



Executive Order 2022-6

August 25, 2022

Recognizing and Apologizing for the City of Providence's Role in Discriminatory Practices and Policies

WHEREAS, on March 29, 2021 Mayor Elorza joined local historians and community members to unveil the Truth-Telling report, "A Matter of Truth," which included a comprehensive analysis of the role of the City of Providence and State of Rhode Island in supporting a "separate and unequal" existence for African heritage, Indigenous, and people of color; and

WHEREAS, the report outlined the extent of the manipulation of race as a means of controlling enslaved individuals of African heritage and the role of institutions and lawmakers in perpetuating discriminatory and racist policies; and

WHEREAS, on August 22, 2022 the Providence Municipal Reparations Commission submitted a report to the City of Providence with recommendations for an 11-Point Investment Plan, comprised of reparative justice recommendations that take a broad view of Providence history and consequences and translate them into a series of programs and policies that can bring immediate opportunity and equity to Providence residents of greatest need; and

WHEREAS, among recommendations includes an acknowledgement of harm, including a formal municipal apology for African enslavement, urban renewal policies and practices and acknowledgement of the harms to African Heritage and Indigenous communities caused by racial discrimination; and

WHEREAS, only by formally apologizing and acknowledging the generational effects of discriminatory policies, bringing those impacted to the table as decision-makers, and making significant investments in the communities targeted by those policies, can we collectively move forward and each of us become full and equal members of our society.

NOW THEREFORE, do I, Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor of the City of Providence, hereby accept responsibility for the City of Providence's role in discriminatory practices and policies including:

1. The City of Providence recognizes and apologizes for its role in discriminatory practices, including lack of equal access to public education, voting rights and general civil rights that led to the subjugation, enslavement, de-tribalization, death, and control of African Heritage and Indigenous people in past and present day.
2. The City of Providence recognizes and apologizes for the act committed immediately after the King Philip's War during a town meeting held in Providence on August 14, 1676, led by Roger Williams, Thomas Harris, Thomas Angell, Thomas Field, and John Whipple, Jr. where the group voted to dispose of the surviving and captured Indigenous people of the town, with many transferred into slavery in the West Indies.
3. The City of Providence recognizes and apologizes for the lack of intervention in the destruction of African Heritage and Indigenous neighborhoods and communities in Providence, as evidenced in part by the Hardscrabble Riot of October 1824 and the Snowtown Riot of September 1831.
4. The City of Providence recognizes and apologizes for the deep-rooted systemic oppression and harm of African Heritage and Indigenous families through a deliberate lack of public assistance as evidenced by supporting red-lining policies, warning out laws, and discriminatory application of the 1934 Federal Housing Administration Act.



5. The City of Providence recognizes and apologizes for the miseducation of African Heritage and Indigenous youth through the segregation of schools.
6. The City of Providence recognizes and apologizes for its role in enforcing unjust policies that led to disproportionate incarceration, police use of force, family destabilization, and restriction of employment prospects.
7. The City of Providence accepts ownership of the harms these wrongdoing have and continue to cause, commits to learning from these past wrongdoings, and will move forward in actively preventing such events from ever happening again by:
 - a. Formally establishing the African American Ambassadors Group as a permanent entity to protect, uplift, celebrate, and empower the African American community in Providence.
 - b. Advancing recommendations provided by the Providence Municipal Reparations Commission and dedicating \$10,000,000 of Providence American Rescue Plan funds to reparations, as defined by the Commission as "closing the present-day racial wealth and equity gap."
 - c. Continue to actively pursue new funding opportunities to address these past and ongoing injustices.

This executive order shall remain in full effect until it is repealed.

So Ordered:

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor