



Urban League of  
Rochester, N.Y., Inc.

# DACISM INTERRUPT RACISM

## 2020 INTERRUPT RACISM REPORT

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## INTRODUCTION

The Urban League of Rochester, N.Y., Inc. (ULR) was founded in 1965 in the wake of racial unrest and riots that devastated the Rochester community. Interestingly, in 2020 the City of Rochester finds itself once again at the center of protests, racial tensions, and calls to defund the police. Rochester, like many American cities, is plagued by two pandemics, COVID-19 and systemic racism. The Greater Rochester community grieves as systems of racist practices are played out in government, housing, businesses, education systems, and flawed health systems. This unmasking of racism unraveled as the Rochester community learned nearly five months later of the tragic death of Daniel Prude. Protests, civic unrest, a dismantled police force, and cries for justice were all evidence of a wounded city. Despite the state of disarray in the City, there are many voices that call for change, a movement, action, and a pathway forward. The Urban League seeks to elevate those voices to help its community heal.

The Urban League of Rochester serves as a community-based, nonprofit affiliate of the National Urban League, providing direct services to low-income and minority individuals within the Rochester metropolitan area. The Urban League of Rochester's mission is to enable African Americans, Latinos, the poor, and other disadvantaged individuals to secure economic self-reliance, parity and power, and civil rights.

At its core, the Urban League of Rochester's driving mission and vision centers on greater equity. The Urban League launched the **INTERRUPT RACISM** platform at the height of the protests in response to the death of George Floyd, still unaware at that time of the death of Daniel Prude. The platform was designed to employ a collective impact approach to engage all community members interested in sharing ideas to help the greater Rochester community heal and move forward. The goal was for the Urban League to act as facilitators of a "community-wide suggestion box," designed to especially hear and uplift the voices of individuals who might not otherwise have a seat at policy tables, from frontline essential service and healthcare workers; to teachers, parents, and students; to veterans and small business owners.

The Urban League's vision for the future is embodied in our new Equity and Advocacy Division, which aims to develop a multi-pronged strategy to work towards a more equitable and inclusive community. This initiative includes our **INTERRUPT RACISM** platform that aims to further understanding and solidarity on issues of racial injustice. All of this work requires continual learning to better inform our best practices, our communication, and our support to meet community needs. The **INTERRUPT RACISM** report will help inform the Urban League and the greater community in understanding strategies, defining allegiances, and training necessary to support our community in dismantling and interrupting racism.

## Launch of Interrupt Racism

On June 4, 2020, The Urban League of Rochester, N.Y. Inc, in collaboration with Rochester Institute of Technology, launched an online initiative to **INTERRUPT RACISM** in the greater Rochester area to elevate the voices of individuals who might not otherwise have a seat at policy tables. Residents and organizations in Rochester were invited to provide their input on racism-related issues that need urgent attention, offer suggestions on strategies to address these issues, and recommend who should be leading the charge to make the city a more equitable place in Monroe County.

The online questionnaire was distributed on June 5, 2020, via [www.urbanleagueroc.org/interruptracism](http://www.urbanleagueroc.org/interruptracism) in English and in Spanish (through a partnership with the Ibero-American Action League); the questionnaire was open for comments until July 12, 2020. Participants could respond online, by telephone via a partnership with 211 (Goodwill of the Finger Lakes), or by mail via a PDF form distributed to community partners through the above website. The data was analyzed by importing the responses to an Excel spreadsheet. First, Pivot Tables were used to summarize, sort, and average data, then we open coded each participant's response using a variety of demographic variables including age, gender, and race. Then axial coding was used to find related themes across various responses. We present the key themes from our data with relevant quotes in the next section. See **Appendix 1** for a complete list of questionnaire items.

## Questionnaire Demographic Results

A total of (n=148) responses were collected and included (n=19) responses from Rochester-based organizations. See **Appendix 2** for a list of organizations. Respondents were predominantly spread across four age groups: 25-34 (n=18); 35-44 (n=30); 45-54 (n=34); 55-64 (n=33). Respondents (n=46) with higher than a bachelor's degree and a bachelor's degree (n=32) reported having full-time employment. Twenty-six percent of the respondents reported earning between (\$50 – 75K), followed by 16% earning between (\$75 – 100K), 16% preferred not to respond, and 14% reported earning more than \$100K. Ten percent reported earning between (\$25-50K) and 6% earning less than 10K. In terms of racial breakdown, 56% or (n=83) identified as White or Caucasian, 29% or (n=43) respondents identified as Black or African American. Six percent or (n=9) identified as Hispanic or Latino/a. Of this 6%, 1 identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, 2 identified as Black or African American, 4 identified as White or Caucasian, and 2 preferred not to respond. Fifty-seven percent of respondents were married and 24% single. In terms of gender identity, more female-identifying individuals (n=101) completed the questionnaire compared to males (n=30).

## I. KEY THEMES TO ADDRESS

*Participants' answers to the question "What is the specific problem related to racism that needs to be addressed?" rendered responses that discussed larger societal issues including the lack of education about racism, educational inequalities, police brutality, housing and poverty, and job employment. Some participants localized the issues, noting what problems Rochester has with racism and how to combat these issues. One of the largest local issues that participants feel needs to be addressed is segregation—at all levels. Another salient issue was employment practices and opportunities.*

- a. **Education.** Participants believe that issues of racism are a result of varying issues related to education. They shared that inequalities in public education and segregation in school systems exist and hinder the educational advancement of Black youth within the education system, which can contribute to the school to prison pipeline. Respondents also believe that there needs to be education in schools and at home to combat racism. Other issues such as the need for access to financial literacy and college funding are needed to be well-rounded and successful. Finally, respondents expressed the need for the culturally comprehensive education that dispels myths about racism and moves away from white washed narratives of history (slavery, etc.) taught in schools. They insist that antiracism be taught in schools. For example, one white female respondent between the ages of 35-44 stated:

*"Lack of diversity in suburban school teachers, consistent implementation of culturally responsive education, specifically antiracist education."*

In another statement, an Asian female respondent between the ages of 45-54 noted:

*"From my view, it's possibly the lack of education from a young age on embracing people of color. Racism often starts at home. If adults (parents or educators) perpetuate racist behavior or do not stop it, then children may grow up thinking it's acceptable."*

Finally, another respondent, a white female between the ages of 45-54, pointed out:

*"Equity in access to higher education, diversity in professions, and higher ed better sharing its abundant resources of talent, tools, spaces, and funding to support grassroots community opportunities--similar to how universities already do for business and sometimes government."*

- b. **Police.** Respondents conveyed the need for police reform. The most prevalent issue expressed was police brutality. They also voiced concerns about police unions. Further, respondents mentioned the need for a clearer understanding of what warrants a 911 emergency call (based on calls for citizens to call about “suspicious” activity can lead to wrongful policing of Black bodies). Responses noted the issues with juveniles getting trapped in an unfair justice system. Finally, respondents believe parents should talk to their Black youth about what to do to survive police encounters. For instance, one female respondent between the ages of 55-64, who did not wish to disclose their ethnicity, questioned encouraging civilians to call 911:

