



**BUILD A BETTER
GRINNELL**

Priority Need Report

Less Racism

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Executive Summary

- *Less racism* was ranked as the #6 priority in the community needs prioritization survey. Grinnell College students ranked the issue as #1, and non-college students who identified as a racial or ethnic category other than only White ranked it as #3.
- Grinnell is a predominantly White community. Nearly 88% of the population is White and neither Hispanic nor Latino, compared to 58.4% for the US. Most of this diversity is likely composed of students at Grinnell College. While total ethnic and racial diversity in the public school system has remained relatively steady since 2017, the number of English language learners has risen significantly.
- A rise in racial tensions at the national level in 2020 and a series of local racist incidents in 2022 led to significant tension for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) students at the college and efforts to respond across the community.
- In addition to the egregious macroaggressions of 2022, college students report occasional racial harassment and regular microaggressions both on and off campus. Racial harassment and racist incidents were also reported as occurring regularly in the public school system.
- Participants reported that racism takes a heavy emotional toll, including stress, feeling isolated and unwelcome, and being fearful for one's safety. Some students are too afraid or uncomfortable to leave campus, and some BIPOC community members have moved their families out of town.
- Participants believe that the primary underlying causes to explain racism in the community include: 1) cultural differences and associated miscommunication, misunderstandings, stereotypes, and sometimes fear or antagonism; 2) lack of interactions and communication between people of different racial and cultural groups, reinforced by a Grinnell College "bubble;" 3) lack of awareness in terms of what is offensive, when an offense has been given, and how common racism is in the community, driven in part by a lack of discussion of race or racism; 4) anger, fear, and resentment; and 5) insufficient efforts to address concerns over racism and racist incidents.
- Suggestions by research participants for addressing racism in the community included: 1) collecting and disseminating more data on racist incidents, representation, and actions; 2) having greater accountability of those who commit racist acts; 3) finding more ways to welcome and celebrate diversity in the community; 4) increasing and normalizing discussions about race within the community; 5) providing more education and training to raise awareness, prepare bystanders, teach Grinnell's history, and prepare teachers, college faculty, and staff; 6) educating College students about Grinnell and its culture; 7) getting people from different racial and ethnic groups involved with one another and building understanding through greater interactions, including sitting down, having conversations, and asking questions; and 8) providing more systems of support for racial and ethnic minorities, including reporting systems, safety measures, and resources. Organization and leadership were suggested as key to achieving many of the suggested policies and actions.
- A range of organizations were identified as being potentially important to improving the situation, basically including the entire community, but particularly the city's public institutions, the college, churches, businesses, and service organizations and foundations.
- One comment that was repeated multiple times across sessions was that the primary responsibility should not be on the BIPOC community.
- Many noted that the community has a strong history of mutual support in times of need, regardless of social and cultural divisions. Most of the community and businesses strongly support the students and reject racism. The City and Police department responded clearly and firmly to the incidents of 2020 and 2022, and there have already been some efforts to organize and collaborate across multiple key institutions. There are many institutions and organizations poised to be involved.

Background, Purpose & Scope

Build a Better Grinnell 2030 Project

This Prioritized Issue Report represents one product of the non-partisan Build a Better Grinnell 2030 Community Visioning project (or BABG 2030). The broader project has involved an assessment of Grinnell's strengths, needs and visions for people who live and work in the community, or rely on resources within Grinnell, through a collaborative approach focusing on community input and engagement. The project's ultimate goals include:

- Building community pride and facilitating positive branding by identifying community strengths
- Enhancing organizational connections and community cohesion and building a commitment to action around a set of priorities through a collaborative and broadly participatory process
- Facilitating community growth and development for the next decade by identifying and illuminating the local context of a prioritized set of needs, together with community assets and policy options that are actionable, impactful, and easy to understand

BABG 2030 is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge program. Co-funding is provided by the City of Grinnell, Grinnell Mutual, Grinnell College, and the Claude & Dolly Ahrens Foundation. The project is guided by a 20+ person steering committee representing a broad range of local constituents and community members.

The BABG research has taken place in three main phases, all involving significant community input: 1) an identification of the range of assets, strengths, and needs in the community; 2) selection of seven priority needs; and 3) a deeper assessment of each of the prioritized needs. The methodology is discussed in greater detail under the methodology section. The main products of this research will include:

- A broad-based assessment of Grinnell. This document will cover a broad range of themes and community services (e.g., healthcare, childcare, aging, food, housing, recreation, education, etc.), providing an overview of community strengths, assets, and needs.
- A community-based identification and prioritization of needs.
- Detailed assessments of each of seven top prioritized issues

The Prioritized Issue Reports

The seven needs prioritized by the community were, in order:

1. More variety of restaurants.
2. Improve quality of drinking water.
3. Improve k-12 buildings and infrastructure.
4. Improve or expand mental health care services.
5. Improve roads & road maintenance.
6. Less racism.
7. Higher wages or lower prices.

This document represents the detailed assessment for *Less Racism*.

What this Report Is, and What it Is Not

Our primary goal with this report is to provide the community with information to help stakeholders make informed choices and address the prioritized need. At its core, this is a participatory community-based needs assessment. It is an effort to bring in diverse voices of persons who live, work, or rely on Grinnell for resources, together with input from individuals who have worked in the community to service the needs in question or otherwise might be considered experts. Our goal in seeking community-wide input is both to empower community members to participate in community development, as well as to better understand the experiences surrounding each identified need, how the need affects members of the community, what underlying causes people see leading to the issue, the obstacles they personally face and that the broader community may face in resolving the issue or ameliorating its impacts, ideas they have for what can and should be done, and what they see as strengths and assets in the community that may contribute to solutions.

The goal of this report is not to answer each of these questions definitively. In some ways the core of this report reflects the results of a community-wide brainstorming session (e.g., where everyone in a room shares ideas on Post-it notes that all go on a board and are then organized by themes). The review of problems, impacts, causes, and solutions are provided from the perspective of members of the community, not the research team nor the project steering community. We have sought to gather input broadly from the community, particularly from those who may not frequently have a voice in decision making, and to share that input here. We believe that listening to and giving voice to such community members is valuable in itself and can be a means to solve problems. To highlight this value, we share the following vignette. At the end of one focus group hosted by a low-income community member in her home, she used our provided script to ask if there was anything else the participants wanted to add. One responded, “I’m just grateful to be able to, to be allowed to participate, that maybe my opinion matters.”

As is good practice in brainstorming sessions, we have not attempted to edit or filter input, nor are we trying to be arbiters of whose ideas are correct or not. Rather we have gathered lots of ideas and sorted them into themes. We do attempt to make note when there are contradictory views, or when there are clear factual inaccuracies. However, we believe it is valuable to represent all the voices who shared their ideas with us. Experiences differ, perspectives differ, even experts can disagree on underlying causes, and there are usually multiple possible solutions to any problem. Additionally, people make decisions on how they understand a situation, so even if all experts agree that some perspective represents a misunderstanding, knowing what the misunderstandings are and how common they are can be valuable to decision makers. Also, we expect that those who take on these issues will have expertise at the table.

While the experiences and ideas shared by members of the community is the core of the report, we also share additional information to help decision makers reach their own conclusions about what part of the problem might be addressed and how. This includes an overview of the current Grinnell context related to the prioritized issue in terms of relevant infrastructure and resources, key measures, historical information, key inflection points, and ongoing efforts, as well as comparisons to a selected group of peer communities. In most cases we have also sought to provide our own input (making it clear when this is the case) to the community asset list when we have identified relevant organizations or other assets that did not come up in interviews, surveys, or community sessions. Finally, we provide some information on policy options pursued in other communities, and assets available outside of the community (e.g., funding resources or resource hubs), though these are not intended as endorsements.

Who is this Report for?

Each issue report is intended for those organizations and individuals interested in addressing some aspect of the issue or well positioned to do so. The Build a Better Grinnell Steering Committee plans to help as necessary to bring such persons together to discuss the findings and consider next steps, though any group is welcome and encouraged to make use of the findings of this report.

In most cases, multiple action priorities can be identified with a diverse range of possible solutions for each issue. It is possible that a single well-positioned group or organization will elect to take on all priorities related to a single issue. It is also possible that different groups will tackle different action priorities and possible solutions. It is possible that only one or a limited number of action priorities will be taken on. It is possible that new coalitions or interest groups will form to take on issues with no other “home,” or alternatively with many possible homes. In the spirit of community-based development, we hope that members of the community most impacted by these issues will continue to be included in decision making in ways that positively inform the details of action plans. While we provide a review of community input below, we mostly review the challenges or concerns that exist under current systems, not potential ones. Users of the services in question can provide valuable insight.

How to Use the Data

The experiences on the nature of the problem and its impacts or consequences should help to understand where some of the key areas of concern are within each of the broader issues. Those sections of the report address who is affected and how. Causes or obstacles that people have identified can be looked at as possible intervention points suggesting areas for solutions. These, together with community members’ specific suggestions for solutions as well as policy options tried elsewhere, provide a range of ideas.

In considering what ideas to pursue, one might start by considering which of the impacts or problem areas should be prioritized, and what causes or solutions relate most closely to those. A policy analysis approach is to start with a specific problem or part of the problem, identify a number of possible solutions (evidence-based or community generated), and then compare the options in terms of key criteria such as cost, feasibility (could this approach be used in Grinnell given things like available infrastructure and the political or cultural climate), and efficacy (if the solution could be implemented, how much of the problem is it likely to solve). This weighing of options can benefit from considering the resources and strengths available in the community or those that could be brought to the community that might support different solutions. Those making use of the document should also apply their own understanding and experience of the community. Another strategy is to apply force-field analysis, which considers what the forces are both in favor and against a particular solution, and considering how forces in favor might be strengthened and forces against diminished to enable action.

In each section where we report on community input, we provide data on the number of community sessions, interviews, and surveys in which an idea was identified. Such counts can be useful for getting a sense of where there is consensus on who is affected and how and may indicate good areas for intervention. Relatively high counts may also indicate areas where there is consensus on obstacles and possible solutions.

We suggest thoughtful caution on how much weight is given to the “counts.” Much of the detail in this report is gained from the listening sessions and focus groups. These are very useful for gaining a sense of the diversity of concerns, experiences, and ideas. They are also useful in getting people to talk to one another. They do not serve, however, as a random or representative survey. Not everyone participates equally, and just because an issue isn’t raised in a session doesn’t mean that no one agrees with it or is thinking about it. The potential of bias decreases some the more sessions that are held. Still, something raised in 10 sessions is not necessarily more common or important than something raised in 8. Additionally, just because something was raised in many sessions doesn’t mean that it was more impactful than something raised only by a few persons. Also, minority opinions are not necessarily less valuable in considering solutions. Innovation often reflects a change from the consensus view on how to do something. This is not to suggest that the counts are not useful, just that they should not be used to apply too much nuance and should be considered with other factors in mind. It is up to those who organize to take action to review the data provided and decide what solutions seem most important and probable given the totality of evidence.

Methods

Research was conducted through three primary phases, though some of the data collection (particularly gathering archival materials and key stakeholder interviews) has continued over the entire research period.

Phase I: The Community Visioning Survey

A community-wide visioning survey ran from December '22 through March '23 and asked individuals who live or work in Grinnell, or rely on Grinnell for key resources, twelve open-ended questions concerning what they felt were the strengths and needs in the community. An English and Spanish language version were created. In total, 603 surveys were completed, and 120 additional individuals provided a response to a single question posed on Facebook or in person. Since many surveys were taken by groups (as large as 15-20 people), it is impossible to know precisely how many participated in total, but the research team feels confident that it was over 10% of the Grinnell population.

To process the data from the open-ended surveys, the research teams sorted responses into general categories (e.g., healthcare, or things to do) and then identified and organized data into sub-categories (e.g., more mental healthcare services, more community events). There were many cases in which the same distinct response was only provided by a few people. Rather than creating hundreds of sub-categories, we looked for ways to group many of these responses together under a shared theme. For example, individuals asking for Indian, Thai, Vegetarian, or a wide range of restaurants were all grouped together under “greater variety of restaurants.”

Subcategories that reflected more than 1% of all responses or had a high number of very specific responses (e.g., events for teens or teen hangout spaces) were selected to move forward to a prioritization phase. Forty-six issues were identified in the open-ended survey. The data from phase one is available at www.buildabettergrinnell.org.

Phase II: Prioritization Phase

Our next step was to determine which of the forty-six issues were most important for those who live, work, or rely on Grinnell for resources. The follow-up *Needs Prioritization Survey* asked individuals to select and rank up to seven issues. The survey also asked for demographic data so we could better determine who was most affected by the range of issues, and we invited individuals to provide their contact information if they were willing to participate in follow-up focus group on the prioritized issues. It was launched on May 9, 2023, and closed on July 16. We distributed the survey widely, promoted it frequently over ten weeks, and received 1270 complete surveys from individuals. The racial and ethnic demographic profile of those completing the survey is shown in Table 1 below¹.

¹ Because this report focuses on race and ethnicity, we are only providing that demographic data here. More detail can be found on the Build a Better Grinnell website (www.buildabettergrinnell.org).

Table 1. Race/Ethnicity Self-Identification²

	Respondents excluding Grinnell College Students (N=883)		All Respondents (N=1274)		City of Grinnell ³ Demographic Profile
	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses	Percent of Population
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	796	90.15%	1010	79.28%	87.8
Black or African American Alone	10	1.13%	26	2.04%	2.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	2	.23%	3	.23%	0.0%
Asian Alone	13	1.47%	91	7.14%	4.2%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander Alone	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Two or more Races	17	1.92%	53	4.16%	3.3%
Prefer not to say or Left Blank	28	3.17%	38	2.90%	
Other	10	1.13%	35	2.75%	
Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino Origin (Any Race)	16	1.81%	62	4.87%	3.5%

We identified the top choices for a range of demographic groupings using a rank-order voting method. This data, as well as additional details on the methodology is available on www.buildabettergrinnell.org. The top five issues to follow through to phase three were determined by taking the top two issues identified by lower-income respondents and the next three issues from all respondents.⁴ The method and the selection process were determined and publicized prior to distributing the survey. Our definition of lower income corresponded roughly to Iowa’s definition for use with Medicaid eligibility (varying by household size).

² Individuals had the opportunity to enter multiple racial categories. Here we provide data for racial categories when only one was selected. If multiple categories were selected, we record the response here as two or more. The “Spanish, Hispanic or Latino” category was a separate question, as with the US census.

³ Based on 2020 Census Data. “QuickFacts, Grinnell city, Iowa,” US Census Bureau, Accessed July 7, 2024, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/grinnellcityiowa/DIS010220>.; Totals of race/ethnic categories may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

⁴ Grinnell College student responses were multiplied by .3 to weight their responses relative to their population as a proportion of Poweshiek County.

The top five issues identified through the prioritization survey are:

1. Improve Quality of Drinking Water
2. More Variety of Restaurants
3. Improve K-12 Buildings and Infrastructure
4. Improve or Expand Mental Health Care Services
5. Improve Roads and Road Maintenance

The steering committee selected the final two issues to move to the next stages from among those highly ranked needs that did not make the top five through the prioritization survey. The committee took into consideration issues of equity and the overall welfare of the community, as well as what other initiatives are already underway in the community. The two issues selected were:

6. Less Racism
7. Higher Wages or Lower Prices

There were other issues that steering committee members discussed as important concerns for the community, particularly those affecting lower-income families, such as affordable housing and childcare. *Higher wages or lower prices* was seen by many as a good final pick because it was ranked third by lower-income individuals and seventh by all respondents. It was also seen as a potentially good way to hear more from those members of the community with financial challenges about what issues were most important.

Phase III: Community Sessions (Listening Sessions, Focus Groups, and Community Hosted Discussions)

The final research phase focused on gaining more detailed information from the community to better understand the prioritized issue. This was done primarily through community listening sessions, focus groups, and community hosted discussions.

We scheduled one listening session and three focus groups each month between late September and mid-December 2023, for twelve sessions total. We frequently advertised these throughout the community, and specifically reached out to individuals who provided contact information and indicated an interest in participating in this stage in the prioritization survey. Listening sessions were all held in public spaces in the Grinnell's Drake Community Library and open to the public on a walk-in basis. Focus groups were also primarily scheduled for the library,⁵ were limited to 6 participants, and required signing up. Attendees at these were paid. We also hired six individuals from lower-income households to conduct up to seven focus groups each (one on each issue) with their friends and family. We provided funding for a meal for the group and left it up to them how many and which issues they elected to address.

