

Q&A from the Community Conversations for an Inclusive Arvada

Overview

On Sept. 30 and Oct. 8, 2020, the City of Arvada hosted remote public meetings, called Community Conversations for an Inclusive Arvada. These conversations served as part of its ongoing commitment to listening to the community's views on diversity, equity and inclusion, and taking positive steps to help make Arvada an even more inclusive and welcoming place.

During the meetings, community members provided feedback and asked questions of the City team. Although some of the questions were answered during the event, several were not, and the City has compiled this set of answers and updates to share with the community.

Community Questions

Can we work on dual language signage?

The City has a contract with Cesco Linguistic Services, Inc. to request translation and interpretation services. Dual language signage would go through the Communications team.

The city should publically address it's dark history with the KKK which was not that long ago (cross-burnings in the 1970s downtown!). Not trying to erase history - How do we acknowledge it, denounce it, and invest in the communities who were and are affected by that history?

In response to requests by our community, the City removed an interpretive panel from near St. Anne's Church that conveyed a history of Ku Klux Klan activities in Arvada, including the depiction of a group of Klan members. We appreciate those who voiced concerns and the opportunity to continue efforts to help everyone feel safe and welcome in our public spaces. As a part of a next step, the City is in the early stages of creating a History Master Plan, which includes how to share this part of our history. The City will work with partners and our community to identify how to tell our story in a respectful and inclusive manner.

What is the city doing to dismantle white supremacy?

The City is partnering with the Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE) which uses a "lead with race" approach. We are investigating doing an internal assessment of our organization through GARE, and looking at best practices to examine city processes and

policies to be more inclusive. Additionally, key members of our organization are going through GARE training that specifically examines the role governments play in dismantling institutional and systemic racism.

What are your statistics, Chief Strate, on how your officers arrest or pull over a statistically higher percentage of traditionally marginalized communities? Implicit bias trainings are great. But what is that data that proves it works?

If you would like to reach out to our Internal Affairs office we will provide you with that information. You can contact me at link-s@arvada.org or Sgt Thome at bthome@arvada.org.

I love this detailed talk on DEI provided by the city of Arvada but I want to know what the action plan is for Arvada to bring about change and implement DEI practices?

We as a City government have a responsibility to engage with our community on these topics to ensure our solutions are right for our community. Our DEI Committee is working with GARE for additional guidance on how best to move forward in partnership with our community.

Are there city-organized community outreach committees that are specifically focused on reaching out & identifying needs within minority groups in Arvada?

The City has hired a team of Community Connectors on three major projects (Healthy Places, Community Visioning, and the 2020 Census) to focus specifically on engaging our underserved populations to better understand their needs. Several of those Community Connectors conducted outreach within Russian and Spanish speaking communities.

Are city meetings & resources available in Spanish?

The City has a contract with Cesco Linguistic Services, Inc. to request translation and interpretation services and is starting to use their services more widely across the organization. Our online community engagement platform, Speak Up Arvada, has a translation feature to be more accessible to community members of different language backgrounds.

I think the city has to be honest about its history, not hiding where it has failed in the past. How can we focus on addressing those issues and what would reparations/restorative justice look like? I think we could have a task force to address that as well. And do we know of a timeline on that creation?

The City has a City Council Strategic Result to create a History Master Plan by 12/2021 which will require an inclusive approach to telling our community's history. Additionally,

the City is supportive of grassroots efforts by the community to identify what steps are important to them.

Does the city work with schools in terms of minority outreach?

The City has worked with Family Engagement Liaisons at several Arvada schools for additional engagement opportunities with underrepresented communities. Jeffco Schools has counselors and support staff to work with students/families including Native American, homeless and lower income families. Jeffco Schools Community Diversity Advisory Council - [open membership here](#).

Is it ok if I tell the Arvada Chamber some of the feedback you all gave about supporting BIPOC businesses? I am a member of the Chamber and I'd love to raise that voice with your permission.

Yes. They had a few representatives on the call but would benefit from additional reminders that there is interest to support BIPOC community members with businesses.

I have observed members of the Arvada Police CORE team (officers Hall and Brownlow most recently at the Rising) interact with our homeless population. It's clear that they are well-trained to deal with those who may be in a precarious emotional state. I want to commend them. I hope that similar levels of training and understanding are part of the culture on implicit racism and bias for non-CORE Arvada Police team members.

Thank you for your question. All APD officers have been trained on topics ranging from overt discrimination (e.g., profiling) to more subtle forms of bias (e.g., implicit bias and micro-aggression). They have been trained to understand that certain cognitive biases may impact personal interactions with others. They have been trained on specific forms of bias, including gender-, disability-, race-, religious-, ethnic-, and LGBTQIA-based biases. They have also been trained on the many negative social impacts of bias-based policing, as well as the legal ramifications of unconstitutional police actions. Among the APD's goals in requiring ongoing, comprehensive non-biased policing training are to create awareness of different types of bias, and to make employees aware of the role bias may play in our society, especially in the criminal justice system.