

**DSHS stands as an anti-racist organization.** We recognize and understand that historical and contemporary experiences with power, privilege and oppression impact our colleagues and constituents. We understand that structural racism, othering and exclusion have become normalized and result in systems, policies and practices that ensure access to opportunity for some and exclude others. We will not be silent. We understand it is up to us to dismantle the structures within DSHS that perpetuate racism, inequity and exclusion for our colleagues, our constituents and all Washingtonians.

**The DSHS mission, Transforming Lives,** is driven by our values of honesty and integrity; open communication; pursuit of excellence; equity, diversity and inclusion; and commitment to service. Transformational change requires action that is seen and felt by colleagues and constituents. Each executive leader of a DSHS administration demonstrates evidence of their commitment and accountability. Each of their posted [Anti-Racism EDI Declaration Statements](#) outlines administration-specific responsibilities in this work for standing as an anti-racist, equitable and transformational organization.

**DSHS recognizes, endorses and acts in alignment with our values** to increase transparency and eliminate supports for racial hierarchy; transform policies, practices and structures; and dismantle barriers to racial equity. Our work in DSHS especially relates to addressing long-standing systemic injustices that target and disproportionately impact Blacks, Indigenous, Latinx and other people of color. These injustices include mass incarceration; inadequate access to quality health care, including equitable mental and behavioral health services; disparate educational resources; and inequitable access to stable sources of food, safe and affordable housing, and gainful employment.

**DSHS condemns racism and white supremacy.** We recognize that white supremacy is overt and covert and is by design centered against Blackness and other people of color. We condemn the devaluation of Black lives and Black humanity that pervades our society. The killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and countless others who are Black, Indigenous, Latinx and of color are rooted in the idea of racial hierarchy, limited application of racism as individual acts and silent inaction in the face of blatant inequities that allow structural racism to persist unchecked.

**DSHS recognizes the necessity to embrace equity, diversity and inclusion** with increased awareness, sensitivity, knowledge and improved skill-based interactions. We will launch a three-year sustained initiative to apply the equity tools of **Truth, Social Justice and Racial Healing** to advance DSHS as an anti-racist, equitable and transformational organization.

**DSHS will continue working on transforming structures** related to our business responsibilities and our networked influences across the state to create productive opportunities that address conscious and unconscious bias in economic, housing, employment, education, social welfare, child welfare, legal, health care, mental health and other systems.

**DSHS will create and sustain healthy environments where Black lives matter** and are valued and supported in all that we do. We embrace our common humanity with our colleagues and constituents who are directly and indirectly injured by the death and disparities resulting from individual and systemic racial harms and violence. We acknowledge responsibility for the harm that Blacks, Indigenous, Latinx and people of color may experience not only through direct violent actions or the use of slurs but in subtle manifestations such as micro-aggressions, unequal access to opportunity and the way performance is judged or rewarded.

**DSHS' budget and resources will reflect our commitment.** A budget is a moral statement of priorities. Dedicated line items will ensure that commitments to anti-racism and equity, diversity and inclusion are sustained over time.

**DSHS will ensure that the voices influencing organizational action are inclusive and representative** so that the responsibility of action is carried out by broad groups of people informed by expertise and best practices.

*Secretary Cheryl Strange – October 2020*

***Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is more than what we do ... It's who we are.***