

City of East Lansing

**RESOLUTION DECLARING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH
CRISIS IN EAST LANSING**

November 24, 2020

WHEREAS, Race is a social construct with no basis in human biology and was created to uphold a system of oppression for Black and Brown People; and,

WHEREAS, racism is rooted in the foundation of America, beginning with chattel slavery in 1619; much of the Black experience in America has been endured under slavery and Jim Crow which allowed preferential opportunities for some while subjecting people of color to hardships and disadvantages in every area of life; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of East Lansing believes in the sanctity, dignity and worth of all human beings; and,

WHEREAS, we recognize that Black People have not enjoyed these freedoms and that the abridgment of these freedoms have caused harm to the physical and mental wellbeing of Black People; and,

WHEREAS, racism and social inequities is a heinous social system with multiple dimensions: it is internalized or interpersonal; it is systemic, institutional or structural; and, it is a system of structuring opportunity, advantage and assigning value and worth based on how one looks or social status; and,

WHEREAS, racism and social inequities unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources; and,

WHEREAS, we recognize the City of East Lansing's collective prosperity depends upon the equitable access to opportunity for every resident regardless of the color of their skin or social status; and,

WHEREAS, racism has been estimated to cost the American economy \$20 trillion; and,

WHEREAS, racism and social inequities causes persistent discrimination and disparate outcomes in many areas of life, including housing, education, employment and criminal justice; and emerging body of research demonstrates that racism itself is a social determinant of health; and,

WHEREAS, Black people in particular suffer from more stress because of experiences with racism. That stress can lead to major health problems such as hypertension, high blood pressure and heart disease; and,

WHEREAS, Racism, not race is often a root cause of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, poor nutrition, violence and mental health concerns for Black people. Racism was not dismantled with the end of slavery; and,

WHEREAS, Decades of housing practices and government policies have helped lower life expectancy among Black Americans and increased infant mortality rates; and,

WHEREAS, Racism, including unconscious and conscious bias, causes persistent racial discrimination in Criminal Justice, Social Capital, Voter Suppression, Education, Transportation, Employment, Food Access, Mental Health and Health Behaviors, Socioeconomic Status, Environmental Exposure, Access to Health Services, Housing and Public Safety; and,

WHEREAS, it has been proven that racism is linked to worse health outcomes for Black People most recently highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic but demonstrated in the high rates of infant mortality, maternal death, breast cancer, prostate cancer, colon cancer, hypertension, mental health crisis and diabetes in Black Communities; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of East Lansing is committed to dismantling those systemic structures that undermine the health of Black People; and,

WHEREAS, studies show the disproportionate challenges facing our nation and community because of racism and inequities in the areas of healthcare, education and economic mobility; and,

WHEREAS, the East Lansing City Council do hereby declare Racism a Public Health Crisis.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the East Lansing City Council that the City of East Lansing will do the following:

- 1. Declare that Racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire country.**
- 2. Work to progress as an equity and anti-racist organization,**
- 3. Work with the East Lansing City Council and staff leadership to identify specific activities to further enhance diversity and to ensure antiracism principles across the City of East Lansing's leadership, staffing and contracting.**
- 4. Promote equity through all policies approved by the East Lansing City Council and enhance educational efforts aimed at understanding, addressing and dismantling racism and how it affects the delivery of human and social services, economic development and public safety.**

5. Continue to advocate locally and through the various organizations of associations for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and supports local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism.
6. Further work to solidify alliances and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism and encourage other local, state, regional and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.
7. Support community efforts to amplify issues of racism and engage actively and authentically with Black Indigenous People of Color.
8. Continue on-going racial equity training with the goal of reaching all leadership and staff.
9. Encourage racial equity training among all community partners, grantees, vendors and contractors.
10. Commit to preserve the DEI administrative role as a permanent position within the city government
11. Conduct an annual review of the declarations and commitments listed in this resolution on racism as a public health crisis across the various governmental bodies by the DEI administration in partnership with the Human Relations Committee, and all other appropriate boards and commissions.
12. Acknowledge and adopt the United Nations declaration of March 25 as an international day of remembrance for victims of the Trans-Atlantic slave passage.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the East Lansing City Council supports all additional efforts in the City of East Lansing and the State of Michigan, and nationwide to address public health disparities due to Racism.