For *less racism*, we had 8 sessions in total, including 6 focus groups and 2 listening sessions, with an average of 4-5 persons each. Initially, we planned to hold all focus groups at the Drake Community Library, publicizing them broadly to the community as a whole. During our first two rounds (three groups scheduled for each), we were only able to gain a group for three focus groups. We then held the last three sessions at Grinnell College and did additional recruiting through campus channels and gained strong attendance at each, with primarily, though not exclusively, students. After two listening sessions, each with a small group in attendance, there were no attendees at the final session. None of our hired community discussion hosts elected to discuss the issue during their sessions. Most sessions ranged from three to five attendees.

⁵ Some other arrangements were made when in the interest of scheduled participants for some issues.

At all sessions, participants were asked to share their experiences and identify what they saw as the nature of the problem, its impacts on their lives, their thoughts on why it exists, what obstacles are faced in addressing it (for them and the community more broadly), their ideas for possible solutions, and strengths and resources in the community that might be helpful. A full list of questions used to guide these is provided in Appendix 4.

In listening sessions, all participants were given an opportunity to respond to each question. The goal was to give everyone a chance to contribute what they would like, but it is not required that they respond at all. Focus groups are generally intended to be more dynamic. A list of questions served as a guide, but participants were also encouraged to have a conversation, and the sessions were given more flexibility to explore directions that might not have been foreseen by the facilitator. Because attendance was typically not too large at the listening sessions (under a dozen for each), these often had more of a character of a focus group with discussion amongst members.

Focus groups have weaknesses and strengths as a research tool. They are not intended to get every participant to respond in detail to every question. They cannot be used in the same way as a detailed questionnaire where we can generate a random sample and have statistically valid conclusions about a population. They are very useful for fleshing out a range of experiences and ideas on a topic, somewhat like a brainstorming session, particularly taken in their totality (i.e., across a handful of sessions, lots of ideas get raised). Thus, after a set of focus groups, a researcher usually will have a good sense of the right questions to ask for a questionnaire and the range of possible responses, but they would not necessarily be accurate in determining whether there might be a statistically significant difference in how a population responds to the questions. Focus groups can help to understand when there is a broader cultural understanding of an issue (e.g., shared ideas about it), and what the cultural norms or shared ideas are. This is in part because they are useful in getting people to talk to one another about an issue, creating a context for group analysis where an idea can be more fully explored and where new ideas or understandings may be generated.

Sessions were recorded, transcribed, and then individually coded using the overarching questions to sort responses and identify recurring themes and unique perspectives.

Interviews with Local Experts and Key Stakeholders


Early in the research process, before identifying the prioritized issues, we held over seventy interviews with individuals involved in a range of community services and community development. The goal was to gain input from a broad mix of community leaders and experts from a range of content areas (e.g., arts and entertainment, business, health, education, etc.). Each interview primarily focused on understanding the community needs, ongoing efforts, and assets related to that area. These were largely intended to inform the project's broader, but less detailed, community assessment. During each interview, individuals were also asked more generally to comment on what they saw as key needs in the community and recent successful or promising community development efforts. Detailed notes or transcriptions were generated from every interview.

After identifying the community priorities, the interviews were reviewed for any mention concerning each prioritized issue by using a range of search terms (including word bases) associated with the issue (e.g., race, racism, Black, Asian, immigrant, minority, slur, White, confederate, DEI, diversity, welcome). All relevant information was extracted and coded into themes similarly to the community session data. The list of all organizations interviewed is provided below. Those that focused specifically or mostly on racism or the experience of racial/ethnic minorities are bolded.

- Bayer Crop Science
- Capstone Behavioral Health (multiple)
- Central Iowa Community Services (CICS) Grinnell Iowa
- City of Grinnell (Multiple)
- Claude W. and Dolly Ahrens Foundation (multiple)
- **Community Support for Immigrants (CoSi)**
- Davis Elementary
- Door of Hope
- Drake Community Library
- First Presbyterian Church
- Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation (multiple)
- Grinnell Area Arts Council
- Grinnell Area Chamber of Commerce
- Grinnell Area Mental Health Consortium-JPK Fund
- Grinnell City Council
- Grinnell Community Early Learning Center
- Grinnell Counseling
- **Grinnell College (multiple, including staff involved with DEI and working closely with BIPOC and international students)**
- Grinnell Christian Church
- Grinnell Fire Department
- Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance
- Grinnell-Newburg School District (multiple)
- Grinnell Parks and Recreation
- Grinnell Police Department
- Grinnell School of Music/Studio E
- Grinnell State Bank
- Healthy Homes Family Services, Int. Mental Health Counseling
- Hey Grinnell Did You Know (Facebook)
- Imagine Grinnell
- KGRN Radio
- Iowa Kitchen
- Link Grinnell
- Mayflower Community
- Mid Iowa Community Action (MICA)
- Poweshiek County Emergency Management
- Prairie Lakes Church
- Region 6/People Rides
- Rotary Club
- SeaJae Properties
- Total Choice Shipping and Printing
- United Way Grinnell College
- UnityPoint Health
- **Welcoming Communities**

Review of Archives (Web and Paper)

Throughout the research process, we gathered and reviewed all nature of documents we could find associated with community development and assessments in general and a range of content areas common to comprehensive community assessments, and specifically related to the prioritized issues (once identified), through literature searches and requests to key stakeholders in the community. These materials were primarily used to produce the *Race, Racism, and Anti-Racism Efforts in Grinnell Iowa* section below. They were also reviewed for mentions of concerns and needs, as well as assets.



To the extent possible, we also gathered data from four peer communities selected by the steering community (Decorah, Fairfield, Pella, and Waverly) to better understand Grinnell's relative strengths and weaknesses as well as to look at how those communities may have addressed similar issues (Decorah, Fairfield, Pella, and Waverly). Once gaining a clearer sense of the nature of the issue from focus groups, we also looked for ideas for possible solutions from communities around the country, focusing on ones like Grinnell, as well as other non-local potential assets and resources (e.g., organizations and funding).

Review of the Visioning Survey and Prioritization Survey

Once the prioritized issues were identified, we returned to both earlier surveys. For the open-ended visioning survey, we went back to look in detail at every mention (using a handful of key words) to identify what, beyond "less racism" was noted. All responses were extracted and coded similarly to community session data. Finally, we pulled information from the prioritization survey to show how different demographic groups ranked the issue.



Race, Racism, and Anti-Racism Efforts in Grinnell, Iowa

Grinnell's Demographics

As Table 2 shows, relative to the US population and the population of Iowa, Grinnell has little racial and ethnic diversity, while relative to its four selected Iowa peer communities, Grinnell is average. Nearly 88% of Grinnell's population is White and neither Hispanic or Latino, compared to 58.4% for the US and 82.7% for Iowa. The largest racial or ethnic groups in Grinnell include Asians (4.2%), followed by Hispanic or Latinos of any race (3.5%), persons of two or more races (3.3%), and Black or African Americans (2.2%). Additionally, as Table 3 shows, approximately 5.1% of the Grinnell population are foreign born,⁶ and 7.4% of persons over the age of five speak a language other than English in the home.

Table 2: Race and Hispanic Origin Demographics in Grinnell and its Peer Communities⁷

	Grinnell	Decorah	Fairfield	Pella	Waverly	Iowa ⁸	US ⁹
Population	9,564	7,587	9,416	10,464	10,394	3.19 million	331.45 million
White Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino	87.8%	92.2%	75.4%	92.9%	89.7%	82.7%	58.4%
Black or African American Alone	2.2%	1.1%	7.9%	0.7%	2.9%	4.14%	13.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.2%	0.4%	.45%	1.3%
Asian Alone	4.2%	1.4%	8.7%	1.5%	1.7%	2.37%	6.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.18%	0.3%
Two or More Races	3.3%	2.5%	3.6%	2.2%	4.0%	5.62%	3.1%
Hispanic or Latino (Any Race)	3.5%	3.2%	4.6%	3.1%	3.4%	6.77%	19.5%
Approx # of Non-White or Hispanic or Latino Residents ¹⁰	1167	592	2316	743	1071	551,870	137.88 million

⁶ Anyone not a citizen at birth. Could be a naturalized citizen or non-citizen.

⁷ Based on 2020 Census Data. "QuickFacts, Grinnell city, Iowa," US Census Bureau, Accessed July 7, 2024, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/grinnellcityiowa/DIS010220>.; Totals of race/ethnic categories may not add up to 100 due to rounding. Race/ethnicity of foreign-born persons is included in race/ethnicity categories. Grinnell College population is included in census data.

⁸ "QuickFacts, Grinnell city, Iowa...", Accessed July 5, 24. Includes 2.78% some other race alone.

⁹ "QuickFacts United States," US Census Bureau, Accessed July 5, 2024, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>.

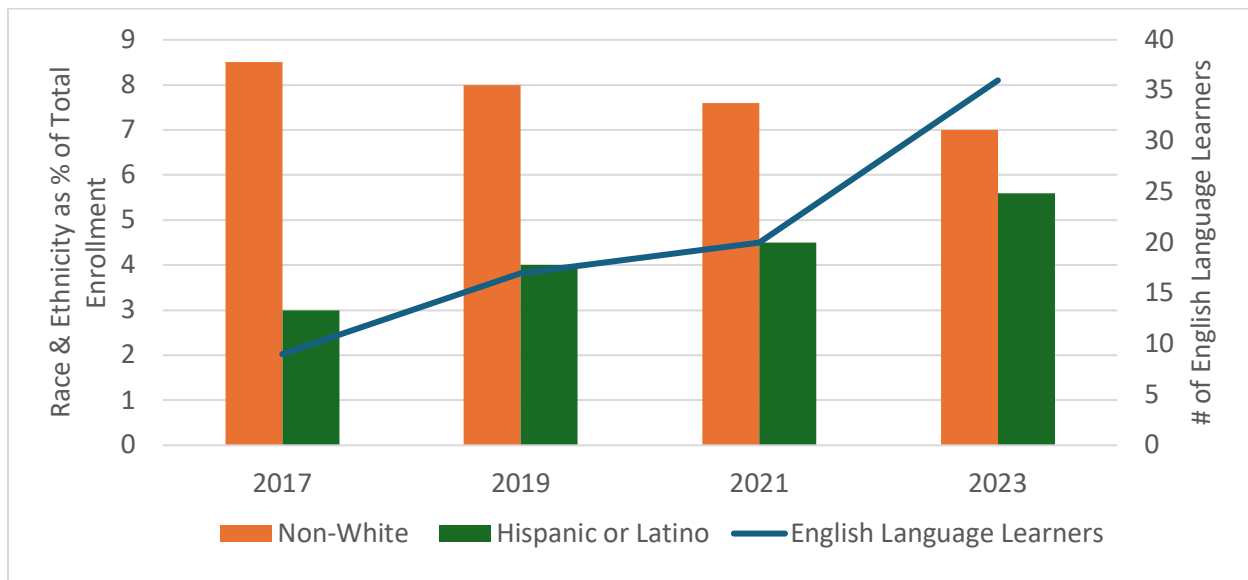
¹⁰ Estimated by taking the difference between White, not Hispanic or Latino population and 100, and multiplying that percent by the total population.

Table 3: Foreign Born Diversity in Grinnell and its Peer Communities¹¹

	Grinnell	Decorah	Fairfield	Pella	Waverly
Foreign Born Persons, 5-yr Est. 2018-2022	5.1%	3.1%	16.9%	3.2%	4.1%
Approximate Number¹²	488	235	1,591	335	426
Language Other Than English Spoken at Home, Persons 5+, 5-year Average 2018-2022	7.4%	4.5%	19%	5.2%	4.2%

Figure 1 shows the percent of non-White and Hispanic/Latino students in the Grinnell-Newburg school district since 2017, as well as the number of English language learners (ELL). While the total percent of non-White students has fallen some, the percent of Hispanic/Latino students has risen consistently as has the number of students in the ELL program.

Figure 1: Grinnell-Newburg K-12 Race and Ethnic Demographics and English Language Learners 2017-2023¹³



¹¹ Based on 2020 Census Data Quick Facts, Accessed July 7, 2024, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/>.

¹² US 5-year average percent with 2020 census population.

¹³ Grinnell-Newburg School District State of the District Reports 2017, 2019, 2021, Grinnell-Newburg Community School District, Accessed July 29, 2024, <https://www.grinnell-k12.org/vnews/display.v/SEC/District%7CSuperintendent%3E%3EState%20of%20the%20District>; “Grinnell-Newburg School District State of the District Administration Presentation,” March 27, 2024.

Table 4 provides demographic data on race and Hispanic origin for Grinnell College and each of the residential colleges located in Grinnell’s selected peer communities. This data provides a sense of the racial and ethnic diversity within each college, as well as each college’s contribution to overall diversity in the respective towns.

Census data for the town of Grinnell includes Grinnell College students. Relative to the larger community, Grinnell College is more demographically diverse in terms of race and ethnicity among its domestic students, with 52.8% identifying only as White, 8.24% as Hispanic or Latino, 7.33% as Asian, 4.78% has two or more races, and 4.43% as Black or African American. Compared to the US population as a whole, the college is relatively low in its representation of both Black or African Americans (4.43% compared to 13.7% nationally) and Hispanic or Latinos (8.24% compared to 19.5% nationally). Nearly 20% of Grinnell College’s student body is international, coming from around 60 countries, the top five being China, India, Vietnam, Japan, and South Korea.

Grinnell College makes up a significant part of the town’s racial and ethnic diversity. Adding Grinnell’s domestic students together with its international students constitutes approximately 8.1% of the total population of the town (774 students). If all international students also identified as non-White or as Hispanic/Latino, the college’s total racial and ethnic minorities would account for 66.3% of the town’s total diversity, while if none did, it would account for 37.5%. Given the countries contributing the largest number of international students, it is likely that this number is closer to high than the low.

Table 4: Race and Hispanic Origin Demographic Data for Residential College Located in Grinnell and Peer Communities¹⁴

	Grinnell	Decorah	Fairfield	Pella	Waverly
Residential College	Grinnell College	Luther College	Maharishi International University	Central College	Wartburg College
Total Enrollment (as a percent of town population)	1759 (18.4%)	1610 (21.2%)	2673 (28.4%)	1169 (11.2%)	1444 (12.9%)
White Only, Domestic (% enrollment)	928 (52.8%)	1206 (74.9%)	646 (24.2%)	1000 (85.5%)	1146 (79.4%)
Hispanic or Latino, Domestic (% enrollment)	145 (8.24%)	106 (6.58%)	143 (5.35%)	57 (4.88%)	59 (4.09%)
Asian Domestic (% enrollment)	129 (7.33%)	28 (1.74%)	101 (3.78%)	11 (0.94%)	9 (0.62%)
Two or More Races, Domestic (% enrollment)	84 (4.78%)	14 (0.87%)	29 (1.08%)	37 (3.17%)	38 (2.63%)

¹⁴ Based on Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Fall 2022 enrollment. From Data USA, Accessed July 5, 2024, <https://datausa.io/search/?dimension=University>. Unlike census data, race/ethnic categories for college data refer only to domestic students.

	Grinnell	Decorah	Fairfield	Pella	Waverly
Black or African American, Domestic (% enrollment)	78 (4.43%)	47 (2.92%)	176 (6.58%)	32 (2.74%)	62 (4.29%)
American Indian or Alaska Native, Domestic (% enrollment)	2 (0.11%)	9 (0.56%)	14 (0.52%)	2 (0.17%)	2 (0.14%)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders, Domestic (% enrollment)	0	7 (0.44%)	2 (0.07%)	2 (0.17%)	2 (0.14%)
Non-Resident Alien (% enrollment)	336 (19.1%)	178 (11.1%)	1232 (46.1%)	1 (0.09%)	92 (6.37%)
Hispanic/Latino & Non-White Population from College, Excluding Foreign-born Students.	438 (4.6% of Grinnell's population)	211 (2.8% of Decorah's population)	465 (4.9% of Fairfield's population)	141 (1.3% of Pella's population)	172 (1.7% of Waverly's population)
Hispanic/Latino & Non-White Population from College, Including Foreign-born Students. ¹⁵	438-774	211-389	465-1697	141-142	172-264
Percent of Town's Hispanic/Latino and Non-White Population Comprised by College Students	37.5-66.3%	35.6-65.7%	20.1-73.3%	19-19.1%	16.1-24.6%
Approx. Student Contribution to Town's International Presence ¹⁶	68.9%	75.7%	77.4%	0.3%	21.6%

¹⁵ The range given represents, on the low side, only domestic students identifying as not only White, to the high side of all domestic students identifying as not only White plus all international students. Many, but not all international students would likely identify as not only White in the census. It is likely that the upper range is closer to the actual number.