*“People are often advised to “call 911” if they see something “suspicious.” At my mother-in-law’s senior apartment building, the monthly newsletter always has a notice that gives the manager’s phone number, and the after-hours emergency management number, and then it says, “If you see something suspicious, call 911.” Recently, I’ve been wondering if we are given the wrong advice. I think we need to look deeper into what “suspicious” means to different people and more clearly define what is an “emergency” that warrants a 911 call.”*

One Black female respondent between the ages of 45-54 listed several actionable items:

*“1. Need for more non white officers 2. police reform 3. Police policy changes related to restraint tactics 4. Police being more sociable 5. End to tactics related to profiling.”*

- c. **Housing.** Participants described issues with housing as being a contributing factor of racism. They described how segregated Rochester is and believe it stems from systemic housing inequities. Further, they note that Rochester is overrun with poverty (seemingly endless cycle) and that there are damaging effects of the stigmas associated with poverty. Finally, barriers like limited access to mortgages, limited income and wealth, etc. lead to limited access to homeownership for Black folk, resulting in low rates of ownership. For example, one white female respondent between the ages of 25-34 stated:

*“It’s the community and poverty levels. We need to find out why people of color are still struggling and not able to get out of problematic areas.”*

- d. **Employment and Job Training.** Responses related to issues with employment and training were numerous. Participants stated the need for more professional



opportunities to build individuals' skill sets, Black business owners/franchisees, and upward mobility to leadership positions and management within their companies and organizations. Additionally, respondents feel that there are implicit biases and micro-aggressions that ultimately disrupt the screening and hiring process. Responses indicated that companies need to do away with meaningless symbolism (ex: "BLM statements w/ no action") and that there are opportunities for white leaders to work and collaborate with people of color (POC)-led organizations. Finally, they believe companies need to work on inclusion, equity, and diversifying their staff. One Asian female respondent between the ages of 18-24 replied:

*"The lack of access to professional opportunities to empower BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, People of Color] due to other factors such as worrying about finances, unaffordable housing, substandard education, emotional distress caused by discrimination, lack of generational support, and food insecurity. Charity, which takes the form of one time donations of food, necessities, and financial support, is only a temporary solution. BIPOC people must be able to gain access to opportunities that allow them to build their career skillsets so that they can provide for themselves and help change the system from within."*

While another respondent, an American Indian or Alaska Native female between the ages of 55-64 explained:

*"Hiring practices need greater inclusion, equity and diversity. I want to see POC serve as executives and directors and on these boards too. Hold orgs and institutions accountable for NOT practicing equity. Please stop the bs on BLM statements what are hollow and not practiced within these orgs. Also the arts industry needs to educate front of house staff as all most are over 65 and white. I have seen first hand the poor treatment of my people on the art venues. Cultural competency is needed at every level!!!"*

- e. **Education.** Participants noted that issues with racism stem from not understanding its definition, history, and lasting effects in today's society. Responses noted the need for people to better understand how racism currently presents itself and the various forms of racism (systemic, structural, and institutional racism). Participants believe that there is a problem with xenophobia and expressed that cultural competence needs to be taught. Responses indicated that there is a collective responsibility to address racism, racist policies, and implicit biases and preconceived assumptions. Finally, participants feel that people need to better recognize and understand white privilege, white supremacy, and white fragility and

they can use it to support/protect Black folx and other POC. For instance, one Black female respondent between the ages of 35-44 stated:

*“The biggest issue is history in America. Many individuals do not know the history of slavery and the fight that Blacks/African Americans have been through to get this far and still suffering even in 2020. The suffering exists from social equality, social justice, social equity, social economics, and dealing with White Privilege and White Fragility. It is frustrating that a Black man can commit the same crime and get a life or do 20 yrs in jail then 20 yrs later their DNA proves they did not commit the crime. An African American person applies for a job but a white person may have a better chance of getting the job even if the component of color has a higher degree. We are living in a time that is unreal and unjust.”*

- f. **Health.** Respondents conveyed that there are disparities in the healthcare system that need to be addressed like equal access and manner of care. Respondents believe that there is a need for healing from the impact of past and current traumas related to racism. Food insecurity was also noted as an issue. Most responses were short and grouped with other issues in one or two words, thus there aren't many examples to report. One white female respondent between the ages of 25-34 noted:

*“The disproportionate rate at which Black children and adolescents are involved in the legal system and all of the psychological trauma and impacts that result from that in addition to the social implications of having a history of involvement with the legal system.”*

## II. RESPONDENTS' PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

*Participants' responses to the question "Do you have a personal experience or observation that demonstrates the problem you shared above?" revealed the details of various incidents of encountering racism. They described incidents with police, neighbors, within the school system and workplace, and incidents with people who do not know them. Several participants, who are likely not Black or POC, used this as an opportunity to reflect on their own relationship with racism and white privilege. Some responses could have been recorded in more than one section listed below. Several respondents noted that they have not experienced/witnessed racism besides what they may see and read about in the news and on social media.*

- a. **Police.** Participants reflected on the encounters they've had with police as well as personal relationships and experiences with officers. Some responses elaborated on police traffic stops they've experienced, witnessing the racial profiling of others, and personal stories/narratives about officers the respondents know. One female respondent, who did not disclose their ethnicity, between the ages of 35-44 stated:

*"2015 my son was 10 yrs old we were stopped by a white female officer in Irondequoit, when I asked why I was stopped she called for back up as if I had committed a crime for asking that question. It appeared the entire squad showed up. We were scared as hell. I wasn't ready to die is what I was thinking, my son and I held each other we didn't make eye contact with these cops I was speechless. I had managed to call 911 before all had arrived which they didn't know....."*

Another respondent, a white Trans female, shared:

*"I grew up in Greece. My friend's Dad growing up was a Sheriff, and he didn't allow N-word music in his house, I realized, when I brought over a Michael Jackson cassette tape. He was known for 'cracking down' on crime, aka policing the projects in town and being harsh with black men and women. He was honored at his funeral. Not a blemish on his record. God only knows how many innocent people were harmed by him."*

- b. **Workplace.** Participants in this section noted issues they've had in the workplace and upward mobility within their companies. Some of the responses detailed issues with hiring practices, lack of diversity, tokenization, and unequal labor to achieve success. In one example, a Black 65+ female respondent explained:

*“I have been on a number of advisory boards, mostly non monetary boards. When white members who served on the same boards completed their terms, they were often moved to governing board who make the decisions about how to serve the total community with their services or products. I was instead with one board sent a letter from the legal department informing me that there were no vacancies at the moment and none in the foreseeable future. Many of the suggestions I have made from advisory boards were adopted by governing boards.”*

While another respondent, an American Indian or Alaska Native female between the ages of 55-64, noted:

*“I was told I can pass by an all white executive board president and his directors all remained silence in that meeting then I was fired because I dared to state that we had a systemic racism issue on how we treat our audiences. My regret was not seeing how tokenized I was and how little support I got doing amazing work. I lost over 35 pounds in 2 months because it was a hostel work environment as the only person of color on staff. I learned a powerful lesson to NEVER allow any organizations to ever tokenize me again. NoMas!!!!”*

