunity. This is especially true in predominantly White, rural spaces such as the North Country where alternative financing programs and affinity groups are not available to help ensure a financial environment where all are valued, included, and empowered.

Challenges and Accountability for ANCA's Small Business Economy Program in supporting BIPOC Solopreneurs

At ANCA, we are only just starting to address the barriers that BIPOC persons face in trying to start, take over or sustain a business. As part of ANCA's five-year strategic vision for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, we will be looking internally and externally at the way we do business to disrupt institutional racism that continues to create barriers for established or aspiring BIPOC solopreneurs. Adirondack Diversity Initiative's Welcomeness Audit will evaluate current policies and procedures

governing how we go about the business of creating opportunities for BIPOC solopreneurs. Moreover, the results of the audit will provide a way forward that centers racial equity as the key ingredient for designing and implementing sustainable strategies that will benefit the entire North Country.

Goals of the Session

This session has three foci:

1. To start a regional conversation about economic development at the intersection of race and finance
2. Guided by our keynote speaker, Valerie D. White, Executive Director at LISC NYC, we will explore the following:
 - What are the barriers facing BIPOC solopreneurs and specifically in accessing capital?
 - In what way is LISC NYC able to address and provide support to BIPOC solopreneurs?
 - How can other economic development organizations support you in the work that you do and/or begin to support BIPOC solopreneurs ourselves?
3. To convene a regional Racial Equity in Economic Development Working Group. The group will leverage the thought leadership of other rural organizations doing similar work and bring in guest participants whose experiences can inform our collective actions. Members of the group will develop the tools we need to evaluate strategies and process challenges to mitigate the racial inequities in our business communities.

Small Business Economy

Community Benefit from Centering Racial Equity

Current and aspiring BIPOC business owners in the North Country can benefit from our collective centering of racial equity; not because our work will entirely alleviate the burden faced in ownership but because we can begin to see and chip away at the instances of inequitable access faced by BIPOC solopreneurs.

Aside from the argument of “doing what is right,” striving for racial equity is reported to have significant capital impacts that will sustain and diversify our economy into the future and can translate into meaningful increases in consumer spending, federal and state/local tax revenues, and decreases in social services spending and health-related costs. For more information about these monetary impacts we encourage you to review [The Business Case for Racial Equity, A Strategy for Growth](#).



Guest Speaker: Valerie D. White

As Executive Director of LISC NYC, Valerie is responsible for building on \$3.1 billion in LISC NYC investments to spur affordable housing, business development, health and jobs in economically vulnerable neighborhoods through New York City. In this role, Valerie leads the team in developing a vision and advancing strategic policies and programs that foster economic equity and inclusion in impacted communities.

Before joining LISC NYC in April 2020, Valerie was executive vice president at Empire State Development (ESD), as well as executive director of the agency's Division of Minority and Women's Business Development. Previously, she was vice president at Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation and managing director at Standard & Poor's Global Ratings (S&P).

In addition to her extensive professional experience, she also serves on the advisory board for the Fordham Urban Law Center; is a director on the Fordham Law Alumni Association; and is a board member for BRIC Media Arts in Brooklyn. She holds both a bachelor's degree in communications and a law degree from Fordham University, as well as a master's degree and certificate in organization development from The New School.

ANCA Board & Staff

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ANCA is an independent, nonprofit corporation with a transformational approach to building prosperity across northern New York. ANCA's community-informed, results-driven strategies for local food producers, small business owners, would-be entrepreneurs, and municipal innovators offer targeted interventions that are designed to keep wealth and value in local communities.