¹⁶ This is a rough approximation of the college's contributions to international persons living in Grinnell. The college demographic data come from a single year and reflect "non-resident aliens," while the foreign-born person data represents a five-year average and includes naturalized citizens.

Racism in Grinnell, Iowa

Oxford language dictionary defines racism as “prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.” The most obvious forms of racism involve overt and blatant acts, or “macroaggressions,” such as those reflected by Jim Crow laws that supported legalized segregation prior to the Civil Rights act of 1964, targeted criminal acts characterized as race-based hate crimes,¹⁷ and harassment, bullying, and intimidation based on racial or ethnic differences.¹⁸

Racism also comes in the form of “microaggressions,” which are the everyday interactions or behaviors, intentional or unintentional, that communicate a bias, often by highlighting a perceived “otherness” of racial or ethnic groups or reflecting harmful stereotypes. Examples of microaggressions include complimenting an Asian American on how well they speak English as it presumes that they were not born in the US. A commonly reported example is when store security follow Black men around stores on the presumption that they are more prone to crime.¹⁹ Another example is commenting on how articulate someone of a different race is as it can send the message that it seems surprising that someone of their race should be well educated and articulate.²⁰

There is no central source of data available for the city of Grinnell on macroaggressions, much less microaggressions. Interviews and listening sessions suggest a long history of occasional overt macroaggressions within town, many concerning the school system, such as race-based bullying, and also targeting Grinnell College students. These experiences and more common microaggressions are discussed in greater detail below.

More data is available regarding Grinnell College and its students. Archives and news reports related to Grinnell College suggest that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and international students have long struggled with micro and macro aggressions, on and off campus, which have negatively impacted their sense of belonging. This was raised in a 2015 belonging study that reviewed 162 student essays asking students to reflect on the challenges they faced in their first year at Grinnell, as well as a more recent study of Black domestic students on “Sacrifices, Trade-offs, and Just Getting Through,” both produced by Georgeanna Robinson of Grinnell College’s Office of Analytical Support and Institutional Research.²¹ Public news stories concerning racism either on campus or targeting students can also be found. In the spring of 2010, for example, a campus party that included racist and misogynist labeling on party bowls was deemed “bias-motivated”.²² In early 2015, racist slurs targeting Black students on campus were posted

¹⁷ At the federal level, a crime motivated by bias against race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability.

¹⁸ Charisse Levchak, *Microaggressions and Modern Racism: Endurance and Evolution*, (Palgrave Macmillan:2018).

¹⁹ Andrew Limbong, “Microaggressions are a big deal: How to talk them out and when to walk away,” National Public Radio, June 9, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/08/872371063/microaggressions-are-a-big-deal-how-to-talk-them-out-and-when-to-walk-away>.

²⁰ Margeurite Ward, “What is a microaggression? 15 things people think are fine to say at work – but are actually racist, sexist, or offensive,” Business Insider, June 9, 2023, <https://www.businessinsider.com/microaggression-unconscious-bias-at-work-2018-6#ha-youre-so-ocd-with-how-you-manage-projects-or-damn-you-work-on-so-many-things-its-like-you-have-adhd-2>.

²¹ Unpublished, provided by author.

²² “Grinnell College officials say sexually-themed party was ‘bias-motivated’,” The Gazette, May 7, 2010, <https://www.thegazette.com/k/grinnell-college-officials-say-sexually-themed-party-was-bias-motivated/>.

anonymously on Yik Yak, leading to discussions around the more common incidents students were facing on a regular basis.²³ In 2018, a study of 162 student workers covering two years of employment by a student member of the college union identified perceptions by Black and International students of discrimination in their campus workplace.²⁴

In the spring of 2020, while the country was undergoing a divisive presidential campaign, racial tensions rapidly escalated at the national level following the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers. Protests erupted in at least 140 US cities,²⁵ and by November, nine demonstrators associated with the Black Lives Matter protests had been killed during protests.²⁶ In Grinnell, in Sept of 2020, Michael Williams, a Black man from the community, was brutally murdered by four White residents of Grinnell. While the Iowa-Nebraska chapter of the NAACP did not believe that Williams was targeted due to his race, the event raised tensions for many Black Grinnell students, particularly given the national climate and events.²⁷ Some Grinnell College staff interviewed highlighted that this is important context to understand the level of trauma felt by students following a series of targeted racist incidents in the fall of 2022.

In the fall of 2022, students reported multiple incidents of racist taunting and slurs being shouted at them from passing cars on and around campus. One reported incident involved a car whose passengers hurled racist insults and then circled back around to yell “Don’t think I won’t smoke you, you stupid f----- n-word”.²⁸ On October 9, just before fall break, signs and over a dozen cars in a campus parking lot on 10th Street were vandalized with racist language and slurs.²⁹ These events led to anxiety and fear by BIPOC students that incidents may escalate into outright attacks or other hate crimes.³⁰

Anti-Racism Efforts and Support for Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Sustained efforts to support diversity, equity, and inclusion and combat racism can be seen in many core institutions of Grinnell, and there have been a number of more specific responses particularly to national events of 2020 and the incidents targeting Grinnell College students in 2022. These are outlined in broad strokes below. Additional organizations or community assets identified by members of the community as strengths relating to the issue can be seen in Table 6, under the strengths and assets section.

²³ Tequia Burt, “Legacy of Activism: Concerned Black Students’ 50-year history at Grinnell College,” Grinnell College, News, June 8, 2016, <https://www.grinnell.edu/news/legacy-activism>.

²⁴ Mike Kuhlbeck, “In Iowa, a union’s report uncovers discrimination at Grinnell College,” Workers World, Jan 29, 2019, <https://www.workers.org/2019/01/40789/>.

²⁵ Derrick Taylor, “George Floyd Protests: A Timeline,” The New York Times, Nov 5, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/george-floyd-protests-timeline.html>.

²⁶ Lois Beckett, “At Least 25 Americans were killed during protests and political unrest in 2020,” The Guardian, Oct 31, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/31/americans-killed-protests-political-unrest-acled>.

²⁷ Amanda Tugade, “After racist incidents, Black students at Grinnell College want culture, safety changes,” Des Moines Register, Nov 9, 2022, <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2022/11/09/grinnell-college-black-students-culture-safety-changes-racist-threats/69610028007/>.

²⁸ Amanda Tugade, “After racist incidents....”

²⁹ James Stratton, “Black Student Union, college respond after racist vandalism and incidents at Grinnell College,” KCCI Des Moines, Last updated Oct 24, 2022, <https://www.kcci.com/article/black-student-union-college-respond-after-racist-vandalism-and-incidents-at-grinnell-college/41758460>.

³⁰ Amanda Tugade, “After racist incidents....”

At Grinnell College, there are a number of identity-based student organizations that work to provide a supporting environment to their members by addressing both social needs (e.g., through gathering spaces and events) and engaging in advocacy, mostly within the college, though expanding into the town when viewed as necessary (such as in response to 2022 racist incidents). These include the African Caribbean Student Union, The Black Student Union, the Student Organization of Latinxs, and the International Student Organization among others. The college also has faculty and staff identity-based organizations (Employee Resource Groups, or ERGs) that assist the institution with DEI initiatives and facilitate belonging and affinity for their members.

The College has a range of offices with significant responsibilities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion and supporting international students and domestic BIPOC students. Many of the college's efforts to support diversity and inclusion on campus can be found on the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion's website.³¹ The mission and vision are described as follows:

The Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion supports the College's mission by promoting a learning environment where inquiry, critical thinking, and exploration are valued and expected. We champion critical dialogues and honest relationships, centering on the democratic education principles of justice, respect, and trust. We do so to assess, cultivate, and sustain a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.

Resources identified include support for faculty and staff, training and community building practices, Intercultural Affairs, which offers students a range of co-curricular experiences, and a Bias Incident Response Team, which serves as a repository of all bias incidents and is charged with determining bias and offering recommended interventions, among others. The site also identifies key partners across campus, which include a network of embedded DEI professionals. For example, many of the efforts to specifically support students can be found in the Division of Student Affairs, including the Office of International Student Affairs, and a Dean of Inclusive Initiatives. Other key offices include Admissions and Aid (with an Associate Directory of Admission and Coordinator of Multicultural Recruitment); Athletics (which includes an Assistant Athletic Director, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Student Success); the Center for Religion, Spirituality, and Social Justice; Donor and Alumni Relations; and Human Resources.

There are two organizations in the broader community that focus on working primarily with racial or ethnic minority populations: Welcoming Communities Central Iowa, and Community Support for Immigrants. The Welcoming Communities Facebook site states that

*Welcoming Communities Central Iowa is committed to bringing Central Iowans together to foster a spirit of welcoming and belonging for all. We seek to lift up and be led by Immigrant/Refugee, BIPOC, women-led, and LGBTQIA movements and voices and promote diversity, inclusivity, equality, and social, economic, and environmental justice. No matter who you are, no matter where you came from, you are welcome here.*³²

A volunteer with the organization noted that they primarily work with the Hispanic population of Grinnell, Tama, and Montezuma to advocate for resources. They have seen success in working with the Grinnell Regional Medical Center, including increasing access to interpreters and translated documents. Their biggest ongoing initiative is to try to make a community ID available for undocumented migrants.

³¹ "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion," Grinnell College, Accessed July 7, 2024, <https://www.grinnell.edu/about/leadership/offices-services/dei>.

³² Welcoming Communities Central Iowa/Comunidades Bienvenidos de Iowa Central (sic), Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1886273255034826/>.

Community Support for Immigrants (CoSI) provides information about resources as well as some assistance to immigrants, seeks to build a welcoming environment for immigrants, and serves as a humanitarian safety net for workers and families living in fear of deportation. According to one volunteer with the group, activities in Grinnell have included providing English practice sessions and fundraising for the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants as well as for specific urgent immigrant needs in the Midwest.

In addition to these organizations specifically focused on supporting immigrants and BIPOC members of the community, many of the town's institutions have committees, policies, employees, or other specific mechanisms to address issues of racism and support diversity, equity, and inclusion. These can be seen in several of the larger businesses in town. For example, Unity Point Health has a Chief Diversity Officer and explicit policies and practices addressing DEI.³³ Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance has a "Belonging Committee" made up of local employees to create a supportive environment and help celebrate diversity.³⁴ JELD-WEN addresses its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as part of its broader social responsibility.³⁵ This is not intended as a comprehensive list, and it is likely that other businesses have relevant policies or staff members, though this can be a challenge for smaller businesses. One representative of the business community noted in an interview that some businesses that are interested in incorporating equity and inclusion efforts are afraid of doing it wrong, so they don't do it.

In Grinnell's public institutions, there is the City of Grinnell Human Rights Commission, which is responsible for studying and remediating discrimination, education, investigating and resolving complaints, and reporting to the mayor and council. Their website includes information on the process for filing a discrimination complaint with the city. The Grinnell-Newburg school system established a REDI Committee (Reimagine Equity, Diversity, Inclusion in Grinnell), with the goal of creating equality and inclusion, developing an understanding of diversity, and nurturing a sense of belonging within the schools and community. It included representatives from the school and the broader community and had subcommittees concerned with curriculum, training, social engagement, community partnerships, policy, and communication. The school district also hired a director of curriculum, diversity, equity, and inclusion in 2022. The REDI committee has since been disbanded and the DEI position was discontinued in 2024. The Police Department has worked with city leadership, Grinnell College, and others to seek ways to address racism community-wide. Appendix 3 provides the department's 2023 *Grinnell Police Department Community Engagement Proposal*.

There have also been a range of activities and support provided by community churches, particularly in relation to support for immigrants and refugees, and by the community's non-profit organizations. For example, according to a representative of Mid Iowa Community Action (MICA), the organization formed a committee to address inclusion, diversity, and equity, which led to a number of specific changes. The Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation administers the Racial Equity Fund,³⁶ which provides grants to further the work of community organizations actively addressing individual and/or institutional racism by changing policies, institutions, or systems.

³³ "Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)," UnityPoint Health, Accessed July 7, 2024, <https://www.unitypoint.org/about-unitypoint-health/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dei>.

³⁴ "When Employees Belong, They Bring Their Best Selves," Grinnell Mutual, Accessed July, 7, 2024, <https://www.grinnellmutual.com/about-us/newsroom/belonging-and-inclusion>.

³⁵ "Social Responsibility," JELD-WEN, Accessed July 7, 2024, <https://www.corporate.jeld-wen.com/responsibility/social>.

³⁶ "Grants," Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation, Accessed July 5, 2024, <https://greaterpcf.org/grants/>.

Responses to Recent Racist Incidents

Two significant periods of intensified community efforts to respond to racism and create diversity, equity, and inclusion infrastructure can be seen in Grinnell in 2020 in the context of national protests and the murder of Michael Williams, and then in the fall of 2022 following racial harassment of students and vandalism of the campus with racist messages.

In June 2020, the City of Grinnell published a letter condemning the actions of the Minneapolis police department leading to the death of George Floyd, and outlined policies and practices guiding the Grinnell Police department.³⁷ The same month, the city's Human Rights Commission issued a statement regarding protests around the country responding to racial discrimination, particularly in policing. The statement recognized the serious concerns of protestors and noted that the Commission had been in discussions with the police department over the past year to discuss proactively enhancing relationships with marginalized groups.³⁸

In response to outreach from recent GHS graduates, the school district also saw an increased need to review the curriculum for inclusiveness and be proactive in addressing racism.³⁹ In the summer of 2020, the superintendent initiated the REDI Committee.⁴⁰ In early October and November of 2020, teachers participated in diversity training. In December 2020, the school district received its first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Grant from Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation to support REDI for training and curriculum projects. The school's efforts to review the curriculum led to public backlash from many members of the community who feared that critical race theory would be incorporated into the curriculum. This concern was addressed in a message from the Superintendent in March of 2021 and remained a contentious issue within the district.⁴¹ While around two dozen references to racism, diversity, or the REDI program can be found on the Grinnell-Newburg Community School District web site (primarily in the context of "weekly updates" by the superintendent) between early 2020 and late 2021, there are no references after 2021 and the committee has disbanded.

In June of 2020, the Grinnell College president and dean published an open letter to the community, "Remaining Awake During a Revolution,"⁴² as a response to national protests and "the brutal killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and countless others...." The letter announced initiatives and referenced the college's Diversity and Inclusion Plan⁴³ as a roadmap for diversity and inclusion efforts. Among the initiatives, they announced working along with the Claude and Dolly Ahrens Foundation to provide funding to the Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation to set up the Racial Equity Fund (discussed above).

³⁷ City of Grinnell letter to the public, June 12, 2020, <https://www.grinnelliowa.gov/documentcenter/view/2211>.

³⁸ "Human Rights Commission," City of Grinnell, Accessed July 5, 2024, <https://www.grinnelliowa.gov/116/Human-Rights-Commission>.

³⁹ School board member personal communication.

⁴⁰ "REDI Committee," Grinnell-Newburg Community School District, Accessed July 7, 2024, <https://www.grinnell-k12.org/vnews/display.v/SEC/Community%7CREDI%20Committee>.

⁴¹ School board member personal communication.

⁴² "Racial Justice Response," Grinnell College News, June 10, 2020, <https://www.grinnell.edu/messages/racial-justice-response>.

⁴³ "Grinnell College Diversity and Inclusion Plan (2019-2020)," Grinnell College, Accessed July 7, 2024, https://web.grinnell.edu/Dean/Diversity/Diversity_Plan_2019-2020.pdf.

In 2022, the college's Black Student Union organized a response to racist incidents targeting students, bringing national attention to the issue (reports appeared on Iowa Public Radio, KCCI Des Moines News, The Des Moines Register, KCRG ABC, Inside Higher Education, among other regional and national outlets). They also issued a set of demands to administrators, which are included in the solutions section of this report.

The President of the college and Grinnell's mayor issued a joint statement calling on the community to mobilize against the recent acts of racism, including by reporting racist harassment and vandalism to the police, photographing license plates of vehicles involved in harassment, and enrolling in bystander intervention training.⁴⁴ The college's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion held a "Community Dialogue," an inter-community event involving students, faculty, staff, and non-campus-affiliated community members that generated a range of community-driven ideas for building bridges and helping all community members feel more welcome both on and off campus. The college and community leadership, including the Grinnell Police Department held discussions as part of several "community partners meetings". The Grinnell Police Department and the Poweshiek County Sheriff's Office announced a \$2,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of those responsible for the racial harassment and vandalism.⁴⁵

On campus, the college erected additional lighting, provided a security app with a "panic button," offered self-defense and emergency kits, increased monitoring, offered evening transportation, and installed cameras in areas experiencing the most incidents with passing cars.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ "Public Statement about Racist Harassment in Grinnell," Grinnell College, News, Oct. 16, 2022, <https://www.grinnell.edu/messages/public-statement-about-racist-harassment-grinnell>.