A white female respondent between the ages of 35-44 representing a local organization stated:

*“As an organization, we have been working to diversify our team in an intentional way for a number of years, and have made incremental progress. In talking with other leaders, especially white leaders, there is a desire among many of them to diversify their teams, yet they don't have the skills or networks to do so effectively.”*

c. **Neighborhood/Geographic Location.** Participants described incidents and personal reflections about their neighbors and neighborhoods. Interestingly, a white female respondent between the ages of 55-64 shared:

*“As a Latino family, when we purchased our home in the town of Henrietta, one of our neighbors shared with us that when they learned that their new neighbors were “Hispanics” they thought that we were going to alter their quiet neighborhood and not take good care of the property. Unfortunately they let their biases take control of their opinions. Needless to say, we have proved them completely wrong and our neighbor came to be like family on both directions.”*

Another white female respondent between the ages 55-64 representing a local organization explained:

*“I see it all the time. Because our community is so segregated, the social contact between Whites and POC is so limited. We need to change that on a grand scale.”*

- d. **Overt/Covert Racist Encounters.** Participants shared stories about encounters with others who have made racist comments and participated in racist actions against them because of their skin color. They detailed accounts of being verbally accosted by others and reflecting on how people have acted toward them in overt and covert ways. One Asian female respondent between the ages 18–24 shared:

*“I am half white and half asian. I have gotten it all. “You’re not a real asian because you don’t speak your native language, you don’t look like your family, you aren’t Buddhist” etc. I have also received comments like “chink, oriental, people have made fun of my eyes, when I had braces and glasses? Forget about it. Every single day, as a MIDDLE schooler, I was told by society that I didn’t look how I was “supposed to” because I’m mixed. Screw society and what it’s done to a lot of young girls.”*

- Another Asian female respondent between the ages of 45–54 stated:

*“Being an Asian, I was bullied as a child, called derogatory names and judged based on the color of my skin. Today, when I am in a social setting (picnics, parties, church, school functions), I sometimes feel people do not approach and talk to me because of my skin color. I HAVE TO approach people first (which really bothers and frustrates me) because they may assume I don’t speak English or other stereotypes. Because of this, when I’m in a social setting, I purposely try to speak to people of color or other races so that they don’t feel left out or ignored.”*

- e. **Education System.** Participants expressed their personal observations about problems within the educational system that have arisen to their knowledge. Some of these are personal accounts of being racially harassed and others are more so about racist policies, structures, and the lack of diversity and inclusion. One white female respondent between the ages of 45–54 answering on behalf of RIT stated:

*“There are growing efforts to be engaged at RIT, but the leading universities in community engagement have made it more of a priority by dedicating spaces in the community (Drexel, for example) and hiring faculty in specific colleges (U of Dayton). I think the seeds are there, they just need some watering from above and I believe the outcome (in diversity, retention of underrepresented students, and eventually community wellbeing) will be worth the investment and help fight inequity and injustice in Rochester. Students who I have worked with that have*

*engaged with community groups on senior and class projects have continued to be engaged with the groups (or similar groups in their new homes) after graduation.”*

One Black female respondent under the age of 18 shared:

*“I have had so many instances during my high school career of racism that it’s hard to count. I’ve been told to go back to Africa and been kicked out of the library for doing the same things as the other kids. The librarian even told me to be “civilized.”*”

Another respondent, a Black female between the ages of 25–34, answered:

*"I worked as a student assistant with a grant funded program for STEM students at my college for the last two years. As a student assistant, I was required to attend white privilege and microaggression trainings for three days of three hour sessions. Faculty wasn't required to attend, but it was suggested that they do. Upon talking to some of the faculty who were current or former professors of mine, I found that those that did attend were: A. afraid to speak about their experiences because they felt awkward or uncomfortable B. were more willing to share their experiences once I spoke to them about my own being a black STEM student in a majority white college and major C. still weren't sure what white privilege really meant after attending multiple trainings because there weren't people of color there to have the conversation with and share a different perspective. D. were shocked to know that they may have been lacking in providing support to students of color in their classrooms until I mentioned personal experiences I had in feeling excluded in similar settings."*

f. **Other Reflections on Racism/White Privilege.** Participant responses showed a level of self-reflection about the impact of racism and the need to acknowledge one’s white privilege. Some responses expressed a level of fear about Black people, not having Black friends, and a change in their perspective after building relationships with Black people. One white female respondent between the ages of 55–64 shared:

*“I have no black friends. I know that my life would be richer if I did. So, this is a selfish request, but I also think that it would give me more understanding of the struggle and practical opportunities to support it.”*

One white male respondent between the ages of 35–44 noted:

*“I myself see the way I’ve experienced white privilege in interactions with police officers. I have had many conversations with people that highlight the desire to be in the discussion but a misguided understanding of systematic racism and black lives matter.”*

While another white male respondent between the ages of 25-34 shared:

*“I used to be very uncomfortable in any city (including Rochester) being around black people in the city culture - I participated in jail ministry for 3 years downtown and that really opened my eyes to love people who aren't like me.”*

### III. PERSONAL PLEDGE TO SUPPORT POSITIVE CHANGE

*The responses to the question “What can you pledge to do to support positive change?” revolved around these central ideas: educate, engage, act, and advocate. Respondents were very specific about the type and level of involvement the participant is pledging to engage in, depending on how they may have responded to other areas of the survey. Respondents discussed ways that they can enact change through their current roles at work, in their communities, and in their households. Responses acknowledged participant’s commitment to continue the work that they are already involved in combating racism. A number of respondents were unsure of what to do and/or did not wish to make a pledge at this time.*

- a. **Civic Actions.** Respondents pledged to participate in civic engagement activities. Some of these activities include writing letters, voting, sign and share petitions, and calling government, local, and state officials. Respondents pledged to better understand local elections and to pressure elected officials to do the right thing. Finally, respondents noted the need to rectify voter suppression. For instance, on white female respondent between the ages of 55-64 responding on behalf of a local organization stated:

*“I want to engage in supporting getting out the vote with attention to initiatives toward rectifying voter suppression. Transformational change needs to occur, that has to happen at the policy level, and that only happens if everyone can vote and that every vote counts.”*

- b. **Educating Others/Self.** Participants pledged to educate themselves, their families, and their friends about racism and its effects. They mentioned teaching their children at home about race, racism, and how to treat others fairly regardless of skin color. Many respondents vowed to educate themselves through reading articles, listening to podcasts, and engaging in conversations with people different from them. Others pledged to share information with others in their community and call out racism when they witness it. One Black female respondent between the ages of 45 to 54 answered:

*"1. Start with my family! Continue to teach my children to respect all- even the ones who will deny them their human rights. Foster love and forgiveness in their hearts, so that they can be whole and healthy. 2. Continue to champion equity and inclusion*



*in my corporation and on the community boards that I sit on. 3. Make ways for more Black students to have scholarships for higher education."*

Another respondent, a white female between the ages of 25-34 stated:

