



# Anti-racism Progress Report

June 2021 – May 2022

This year, I have attempted to live up to the commitments I made in 2020, based on my adoption of the [Hello Seven pledge](#).

Here are the areas of the pledge followed by my original commitments (in gray), what I held to or accomplished, and what I plan to do in the coming year.

## **Name white supremacy and the impact of racism on both our personal and professional lives.**

White supremacy impacts every aspect of my personal and professional life. Because I'm White, there are many ways I disempower Black people and uphold systems of oppression. This includes how I spend my money, which contractors I hire, which businesses I associate with, and the kinds of content I share. Looking at a list of my clients and collaborators, it's obvious that I operate in an almost completely White sphere.

To unlearn these behaviors and begin to undo the harm I've caused, I'll explore each aspect of my business immediately, including my policies, use of language and finances, and my marketing and networking tactics. As I discover racist aspects of my business, I'll change them to be actively anti-racist.

Last year, I pledged to

- Keep my anti-racism page up and post a link to this progress report on it.
- Continue to name White supremacy as a reality and force to be resisted and dismantled in my business materials and marketing.

I posted last year's progress report on [my anti-racism page](#) and continued to name White supremacy through my professional anti-racism statements and shares on social media and by following and amplifying Black voices online (especially copywriters of color). I also continued to read books by Black authors and to log them in [this blog post](#).

## **Engage in anti-racist education for you and your team.**

I pledge to engage in anti-racist education quarterly. I will pay for and attend a BIPOC-led workshop or training twice a year and engage in an anti-racism book study with other business owners twice a year.

Last year, I pledged to:

- Find and attend two paid anti-racist trainings and attend at least two other training sessions that are free or ticketed.
- Continue to read books by Black and Indigenous authors and consume other media created by (and uplifting) Black content creators and marketers.
- Initiate at least one study group of business owners to more deeply explore anti-racism in our businesses.

I participated in the following trainings and webinars:

- Embodied Antiracism for White-Bodied Folx, YMCA virtual guided meditations (paid) October 16, November 13
- Let's Talk: Google It, YWCA virtual two-part series (paid) February 26, March 26
- Let's Talk: Race, YWCA virtual three-part series (paid) April 30, May 28, June 25

I read the following books:

- White Tears/Brown Scars by Ruby Hamad
- Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together In The Cafeteria? by Beverly Daniel Tatum
- Perhaps others. I did not track the books I read this year as well as I did last year.

I did not initiate a group of business owners to engage in a study, as I pledged I would.

In 2022-23, I pledge to:

- Attend quarterly anti-racist trainings, three paid, one paid or free.
- Continue to read books by Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian American authors on **antiracist themes** but also **content created to provoke thought and joy, especially fiction and poetry.**
- Create and use a system for tracking what I read, beyond updating my blog post.
- Consume other media created by and uplifting Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian American people, particularly creators in my industry.

## **Commit to open conflict and allow discomfort.**

Open communication is part of Pearl & Ink's stated values and includes full engagement in conversations about race and systemic racism. I pledge to embrace the inevitable conflict and discomfort that will arise during these conversations and to be an active participant in the conversation. It's not going to get better if we stay silent, pretend racism is over, or deny that we're part of the problem.

Last year I pledged to:

- Continue meeting with the accountability group bi-weekly and reach out to rebuild attendance, following a summer break.
- Explore how to engage with SURJ, particularly their monthly meetings.
- Explore other organizations doing anti-racist work, such as the local chapter of the YWCA, and see if there are ways to engage with them.
- Do more through mutual aid to concretely support Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in our community.

This year, I continued meeting bi-weekly with the other White professionals through the Thurston County Anti-racism Collective, which has essentially turned into an accountability group. This year, all three of us have made steady progress toward making our work more anti-racist.

This year we:

- Continued to speak frankly about racism and the ways we see it continue to emerge in ourselves and the systems around us. We continued to seek and offer feedback, encouragement, new perspectives, and accountability.
- Added more reading and discussion to our meetings. Since each of us regularly engage in different types of anti-racist readings, we were able to enrich one another's understanding by sharing articles and discussing them together.

- Reported on our compliance with our respective anti-racism statements, especially in the areas of monetary gifts, staff training, and individual training for greater personal awareness.
- Continued to contribute to businesses owned by People of Color by purchasing supplies and services from them.

Once again, I did not engage with our local SURJ chapter. I did engage with Olympia's YWCA chapter through the trainings listed above.

I gave to some mutual aid efforts. In particular, my business supported ten businesses through their GoFundMe campaigns to provide relief when more than a dozen businesses were destroyed in a fire this December. Some of these businesses are owned by people in marginalized groups. I gave a total of \$500 to these businesses.

I did not give to or promote mutual aid groups in an organized way.

This year I pledge to:

- Continue meeting bi-weekly with the accountability group. Invite other business owners to join in a more active way through person-to-person interactions.
- Get more involved with the YWCA. I plan to participate in their upcoming Let's Talk Series courses on gender (this summer) and class (this fall). I'd also like to find out more about their cohort program and participate if they and I think it's good timing and a good fit for me. I aim to attend at least two more meditations for White-bodied people this year.

## **Invest a portion of your monthly company budget to the Black community.**

I pledge to invest 30% of my business budget into Black-owned products and services, including software, services, Black-authored business books, and writing tools.

Last year, I pledged to:

- Research and use the lists I created of consultants and other businesses run by People of Color before making any purchases. Since I purchase so few products and services, every purchase I make counts.

- Purchase actively. Instead of waiting until the business needs something, I can stock up on a regular schedule. This will spread out my spending and also supply Black- and BIPOC-owned businesses with ongoing rather than intermittent support.