⁴⁵ Amanda Tugade, "After racist incidents...."

⁴⁶ "Campus Update: Security Measures and Mobilization Against Racism," Grinnell College, News, Oct. 18, 2022, <https://www.grinnell.edu/messages/campus-update-security-measures-mobilization-against-racism>.

Community Input: Perspectives on Racism

This section of the report details the input collected from members of the community through community sessions (listening sessions, focus groups, community hosted discussions), the open-ended visioning survey, the prioritization survey, and interviews. The information shared here does not represent the views of the researchers or the Build a Better Grinnell Project steering committee. Nor are we trying to be arbiters of what belongs or doesn't or what is true or not. We are presenting experiences and views held by participants in this study.

The core of this section comes from the community sessions, where we specifically asked participants to talk in detail about their experiences and concerns with racism, how they are impacted by their concerns, who they feel is most affected, why they think these problems exist, the obstacles they anticipate in addressing them, their ideas for addressing the situation, who should be involved, and what they see as the community's strengths and assets. We also include all relevant information from the initial visioning survey, but that data is mostly limited to the nature of the problem and is often vague (e.g., "less racism"), so it does not consistently appear throughout sections below. Input available from interviews is also included.

The Concern for Racism

In the initial visioning survey, 119 distinct surveys (19.4% of all) noted a concern for racism or for racial and ethnic minorities feeling unwelcome in the community. Another 17 surveys (2.8% of all) not included in this group noted a desire for more diversity in the community.

In the prioritization survey, *less racism*, was ranked as the sixth priority, and had the third most #1 votes of any issue (6% of all respondents). This takes into account the weighting of Grinnell College students.

Racism or racist incidents were also raised in 16 interviews with key community stakeholders and experts, generally in response to concerns for the community. Seven of the individuals represented a range of community organizations, while the other nine were associated with Grinnell College.

What is the Nature of the Problem?

In our Visions of Grinnell survey and interviews, we used several questions to help identify what things people would like to see changed in Grinnell (e.g., what things have frustrated you, and what changes would you like to see). Most responses were vague, for example mentioning only "racism" or "racist incidents" as frustrations or concerns without additional clarification. Surveys that provided more details are noted below. In community sessions and interviews specifically focused on the issue, we asked participants to discuss what they see as the "nature of the problem" (e.g., why do you feel that racism should be a priority issue, and what are your specific concerns). Below are the general areas of concern that were shared.

Participants focused on a broad range of issues. In every session, participants addressed incidents where persons were targeted and made to feel uncomfortable or afraid due to their race or ethnicity, or where they were demeaned or denigrated. Many also offered up their perceptions of the underlying causes of these (e.g., lack of diversity in the community) or insufficient responses to these (e.g., no one is being held accountable) as "the problem." In this section, we focus on the specific incidents as the problem, leaving input related to underlying problems and insufficient responses for a review of causes and obstacles, which of course represent problems in themselves.

1) Racial slurs or harassment.

Participants noted incidents of egregious racist behaviors as a core concern (6/8 sessions, 8 community and 10 GC campus surveys). This included Grinnell College students being yelled at from passing vehicles on or off campus, individuals being called the N-word in town, and incidents in the public schools. One community survey reported that the respondent had worked with doctors in the community that had been called the N-word by patients.

2) Daily microaggressions.

There was considerable discussion about the everyday interactions where people feel that they are being treated differently due to their race or ethnicity, or where things said or done, intentionally or not, that reflect biases or stereotypes that are offensive (6/8 sessions, 1 GC student survey). Some examples provided of such incidents included the following.

- a) Woman wearing a hijab in Walmart having someone stop her to politely ask questions that involved various offensive assumptions.
- b) Black female student treated like “an angry Black woman” when trying to discuss with a non-Black friend why she was upset.
- c) Student in a friend group poking fun at a village name in Africa.
- d) Woman who is the child of immigrants from Latin America being asked if her parents “swam across the river.”
- e) Co-worker of Black student switching the radio to hip hop every time the student comes in.
- f) Professor using outdated or incorrect terminology when referring to immigrant groups.
- g) Asian students being complimented for their studiousness.
- h) BIPOC students being stared at when at a restaurant in town.
- i) BIPOC students treated differently from White friends in some stores.
- j) Demeaning interactions with hospital staff.

3) Incidents of racism in the school system.

Participants identified varied incidents of racism in the public school system (5/8 sessions, 1 interview concerning immigrants, and 15 surveys, including 3 from Welcoming Committee participants). These mostly involved bullying and the use of slurs. Differential expectations and treatment were also raised. Specific examples provided in community sessions included:

- a) A high school dance closed down because kids were chanting racial slurs.
- b) A middle schooler teaching the whole cafeteria a slur in a different language and chanting it.
- c) Second graders using the N-word.
- d) Low expectations with participant’s Black children.

4) Graffiti or vandalism.

Participants noted multiple incidents of graffiti or vandalism on campus since 2022, including marking up of cars in a parking lot and graffiti on dorms (5/8 sessions, 3 community and 1 GC student surveys, 3 interviews).

5) Racial profiling or stereotyping.

A number of participants addressed how BIPOC community members can feel targeted and stereotyped (5/8 sessions, though only 3 related to incidents in town). This included students feeling that they were being followed around stores, students being followed by a police officer in town, and Asian students expected to be particularly studious.

6) Faculty and staff at Grinnell College.

Grinnell College students identified incidents on campus with faculty or staff ranging from perceived differential treatment (e.g., grading, patience, interactions) to microaggressions (3/8 sessions, 1 GC student survey).

7) Intimidating Truck.

Grinnell College students raised concern over a truck passing BIPOC or international students and honking, then circling multiple times to go past and follow them (2/8 sessions, one from personal experience).

8) Confederate Flag.

Participants perceived a racist message from the conspicuous presence of a confederate flag in town near the elementary school or on a truck driving through campus (2/8 sessions, 10 community surveys).

9) Concern with Police Department.

Several survey responses raised concern for racism within the police department. Some mentioned a case of a police officer flying a confederate flag (4 community and 1 GC student survey).

10) Campus Yik Yak.

Some Grinnell College students noted that Yik Yak is used by members of campus to anonymously post denigrating comments against certain groups (1/8 sessions, 2 GC student surveys).

11) Anti-Asian Covid Taunting.

Some students noted that Asian students were being yelled at early in the pandemic due to the association of China with Covid (1/8 sessions).

What Are the Impacts or Consequences?

Participants in community sessions were asked how they were impacted by the issues they were identifying as concerns and what they saw as the impacts on the broader community. Some responses to surveys and interviews also provided related input. The following responses were provided.

1) Discomfort and Fear.

Participants shared that the more egregious incidents (racial slurs, graffiti, etc.) in particular make them uncomfortable and fearful in Grinnell (6/8 sessions, 5 community and 8 GC student surveys, 7 interviews). For students, the fear was particularly in relation to areas off-campus. Two interviewees, one of whom works closely with students and the other who works with immigrants in the community, specifically noted that while Grinnell may be a very safe town, it doesn't always feel that way for those who are immigrants or persons who are not White. Some specific personal stories that were shared by non-students included the following.

- a) A community member learning from a neighbor that the neighbor is fearful of people who are different and so the neighbor always takes their gun with them when they travel to a particular nearby town with high diversity.
- b) A child being bullied and called the N-word in school and told by a friend that they can't come to the friend's house to play because the friend's father might kill the child because they are Black.
- c) A community member who fears for the safety of their non-White grown children to return to the community after the incidents in the fall of 2022.

2) It Takes a High Emotional Toll.

Participants discussed the personal emotional toll, including stress and feelings of isolation that come with racist incidents, feeling unwelcome in the community, feeling like you are having to represent your race with every action, having to second guess whether rudeness or awkward interactions towards you were due to your race, and having people regularly say offensive things towards you (5/8 sessions, 8 interviews, 1 GC student survey, 3 interviews).

- a) In 2 interviews, staff that work closely with students noted that some BIPOC students, particularly first-generation college students, may already experience imposter syndrome (a sense that they don't belong at the college), and that the sense of isolation this causes is exacerbated by feeling unwelcome in the town and not having a broader community that they can connect with.
- b) In 1 interview, a community leader questioned whether it really mattered what the strengths of the community are if there is also a message that people are not welcome. Being welcoming should trump everything else in building a better Grinnell.

3) Bad for the Community.

Incidents of racism and people feeling unwelcome create a bad image for community and college (4/8 sessions), which can complicate recruiting and retaining labor and students (3/8 sessions, 1 interview, 2 community surveys). In a survey of nine HR managers, one (not associated with Grinnell College), responded that issues for students of color in public schools is one specific reason they have had employees leave.

4) People Move Out of the Community.

In community sessions, participants referenced people that they have known (including associated with the college and Black doctors in town) who have moved out of the community, either leaving Iowa entirely or moving to nearby cities (e.g., Des Moines or Iowa City), in order live in a more diverse environment, escape the stress, or find schools for their children where they are either less subjected to racism or less isolated (3/8 sessions, 11 community surveys). In 1 interview, a community member representing one of Grinnell's larger organizations noted that BIPOC community members are being driven out by a sense of feeling unwelcome.

5) Stay on Campus.

Grinnell College students indicated that incidents that they have experienced personally or that their friends have experienced have led them to be sufficiently fearful or concerned enough to stop trying to go to town (2/8 sessions, 4 interviews, 1 GC student survey). They just stay on campus, further segregating the community as one noted. In interviews with staff from Grinnell College who work closely with students, the issues of fear and safety were raised in 4 interviews as a barrier for students to access the community or community resources.

Where do Most Incidents Happen?

Incidents were discussed as happening in three general areas: on campus, in town, and in the public schools. In town, participants discussed Grinnell College student experiences (5/8 sessions) as well as experiences of BIPOC town members (3/8 sessions). On campus, many referred to the well-publicized incidents involving people from off campus coming onto or through campus (6/8 sessions), as well as incidents (primarily microaggressions) and everyday experiences within the campus community (considerable discussion in 3/8 sessions). Surveys also noted these several contexts, though most did not specify.

In interviews, most who raised the issue noted it as affecting college students (7 interviews). One identified issue in the public school system, and five made no specific reference to incidents, but just raised it as a community concern. Fifteen surveys noted racism in the school system, including 3 of 15 surveys collected in Spanish by individuals through the Welcoming Community.

Who is Most Affected?

Summarizing much of the input from above, including from community sessions, interviews, and the initial visioning survey, there are four groups that are primarily affected by racism and racist incidents in the community.

1. College Students (and the college more broadly). In all sessions, participants were aware of some of the high-profile incidents that targeted college students (e.g., graffiti on cars, yelling from cars). These, as well as the more frequent microaggressions were seen to most affect domestic BIPOC students as well as international students. For many participants, there was not a strong understanding of other incidents or areas of concern around the community. As Table 5 shows, the issue was ranked #1 by Grinnell College students.
2. BIPOC Students in the Public School System. This was particularly highlighted by individuals who had or knew such children in the school system. In addition to parents, this included input in a community session from one educator involved with the school system, and surveys from several Hispanic families involved with the Welcoming Community.
3. Immigrants and Other Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Community. We heard in multiple community sessions, interviews, and surveys a general concern for the experience of BIPOC and immigrant members of the community beyond the school system or Grinnell College. Some of this was through firsthand experience. As Table 5 shows, the issue was ranked #3 by racial and ethnic minorities, excluding Grinnell College students.
4. Everyone. In one session, a participant noted that, as a White person, they felt no impacts from racism in the community. In most sessions, however, White participants indicated that the entire community is impacted while recognizing that BIPOC community members and international students feel it more acutely. In one interview, a community member noted that, from a marketing side, it is not good for Grinnell to seem unwelcoming. As the demographic ranking data indicates, individuals from all demographic groupings included the issue in their ranking. Responses from survey one also indicate that being concerned for racism, at least for some, transcends the “town/gown” divide. For example, multiple responses identified racism as a concern, while also critiquing the college’s role in the community.

Table 5: Ranking of *Less Racism* by Demographic Group

#1	Grinnell College students (N=388) ⁴⁷
#3	Racial & ethnic minorities, excluding Grinnell College students (N=61) ⁴⁸
#10	Under age 25 (“Gen Z”), excluding Grinnell College students (N=76)
#10	Women aged 19-45, excluding Grinnell College students (N=222)
#13	Commuters, excluding those living in Grinnell’s rural outskirts (N=72)
#14	Aged 26-45 (N=301)
#16	All respondents, excluding Grinnell College Students (N=882)
#17	Aged 66 and over (N=153)
#18	All respondents identifying as rural (N=121)
#22	Lower income (N=102) ⁴⁹
#24	Men aged 19-55, excluding Grinnell College Students (N=156)

Is the Problem Getting Better or Worse?

There was little input or consensus from the sessions on whether the situation has gotten better or worse. Grinnell college students that we heard from lacked a longer-term experience to know. Among others, some felt that recent national events, such as Black Lives Matter, increased anti-immigration rhetoric, and the rise in public profile of hate groups has given rise to more racist incidents, or alternatively raised the sensitivity to such events. Others believed that there have long been incidents, but that these are generally infrequent, while still others noted a longer history of regular incidents in the public school system.

Five interviewees noted that they see the issue as having intensified in recent years, with some citing an increase in incidents and some an increase in attention. One felt the issue had gained increased attention as the focus on Covid had faded from the top of everyone’s thinking. Four identified a shift in the national climate caused by increased political rhetoric, intensified political divisions, and/or the fact that college students have grown up in a time when there were high-profile killings of Black persons and more discussions and sensitivity of racial inequality (also noted in four community surveys).

How Does Grinnell Compare to Elsewhere?

There were also a range of perspectives regarding how Grinnell compares to other places, which to some extent was affected by people’s perception of the “problem.” For those who saw the problem as a lack of diversity, Grinnell was seen to be at an extreme to other places they had experienced. For those who were considering explicit incidents of racism, most who commented felt that Grinnell was less extreme than other places they had been. One participant commented that in a previous Iowa community where they lived, which is a little smaller than Grinnell, their BIPOC child was regularly stopped by the police and questioned, but that they have not personally experienced any overt racism since moving to Grinnell. Some others commented that while explicit racist incidents may not be as bad as some other places, the lack of

⁴⁷ While 388 Grinnell college students participated in the prioritization survey, each vote counted as one-third of a vote (explained in methods) in determining the ranking by all respondents including the college students.

⁴⁸ Identifying with one or more race/ethnic categories other than White, as well as those identifying as being of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin.

⁴⁹ Household income under \$25,000, or \$25,000-\$50,000 in households of 2+, or \$50,000-\$75,000 in households of 6+. Excludes respondents under the age of 19 and all Grinnell College students.

diversity in the community leads racial and ethnic minorities to be more isolated, stand out, and be made to feel uncomfortable more frequently in interactions in the community, particularly if they grew up in more diverse areas.

Causes: Why Do these Problems Exist? What Obstacles do You See to Addressing Them?

In every community session, as well as interviews focused on the core issue, we asked questions to get at perceptions of underlying causes. These included asking why the issue exists for the community, why it has not been resolved, what difficulties individuals have in resolving the issue or alleviating its impacts for themselves or their family, and what they view as the likely obstacles in addressing the concerns. Focusing on underlying causes can be one strategy to resolve a problem.

Participants are experts in their own experiences and likely have a good understanding of the obstacles that exist for them personally to alleviating or resolving a problem. Most are not necessarily experts on the issue as a whole and may not be aware of broader underlying causes (though some of the interviews focused on experts). As a result, many participants may be speculating on broader causes. At the same time, non-experts may have valuable insights on the obstacles that exist to addressing a problem in the community, and there is often a “wisdom of the crowd” or shared cultural knowledge on how things work. Even when causes and obstacles perceived by community members reflect misunderstandings or misinformation, these can be valuable for decision makers as they may reflect opportunities for education. Those misunderstandings may also present obstacles themselves to the feasibility of various options. For example, if community members don’t think that solutions are getting at the right problem or causes, they may be less likely to be supportive and the solution may be less likely to succeed.

The following perceptions on causes were shared.

1) Real or Perceived Cultural Differences

Participants identified cultural differences as a major underlying factor leading to incidents and experiences perceived as offensive or denigrating and seen as reflecting racism. In some cases, those cultural differences are seen as leading to antagonistic and overtly racist practices. In other cases, cultural differences are seen to create misunderstandings, discomfort, and perceived microaggressions.