*"First going back and educating myself. It's become clear that my previous education, even at my college RIT failed me in this area. I also failed myself for not realizing this sooner. Secondly, donating to causes such as this, that help fight racism."*

c. **Involvement/Support of Programs.** Participants pledged to get or continue to be involved in a number of community-led programs and organizations like Black Lives Matter (BLM). They discussed finding ways to implement plans of actions, to donate money/resources/time, and conveyed their interest to join advisory/planning/coordinating committees within these organizations and programs. For example, one Asian female respondent between the ages of 18-24 noted:

*"I have donated to the BLM movement. I have signed probably hundreds of petitions for change. I have gone to a peaceful protest with my brothers. I have used and will continue to use my social media platforms as a voice for the unheard. Justice has not been served entirely, and I will not stop advocating until it has been."*

d. **Workplace/Schools.** Participants expressed how they would work to fight against racism in their workplace and schools. Responses pledged to use their various roles to champion inclusion and equity, examine hiring and recruiting practices and to diversify their staff and board members. They expressed their commitment to using their voice and position to advocate for changes, facilitate conversations and implement various training. Participants stated they would become more active in school systems/boards, support student leaders, and disrupt the school to prison pipeline through restorative justice intervention and cognitive-behavioral life skills training. Finally, they committed to teaching students about racism and developing a curriculum that is culturally responsive/abolitionist pedagogies. For example, one white female educator between the ages of 45-54 stated:

*"I will learn how to do authentic engaged work through study and listening to the community. I will work to create curriculum and lead students in projects at RIT through my existing role. I will help support student leaders and community leaders who want to collaborate. I would love to have more faculty partners in this work and many are interested, but being pretenure is a bit of a deterrent."*

One white female respondent between the ages of 35-44 pledged:

*‘In my job as social studies supervisor for an area school, I have been and will continue to dedicate my work to implementing a culturally responsive and antiracist social studies educational program, as well as support culturally responsive and antiracist education consistently across my district.’*

- e. **Advocacy/Support.** Participants pledged to be advocates and support others through a variety of actions and activities. They expressed their commitment to sharing information on their personal social media sites (podcasts included), confronting racism in their inner circles, challenging the perspectives of friends/family, and volunteering and contributing their time, energy, resources, and money. Several white participants pledged to be vocal allies and to get involved in protests and supporting BLM. Others committed to engaging in open dialogue and listening to others, creating initiatives that educate about advocacy, supporting Black businesses, and helping with access to housing options. For instance, one respondent who did not complete the demographic data replied:

*‘I am helping people understand other perspectives by giving examples. I am proposing a number of initiatives and ideas at work that will help produce results. One of these involves teaching true advocacy and how people can really bring about change.’*

- f. **Personal Behavioral Choices.** Participants pledged to confront racism through their own personal behaviors and actions. Many responses indicated participants aim to be kind, peaceful, prayerful, open, caring, loving, and self-aware of their own biases and beliefs. Responses expressed the need to unlearn their previously held biases, ask questions, participate, respect others, get out of their comfort zones to meet different people, and to lead by example. For example, one white female respondent between the ages of 45-54 stated:

*‘I pledge to listen more with an open mind, not assume, ask questions and be brutally honest. I encourage my black friends to not think all white people are prejudiced or “bad” just because they’re white and whose ancestors did horrible things to blacks in the past. I encourage my white friends to not think all black people are “bad” and that discrimination in ANY form (thoughts, words, deeds), no matter how unconscious, is simply not acceptable. This is not easy – acknowledging that is the first step. We must become comfortable being uncomfortable.’*

## IV. RECOMMENDED CHANGE LEADERS *(by Age Group)*

*When respondents were asked about **who should lead the change** to reduce inequities and interrupt racism, the majority of responses indicated that educational institutions should play an important role. When responses were analyzed by age group, there were some distinct differences. Those over the age of 65, while agreeing that we need collective action and collaboration between various groups, also emphasized the need for institutional leadership to lead the change in order to have a larger impact.*

For instance, a White female respondent said:

*"I would like to see the Rochester Mayor, Monroe County Executive, and Town Leaders lead this effort. They would obviously need the support of many community groups, schools, libraries and religious groups. Groups such as the Urban League, Levine Center to End Hate, YWCA...and many more. This must be very visible with broad participation.....otherwise people will dismiss it. You need leaders to provide THOUGHT LEADERSHIP so that the issues are understandable".*

- a. **Respondents in the 55-64 age group**, while recognizing the need to involve the community and government organizations, emphasized the need for open dialogue and elevation of voices that experience racism. A White female responding on behalf of her organization said:

*"It needs to be collaborative, and open a dialogue that engages white leaders to overcome racism blindness, identify and address race bias, and become active players in creating equity by eradicating systemic racist patterns and practices."*

Another White female representing a local organization emphasized the need to prioritize community voices:

*It cannot just be the policy makers, though they hold power, diverse populations is a priority but just as important is generational representation, and inclusive voices, (business sector, faith-based, lived experience).*

- b. **Respondents in the 45-54 age group** emphasized multi-stakeholder collaboration to bring about change in Rochester. Many of the respondents mentioned the need to promote people willing to share their power rather than just elected officials, as well as those with the ability to bring people together, such as pastors, educators, young leaders, and coaches. This demographic also offered concrete suggestions as to

which organizations should be facilitating dialogue in the community. For example, one Black woman recommended:

*“These conversations should be facilitated by the Urban League, the United Way, TNT, UofR and the RCSD. The public service announcements could be created by members of the community at RCTV.”*

A white female respondent also pointed out that while it can be challenging to partner with institutional stakeholders, successful partnerships can help the community. She recommended that

*“University leadership: grow existing programs in community engagement at Universities, like University Community Partnerships at RIT and seek support for faculty who are interested in this kind of work (they are already there).” She also pointed out that: “Community organizations would need to be willing to work through the sometimes difficult processes of figuring out how they can work together with universities to move their projects and ideas forward. (Universities have not always been good partners.)”*

c. **Respondents in the 35-44 age group**, similar to the respondents in the 45-54 age group, pointed out the need to have the change be community-initiated rather than government-driven, as it can be politicized and delayed in bureaucratic processes. This age group also recommended the need to have a coalition of diverse stakeholders and emphasized the need to have people of color lead the initiatives. For instance, one black woman said “Community leaders of color in that can influence institutions And policies.” This sentiment was also echoed by a white woman who also suggested that “respected Black leaders empowering white leaders to speak together to educate,” would help initiate change in the community.

d. **Respondents in the 25-34 age group** echoed the sentiment that anyone with a desire to see change should be included in the collective, collaborative community efforts. This age group also recognized that stakeholders with resources and authority are more likely to have the bandwidth to initiate change. For example, a white woman pointed out that:

*“Colleges have a lot of resources and student labor force that has time to work and focus on these issues. From there get local high schools involved with the students*

*themselves. Secondly organize local high level business professionals to engage and lead these students of all ages. It's a community effort, everyone needs to be involved."*

A white male respondent also suggested that change should be led by

*"people of influence within all camps - teachers, students, business leaders, the church, etc potentially organized through an educational facility or unit of local government."*

- e.* **Respondents in the 18-24 age group** were few, but the respondents therein also reaffirmed the need to include anyone interested in being an ally in the change initiatives. This age-group also emphasized educational initiatives, with one Asian female pointing out that other academic institutions should be involved as well.

