



Michelle Lujan Grisham • Governor

Alicia J. Keyes • Cabinet Secretary

Though I cannot fully understand what it is like to not feel protected or valued because of my race, I acknowledge that the cultural structure America operates in, through law enforcement and beyond, is rooted in systemic racism.

There are many New Mexico businesses that believe in cultural diversity and are active in improving and reassessing their business policies toward fair and equitable treatment of all their employees and constituents. But right now, we are called to step back, be mindful and honest, and ask if we are doing enough to make real change.

Answering the question of what we can do as a business community about racism should be a collective undertaking. In that spirit, I relied heavily on speaking with my colleagues, in particular my executive assistant, Shani Harvie, and other friends and associates.

While there are many things we can do individually to make this moment one that stands for change, as business leaders it is important that we look at how each of our business models either supports the Black, Native and other minority communities, or how it contributes to systemic racism.

It is time for businesses to begin questioning how we hire, support, and promote minority employees.

Now is the time to take action. It is my hope that businesses in our community will consider the following suggestions.

1. Encourage and promote wealth-creation and move towards a livable-wage. Be transparent with salaries. Work toward paying women and people of color, specifically Black and Indigenous peoples, equal pay for equal work.
2. Identify your company's security and enforcement practices and analyze whether there is inherent systemic discrimination. Set rules as to when it is appropriate to call the police. Train staff to assess each situation, and to call the police only when an issue cannot be deescalated by communication and community building. Eliminate the use of profiling based on race.
3. Reexamine your hiring process and job applications. Adjust Interviews, applications, and training to ensure bias and prejudice are eliminated. You can interview blindly, alter or change emphasis of education requirements, and meet applicants in-person to determine if they can actually perform the job rather than only using their resume or background to justify their ability.
4. Identify and support CDFI lenders for minority business owners to provide easier access to funding that has less stringent requirements than a traditional bank.
5. Consider having a position dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion that is able to perform trainings and gather analytics on your efforts to be more inclusive. This holds your company accountable and ensures that these efforts are not just a passing trend.
6. Have zero tolerance for hate speech and very clear disciplinary actions for what will be done when microaggressions and racial bullying occurs at work. Make sure these policies are published on your website. If you find there are complaints from employees, look into training options to help employees better understand what language and talking points might be considered offensive and how microaggression affects their co-workers and neighbors.

Respectfully,

Alicia J. Keyes

Cabinet Secretary

New Mexico Economic Development Department