- a) Cultural differences exist (8/8 sessions, 8 interviews, 6 community surveys). Grinnell is in rural Iowa, and many living in the region have relatively little experience with racial, ethnic, or cultural diversity. The college brings in students from around the country and the world who reflect considerable diversity, many of whom have relatively little experience with rural, White, Midwest culture. This diversity, combined with diversity from immigration, is growing.
- b) Divisions exist on the college campus between people from different racial and cultural backgrounds. Students gravitate towards others they see as similar. This can be seen in the dining hall, which is largely divided by race, ethnicity, and national origin (3/8 sessions, 1 interview, 1 GC student survey).
- c) Distinct groups and cultures can have a lack of knowledge or understanding about others (4/8 sessions, 3 interviews, 3 community surveys). Participants noted and shared related experiences that the lack of understanding of others’ cultures and background can lead people to see other groups as strange or different (exoticizing them), or to treat them or judge their beliefs and behaviors as they would someone in their own group, perhaps either giving or perceiving offense. Persons may judge the behaviors and beliefs of others based on their own learned cultural standards or have trouble empathizing with those with distinct backgrounds. This affects both how

town members perceive and interact with students, and how students perceive and interact with members of the town.

- d) Lack of knowledge can be filled with stereotypes or inappropriate expectations (6/8 sessions, 2 interviews). In the absence of personal knowledge or experience with people of distinct backgrounds and cultures, people often fill their inexperience with stereotypes and uninformed expectations. Participants addressed how this happens for members of the community as well as for college students.
 - i) Many students come to Grinnell with preconceived notions. These may involve thinking that Grinnell will be a bubble protected from the kinds of racism seen throughout the country, or alternatively being highly wary of Midwest rural White culture, which may be stereotyped as racist (4/8 sessions).
 - ii) While incidents of racism by individuals from off campus have happened, most students relate these as stories that they have heard from others that get passed down through generations of students and reinforce stereotypes of the community as a whole (2/8 sessions, 1 interview).
 - iii) In a community with relatively little diversity, stereotypes of immigrants and racial and ethnic minorities can be reinforced by some news reporting and for political purposes (3/8 sessions).
- e) Curiosity can be misunderstood and/or offensive (3/8 sessions, extensive discussion). In some cases, the lack of knowledge and experience leads to curiosity and an effort to engage with others. Participants noted that questions that come from a place of unfamiliarity with others can nevertheless be perceived as offensive.
 - i) In one session, a participant related a story in which a person trying to learn more about the individual's immigrant experience perhaps inadvertently raised a number of painful and insulting stereotypes.
 - ii) Another participant noted that in working with kids at the elementary school, they are enthusiastic to engage the students on all manner of innocent questions. Some felt that these same questions can be offensive from adults however (e.g., why is your hair like that, can I touch it).
 - iii) There were different opinions about the degree to which intent matters to giving or taking offense.
 - iv) Some also expressed exhaustion or frustration that it should be the job of racial and ethnic minorities to educate others and be patient with things that all people should by now recognize are offensive or that reflect a history of racism.
- f) Tribalism and fear can be another response to cultural and racial differences and lack of personal experiences (3/8 sessions, 2 interviews, 1 community survey). People can gravitate to those that feel familiar, focus on the differences they have with others, and view those differences as dangerous. This was discussed both in terms of members of the community and the campus.
- g) Culture is learned (2/8 sessions). The differences in behaviors and beliefs, along with stereotypes, fear and outright racist perspectives are learned. This comes from parents, but social media is increasingly playing an important and sometimes harmful role.

2) Lack of Interaction and Communication Between People with Cultural and Racial Differences.

In nearly every session, participants identified the lack of interaction and communication as being a fundamental reason for the perpetuation of racial tensions and inter-cultural miscommunication (7/8 sessions). Lack of interaction and the reasons behind it were also addressed in thirteen interviews, most of which were from Grinnell College staff (10 interviews) in response to general questions about students accessing resources in the community. It is an obstacle to increasing understanding, building empathy and

respect, sharing experiences, and building greater awareness. As outlined above, much of this relates to the cultural differences and the tendency of similar cultures and identity groups to stick together, and sometimes actively or unintentionally avoid others. Other reasons addressed that underlie the lack of interaction include the following.

- a) People want to avoid conflict (also discussed under lack of awareness). Racial and ethnic minorities and international students often just want to avoid conflict when microaggressions or other incidents happen, so distinct groups miss a chance for communication and better understanding of one another. (Note that friends informing friends in all White social groups of offensive language is also relevant but is included more as an educational approach addressed under “lack of awareness.”)
- b) Some have a fear of offending and of “cancel culture” (3/8 sessions). In one session, a couple of community members noted that they may avoid interactions because they are scared to say the wrong thing or ask the wrong question. To some degree this reflects the other side of the discussion on “curiosity” where offense can be given and taken in an innocent effort to learn more about someone. In two other sessions, college students discussed the obstacle to communication created by fear of offending combined with a cancel culture on campus.
- c) Talking about race is hard (2/8 sessions). Building on the avoidances and apprehensions that come from all sides, communicating about race in general can be hard for people and we have little experience doing so as a culture.
- d) There is insufficient engagement with Grinnell’s history (1/8 sessions). A couple of participants discussed that lack of interaction goes beyond the interpersonal, and that the community does not sufficiently engage with its own history in the abolitionist movement in a way that would build greater understanding and appreciation for diversity. Another noted that teachers may be fearful to do so given the state’s current laws against teaching racism.
- e) There is a divide between the campus and the community (“town/gown”), and Grinnell College creates a bubble (5/8 sessions).
 - i) Community and college participants noted how the college serves as a kind of bubble and that students often avoid going downtown. As noted above, some of this is in response to incidents of intimidation and subsequent fear by students.
 - ii) In several sessions, participants noted that apart from the issues of racism there are tensions between the college and some members of the community, which can be an obstacle to greater communication, particularly among those who might most benefit.
 - iii) In 13 interviews, key informants addressed the separation that exists between college students and the rest of the community, and the reasons that this exists. The major obstacles noted to students interacting more with community members included the following.
 - (1) Students are fearful to go off-campus or feel unwelcome in town (9 interviews).
 - (2) Two interviewees noted that this can be reinforced by the administration, which warns students to be cautious of the town.
 - (3) There is a general and long-standing separation between the community and the college (5 interviews), which can include a perception by both members of the community and college students that the students aren’t community members.
 - (4) There are cultural differences that inhibit students from engaging with the community (3 interviews).
 - (5) There are insufficient transportation options for students (3 interviews).
 - (6) There is a sense among students that there is nothing to do in town, or many things close earlier than most students are available (2 interviews).

- (7) Lack of knowledge of what is going on in town (2).
- (8) No time due to heavy workload (2).
- (9) Covid created social distancing that has not been overcome (2).
- (10) There are not enough specific engagement or volunteer opportunities (1), or planned events to connect students and town members (1).
- (11) Lack of lighting (1).
- (12) Poor weather (1).

3) Lack of Awareness.

Participants noted that there is a lack of awareness both by individuals who may be offending others, and by the community as a whole of the extent of the problem (5/8 sessions, 1 interview). Some specifically asked about data and the frequency and intensity of incidents. Some saw the issue as restricted to an occasional incident between a “few bad apples” and college students and were unaware of experiences in the school system. Much of this relates to the lack of interaction discussed above. Specific examples and reasons for the lack of awareness include the following.

- a) Participants across many of the sessions noted that people don’t talk about race, or only talk about it when there is a serious incident. In the initial visioning survey, of the 119 distinct surveys identifying racism as a concern, 89 of those (or 15% of all surveys) noted it under the question “what aspects of the Grinnell community (positive or negative) do people NOT talk about?”. (48 noted it under “things that have made you consider leaving Grinnell,” and 39 under “things that have frustrated you about living in Grinnell.”⁵⁰)
- b) Iowa laws against teaching about racism in schools make teachers likely to avoid topics in which students can learn more about history, perspectives and lived experience of racial and ethnic minorities that could help to combat racism (1/8 sessions). Lack of guidance on this issue puts teachers in a difficult position (1 interview).
- c) Some people want to just avoid conflict and so don’t point out what might be problematic or offensive statements (2/8 sessions). Iowa niceness may lead people to not talk about the issue or avoid confrontation (1/8 sessions, 1 community survey).
- d) Some students noted that the bias reporting system on campus is complicated, not well known or used, and often leads to frustrating outcomes (2/8 sessions).
- e) People don’t see the need (1/8 sessions, 2 interviews). Too many people just don’t believe that racism is a problem, or at least not a problem in Grinnell, or that DEI is necessary in the school system despite having nearly 30 students in English language learning (at the time of interview).
- f) Too few people take an interest in the issue, particularly if they have not experienced it firsthand, so they do not show up to learn about issues (2/8 sessions, 6 community surveys, 6 community surveys).
- g) The norms change in terms on what terminology is appropriate, and it can be hard to know what might be offensive (1/8 sessions).
- h) There is little reporting in news sources on incidents in the community (1/8 sessions).

4) Anger, Fear, or Resentment.

Participants identified anger, fear, and resentment as underlying causes of racist incidents, particularly those that involved purposeful and explicit incidents (such as slurs, graffiti, and intimidation) (5 sessions, 4

⁵⁰ Note that these add up to more than 119 as many respondents raised the issue under more than one question.

interviews, 2 community surveys). (Note: these were also discussed as emotions that students experience in relation to the town that limits their interactions.)

- a) Some people resent Black Lives Matter. A participant noted feeling resentment towards the Black Lives Matter movement (1/8 sessions). This was also indicated in several surveys.
- b) Participants noted that differences between groups (discussed above) can lead to fear and scapegoating of the “others” (2/8 sessions).
- c) Some people in the community resent the college. Some believed that some of the incidents might reflect a resentment by some members of the community against the college more broadly, in which racist language is used as a strategy that will score maximum insult and response (3/8 sessions, 2 interviews). As noted above however, some survey responses made clear that one should not necessarily conflate resentment of the college with racism.
- d) Some suggested that anti-immigrant or anti-foreigner sentiment is due to the rise of immigrant labor in the US being perceived as a threat to the working class (1/8 sessions, 2 interviews).
- e) Participants suggested that there is a “White fear” of changing demographics and loss of privilege (2/8 sessions).

5) Limited Efforts to Address the Issue.

Participants felt that part of the reason that the incidents continue to happen is that the efforts to address the issue have been limited or insufficient (5/8 sessions, 6 interviews, 19 community and 8 GC student surveys). Specific concerns with efforts to address included the following.

- a) Bystanders remain passive (3/8 sessions, 1 community survey). The majority of people are passive bystanders and don't know what to say or do even when they know something is wrong.
- b) When confronted, individuals often respond with denialism, defensiveness, and fear of being labeled a racist, which inhibits discussion and ability to change behaviors (3/8 sessions, 1 community survey).
- c) The victim gets blamed, not believed, or not taken seriously (2/8 sessions, 1 community survey, 1 GC student survey). Those who raise an issue can be made to feel that they are complaining.
- d) There has been insufficient *sustained* action (1/8 sessions, 2 interviews, 1 GC student survey). While needs and concerns have been raised, responses are too often “performative” (done for show and not genuine) and reactive rather than concrete actions and sustained efforts to address issues.
- e) Racism is not a core concern to Grinnell College (2/8 sessions). Some participants felt that racial issues don't receive as much attention as others, such as gender-based issues.
- f) The college tries to maintain its reputation and cover up incidents rather than engage (2/8 sessions).
- g) There is disbelief that this is an issue, pushback, or resistance to change in part because of political divides and perceptions that it is a partisan issue (2 interviews, 2 community surveys).
- h) There is a lack of consequences or accountability against offenders both on campus and in the community (1/8 sessions, 2 community and 1 GC student surveys).
- i) People who are most affected feel powerless (1/8 sessions).
- j) Downtown doesn't do enough to attract students (1/8 sessions). There is little outreach, most businesses are closed in the evening, and there doesn't seem to be much retail catering to students.
- k) There is a lack of organizing and no sustained organization in town taking on anti-racism work (1/8 sessions).

- l) There is insufficient effort by Professors who play a big role in setting the campus environment and could do more (1/8 sessions).
- m) People are unsure what to do (1 interview, associated with the business community). The community hasn't figured out what to do and some businesses that are interested in incorporating equity and inclusion efforts are afraid of doing it wrong, so they don't do it.
- n) There is a lack of training and DEI initiatives for public schools (4 community surveys).
- o) There is insufficient support from police concerning racist incidents against campus (1 GC student survey).

6) Lack of Diversity.

Participants explicitly identified the lack of diversity in Grinnell as either the problem itself or as underlying incidents of racism (3/8 sessions, 3 interviews, 23 community surveys). This was implied in even more sessions as the discussion of cultural differences above suggests. Some noted that the lack of diversity in positions of leadership or in visible positions of power or even in staffing, such as city council, police force, the school board, or Grinnell College were part of the obstacle to addressing the issue.

7) A Few Bad Apples.

Some participants suggested that the main problem is primarily just a few bad apples, believed to be primarily high school kids (2/8 sessions, 1 community survey). One questioned whether it was even racist if it was just some kids being stupid with a racial tone.

8) Social Media.

Social media was noted as a negative influence on middle school children that influences racist behaviors and beliefs (1/8 sessions). On campus, apps like Yik Yak are seen by some as providing anonymity that enables harmful communication (3 GC student surveys).

Solutions: What Could be Done to Resolve the Problem or Alleviate Their Impacts

The following are suggestions that were provided in community sessions, interviews, or the first visioning survey. We also include an appendix on strategies and solutions tried elsewhere, including from Grinnell's four selected peer communities, which may be useful in considering strategies. The solutions presented in this document do not reflect the views of the research team or the Build a Better Grinnell steering committee.

As we addressed in the background and scope section, we caution those reviewing the document not to assume that the most suggested solutions are necessarily the "best" or most likely to succeed. This is not intended as a comprehensive list. These are the range of ideas that came up in our community-wide "brainstorming sessions." Those making use of this document may have additional ideas to address causes or alleviate impacts.

1) Greater Accountability.

Some would like to see clearer accountability for those who commit overt acts of racism. There was a sense among some that there are likely many in the community who know who is responsible for acts of intimidation, graffiti writing, and slur yelling. Some would also like to see greater accountability for those who use offensive language or regularly engage in microaggressions, particularly if these are not modified after being informed.

2) Welcome and Celebrate Diversity.

Participants in most sessions and 5 interviews suggested that the community find more ways to welcome and celebrate diversity. Fifty surveys also expressed an interest and support for greater diversity in the community (17 of which did not specifically identify racism as a concern). Specific suggestions included the following.

- a) Festivals or events to celebrate diversity.
- b) Creating or identifying spaces within the community and on Grinnell College campus where people from distinct racial and ethnic groups can feel comfortable.
- c) Greater language support for immigrants.
- d) More marketing to welcome and invite people into town. Some mentioned signs that welcome college students from all over the world. Some felt that specific efforts by downtown businesses would be of value (e.g., “hey, we want you here”). Targeted outreach for community events was also suggested.

3) Collect Data.

Some suggested that collecting more data on incidents of racism, representation in positions of power in the community, and other key variables would be useful.

4) Increase Communication.

Greater communication was discussed or implied in most sessions and interviews (where race or ethnicity were addressed) as being a key part of education and training, as well as being central to greater interactions between people with distinct racial and ethnic backgrounds. Those solutions are addressed below.

Apart from these contexts, many session participants also noted the importance of more discussion on the issues in general, not just between White people and racial and ethnic minorities, but among all members of the community, such as between individuals in a friend group. Some participants noted that the goal should be to normalize race in conversations. As noted above, 15% of all surveys identified racism or being unwelcoming to BIPOC persons as something that the community does NOT talk about. The issue was also discussed in terms of getting away from being passive bystanders, and having difficult conversations with members of your friend group at moments when problematic language appears. While some participants discussed this in terms of calling out your friends, one noted that they like to think of it as “calling in” your friends to a discussion, not a lecture or reprimand.

In two interviews, increased discussions were also addressed in terms of positive and successful efforts in the community thus far to organize and plan policies and actions. One noted fruitful discussions with the Unity Point CEO concerning ways the hospital could support immigrants. Another noted unprecedented discussions since 2020 involving the College, the city, and other organizations, leading to a shared understanding of racial justice as a community issue and agreements over ways to communicate.

5) Education and Training.