*"I think not only RIT, but other colleges in the surrounding areas should partner with local organizations to provide these workshops."*

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON STRATEGIES SUGGESTED BY ROCHESTER COMMUNITY

**Recommendation 1:** The City of Rochester should require all companies receiving municipal funding to have a published diversity statement.

**Recommendation 2:** Academic institutions in Rochester should initiate and sustain a conversation about racism on their campuses.

**Recommendation 3:** Academic institutions should partner with community organizations to develop training and employment opportunities to reduce inequity in Rochester.

**Recommendation 4:** Initiate a dialogue with elected officials to develop more equitable policies.

**Recommendation 5:** The Monroe County Executive Board should prioritize training and hiring of people of color to diversify leadership in the county.

**Recommendation 6:** Diversify the K-12 curriculum and implement a unit on racism and privilege in all educational institutions.

**Recommendation 7:** All school district leadership should initiate partnerships between school districts and their communities of color and develop strategies to address concerns raised by students of color and their families.

**Recommendation 8:** Review structure and access to public schools to provide equitable opportunities for all students in our region.

**Recommendation 9:** Develop opportunities for STEM professionals in the Rochester-Finger Lakes region to mentor and train city youth and young adults.

**Recommendation 10:** Review the Social Service System and gather community feedback to improve services.

**Recommendation 11:** Work with Courts, District Attorneys, Public Defenders, Probation, Pre-Trial and Diversion programs providing Restorative Justice Interventions and Cognitive Behavioral Life Skills Training.

**Recommendation 12:** Develop a public awareness campaign to teach people about when to call 911.

**Recommendation 13:** Increase funding for educational programs that support youth involvement with law enforcement (e.g., the Explorer program) to help diversify police forces.

**Recommendation 14:** Provide funding to people interested in starting small businesses in urban communities to better address community needs (e.g. grocery stores, medical practices, etc.).

**Recommendation 15:** Develop a county-wide campaign on social media, radio, and television to engage citizens in conversations about racism and inequity.

**Recommendation 16:** Increase mental health outreach and support for the Black community.

**Recommendation 17:** Re-imagine police funding, training, and recruitment practices.

**Recommendation 18:** Eliminate disparities in health care, housing and employment.

## VI. RESPONSE OF THE URBAN LEAGUE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

### Change Strategy

For sustainable change to take place, it will require deep-level systems change. The Urban League suggests employing a plan that moves the community beyond surface-level change. Deep-level systems change must be sought for communities to move the needle on racism and systemic practices. This will require more than solidarity statements, anti-racist challenges, and one-off community conversations about race. This movement requires investment, learning, unlearning, and a concerted effort for change and employing a demonstrated change strategy. Attitudinal shifts must occur, interpersonal learning, developing a coalition to guide the work, and most importantly the implementation of a successful change model. All actors must consider themselves change leaders, or Interrupters. The Urban League recommends that the community analyze the dismantling racism efforts as a turnaround effort and employ Kotter's (1996) theory of an eight-stage change model. The Urban League recognizes that there are limitations to Kotter's (1996) change model, as it guides the strategy but does not provide action steps necessary for preparing the self in facilitating the turnaround change strategy. However, the Four-Stage Interruption Model as posited by Dr. Seanelle Hawkins (**see below**) outlines the importance of the change leaders developing inner strength, self-awareness, and personal skills necessary to prepare to set a change strategy. For the recommendations to be successful, each individual must see themselves as a change leader, a turnaround leader, and in this instance, the term "turnaround/change leader" is replaced as "Interrupter." Turnaround change is necessary to recover from the impact of racism in the greater Rochester Community.

Within the literature, turnaround is theorized in three ways: As a "condition" (Armenakis, Fredenberger, Cheronis & Field, 1995, p. 231), as a "process" (Short, Palmer, & Stimpert, 1998, p. 155), and as a "consequence or end state, of successful strategic actions" (Short, Palmer, & Stimpert, 1998, p. 155). Turnaround efforts will result in two divergent end states: failure or recovery (Hager et al, 1999; Slatter, 1984; Stewart, 1984).

The Greater Rochester Community seeks to change the current condition, but currently there is not an identified process to create the strategic actions necessary to create a process to recover from the systemic impact of racism. Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model was developed as a guide to the business for-profit sector, but Kotter contends that the theory is applicable to any organizational change. The Urban League proposes that the Greater Rochester Community should consider its community members as part of a larger organization that seeks movement in reducing the impacts of racism and interrupting racism in Rochester. Kotter states that his eight-stage process is necessary to lead successful and



sustained change within any organization. Moreover, Kotter argues that the change model is sequential and employs the following steps:

1. *Establishing a sense of urgency*
2. *Creating the guiding coalition*
3. *Developing a vision and strategy*
4. *Communicating the change vision*
5. *Empowering broad-based action*
6. *Generating short-term wins*
7. *Consolidating gains and producing more change*
8. *Anchoring new approaches in the culture*

The Urban League has analyzed the 18 recommendations and offers a deeper look at the recommendations and suggest that Kotter's (1996) and Hawkins's (2020) Four-Stage Interruption Model are necessary to create sustainable change. Kotter argues that following this sequential multi-stage process is important to lead successful change. According to Kotter, change cannot be accelerated by skipping steps in the change sequence.

Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model begins with establishing a Sense of Urgency. Kotter said that change leaders must eliminate the status quo and create a sense of urgency by informing all actors that the change is necessary. The change leaders must also make modifications, require all to change, and mandate for quick and dramatic improvement. Our community leaders, elected officials must mandate that change is necessary as this will create the "sense of urgency" Kotter recommends.

### The Urban League's Responses

**Recommendation 1: The City of Rochester should require all companies receiving municipal funding to have a published diversity statement.**

The Urban League argues that Recommendation 1 requires an effort from Monroe and surrounding counties, not just the City of Rochester. Monroe and surrounding counties should co-create a published statement recognizing the necessity to dismantle historical systems of racism. This acknowledgment will help the Greater Rochester community understand the necessity for change and highlight the efforts necessary for collective impact. Although action steps may differ, collectively the Greater Rochester leaders affirm the problem—racism—and

the urgency around developing solutions to historic racist practices. County residents must urge their leaders and elected officials to create and publish these statements immediately.

**Recommendation 2: Academic institutions in Rochester should initiate and sustain a conversation about racism on their campuses.**

The Urban League of Rochester asserts that area institutions need to move beyond a mere conversation about race on their campuses and garner ideas and strategies to create a coalition to drive the effort. The second step in Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model encompasses assembling a group to lead the change to ensure that all commit to the effort. Universities can leverage their faculty and student bodies to guide the effort to create a coalition to lead the effort. Universities and colleges have a unique opportunity to help organize groups and facilitate a process to lead the change strategy. Student groups have the time and energy to organize and create effective strategies to guide the coalition. This process could be an arduous undertaking at the onset, but Universities have the resources to fully guide the coalition and create systems of accountability. Moreover, universities have experience in turnaround strategies, developing and implementing system change models. Universities should seek to develop relationships with County and City officials, judicial staff, law enforcement, faith-based community, health systems, business, and nonprofit leaders to guide the coalition for change.

