

**Statement to the Board of Selectmen on institutional racism in the Brookline work force  
Commission for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations  
Town of Brookline, MA, January 4, 2016**

Deivered orally by the commission chair on January 5, 2016

The Board of Selectmen, as an institution of Town government, has allowed a culture of institutional racism to exist through its past hiring practices. As an example, in the history of the Town's existence there have been [only] two department heads who are people of color.

In the past five years the Town has allowed a firefighter who, without dispute, used the N-word, to be promoted to a supervisory position. And the culture that such actions foster has led to situations which have brought us here today.

The Commission for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations calls upon you, as the elected leaders of this Town, to exercise your responsibilities and duties, as commissioners of the police and fire departments, as the elected representatives of this Town, to stamp out this culture. There must not be a delay.

You must act with expedience. There is a history in this Town of not taking actions on these matters in a timely manner. You must not repeat this history. This is a matter of extreme urgency, which the Board of Selectmen needs to address with actions, not words, now.