Given the centrality of cultural differences, the difficulties of communication, and the lack of awareness of the issue, efforts involving education and training were the most suggested ways to address the issue in listening sessions. Education was also explicitly discussed in 4 interviews with Grinnell College staff, all of whom focused on educating Grinnell College students. (If we include education efforts implied by those

promoting DEI efforts, which at the minimum entail a degree of self-education, then eleven interviewees promoted educational efforts.) Suggestions included the following.

- a) Teach Grinnell's abolitionist history in the schools and include it in the Grinnell Historical Museum.
- b) Provide training on how to have the difficult conversations about race.
- c) Incorporate antiracism more deeply into the college curriculum (e.g., Tutorial, more consistent FYE coverage).
- d) Educate the educators in the Grinnell-Newburg school system to better understand and be able to support the challenges of BIPOC students in mostly White classes.
- e) Educate the community through interactions, events, festivals, and film viewings (like the Postville film), etc.
- f) Educate Grinnell College students about the community and rural culture, and how to expand their social circles and talk to others who are not like them.
- g) Educate the children through similar, but age appropriate, interactions to the general community, as well as teaching about other cultures and racial history in school. Monitoring internet consumption or teaching about the dangers of some of the racist content was also suggested. This role falls on parents as well as teachers.
- h) Provide bystander training.
- i) Provide bias training for faculty and staff.

6) Increase Interactions.

As discussed under Causes, many participants and interviewees highlighted the importance of getting people involved with one another through greater interactions, including sitting down, having conversations, asking questions, and getting to understand one another. Some, while supporting education efforts as one tool, noted that it can be hard to change people's minds about things just through telling them things. Personal experience is key. Some more specific ideas included the following.

- a) Get students into the town and rural areas more. This might involve volunteer activities, facilitation by host families of international students, church visits, event participation, downtown business hosted events, community meals, visits to Grinnell school system, or facilitated tours of the region.
- b) Use shared interests to facilitate interactions. One idea was to build stronger relationships between high school and college sports teams (e.g., to root one-another on, show support).
- c) Find ways to bring community members to Grinnell College campus more often, particularly members of the community that might not normally feel comfortable coming to campus. This would necessitate finding ways to better publicize the college's events as well and perhaps welcome signs and way signs on campus to help community members feel welcome.
- d) Increase cultural sharing between immigrants, international students, BIPOC and other community members. This might involve visits to churches, and involvement in community events such as Homecoming.
- e) Have events in the community make an explicit effort to involve activities and marketing that invite in marginalized members of the community. Events involving food was one suggestion.

7) Organization and Leadership.

The importance of leadership and political will to make the issue a priority was highlighted for both the community and Grinnell College. Leadership in the school system was also seen as critical, particularly given divisiveness in the current political climate. Some also identified the value of having an organization in town that could support those affected and provide leadership on addressing the issue, such as an anti-racism coalition.

Seven interviewees discussed the importance of explicit diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, which relate to organization and leadership and cut across many of the other suggestions. The central idea addressed concerned the value of creating explicit groups, policies, and practices both within institutions and across the community as a whole to address issues and create a welcoming and inclusive environment.

8) Safety Measures.

Some Grinnell college students identified an interest in greater safety measures, including better lighting on campus, more video cameras, and self-defense courses. Interviewed Grinnell College staff also noted the importance of students feeling safe.

9) Support Grinnell's Racial and Ethnic Minorities and Victims.

Some Grinnell College students discussed the need for an easier and more supportive reporting system, advocates that could help students with the process or serve as intermediaries or facilitators to have discussions with those persons who were seen as instigating tensions, and more people (particularly leadership) who would stand up and support racial and ethnic minorities. A need for more support for immigrants (e.g., lawyers, immigration services, alternative language support) in the community was also noted.

10) Black Student Union Calls to Action

Following incidents of racist vandalism on Grinnell Campus in the fall of 2022, the Black Student Union issued "BSU Demands (10 Point Plan) Calls to Action,"⁵¹ which demanded the following of the college.

- a) Cameras (with amnesty).
- b) Legal accountability for anti-Black hate crimes.
- c) Self-defense training and defense kits (paid for by school).
- d) Mental Health wellness resources: Black social worker and therapists on-campus/on-call.
- e) Required recovery days.
- f) Paid time off for Black student workers.
- g) Waived fees for transportation out of Grinnell.
- h) Required emergency town hall meetings (with town of Grinnell not just on campus).
- i) Mentorship resources.
- j) Know Your Rights camp.

Who Should be Involved?

In every session, participants were asked who should be at the table or involved in decision making. A range of organizations were identified as being potentially important to improving the situation. One comment that was repeated multiple times across sessions was that the primary responsibility should not be on the BIPOC community. Groups identified as important to addressing the issue included the following (in no particular order).

- 1) The schools (teachers, school board, other leadership)
- 2) Police
- 3) City council and other community leaders
- 4) Businesses
- 5) Grinnell College administration, faculty, and staff
- 6) The Churches

⁵¹ Instagram, Oct. 12, 2022, https://www.instagram.com/p/CjrKaiANdLi/?img_index=1.

- 7) Grinnell College students and their organizations (e.g., SOL, BCC, ACSU)
- 8) Community service organizations and foundations
- 9) The immigrant community
- 10) The general population, particularly those might be unsure or fearful of or resistant to Grinnell's BIPOC community.

What are Grinnell's Strengths for Confronting Racism?

During every session, participants shared what they see as assets in the community for addressing racism and building a more welcoming community for racial and ethnic minorities, as well as existing organizations or features of the community that are seen as strengths in regard to the issue. These are summarized in Table 6 below. Note that something listed as a strength or asset does not necessarily suggest that nothing else is needed. For example, efforts to support immigrants were noted as something good that had been done, not that more assistance was not needed. Assets and strengths are also drawn from community interviews and the project's initial visioning survey, but only when they were discussed specifically in relation to related themes such as racism, racial or ethnic diversity, immigration, or diversity equity, and inclusion efforts. Finally, we have also included organizations and assets that were identified by the research team.

Table 6: Strengths and Assets Related to Reducing Racism

Issue or Organization	Nature of Strength or Asset	Source of Identification (community sessions=C; interviews=I, research team =R; survey=S)
General Environment		
Community Diversity	Community seen as diverse in various ways, particularly for Iowa, which strengthens the town. College is recognized for bringing considerable cultural diversity.	I, C, S
Recent Racial Justice Awareness and Efforts	Growing effort in community to raise awareness of the issues, have conversations, and identify solutions. Efforts on campus to raise awareness and learn ways to support BIPOC students, including diversity, equity, and inclusion training in some departments, roundtables, workshops, and courses like first year experience.	I, C
Town Support of Grinnell College Students	Community leaders and most businesses, organizations, and town folk want college students to engage actively with the town.	I
Community Mutual Support	Community helps one another in time of need regardless of differences.	I ⁵²

⁵² This was also identified as a core community strength in the visioning survey, though no specific reference was made to racial or ethnic diversity.

Issue or Organization	Nature of Strength or Asset	Source of Identification (community sessions=C; interviews=I, research team =R; survey=S)
Safe Community	Community feels physically very safe to most (though recognize not all feel this way)	I ⁵³
GC Campus Organizing	Students rally and support one another and causes.	I
“Welcome to Grinnell” Kits	Nice effort for community immigrants.	I
Student Volunteer Engagement	Positive way to enhance interactions.	I, C
Limited Racism	In many sessions, participants shared their belief that racism is not a widespread issue in the town. Some felt that it was restricted to a few bad apples, or that it was a way for troublemakers to try to get under the skin of college students. One family shared that they had experienced no problems since moving to the community, while in another Grinnell town not too far away, their children were regularly harassed. One student noted that major incidents involving the town were maybe once a year. Many students also reported positively on their experiences going downtown and with the community in general. (Note that at least a couple of participants involved with the school system also pushed back some, noting regular issues in the schools.)	C
Efforts to Support Immigrants	In one session a community member noted efforts supporting immigrants in the community as a positive.	C
Efforts to Connect Students with the Community	Existing events and efforts to connect students with community members were discussed in several sessions. These included the use of the college van to get students around the community; student participation at community meals, student volunteering positions around the community, including working with children in the schools; and the “Jamboree” a music festival involving students and residents of the Mayflower.	C
Bias Reporting System on Grinnell College Campus	The presence of a bias incident reporting system on campus was noted.	C
Safety of Campus	In one session, there was consensus among a group of students that they generally feel safe on campus.	C

⁵³ This was also identified as a core community strength in the visioning survey, though no specific reference was made to racial or ethnic diversity.

Issue or Organization	Nature of Strength or Asset	Source of Identification (community sessions=C; interviews=I, research team =R; survey=S)
Grinnell History	The town's abolitionist history was raised as an asset in one session.	C, S
GC Renfrow Hall	Noted as an opportunity to increase interaction between students and town.	I, C
Specific Organizations or Programs		
GC Center for Careers Life and Service (CLS)	Connects students to volunteer opportunities in community. Sponsoring community discussion sessions.	I
Welcoming Communities of Central Iowa	Social organization. Advocates for resources for Hispanic population.	I, S
Community Support for Immigrants (CoSI)	Helps connect immigrants to resources in community.	I
Churches	Some provide support for immigrants and refugees. Identified places where interactions around people of different racial and cultural backgrounds can and do happen.	I, C, S
City of Grinnell	Publicly denounced incidents of racist vandalism and harassment of GC students. Communicating with GC students about issues.	I, S
Grinnell Newburg School System	Hired a DEI director to help ensure inclusive instruction.	I
Chamber of Commerce	Works with college to help identify volunteer positions for GC students in town.	I
Stew Makerspace	Space for GC student and community member interactions.	I
Grinnell College	Brings diversity to the town. Leadership in addressing community racist incidents. Community members can go on campus for events and interact with students.	I, C, S
MICA	Created a committee to address inclusion, diversity, and equity and has begun implementing various changes.	I, C
Grinnell Police Department	Public statements and response to incidents on GC campus. Welcome efforts to diversify the police force and create a welcoming culture.	I, C, S
United Way	Helped organize a DEI learning exchange in community.	I
GC Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Campus resource to address issues.	I
Unity Point Hospital	Open to discussions and actions on ways to support immigrant community.	I
Iowa Valley Community College	Provides ESL classes.	I

Issue or Organization	Nature of Strength or Asset	Source of Identification (community sessions=C; interviews=I, research team =R; survey=S)
GC Grinnell Advocates	Grinnell student organization that provides awareness and support of sexual violence. Seen as good model for race-based issues.	I
Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation	Since 2020 has recognized importance of creating funds to help address racial equity issues.	I
Racial Equity Fund (GCPF)	Provides grants to further the work of community organizations actively addressing individual and/or institutional racism by changing policies, institutions, or systems.	R
Grinnell-Newburg School Foundation, Reimagining Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) Fund.	Created to support the efforts of the Grinnell-Newburg School District to infuse diversity and inclusion throughout the curriculum.	R
African Caribbean Student Union.	Organization on campus identified as being supportive of members of BIPOC community and often helping to bring diverse students together through events.	C
GC Admissions	Works to recruit a diverse student body every year.	C
The Conney M. Kimbo Black Cultural Center	Supportive of Black campus community.	C
The Office of International Student Affairs (OISA)	Provides support for international students and helps to bring diverse students together through events.	C
The Student Organization of Latinxs	Supports Latinxs community on campus. Brings diverse students together through events.	C
City of Grinnell Human Rights Commission	Responsible for studying and remediating discrimination, education, investigating and resolving complaints, and reporting to the mayor and council.	R
Grinnell College's Pre-Orientation Program	International Pre-Orientation Program (IPOP). Peer Connections Pre-Orientation Program (PCPOP), and Grinnell Science Project (GSP) designed for students from historically marginalized identities and backgrounds.	R
Multicultural Leadership Council (GC)	Group of student leaders associated with range of student cultural organizations.	R
Black Student Union (GC)	Works to support a sense of community for persons who reside within the Black Grinnell Community and student body	R
Grinnell College Student Government Association	Governing body of student leaders who advocate for all students in partnership with Grinnell College Staff, Faculty, and Administration.	R

Issue or Organization	Nature of Strength or Asset	Source of Identification (community sessions=C; interviews=I, research team =R; survey=S)
Division of Student Affairs, Grinnell College	Works to foster and proactively promote student learning and development. Houses a number of staff that support students and their organizations.	R
REDI Committee (Reimagine Equity, Diversity, Inclusion in Grinnell)	Created to increase equality and inclusion, develop an understanding of diversity, and nurture a sense of belonging within public schools and community. (Disbanded)	R
The International Student Organization (ISO)	Promotes international understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among cultures on campus and in the Grinnell community. Holds events and builds community.	R
GC Cultural Attaché Program	Helps connect international Grinnellians with the local Grinnell community through its local schools and community venues in order to facilitate authentic cultural exchange.	R

Summary & Discussion

While Grinnell has an average amount of racial and ethnic diversity compared to its peer communities, when compared to Iowa or the country, it is relatively a very White community. Much of the diversity that exists (likely 50-60%) comes from Grinnell College, which brings students from every state in the U.S. and around 60 foreign countries. While total ethnic and racial diversity in the public school system has remained relatively steady since 2017, the number of English language learners has risen significantly.

In the spring of 2020, racial tensions rapidly escalated nation-wide following the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers. In Grinnell, in September of 2020, Michael Williams, a Black man from the community, was brutally murdered by four White residents of Grinnell. While race was not identified as a motive, the event raised tensions for many Black Grinnell students, particularly given the national climate and events.

In the fall of 2022, a series of racist incidents targeted at Grinnell College students gained national attention and students demanded greater efforts on the part of the college and community to address racism and students' concerns for safety. This led to an unprecedented level of discussions over race between the college, the city, and local service organizations, and coordinated commitments to enhance vigilance and action.

In the spring of 2023, the Build a Better Grinnell prioritization survey asked participants to select the top issues that they would like to see addressed in the community from a list of 46 options. Overall, *less racism* was ranked as the #6 priority for the community. For Grinnell College students, *less racism* was ranked #1, and for non-college students who identified as a racial or ethnic category other than only White, it was ranked #3.

In our listening sessions, focus groups, community interviews, and surveys, most participants highlighted the very public and blatant harassment and intimidation of college students as a key concern. But participants also shared less publicized and known harassment and challenges faced by members of the immigrant community, regular incidents in the public school system, and daily microaggressions against racial and ethnic minorities from the town and college, and international students, taking place both on campus and in the broader community.

While many felt that racism in Grinnell is not as bad as elsewhere in Iowa or in other parts of the country, they were usually referring to macroaggressions (e.g., outright slurs and purposeful harassment), and not considering that the relatively lower diversity and experience with diversity can make microaggressions more common. Additionally, some noted that it may be precisely because there is relatively little diversity in the community, and thus a greater sense of isolation and less support networks for those affected, that the impacts of both macro and microaggressions are felt so strongly.

Participants shared that regardless of the nature or intent, being subjected to racism took a heavy emotional toll with added stress and feeling isolated, uncomfortable, and unwelcome. Particularly with the macroaggressions, many were fearful and felt unsafe in the community. Some Grinnell College students are too afraid or uncomfortable to leave campus and some BIPOC community members have moved their families out of town for more welcoming or diverse environments for their children.

Participants viewed a range of underlying causes as necessary to explain why incidents of macro and microaggressions persist, and the difficulties in overcoming them. Most felt that cultural differences between a mostly White, rural community, and racial and ethnic minorities and international students, as well as between students on campus were one important factor. Different groups have different expectations of what is appropriate, normal, polite, or offensive. The limited experience and understanding of one another may be filled with stereotypes or inappropriate expectations. Even innocent curiosity can be unintentionally offensive when it is connected with harmful stereotypes. At the extreme, cultural differences can lead to fear and avoidance of others, and sometimes hostility toward them.

Another primary underlying cause is the lack of interactions and communication between people of different racial and cultural groups. People of similar racial and ethnic backgrounds often gravitate to one another because of shared culture and identity. For college students, there are other tensions between the college and the town that serve to create a college “bubble” and reinforce students’ isolation and lack of interaction, as well as additional obstacles to going off campus. People from distinct racial and ethnic groups may also avoid those from other groups, or avoid open communication, in order to avoid conflict or for fear of offending the individual or being “canceled.” In general, talking about race is difficult in the US.


Lack of awareness in terms of what is offensive, when an offense has been given, and how common racism is in the community was noted as another key obstacle. A range of underlying causes for lack of awareness were also discussed, including the general lack of community discussion on race and racism, the difficulty of teaching about race in Iowa classrooms, insufficient systems to gather and share information about racist incidents, the tendency to avoid conflict and Iowa nice, and a general lack of interest or sense that it is necessary.