My business has very few day-to-day expenses. This year, I spent money only on the basics: subscription and license renewals, professional services, and office supplies and software. I also purchased a new laptop.

None of this was purchased, so far as I can tell, from a Black-owned business. This underlines the fact that a) many of “the basics” for business in our society are still dominated by White people and b) I can be most effective, financially, by supporting People of Color by donating directly to causes that are run by and that support them.

This year, I pledge to:

- Research and use the lists of creators and consultants who are Black, Indigenous, Asian American, and Latinx before making any purchases.
- Once again, purchase actively by stocking up. This will spread out my spending and also supply businesses owned by marginalized individuals with ongoing rather than intermittent support.
- Check in on my spending quarterly and take inventory to see if there’s anything I can use, now or in the near future. I have added quarterly reminders to my calendar to prompt me to check in on my spending.

## **Express your sincere, long-term commitment to becoming an anti-racist organization.**

As a start, I’ve crafted a statement of Pearl & Ink’s commitment anti-racism, which I include on my consumer-facing marketing materials, client documents, and internal policies:

***Pearl & Ink is an anti-racist business. Through education, active involvement in anti-racist groups, information sharing, internal policies, spending, and action, this business is engaged in the ongoing work of dismantling systemic racism.***

During the first half of the 2020-21 year, I’ll forge a more detailed action plan.

Here’s where each area of my business stands in my goal to become an actively anti-racist business:

# Policy

In 2021, I implemented a new giving policy: To give 5% of my annual income to Black and Indigenous farmers, starting by becoming a sustaining member of two organizations that support Black farmers in the Pacific Northwest.

From June 2021 through May of 2022, the business paid Black farming groups \$1,200.00:

- Black Food Sovereignty Coalition (Portland) \$600.00
- Black Farmers Collective (Seattle) \$600.00

After taxes, I calculated that the 5% giving structure would allow Pearl & Ink to give end-of-fiscal-year gifts to two local farming operations: [Haki Farmers Collective](#), a Black-founded and -operated group farming land in Lacey and Tumwater and [Salish Roots Farm](#), an operation in the Kamilche Valley operated by the Squaxin Island Tribe. This allowed me to give an additional \$1,300.00 to Black and Native farmers:

- Haki Farmers Collective (Olympia/Lacey/Tumwater) \$650.00
- Salish Roots Farm (Kamilche Valley/Shelton) \$650.00

This year, I will officially keep the same policy in place and assess whether or not I will be able to maintain an income that would allow me to become a sustaining member of Haki Farmers Collective, as well.

## Reduced-fee policy

In 2020, I developed a reduced fee policy for business owners of color and organizations that align with Pearl & Ink's values. Like last year, I failed to market this policy adequately.

The bulk of my work this year was for a few retainer clients, including my first government contract. This makes my work more sustainable but less flexible, making me less available for new retainer clients and less able to take on the kinds of special projects that new clients often use as a trial run for my services, such as websites.

I believe my work can be more effective for People of Color if I either a) offer to help individuals at a reduced rate or pro bono and/or b) offer a more highly publicized and organized effort, such as matching new business owners in marginalized groups with copywriters who would, similarly, like to offer copy at a reduced price or pro bono.

Therefore, I'm shuttering my reduced-rate policy and pledging to get input from my accountability group as well as two other copywriters/content writers in town who may be open to offering their services. Once I've decided what to do, I'll start implementing the new action. I'll revisit this effort every four months.

## Language

I continue to shape the language I use in my marketing to be more inclusive and less harmful. This year, based on feedback from a contract manager and a collaborator on one of my contracts, I started spelling out "Black, Indigenous, and People of Color" more often and reducing my use of "BIPOC."

Even though "BIPOC" has been promoted by influential Black writers such as Layla F. Saad, it's clear that many people in the Black community, the Latinx community, and other communities of color find the acronym lazy and dismissive.

Based on this feedback and on thoughts like those expressed in [this Newsweek opinion piece](#) and [this New York Times op-ed](#), I'll start using "People of Color" infrequently and only if I need a blanket term. Otherwise, I will strive to name specific groups.

## Marketing

I continued to promote Black copywriters through my Instagram Stories and through the "HIRE POC" highlight on my main page. There are currently nine featured copywriters in the highlight.

I'd like to feature new writers on a more regular basis, perhaps two or three per quarter. I also want to be mindful about how many writers I have on this highlight so it's not an unmanageable list for potential customers.

Even more than adding new writers, I need to more actively promote these copywriters of color and their work. If the highlight just sits there, it's performative and harmful.

This year, I pledge to:

- Put up a reminder Story every other month to call attention to the highlight.
- Actively promote the fact that I'm not taking on many new clients and point people *first* to the many copywriters of color available for work.
- Seek out Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian American copywriters in the Pacific Northwest and prioritize their work in my marketing. So far, I have no one from this region highlighted, a weak point given my focus on and contacts within

South Puget Sound and Seattle. Since most of my contacts want to work with someone local, there's a disconnect between leveraging my online platform to promote copywriters of color and the probability that my contacts will actually hire someone remote.

## **Networking**

Like last year, I attended no networking events.

I continue to seek out businesses owned by People of Color and to promote their work. This year, I'll pay special attention to Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses, buy from them in person whenever possible, and take photos to promote their work on social media.

## **Collaboration**

This year I did not partner with new collaborators who are People of Color. I only worked with one new collaborator, a White male who was hired by one of my clients.

I did not actively reach out to web builders, designers, social media managers, or photographers. My goal is, once again, to start filling in details about the kinds of clients each wishes to work with so I can more effectively refer potential clients to them and build a solid, diverse network of professionals that I can learn from and support.

I pledge to update my current list this month and check in on my progress/update my list and contacts in six months.