The Urban League would like to acknowledge that the public collaboration of Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) on the initial stages of **INTERRUPT RACISM**, including the questionnaire and data analysis, likely resulted in the more frequent explicit naming of RIT in participant responses than of other local institutions (e.g., University of Rochester, Monroe Community College, SUNY Brockport). A comparison of present and past approaches to antiracism education and responses to acute incidents of racially-motivated violence across local Universities and Colleges is beyond the scope of this report, however.

**Recommendation 3: Academic institutions should partner with community organizations to develop training and employment opportunities to reduce inequity in Rochester.**

Kotter (1996) establishes that change leaders must develop a vision for change. Recommendation 3 suggests that academic institutions partner with community organizations like the Urban League to better understand the needs of the public and the inequities they face.

Universities should seek to help the greater community by leveraging the institutions' own resources. In partnership with community organizations, institutions can assist the greater community to understand the need for change. These efforts can be deployed through training, research grants, community conversations, and college coursework, all with the goal of developing a vision for change. The vision should recognize all areas identified in the **INTERRUPT RACISM** data: 1) Education, 2) Health, 3) Policing, 4) Housing and 5) Employment and Jobs (see section below on the Interruption Model).

**Recommendation 4: Initiate a dialogue with elected officials to develop more equitable policies.**

Recommendation 4 suggests that elected officials start a dialogue about the need for more equitable policies. Kotter (1996) maintains that change leaders must communicate the vision. Elected officials should not only be aware of the change vision but take an active role in developing and communicating the change vision. The vision will need to be communicated in multiple print, digital, and media formats. The Greater Rochester community must be clear on the change vision. Such a vision is provided through the **INTERRUPT RACISM** website.

Note on Recommendations 5-11

Kotter (1996) argues that it is critical for change leaders to recognize and eliminate barriers to achieve the intended change. Identifying the areas that need to immediately change must be incorporated, like those in recommendations, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

**Recommendation 5: The Monroe County Executive Board should prioritize training and hiring of people of color to diversify leadership in the county.**

Part of the effort to remove barriers to change is training and hiring people of color. Efforts already made by the Working Groups of the Commission on Racial and Structural Equity (RASE) and the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI) can inform this recommendation at a deeper level. The input of committees like RASE and RMAPI should be sought for current and future changes. Hiring policies will need to be reviewed to create opportunities to hire more people of color.

**Recommendation 6: Diversify the K-12 curriculum and implement a unit on racism and privilege in all educational institutions.**

There are already efforts underway locally to develop an antiracist curriculum, including at the Urban League with **INTERRUPT RACISM**. Breaking down silos between school systems and community organizations and shifting attitudes will ensure community leaders have a better understanding of resources and may provide a bridge for collaboration.

**Recommendation 7: All school district leadership should initiate partnerships between school districts and their communities of color and develop strategies to address concerns raised by students of color and their families.**

The school districts should explore a shared curriculum and opportunities for resource sharing, particularly while virtual learning is employed during the COVID-19 crisis. The virtual nature of instruction has the potential to magnify pre-existing disparities between, for example, the Rochester City School District and surrounding more affluent suburban districts. District staffs have an opportunity to provide innovative classroom settings via virtual learning and invite other districts to create a shared learning space among learners.

**Recommendation 8: Review structure and access to public schools to provide equitable opportunities for all students in our region.**

Recommendation 8 encompasses a comprehensive review of the structure and access to public schools to deliver equitable opportunities for all students in our region. As districts continue to navigate virtual models, the superintendents should explore shared goals for creating improved learning outcomes through an equity lens. As district superintendents meet, agenda items must include collaboration throughout the region to improve education equity practices. Across the nation, the National Urban League and its affiliates have demonstrated models of equity in education.

**Recommendation 9: Develop opportunities for STEM professionals in the Rochester-Finger Lakes region to mentor and train city youth and young adults.**

The exploration of partnerships between districts could create innovation to provide more STEM (science, technology, engineering, maths) resources for city youth and young adults. Moreover, formalizing partnerships with community organizations will create opportunities for more resources available to city youth. Additionally, the exploration of joint grant applications affording multiple organizations the opportunity to jointly apply to serve a larger population of city youth with shared goals and joint curriculum could create more opportunities for youth to be better served with strong programming and professional diverse staff.

**Recommendation 10: Review the Social Service System and gather community feedback to improve services.**

Users of the Social Service System should be surveyed via focus groups and electronic and/or mail-in surveys to better understand how the services hinder or support individuals that utilize these systems. Too often, decisions are made without the input of those that are direct users of the system or service during the change process. The Urban League argues that individuals with current lived experiences are critical and necessary to the process to make meaningful change.

**Recommendation 11: Work with Courts, District Attorneys, Public Defenders, Probation, Pre-Trial and Diversion programs providing Restorative Justice Interventions and Cognitive Behavioral Life Skills Training.**

Recommendation 11 proposes working with Courts, District Attorneys, Public Defenders, Probation, Pre-Trial, and Diversion programs providing Restorative Justice Interventions and Cognitive Behavioral Life Skills Training. Criminal Justice work should include the training of its leadership as a first step, then a concerted effort to create interventions and system change.

**Recommendation 12: Develop a public awareness campaign to teach people about when to call 911.**

Community members may request emergency police responses in situations where their own racism is the real threat. Commercials, print advertising, and community campaigns must recognize biases and macro-aggressions that suggest that specific groups of people look suspect. Specific efforts for individuals to recognize biases will, in turn, raise awareness about micro-aggressions.

Kotter (1996) posits that short term wins offer change leaders evidence that their strategy is on track. Consequently, the leaders are empowered to push towards the goal. As the community makes progress towards its goals, successes should be monitored, documented, and celebrated. The coalition must define how it will celebrate successes to encourage and empower the greater community to continue the change effort.

As progress is made educating and training the criminal justice system staff, the coalition should create opportunities to strengthen the change. Kotter recommends that change leaders must consolidate improvements and produce more change, which will motivate individuals to continue the momentum and drive change. When change teams recognize the intended change efforts, progress can be motivated and mobilized to continue by producing more change.

**Recommendation 13: Increase funding for educational programs that support youth involvement with law enforcement (e.g., the Explorer program) to help diversify police forces.**

Recommendation 13 proposes an increase in in funding for educational programs like Police Athletic Leagues (PAL) and Explorer Programs that support *positive* youth involvement with law enforcement. These programs are effective in helping to create authentic relationships between police and community members, in addition to helping diversify police forces. A more diverse police force that more directly reflects the diversity of the community will ensure more community members feel safe and feel “seen” by law enforcement.