Participants identified anger, fear, and resentment as other underlying causes of racist incidents, particularly those that involved purposeful and explicit incidents. Some of that resentment was thought to be associated with the presence of the college. Others suggested that it comes from a fear of others, changing demographics in the US, economic uncertainty, and scapegoating.

Many felt that a main problem, and underlying problem, is accountability and that not enough has been done to address concerns over racism and racist incidents. Some felt that there were too many passive bystanders. Some saw responses thus far as largely reactive, or even just for show, and felt that there was no accountability, and insufficient initiative-taking and prolonged efforts by the college, the community, professors, & downtown businesses. A range of possible reasons were provided for perceived lack of action, including pushback or resistance by those who see the issue as partisan, denialism and defensiveness to being labeled racist, a tendency to blame the victim, that it is not a core concern for the college, and that people just don’t know what to do.

Other possible causes or obstacles raised included the lack of diversity in the community, which was discussed here primarily in terms of cultural differences and lack of interaction, that there are a few “bad apples,” and the influence and anonymity of social media.

Taking the perceived causes into account, participants suggested a range of options for addressing racism in the community. Some would like more data collected and disseminated, as well as greater accountability for those who commit racist acts. Many participants suggested that the community find more ways to welcome and celebrate diversity, providing a number of suggestions for how to do so. Some suggested a




need to increase and normalize discussions about race among friend groups and the community as a whole. Greater education and training could be used to raise awareness, as well as support BIPOC members of the community by preparing bystanders, teaching Grinnell's history, and preparing teachers as well as college faculty and staff. College students could also be better educated about Grinnell and its culture.

Many participants and interviewees highlighted the importance of getting people involved with one another through greater interactions, including sitting down, having conversations, asking questions, and getting to understand one another. Organization and leadership were suggested as key to achieving many of the suggested policies and actions, at the level of the college, the school district, and the city. Finally, greater systems of support for racial and ethnic minorities, including reporting systems, safety measures, and resources were noted. Some specific suggestions are reflected in the Black Student Union's 10-point call to action.

A range of organizations were identified as being potentially important to improving the situation, basically including the entire community, but particularly the city's public institutions, the college, churches, businesses, and service organizations and foundations. One comment that was repeated multiple times across sessions was that the primary responsibility should not be on the BIPOC community.

Participants also identified a large number of assets and strengths for Grinnell that could be supportive in addressing the issues raised. These are outlined in full in Table 6. Many noted that the community has a strong history of mutual support in times of need, regardless of social and cultural divisions. The diversity of the community itself was seen as a strength, and many noted that most of the community and businesses strongly support the students and reject racism. The City and Police Department responded clearly and firmly to the incidents of 2020 and 2022, and there have already been some efforts to organize and collaborate across multiple key institutions. As the table indicates, there are a large number of institutions available to collaborate.



Appendix 1: Policy Options and Strategies from Other Communities

As part of the research process, we explored what other communities have done to address racism or racist incidents in small towns or to make BIPOC and international students and other community members feel welcome. Below is a set of links to additional resources, as well as a small sample of strategies and case studies. This is not intended to be comprehensive, nor are these intended to represent the views of Build a Better Grinnell research team or steering committee. Many additional compilations of resources can be found by searching for anti-racism resources. The goal in providing these is to give decision makers another set of strategies that can be used along with other information provided in this report and decision makers own knowledge and expertise of the community to identify potentially useful options for Grinnell.

General Sources for Additional Information

1) National League of Cities (NLC) Race, Equity and Leadership (REAL) Initiative.

Includes action guides, training, and case studies to strengthen local leaders' knowledge and capacity to eliminate racial disparities, heal racial divisions and build more equitable communities.

<https://www.nlc.org/program/race-equity-and-leadership-real/>

2) Southern Poverty Law Center, Learning for Justice

Community-focused education program of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) that cultivates and nurtures dialogue, learning, reflection, and action from those most proximate to and impacted by injustices. The program seeks to uphold the mission of the Southern Poverty Law Center: to be a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle White supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements and advance the human rights of all people.

a) Section on race and ethnicity includes various resources

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/race-ethnicity>.

b) Responding to Hate and Bias at School. Publication of the Southern Poverty Law Center Learning for Justice program. Designed for school administrators to prepare for and respond to incidents.

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/responding-to-hate-and-bias-at-school>

3) Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching & Service

Housed at Georgetown University. Contains a set of resources directed towards distinct groups (for people of color, for White people, for higher education and educators, for parents and child caretakers/educators, etc.). Includes educational materials, strategies, and links to additional resources.

<https://csj.georgetown.edu/racial-justice/resources-for-particular-communities/>

Case Studies Using Varied Strategies to Address Racist Incidents and Reduce Racism

1) Confronting Racism in Schools with Southern Poverty Law Center Resources

Dayton, Washington is a town of about 1000, mostly White farmers. After a series of racist incidents involving the school, the superintendent gained resources from the Southern Poverty Law Center to educate teachers and work with students. He then collaborated with Whitman College to teach the civil rights movement to his students. <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2014/07/07/schoolhouse-lessons-confront-small-town-racism>

2) Creating Institutions to Focus Policies and Action

Ferguson, Missouri (pop 18,000). Forward Through Ferguson is a non-profit established after Michael Brown's killing. The Ferguson Commission uplifts communities through training workshops, creating networks of community activists, and funds/grants. It makes recommendations for systemic changes like increased community policing and anti-bias training. <https://forwardthroughferguson.org/>

3) Using Art to Give Voice and Create a Welcoming Environment
Walls for Justice, by Mural Arts Philadelphia: "Protest with a paintbrush" in response to Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. Anti-racism murals were painted throughout PA and there were mural training workshops too. There was also a collaboration with the Better Bike Share Partnership in 2022 for a community art ride along the Delaware River Trail, to highlight the murals and their importance in social justice.
<https://www.muralarts.org/blog/walls-for-justice-protest-with-paintbrush/>

4) Enhancing BIPOC Representation in the School System
Rapid research policy brief prepared with the Center for Education Policy Analysis, Research, and Evaluation (CEPARE). Enhancing the diversity of hiring committees to reduce bias, at all stages of hiring processes (recruitment, screening, interviewing, etc.). BIPOC specific mentorship programs were seen to increase retention rates for students and for staff. First-year teachers from BIPOC backgrounds have significantly lower turnover rates when they receive induction support.
<https://today.uconn.edu/2023/06/from-recruitment-through-retention-strategies-to-repair-and-strengthen-the-bipoc-teaching-pipeline/>

5) Support for BIPOC College Students

- a) Mental Health Counseling. *Nipissing University*: Provides mental health counseling specifically for BIPOC students. This includes culturally sensitive counseling, partnerships in the community who are BIPOC counselors, education initiatives and advocacy groups for BIPOC mental health.
<https://www.nipissingu.ca/departments/student-development-and-services/counselling-services/bipoc>
- b) Living Learning Community for BIPOC students. *UNC Asheville*: found that 49% of BIPOC students often feel welcome on campus compared to 86% of White students. They addressed the issues through initiatives like Living learning communities, designed for historically underrepresented students to live together and share their experiences, finding support amongst each other in their living/housing spaces. <https://irep.unca.edu/understanding-the-experiences-of-bipoc-students/>;
<https://afst.unca.edu/engage/sankofa-llc/>
- c) Inclusive teaching at a Predominantly White Institution. Set of resources from the University of Minnesota's Center for Educational Innovation. Addresses pedagogy, developing a supportive class climate, and other issues. <https://cei.umn.edu/teaching-resources/inclusive-teaching-predominantly-white-institution>
- d) Mentorship programs can provide a support system to BIPOC students navigating college. This article provides links to examples of mentorship programs at Columbia University, University of Washington, University of Texas at Austin, and Lewis and Clark.
<https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/college-mentorship-programs-for-bipoc-students/>
- e) Strategies to support BIPOC students at primarily White institutions. Research by The Education Trust, a nonprofit focused on racial and economic barriers in education, provided the following suggestions based on conversations with Black, Latino, and Asian American students at predominantly White institutions. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/student-success/college-experience/2023/11/09/seven-actions-pwis-can-take-aid-students-racial>,
<https://edtrust.org/college-campus-racial-climates/>

- i) Increase representation of people of color at the college, including faculty.
 - ii) Collect regular and frequent data on the campus racial climate.
 - iii) Facilitate interracial conversations.
 - iv) Streamline systems for reporting discrimination and provide updates on resolution of incidents.
 - v) Frequent discussions between institutional leadership and racial or ethnic student organizations.
 - vi) Ensure supports exist and inform students of their presence. Including social, academic, economic, mentorship, first-year courses, career advising, and scholarships.
 - vii) Establish affinity spaces such as cultural centers.
- f) Facilitate conversations between students through media (podcast). Co-producing podcasts about shared interests with student peers is an opportunity for students to break misconceptions about one another. Podcasts can educate all students about global issues and inspire them to know more about the local and global communities they are part of. Universities or instructors can use a range of podcasting approaches to suit them and their student population. Many universities have student-led podcasts covering topics such as social justice, sustainability, mental health, and cultural exchange. These podcasts create spaces for dialogue and learning.
- 6) Preparing College Students to Live in a Different Cultural Setting or Small Town
- a) Community Hosts: Community host programs pair college students (especially international or out-of-state students) with local residents who volunteer to be hosts. The goal is to bridge the gap between campus life and the surrounding community. These are local families or individuals who volunteer to host students. Students receive an orientation about the program. Hosts and students engage in regular interactions, such as attending community events, celebrating holidays, or sharing stories. This exposes students to local customs and traditions. It increases cultural understanding, improves language skills, and provides a sense of community. However, challenges may arise if there's a mismatch between student and host personalities or expectations. Grinnell College's Community Host Program connects international students with local families. Hosts invite students for dinners, outings, and holiday celebrations. Bowdoin's program gives priority to international students but will connect any student as long as there are sufficient hosts.
<https://www.bowdoin.edu/student-activities/community-host-program/index.html>
- 7) Connecting BIPOC and International Students with the Community
- a) Civic Engagement. These activities engage students with the local community. It leads to improved mental health and social connections, reduced crime and improved community safety, and inclusion. Appalachian State University: students can earn a graduation certificate and honor by completing the required number of designated service-learning courses. Lists of civic engagement centers can be found here: <https://web.apsanet.org/teachingcivicengagement/additional-teaching-resources/civic-engagement-centers-and-institutes/>
 - b) Story Circles. A show and tell event where international students present their hometown to the local community. Students and community members interested in sharing each other's cultures come together to share stories that are meaningful to them. It increased cultural awareness amongst the people. The University of California hosts an event called "Story Circle," where students can share stories about their hometown. It creates a platform for cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

Appendix 2. Policies and Practices in Grinnell's Peer Communities

The following represent what the research team was able to identify through on-line searches and reviews of key websites (city, school district, college) in Grinnell's peer communities. Thus, these can be seen as the more public (or publicized) efforts. We did not attempt a more comprehensive review through interviews with community representatives.

Decorah

- 1) City Human Rights Commission. The seven-member Commission provides education and addresses discrimination in the areas of education, housing, public accommodations, employment, and credit.⁵⁴
- 2) Decorah has a comprehensive hate crime policy "to respond to acts of hatred, including hate crimes, in a responsive, coordinated manner, with the unequivocal message that such acts will not be tolerated in Decorah. This Plan is intended to provide internal procedural guidelines for city officials responding to acts of hatred based on bias, racism, and bigotry".⁵⁵
- 3) Decorah has created an All Are Welcome Agreement for businesses to display, which shows "that you and your employees agree to make all of your customers feel welcome and safe."⁵⁶
- 4) Luther College Diversity and Inclusion website contains range of resources available for students.⁵⁷
- 5) Luther College's Music Department initiated an Antiracism Task Force to tackle racism and foster diversity, equity, and inclusion within its programs. The task force, consisting of faculty, staff, and students, focuses on understanding racism's impact, enhancing BIPOC student recruitment and retention, incorporating diverse musical traditions into the curriculum, and revising the department's mission statement to reflect antiracism commitments.⁵⁸
- 6) Decorah Public Schools follow a non-discrimination statement.⁵⁹

Fairfield

- 1) The City of Fairfield Diversity Equity & Inclusion Committee was founded in the summer of 2020, by Mayor Connie Boyer. "We are committed to providing informed, authentic leadership for diversity, equity, and inclusion within our community."⁶⁰
- 2) Maharishi University's has a diversity, equity, and inclusion site with a range of information and resources.⁶¹
- 3) Fairfield Schools have a non-discrimination policy covering race, color, national origin, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status, gender identity, and socioeconomic status (for programs).

⁵⁴ "Human Rights Commission," City of Decorah, Commissions and Boards, Accessed July 9, 2024, <https://www.decorahia.org/commission-and-boards/human-rights-commission>.

⁵⁵ "Hate Crime Policy," City of Decorah, City News Articles, Posted Oct. 26, 2019, <https://www.decorahia.org/city-news/hate-crime-policy>.

⁵⁶ "The All Are Welcome Agreement," City of Decorah, City News Articles, Posted Oct. 26, 2022, <https://www.decorahia.org/city-news/hate-crime-policy>.

⁵⁷ "Diversity and Inclusion," Luther College, Student Life, Accessed July 9, 2024, <https://www.luther.edu/student-life/diversity-inclusion>.

⁵⁸ "Luther College Music Department DEIB," Luther College, Music Department Information, Accessed July 9, 2024, <https://www.luther.edu/music/department/antiracism>.

⁵⁹ "Non-Discrimination Statement," Decorah Community School District, Accessed July 9, 2024, <https://decorah.k12.ia.us/non-discrimination-policy/>.

⁶⁰ "City of Fairfield Diversity Equity & Inclusion Committee," Facebook, Accessed July 9, 2024, https://www.facebook.com/FairfieldDEICommittee/?locale=en_GB.

⁶¹ "D/E/I," Google Sites, Accessed July 9, 2024, <https://sites.google.com/mum.edu/miu-equity-diversity-inclusion/home?authuser=0>.

Pella

- 1) Pella has produced a Title VI Plan and compliant process, ensuring that nobody will “be excluded from or participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity.”⁶²
- 2) The Reformed Church in America’s 2022 General Synod in Pella stated a commitment to “deepen its commitment to antiracism and move toward a multicultural and multiracial future freed from racism”. This directive affects many reformed churches in Iowa.⁶³
- 3) Central College actively promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through its Building a Culture of Inclusion initiative, involving students, faculty, and staff in collaborative efforts to infuse DEI into campus life. This initiative encompasses a range of activities, including organizing multicultural events, establishing BIPOC+ meet and greets, and introducing multicultural spaces on campus.⁶⁴
- 4) Pella Community School District has a non-discrimination policy.⁶⁵

Waverly

- 1) The Human Equity and Diversity Commission, established by the City Council on January 12, 2021, focuses on fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community in Waverly. Its responsibilities include recommending operational budgets to the City Council, devising plans, strategies, and policies to eliminate barriers and promote opportunities for Waverly's residents, and launching initiatives aimed at enhancing diversity and equity within the city. This commission serves as a pivotal body in shaping a community that values diversity and ensures equity for all its members.⁶⁶
- 2) Wartburg maintains a diversity and inclusion website.⁶⁷ Wartburg College's Diversity & Inclusion Plan, spearheaded by the Diversity and Inclusion Council (DIC), focuses on embedding diversity and inclusion within institutional frameworks and everyday campus life. Initiatives include centralizing diversity programming, enhancing faculty and staff diversity, and potentially establishing a Chief Diversity Officer to coordinate these efforts.⁶⁸

⁶² “Title VI Plan,” City of Pella, Government, Accessed July 9, 2024, <https://www.cityofpella.com/391/Title-VI-Plan>.

⁶³ Scottv@kiwaradio.com, “RCA General Synod Changes Relationship To Western Theological Seminary, Makes Other Decisions,” KIWA Radio, June 17, 2022, <https://kiwaradio.com/local-news/rca-general-synod-changes-relationship-to-western-theological-seminary-makes-other-decisions/>.

⁶⁴ “Diversity, Equity & Inclusion,” Central College, Accessed July 9, 2024, <https://central.edu/dei/>.

⁶⁵ “Non-Discrimination Policy,” Pella Community School District, Accessed July 9, 2024, <https://www.pellaschools.org/discrimination-policy/>.

⁶⁶ “Human Equity and Diversity Commission,” City of Waverly, Boards & Commissions, Accessed July 9, 2024, <https://www.waverlyia.com/city-information/boards-commissions/human-equity-and-diversity-commission/default.aspx>.

