

Presbytery of Baltimore Policy on Mandatory Dismantling Racism Training

Revised Policy Approved at 889th Presbytery Gathering on November 14, 2020

Be it resolved that the Presbytery of Baltimore adopts the following policies and procedures to be referenced in the Manual of the Presbytery of Baltimore and appended as the “Presbytery of Baltimore Dismantling Racism Policy”:

1. The Presbytery makes a commitment to offer, provide resources for, and to publicize educational opportunities that focus on dismantling racism within ourselves, our church institutions (Presbytery and congregations) and the communities we serve. The Presbytery intends to provide a training that is both didactic and experiential to incorporate the following elements and concepts:
 - A theological grounding for this work
 - Our local Maryland and Baltimore history, including Presbyterian church history
 - Core concepts of institutionalized racism and its manifestation at the individual level
 - An awareness of the impact of church policies and decisions on people of color
 - Tools and strategies to develop anti-racist behavior and culture within our church life

2. Dismantling Racism is an on-going commitment in which members of the Presbytery and other designated individuals outlined below agree to complete at least one day of training (or its equivalent) every three years. The Dismantling Racism Team is responsible for providing a foundational anti-racism training at least annually for those who are new to the Presbytery. In subsequent years, participants may choose from several options approved by the Dismantling Racism Team to meet this requirement, including both educational events and experiential learning through community engagement. This requirement applies to the following groups and individuals:
 - All Active Teaching Elders are required to attend Baltimore Presbytery’s educational program on Dismantling Racism, within one year after their arrival. For Teaching Elders serving churches, failure to fulfill this requirement within the specified time will result in unpaid administrative leave until it is completed. This requirement will be included in the terms of call. Notation of their participation will be made in their permanent file. The Presbytery of Baltimore will communicate to Pastoral Nominating Committees and presbyteries who are requesting references on the status of candidates with respect to this requirement. Teaching Elders serving outside the bounds of the Presbytery may be exempted by the Commission on Ministry.
 - Commissioned Lay Pastors must meet the same educational requirements as Teaching Elders beginning within in one year of their commission.
 - Ruling Elders elected to serve on the Commission on Ministry (COM) and the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) are required to participate in a training within one year of being elected to COM or CPM and additional training at least once for every three-year term served.

- All Candidates for Ministry are required to attend a Dismantling Racism training or similar training (approved by the Presbytery). In the event that the timing or location of a training is not feasible, the candidate may work with CPM to determine an alternative means to meet this requirement.
 - All Presbytery staff is required to attend within one year of hire/election.
3. The Presbytery strongly encourages honorably retired teaching elders, ruling elders serving in leadership roles in the Presbytery, session members and other congregational leaders to participate in such trainings. Likewise, the Moderator-elect of the Presbytery is strongly urged to attend a training within one year of election.

4. Proposed Training Schedule

The Presbytery will offer at least one foundational Dismantling Racism training every year based on demand and will provide additional opportunities to meet the continuing education requirement. The Dismantling Racism Team will present an annual plan to the Commission on Reconciliation for their approval.

5. Training Administration & Oversight

This policy will be administered by the Commission on Reconciliation who shall provide oversight of the Dismantling Racism Training Team and authorize the hiring of training consultants. The Commission is responsible for reviewing follow-up reports from training participants and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the trainings.

The Dismantling Racism Training Team is considered a Special Committee of the Commission on Reconciliation and is responsible for developing the training curriculum, identifying trainers and coordinating the training events. The Commission shall appoint the members of the Team who shall make regular reports to the Commission on their activities.

The office of the Stated Clerk is responsible for ensuring notation of TE and CLP participation is made in their permanent files and notifying them of compliance deadlines. The Presbytery of Baltimore will communicate to Pastoral Nominating Committees and presbyteries who are requesting references on the status of candidates with respect to this requirement.

The Social Justice Consultant will serve as staff support to the Team.

6. Provision for Training Evaluation & Policy Review

The Dismantling Racism Team will conduct evaluations with past participants and present findings to the Commission Reconciliation at least once a year.

This revised policy is based on the evaluation of the Commission on Reconciliation and report of the Dismantling Racism Team as required in the original policy adopted on September 13, 2018. Future revisions may be presented to the Commission on Reconciliation who is responsible for bringing them to the full Presbytery for action.

7. Funding

The Presbytery shall designate funding in the Presbytery Budget in order to ensure that required participants can attend at minimal expense to the individual or congregation. Participants who cancel the day of the training or fail to complete the workshop may be asked to reimburse the Presbytery for the cost of the training or pay the full cost for future registrations.

The Presbytery will offer a sliding scale registration fee to help offset the cost to the Presbytery and allow for greater participation among other leaders in the Presbytery and its congregations.