



Legislation Text

File #: 190098, **Version:** 2

190098
SUBSTITUTE 2

COMMON COUNCIL

Substitute resolution committing the City of Milwaukee to take actions toward achieving racial equity and transforming the systems and institutions of racism that impact the health and well-being of the community.

This resolution commits the City, in collaboration with its departments and the Equal Rights Commission, consistent with its authority as defined in Chapter 109 of the Milwaukee Code, to take actions toward achieving racial equity, including, but not limited to, implementing strategic practices in the following areas:

1. Organizational infrastructure.
2. Organizational and workforce capacity.
3. Internal practices and processes.
4. Policy and legislative change.
5. Community alliance building.

Whereas, Milwaukee is considered one of the most racially-segregated cities in the United States; and

Whereas, Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by social determinants of health, such as increased exposure to lead, poor air quality, lack of safe places to walk, bike, or run, and inadequate health education; and

Whereas, The racial segregation in Milwaukee results in wide health outcome disparities among its different racial populations; and

Whereas, Racism is a social system with multiple dimensions, including individual racism, which is internalized or interpersonal, and systematic racism, which is institutional or structural and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks; and

Whereas, Systematic racism unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and depletes the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources; and

Whereas, Racism causes persistent racial discrimination in housing, education, employment, transportation, and criminal justice, and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism is a social determinant of health; and

Whereas, From 2015 to 2017, the 3-year rolling average infant mortality rate in the City of Milwaukee among African-American mothers was 15.4 deaths per 1,000 births, compared to their white counterparts, a rate of 5.1 deaths per 1,000 births; and

Whereas, Healthiest Wisconsin 2020 states that, “Wisconsin must address persistent disparities in health outcomes and the social, economic, educational, and environmental inequities that contribute to them”; and

Whereas, Although there is no epidemiologic definition of “public health crisis,” the health impacts of racism clearly exemplify the definition proposed by experts, which is that “The problem must affect large numbers of people, it must threaten health over the long-term, and it must require the adoption of large-scale solutions”; and

Whereas, Over 24 cities, counties, and states in the United States combined, including the Wisconsin Public Health Association and the Milwaukee County Executive and Board of Supervisors, have declared racism to be a public health crisis affecting the entire society; and

Whereas, It is the intent of Milwaukee County to address racism, including seeking solutions to reshape the discourse and to actively engage all residents in racial justice work; and

Whereas, With support from community partners, it is also the City of Milwaukee’s responsibility to address racism, including seeking solutions to reshape the discourse and actively engage all residents in racial justice work; and

Whereas, One of the City’s 6 strategic goals is to promote racial, social, and economic equity for all residents; and

Whereas, The City funds a wide range of programs and services to support this strategic goal in areas including education and workforce development, criminal justice and violence prevention, health, housing, small business development, and other programs funded through a variety of sources including levy, Community Development Block Grant, and other grants and sources; and

Whereas, The Equal Rights Commission is authorized by s. 109-11 of the Code to gather reports from City departments related to efforts and activities undertaken across City government to achieve equal rights objectives; and

Whereas, This resolution builds on the City’s efforts to advance racial equity and social and economic justice; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the City asserts that racism is a public health crisis affecting the entire society and supports all efforts to address public health disparities due to racial inequities throughout the City; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Equal Rights Commission shall collect information from City departments in accordance with its authority as set forth in s. 109-11 of the Code, analyze department efforts as set forth in s. 1094-4 of the Code, and provide recommendations to the Common Council and the Mayor on an annual basis; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City, in collaboration with its departments and the Equal Rights Commission, consistent with its authority as defined in Chapter 109 of the Milwaukee Code, commits to take actions toward achieving racial equity, including, but not limited to, implementing strategic practices to address racism in the following areas:

1. Organizational Infrastructure

- a. Work with the Equal Rights Commission to identify and recommend a process to ensure that racial equity is a core element of departmental operations.
- b. Regularly collect, analyze, and report demographic and socio-economic characteristics to track population trends and to better understand who is affected by health inequities in order to identify priorities for improving health outcomes and to implement policy and practices to advance improved outcomes.
- c. Work to identify, analyze, and report data about the social determinants of health in a way that is accessible to the public and lead or facilitate plans to address those determinants.

2. Organizational and Workforce Capacity

- a. Ensure recruitment, retention, promotion, and training policies support racial equity principles.
- b. Establish and support hiring and development processes that demonstrate a commitment to a workforce that is sensitive to and understands the root causes of health inequities and a willingness to learn cultural competency and listening skills.
- c. Develop training and learning opportunities to ensure a culturally competent and representative workforce that serves the residents of Milwaukee, and build competencies to help staff identify and address health equity issues.
- d. Develop and offer educational trainings and activities to expand employees' understanding of how racism affects individuals, the health of marginalized populations, and provide tools to assist employees to engage actively and authentically with communities of color.
- e. Develop and facilitate an organizational structure to support change through designated teams that will facilitate and/or transform organizational practice.

3. Internal Practices and Processes

- a. Develop or adopt policies, practices, and tools that explicitly address health equity.
- b. Examine departmental policies, rules, and practices to ensure that they are promoting equity and access to services.
- c. Identify and track resource allocation to ensure that City government engages in improving health disparities in a demonstrable way.
- d. Work with nationally recognized technical assistance organizations, such as Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) initiative, to develop goals and strategies to improve health disparities among communities of color in the City.
- e. Include health equity language and apply a health and racial equity approach to organizational processes and procedures: contracts and Requests for Proposals, grant proposals, budgeting and resource allocation, and other key organizational processes

and procedures.

- f. Leverage and integrate funding to show resources dedicated to and impacting health equity.

4. Policy and Legislative Change

- a. Advocate for and draft relevant policies that improve health outcomes in communities of color, and support local, state, and federal initiatives that advance social justice, while also encouraging individual employee advocacy.
- b. Incorporate goals and language about health equity and the social and economic conditions necessary for health into the City's strategic goals and financial plans.
- c. Create and champion state and federal legislative agenda that focuses on impacting social determinants of health and undertake direct or indirect advocacy in decision making processes.
- d. Evaluate all legislation by the Common Council for impact on health equity goals.

5. Community Alliance Building

- a. Ensure the implementation of MKE Elevate strategies to promote equitable laws and practices, enhance community connectedness, including addressing infrastructure and transportation considerations, and emphasize neighborhood and civic engagement.
- b. Collaborate with other governmental agencies in the areas of labor, transportation, education, corrections, economic development, housing inequality in metro Milwaukee, and public safety to influence decision making in ways that promote health equity for residents.
- c. Encourage other local, state, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis and model system change for the public and private sectors in recognizing and addressing racism as a public health crisis.
- d. Follow and use the Health Department's Community Health Improvement Plan recommendations to address community concerns that influence the safety and health of residents.
- e. Respond proactively to community requests for data on issues that impact their lives and make data available to residents and those who serve them so they can use it in their own efforts to advance equity.

; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City supports all additional efforts in Milwaukee County, the State of Wisconsin, and nationwide to address racism and public health disparities due to racial inequities; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City Clerk shall forward copies of this resolution to the offices of the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the Assembly, the Assembly Minority Leader, the Senate Majority Leader, the Senate Minority Leader, and any state legislator who represents all or part of the City of Milwaukee and to each member of the City's U.S. Congressional delegation.

Tea B. Norfolk
7/30/2019