

## **Interrupting Bias and Building Belonging in a Municipality**

The Town of Pelham is sponsoring an in-person, 90 minute workshop for its employees and volunteers, to which residents also are invited to attend. The workshop will be offered twice. Both sessions will be held in the Ramsdell Room at the Pelham Library. The first session will be held on October 28, 2025 from 10:30 to Noon. The second session, for those who did not attend the first, is scheduled to be held on October 29, 2025 from 7:00 to 8:30 pm

The purpose of the training sessions is to help attendees to become better able to identify, and respond appropriately to, racial and other divisive issues. Each session will include discussions of how discrimination can occur when municipal employees interact with other people, why people engage in discriminatory conduct, and what can be done to address it. The ultimate question is what is the goal of this process.

The principles that will be applied are diversity, equity, and inclusion, collectively referred to as DEI. Although they sound anti-discriminatory - you can be who you are and still be treated fairly and welcomed - the President, on his first day in office last January, characterized DEI as illegal and immoral. Persons who attend the training sessions will experience how DEI actually works: what it focuses on, how it addresses discrimination, and what results from following the process. They will be able to decide for themselves how these principles fit their values.

The sessions will be led by Jennifer Moyston, whose background is in diversity, equity, and inclusion, especially around community engagement, workforce equity, and creating cultures of belonging. She has spent years working at the municipal level to help towns build more equitable policies and practices. That includes working for the Town of Amherst in the Department of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion for 11 years, the last 2 1/2 years as Assistant Director of the Department. Currently, she is the Board President at the Amherst Survival Center and serves on the boards of Community Action Pioneer Valley and Hilltown Community Health Center.

Sponsored by the Select Board, the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and the Pelham Library

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