⁶⁷ “Diversity & Inclusion,” Wartburg College, Accessed July 9, 2024, <https://www.wartburg.edu/diversity/>.

⁶⁸ “Co-Curriculum Diversity & Inclusion Plan,” Accessed on July 9, 2024, <https://d30ufu6vr9yoyg.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/cocurdivplan.pdf>.

- 3) To foster a safer and more inclusive campus, the Wartburg College has also formed a Community Responsibility Team. This team, led by the Chief Diversity Officer, tackles bias-related incidents, provides resources to the community, and aims to improve the overall campus climate through policy development and active engagement with campus-wide diversity and inclusion efforts.⁶⁹
- 4) Waverly-Shell Rock Community School district lists its non-discrimination policy and grievance procedure on its “equity concerns” page.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ “Co-Curriculum Diversity & Inclusion Plan...”

⁷⁰ “Equity Concerns,” Waverly-Shell Rock Community Schools, Accessed July 9, 2024, <https://www.wsr.k12.ia.us/page/equity-and-abuse-policies>.

Appendix 3: Grinnell Police Department Community Engagement Proposal

The following document was provided by Grinnell Chief of Police Michael McClelland.

Grinnell Police Department Community Engagement Proposal

Michael A. McClelland, Chief of Police

July 15th, 2023

<https://youtu.be/srfUJ1w-uWw>


Community Engagement Purpose

“I do not feel safe in my community; I am afraid to walk the streets in fear.” This was a statement from a black Grinnell College student in October 2022. Fourteen vehicles on the college campus had been graffitied, some with white supremacy symbols. Along with this horrific act, numerous minority students were now coming forward with separate stories of being racially harassed by white drivers yelling racial slurs at them as they walked down the street (Tudgade, 2022). Not only had these incidents brought attention to the problem of racial harassment in the present, but numerous minority alumni came forward, telling the same stories of racism during their years at Grinnell College. Loyal Terry, a senior student at Grinnell College and co-spokesperson for the college’s Black Student Union, stated, “Most of the black and international students at the school do not trust Campus Security, or for that matter, the Grinnell Police Department.”

Terry’s statement hit me hard as the Police Chief. Although I had only been in the position of Chief for a few years, since my arrival, I had not received one report or complaint from anyone in the community about racial harassment going on. Nothing in our records showed my officers being investigated for conduct unbecoming, excessive use of force, or abuse of authority. My attendance at community meetings, social clubs, and other community events yielded nothing to raise my awareness that there was a racial problem in the community of Grinnell. Ignorance, however, is not an excuse, and I now have a significant community issue I must address: why the minority students of the college do not trust the police, and for that matter, persons of color within the community who may also be afraid to come forward. How can I, as the Police Chief, effectively engage the community with this issue and build mutual trust and legitimacy so they do not have to live in fear? The following pages will address my proposal to begin this dialogue and how partnering with the community stakeholders will allow us to develop co-produced solutions.

Problem Definition and Background


While this problem of racial harassment of students in the small town of Grinnell, Iowa, is horrific, shocking, and unbelievable to some, it is a problem that has deep-seated roots within the American experience that we must acknowledge first. While recent high-profile incidents nationally have sparked the conversation about police mistreatment of minorities and demands for reform, they all pale in comparison to incidents of the not-so-distant past. From the slave patrols of the 1800s, police enforcement of Jim Crow laws, to the Civil Rights movements and urban race riots of the 1960s, police and the minority community have shared a violent past. As policing evolved throughout the last 200 years, minorities have not benefited from these changes as much as Whites, highlighting once again the difficulty in fostering positive police–minority relations. The history of police–citizen violence during times of civil unrest has resulted in personal and vicarious instances of trauma (Bryant-Davis et al., 2017), which complicates the ability of minorities to have constructive, trustworthy relationships with police. While many officers on the streets today were not born when these events occurred, they must acknowledge the harm it caused and the lack



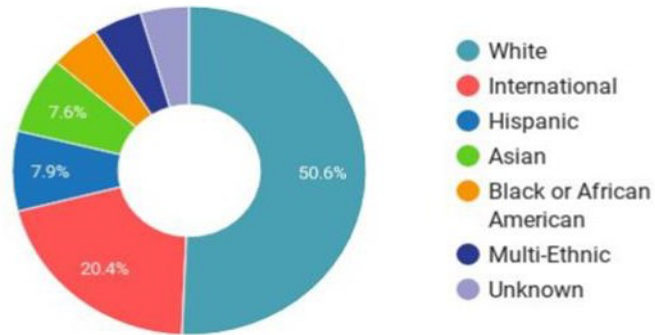
of trust created. This would be the first step for many during the community dialogue process (Jannetta, J. et al., 2019).

I believe it is essential to note the demographics of the City of Grinnell, Iowa, which has a population of 9,435. The tables below show a population breakdown by race for the city and the college. It is essential to separate the demographics of the City of Grinnell versus those of Grinnell College due to the transient nature of the student population and how it impacts the city. Being a private college, Grinnell College has a separate administration and is not easily influenced by outside entities, like the City Government or our police department. Administrators on the campus have made it very clear that they do not wish for the presence of Grinnell Police officers in or around campus due to fears some students have of the officers and the weapons they carry. Grinnell College has an enrollment of 1,500 students for the Fall and Spring semesters, along with a sizeable international student group.

While the city of Grinnell, 90% white, may not have a defined history as a “sundown or sunset town,” defined as a town with a history of excluding nonwhite people, most frequently African Americans (Beagan, G. 2022), it would be irresponsible to say that racism is not a part of its history, or a factor in everyday life here. The city taunts its founder, J.B. Grinnell, as an abolitionist with connections to the “underground railroad” and how fugitive slaves from the South were hidden in Grinnell and helped before the Civil War (Conrad, R. 2004).

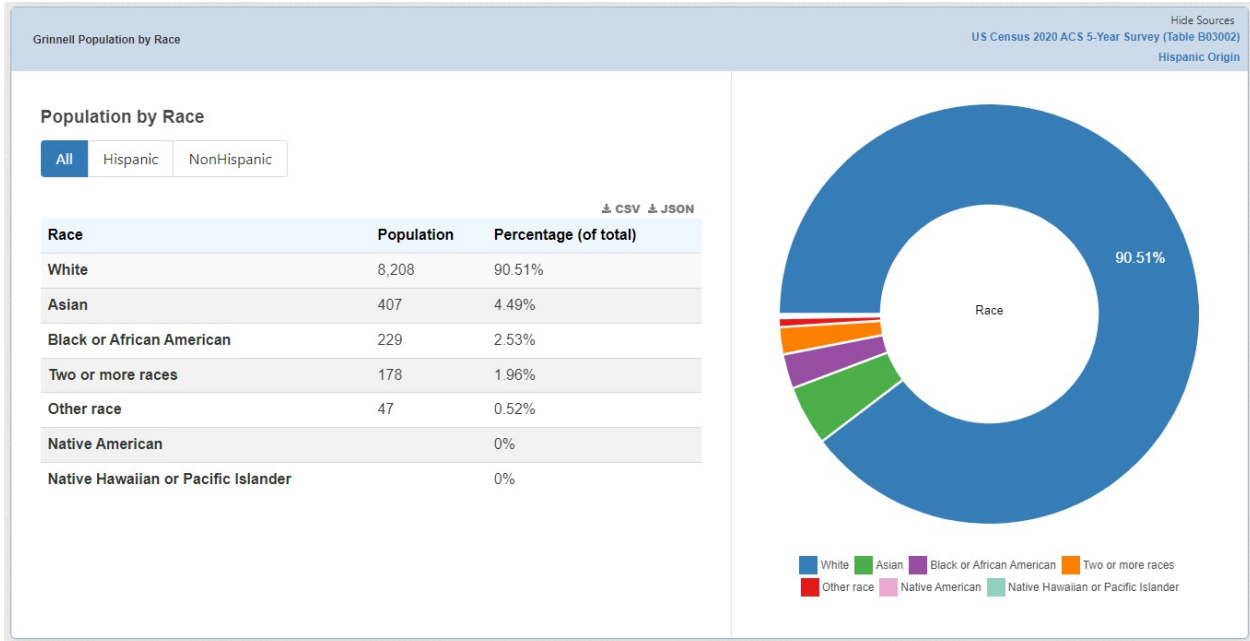


Racial-Ethnic Demographics of Grinnell Full-Time Undergraduat...



CollegeFactual.com

Race/Ethnicity	Number
White	734
International	281
Hispanic	135
Asian	115
Black or African American	69
Multi-Ethnic	68
Unknown	57
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0



Stakeholder Analysis

With this understanding of the history, it becomes clear that the failure of the department, along with the city and college administration, to engage the issues of race seriously and swiftly could result in problems leading to negative media, protests, and possibly violent riots as seen throughout our country in 2020. Although the college, specifically the Black Student Union, claims there have been hundreds of incidents of racial harassment with students of color, very few have been reported to the Grinnell Police Department. If the trust of the police is, in fact, a barrier to this, I cannot address it alone, and it is crucial to bring in all key stakeholders and develop an engagement plan. The stakeholder mapping below represents my stakeholder analysis of this problem, based on identifying the key stakeholders and their interests (positive or negative) in the project, their levels of impact or influence they can have, and how best to create open and transparent dialogue for success (Kenny, K. 2014). When looking at the issue's primary stakeholders, those directly impacted are more to the center. In contrast, those who have a concern but are not directly involved are included as secondary stakeholders.

College administration may resist engaging with the police and develop a separate community engagement plan. Remembering the political environment and the division this could cause is essential because there is already a divisional bubble between the College and the town of Grinnell, a "Town vs. Gown" mentality (Richardson, H. 2020). If we or the college administration fails to approach the minority citizens of Grinnell in a dialogue manner and instead choose a debate-style approach, all communications could shut down. Therefore, when we bring our primary stakeholders together, we must set clear expectations and goals on what we wish to accomplish. The goal is to determine how the Grinnell Police Department can gain the trust and legitimacy of persons of color to serve its community and citizens with equity and equality effectively.



Process Description

The first step in this community engagement plan is to bring together identified stakeholders. I would do this by several different means. First, beginning with a social media campaign, advocating for the public's input on how they see or evaluate their police department, the service provided, and how they wish to be policed. This can be done on our Facebook or Instagram platforms or by sending a survey link to the monthly city utility bills. The beginning of this social media campaign can be started with a video, narrated by me, personally explaining the issues we are having in the community with racial harassment, and in essence, showing genuine concern and empathy towards the problem and our desire to improve relations with the community. The importance of using technology and social media cannot be understated since most community members do not feel comfortable coming to a public meeting or forum. Some minority groups may fear coming to a public meeting, afraid to express themselves openly and truthfully. The ability to express themselves anonymously online or with a survey allows them to be heard. Gathering this information and data and actively listening to what citizens say are the first steps toward co-produced solutions.

Along with the surveys, the second step would be to have several public forums in a neutral location in which no one has the benefit of power or status. The forums would be scheduled on a weeknight so as not to conflict with everyone's busy schedules and weekend plans. I would select the conference center room at the Hotel Grinnell, which is centrally located in town and very spacious with the ability to cater a meal or snacks, which I believe would set the tone and bring people together socially beforehand. The hotel also has other rooms available to accommodate breakout groups if needed or desired. The main room would be designed with round tables of six in order to group specific stakeholders so they could discuss their areas of expertise and what they can bring forward to the

I would ask Dr. Kesho Scott, an internationally renowned diversity trainer/ consultant, to moderate the forum. Scott is a founding member of International Capacity Building Services. This cultural competency training team facilitates "unlearning isms" and Human Rights workshops, seminars, and training programs successfully adapted for audiences throughout the United States and abroad. While Scott is associated with Grinnell College as an Associate Professor of American Studies and Sociology, I believe that because of her extensive experience and advocacy of anti-racist and anti-sexist training and forums outside the college, she can remain neutral and successfully moderate our forums, its time frame, schedule, and listed goals. It is also vital that I, as the Police Chief, be present during all forums. While I may not be a facilitator or moderator of the meetings, my presence shows the stakeholders that police leadership is serious about advocating change. It will also ensure it permeates the entire police department chain of command.

With the information gathered from social media and surveys, along with having members of the community and college students come forward at the public forums to be heard, an analysis of the data collected can give us the ability to see where problems exist and where the breakdown in community trust lies with the police. It is here where the productive dialogue begins and co-produced solutions occur. While there may be deadlines set to accomplish specific tasks, the timeline to collect all this information may take more than one public forum, along with different follow-up meetings of the City Council, Public Safety Committee, or College administration, to come to a consensus of what must be done.

At some point, based on the collaborative input and recommendations from the community and stakeholders, decisions must be made on how to proceed, and a plan of action must be made to move forward. These decisions and plans must be based on resources, budgetary concerns, and personnel. The plan must be realistic and sustainable to go along with the overall mission of the police department. However, the results and outcome of this community engagement plan may not stop with just the police in mind. It may also sprout other community stakeholders to dialogue to improve equality and equity in the Grinnell community and stop structural and systemic racism in other areas, like banking, housing, health care, and education.

Once the plan of action or strategy is completed, the work begins. As a small-town police department, I cannot go at it alone; continued input and assistance will be encouraged and needed. I plan to assemble a Chief's Advisory Committee (CAC) to continue communicating openly with the community and stakeholders. This CAC would be composed of five to seven selected members from the community, selected in much the same fashion as my stakeholders. These members would meet once a month, probably an evening during the week, for 90 minutes, to assist me not only with the plan or strategy resulting from public forum and surveys but in all aspects of our department: training, policy, and procedures, recruiting and retention, promotions, mental health liaison, community policing, community engagement events, officer complaints and discipline, use of force, and so on. The members would be exposed to all department elements to understand better how and why we do what we do. From that exposure, they can assist me with valuable feedback on concerns the community may have with the police, along with enhancing our trust and communications with the public.

The CAC will be instrumental in communicating to stakeholders the decisions being made and how progress is going with agreed-upon strategies. This progress can be delivered by hosting community policing events, like town hall meetings or Coffee with the Chief. It can also be released in monthly reports by me, reporting total numbers of calls for service, citations issued, warnings, crashes, etc., along with a Race, Gender, and Ethnicity report, advising who is being contacted the most by my officers, who is getting stopped and issued citations. All these monthly reports can then be generated into a Yearly Report so citizens can see what their police force is doing, where crime is occurring, and who we are contacting and arresting.

The biggest challenge with this community engagement proposal will be the buy-in from my officers and command staff. Police officers hate change, and this would be a total change in the culture of our department. Some officers may decide it is not what they signed up for, transfer to another department, or leave the profession altogether. The other challenge will be getting those who need to be involved in the dialogue involved. Fear is a powerful thing, and some, specifically the persons of color in our community, may not come forward and remain silent due to fear of retribution from others. Our success in this plan will only be judged by those we serve, and we will have to seek their input constantly, either with follow-up surveys or face-to-face meetings, to gauge if all our work is making a difference. When everyone, regardless of skin color, race, gender, or sexual orientation, can walk the streets of Grinnell without fear, then we will know we are successful.

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Appendix 4: Questionnaire Guide for Community Discussion Hosts

The following is the discussion guide that was provided to hired community discussion hosts. A similar set of questions was asked in listening sessions and focus groups.

Less Racism

Part 1: The nature of the Problem

- What is the problem here? What are people referring to when they ask for less racism in Grinnell?
- How bad is this problem?
- What are some specific examples of this problem?
- Are some aspects of this problem more severe than others?
- Is it worse at particular times?
- How long has this been an issue? Is it getting better, worse?
- How extensive is this problem? Are there some areas in the community where this is more of a problem?

Part 2: The Impacts or consequences.

- How does this issue affect you or your family?
- Can you give some specific examples of when and how you have been affected by racism in Grinnell?
- What steps or changes in behavior have you taken to adapt to the presence of racism?
- What challenges have you or your family faced trying to personally adapt to the presence of racism?
- How does this issue affect the community?
- Are some people more affected than others?
- What happens if nothing is done?

Part 3: The Causes

- Why does this problem exist in Grinnell?
- Why haven't we been able to solve this issue?
- What will be the obstacles to getting this need met for the community?

Part 4: Solutions

- What ideas for solutions do you have for individuals, families, or the community as a whole?
- What efforts have been made to address this issue? How did they go?
- Do we have current programs or efforts to address racism? Please share.
- What do you see as the community's strengths in regard to this issue? (What is working well? What might we build on?)
- Are there groups or individuals in the community that would be helpful or central in addressing this?
- Are there funding resources available to help address this?

Part 5: Other

- What else do you want us to know or be thinking about in relation to this issue?