**Recommendation 14: Provide funding to people interested in starting small businesses in urban communities to better address community needs (e.g. grocery stores, medical practices, etc.).**

Other enhancements to continue to mobilize change include Recommendation 14 providing services for entrepreneurs interested in starting small businesses in urban communities to better address community needs (e.g. grocery stores, medical practices, etc.). La Marketa, an Ibero-American Action League project, is evidence of such opportunities to create spaces for small businesses in low-income communities. This model should be explored to create opportunities for African-American communities.

**Recommendation 15: Develop a county-wide campaign on social media, radio, and television to engage citizens in conversations about racism and inequity.**

Kotter's (1996) last stage posits that the coalition must institutionalize new approaches and anchor them in the culture; successful change is evidenced by illustrating the embodiment of the shared norms and new behaviors. Recommendation 15 advises for the development of a county-wide campaign on social media, radio, and television to engage citizens in conversations about racism and inequity. As the Greater Rochester community realizes its change goals, the community must be informed of progress, including short-term wins. The Urban League has developed its own campaign around **INTERRUPT RACISM** but has not as of yet received official support from the City of Rochester or Monroe County.

**Recommendation 16: Increase mental health outreach and support for the Black community.**

Community members that utilize mental health resources are best to advocate for preferred services and needs. The mental health system must institutionalize survey approaches to gain feedback for service users to learn how to improve services with a focus on equity and reaching communities of color.

**Recommendation 17: Re-imagine police funding, training, and recruitment practices.**

The Urban Leagues urges community members to move beyond sloganeering phrases about defunding and explore what it means to reimagine policing, which should include re-training

and a thorough analysis of recruitment practices. RASE and the Police Accountability board provide opportunities to do so. These processes should include feedback loops to ensure changes are evident and intelligible to the community they serve.

**Recommendation 18: Eliminate disparities in health care, housing and employment.**

These three areas will require a deep systems review of historical practices that resulted in the racial inequities that are prevalent today. Our community's history of housing segregation and redlining led to housing and lending discrimination and created neighborhoods of poverty and lack of access to safe neighborhoods. Lack of good jobs, employment discrimination, and wage gaps are to blame for the pervasive disparities across the Greater Rochester community. Creating equitable opportunities for affordable and accessible health care, affordable and safe housing, and good jobs are critical for the Greater Rochester Community to re-envision if it seeks to eliminate disparities. These structural changes will require interventions that include educating decision makers about how its practices are creating inequities. Efforts like St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center's Racial Equity and Justice Initiative (REJI, now part of the Urban League's **INTERRUPT RACISM**) and the Black Agenda Group (BAG) are all strong efforts to create awareness and dismantling practices that perpetuate inequities.

Racism has an especially profound, measurable impact on mental and physical health: We must reexamine medical guidelines, medical education curricula, and institutional protocols to research how racism is perpetuated in hospitals, clinics, addiction and recovery organizations, and mental health facilities, while working on solutions that interrupt racism. Community members need to learn and understand the history of how people of color and the poor have been excluded or underserved by healthcare systems, as evidenced today in the lack of access to COVID-19 testing and treatment in many Black and brown communities. The National Urban League's *State of Black America* (August 2020) stated that Black individuals in the US were 2.7 times more likely to be infected by COVID-19 than whites. Latinx people were at an even higher risk at 3.2x. The picture becomes grimmer still when looking at outcomes of the disease process: When controlling for all other variables but race/ethnicity, Black and Latinx Americans were more than 4 times more likely to be hospitalized than white Americans for complications from COVID-19. And Black Americans were 3.6 times more likely than white Americans and nearly twice as likely as Latinx Americans to ultimately die from COVID-19. It is sobering to note that these shocking disparities are for but one novel, though admittedly deadly, disease.



While it is beyond the scope of this report to consider literature on other potentially fatal conditions that likewise have higher incidence rates among people of color and the poor—high blood pressure and heart disease, diabetes, many cancers—it bears repeating that racism has a profound, measurable impact on mental and physical health and should be treated as the **public health crisis** that it is.

### The Four-Stage Interruption Model

As the community seeks to dismantle racism, the Urban League of Rochester argues that a four-stage leadership framework, in conjunction with Kotter's (1996) change model, is necessary if sustainable change is sought. Herein referred to as the Four-Stage Interruption Model (**Figure 1**), the model begins with the individual and works outward. This inside-out approach illustrates the types of changes that the Interrupter needs to consider, providing a guide for marshaling personal capabilities, accessing available resources, leading others through Interruption efforts, and assessing needed change.

The first stage, Preparing Self, builds the Interrupter's personal capacity for change. The second stage, Accessing Resources, provides resources to help the Interrupter guide the change effort. Next, Leading Others is the stage in which the Interrupter utilizes competencies gained in the previous stages to direct the change efforts in its network. The network can include, but is not limited to, family, friends, the social media network, faith groups, affiliations, and workplace. Finally, the Interruption in the last stage includes action steps and accountability systems to ensure a change in the specific targeted areas. The first three stages of the Interruption model underlie the effectiveness of the final stage, the Interruption.

**Preparing Self** is the initial stage as illustrated in Figure 1. In this stage the Interrupter develops efficacy skills and generative capabilities to guide the Interruption change strategy and, in turn, the Interruption. Preparing Self activities will vary among individuals. However, an Interrupter must engage in a process of (a) self-reflection to assess their personal readiness to dismantle racism; (b) gaining personal confidence and support to lead the effort; (c) working with a group or equity professional to help train and learn and develop about systemic racism; and (d) staying connected to issues that impact race-related matters.

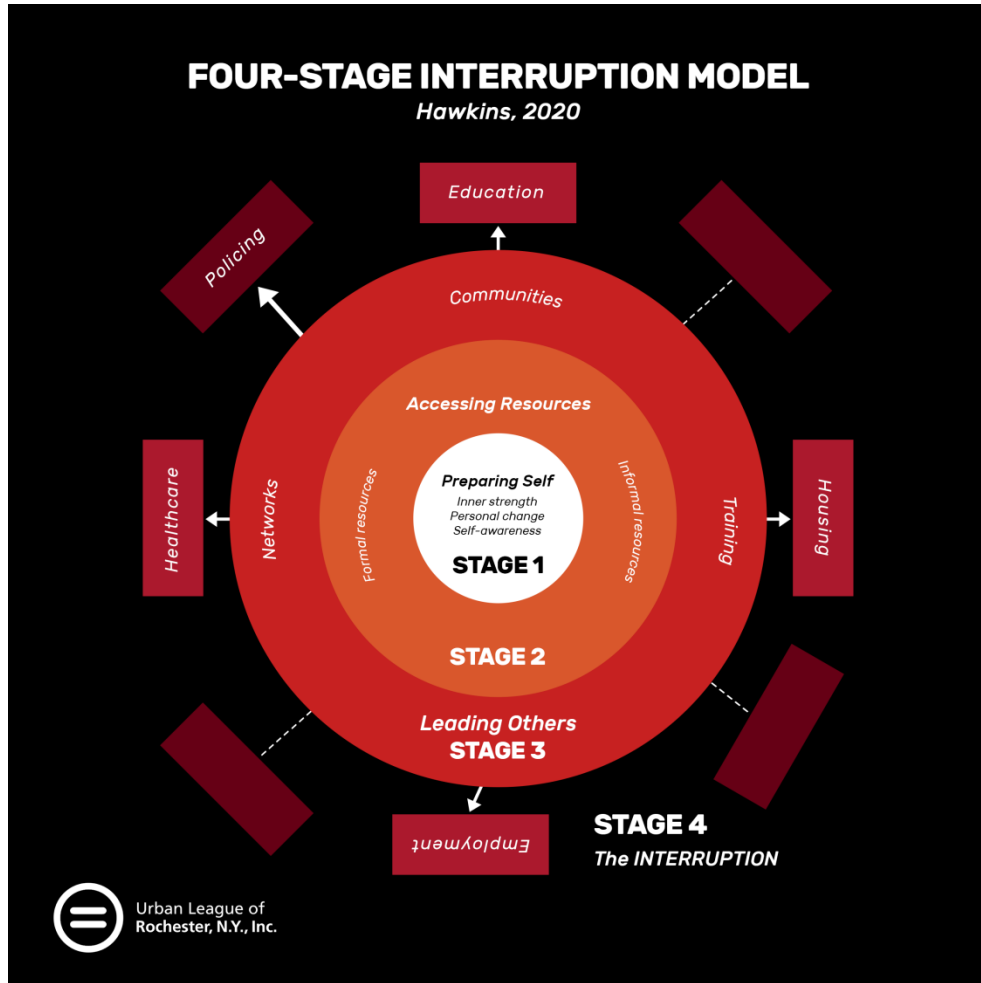


Figure 1

Not all individuals will find that their personal goals are congruent with the journey towards dismantling racism; some may decide not to become Interrupters. However, once an individual decides to move forward with becoming an Interrupter and implementing an Interruption change strategy to dismantle racism, the individual will gain personal confidence and shall benefit from support from a network of other Interrupters. Staying connected to developments regarding race, diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice initiatives are essential to the Interruption process.

Next is **Accessing Resources**, the second stage of the Four Stage Interruption Model, illustrated at the center of Figure 1. At this stage, the Interrupter will access formal and informal resources or a combination of the two to prepare for the final stage of the Interruption. The Interrupter may attend groups or meetings and read articles and access online resources about racism and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) efforts, such

as those found in the **Interrupter Toolkit** at [www.urbanleaguero.org/irtoolkit](http://www.urbanleaguero.org/irtoolkit). The Interrupter may also seek formal training by attending a conference, summit, college course, or engage with a consultant or diversity, equity, and inclusion officer. Formal resources differ in that they often define expectations, detail outcomes, and determine specific expectations for the participant.

The third stage, **Leading Others**, is illustrated in the outer circle of Figure 1. At this stage, the Interrupter will lead others. After gaining more knowledge through formal and informal resources, building self-confidence, the Interrupter will utilize its competencies to lead others to develop new Interrupters, educate their networks, develop shared goals, and provide information about the action steps necessary to create sustainable change. The Interrupter will guide its network in understanding the urgency of moving from complacency—attitudes of “this is how it has always been”—to a culture of accountability and action steps for change.

The final stage, **the Interruption**, illustrated in Figure 1 demonstrates how the Interrupters utilize the skills gained in the previous stages to inform the targeted systems that need systemic change. The Interrupters will utilize the skills gained in the former stages (Preparing Self, Accessing Resources, and Leading Others) and through their application focus the Interruption in the specific areas targeted. There are five targeted areas identified in the **INTERRUPT RACISM** data: 1) Education, 2) Health, 3) Policing, 4) Housing and 5) Employment and Jobs. The five outer legs depicted in Figure 1 represent the systems targeted for change and its connection to the Preparing Self, Accessing Resources, and Leading Others stages.

The model provides flexibility in that the outer legs can be increased or decreased depending on the systems targeted for improvement. The unlabeled boxes depicted in Figure 1 illustrate this flexibility at the Interruption stage. (Preparing Self, Accessing Resources, and Leading Others Stages are critical and do not provide the same flexibility as the outer legs.)

In sum, the Preparing Self and Accessing Resources stages will support the growth of the individual Interrupter in developing capabilities and strategy. In the Leading Others stage, the Interrupter influences their networks and develops others into Interrupters toward the last stage, the Interruption, where their shared vision may achieve the desired change of dismantling system racist practices.

The Urban League posits that the Four-Stage Interruption Model in alignment with Kotter’s (1996) eight-stage change model could be a successful model to employ to implement an effective change strategy to move the needle on the impact of racism in our community.

## CONCLUSION

Recognizing the current momentum for change, communities must mobilize members to create action steps for sustainable transformation; an effective change strategy must be deployed. Business practices have proven successful turnaround change systems when an organization recognizes its operational deficits. The Urban League posits that the Greater Rochester Community is operating at a deficit when systems of racist practices are evident in its education, housing, policing, employment, and health systems as evidenced by the data unveiled in this, the Urban League of Rochester's 2020 *INTERRUPT RACISM Report*.

In order to successfully execute the 18 recommended strategies for change, practices must be dismantled, re-envisioned, and confronted with demonstrated strategies that begin with personal change. This internal work will influence the Interrupter and their networks and create a readiness for deeper systems change far beyond solidarity statements; ineffective meetings that lack meaningful action steps; and anti-racism challenges that only realize surface-level modifications that are not sustainable. Successful execution requires the actors to engage in interpersonal change coupled with effective turnaround interruption strategies to **INTERRUPT RACISM**.

Appendix 1: *INTERRUPT RACISM* Questionnaire Items

1. Are you answering on behalf of yourself or an organization/group?
  - a. If the latter, what organization/group?
2. Zip Code
3. What is the specific problem related to racism that needs to be addressed?
4. What strategy/ies do you suggest will address this problem?
5. Who do you think is best to lead this change?
6. What can you pledge to do to support positive change?
7. Do you have a personal experience/observation that demonstrates the problem you shared above?
8. Demographics
  - a. E-mail
  - b. Name
  - c. Phone number
    - i. May we text you?
  - d. Age
  - e. Are you of Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin?
  - f. How would you describe yourself? (*race*)
  - g. Gender Identity
  - h. Sexual Identity
  - i. Marital Status
  - j. Highest Education Level Obtained
  - k. Employment Status
  - l. Yearly Income
9. Are there any other comments you'd like to share?
10. Consent statement

Appendix 2: Organizations that participated in the *INTERRUPT RACISM* survey

- American Lung Association
- Black Lives Matter
- Causewave Community Partners
- Center for Dispute Settlement
- Child Care Council
- Eagles Wings Consulting
- Fitness Professional
- FUSION
- Ibero-American Action League, Inc.
- LCCP- LSG<sub>1</sub>
- LCCP Cohort 14
- M&T Bank
- McDonald's Restaurant dba Horace Jeter Inc.
- OWN Rochester
- Roc NORML
- Rochester City School District
- Rochester Downtown Development Corporation
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- Rochester Regional Health
- St. Marianne Cope Parish