



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

September 7, 2022

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Lorena Barrera, Administrative Analyst

SUBJECT: Adopt Resolution Recognizing Racism as a Public Health Crisis

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt resolution.

DISCUSSION

A similar resolution was adopted recently by the County of Marin and the Mayor has requested this resolution for inclusion in the Fairfax Town Council agenda.

Racism is a system of opportunity and value designation based on the social interpretation of an individual's physical appearance, or "race". Racism leads to conditions that give some people an advantage and some a disadvantage over others in an unfair manner. In society, racism has a negative effect for people on both their physical and mental health.

Research shows that racism is deeply embedded in our society and has a major impact on communities of color. Ultimately, racism has influenced where people live, work, and socialize and that is tied to inequities in access to social and economic benefits like housing, employment, and education. In the field of Public Health, these conditions are referred to as social determinants of health. For several generations, racial and ethnic minority groups have been challenged with disparities in job opportunities, education, income, and health care. The disparities exist on a large scale and have led these groups to experience higher rates of illness and death across a wide range of health conditions including diabetes, hypertension, obesity, asthma, and heart disease making racism a public health crisis.

The Town Council has committed to learning, understanding and addressing issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion and therefore, should consider adopting the resolution recognizing racism as a public health crisis.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

ATTACHMENTS

Resolution

RESOLUTION 22-__

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFAX RECOGNIZING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

WHEREAS, Fairfax is a Town composed of residents who value peace, respect, inclusivity, and equity, and who recognize that Fairfax derives its character from a rich diversity of thoughts, ideas and contributions; and

WHEREAS, like the County of Marin, Fairfax believes that it is incumbent on locally appointed leaders and policy makers to honor, endorse, and support diversity in our community; and

WHEREAS, the Council has a goal to ensure that all residents have the right to a life free from institutional, structural, systemic, and interpersonal racism; and

WHEREAS, Fairfax recognizes that institutional, structural, systemic, and /or interpersonal racism is a public health crisis because it prevents impacted individuals and communities from achieving positive health outcomes and adversely effects the physical and mental health and safety of communities of color; and

WHEREAS, the social determinants of health demonstrate that equitable access to economic opportunities, education, affordable housing, quality healthcare, clean water, diversity in food, and social and community interactions and relationships all impact health; and

WHEREAS, the social determinants of health have led communities of color to experience higher rates of illness and death across a wide range of health conditions including diabetes, hypertension, obesity, asthma, and heart disease; and

WHEREAS, in the Town of Fairfax, the US Census Bureau found that in 2020, Fairfax's population was 87 percent white, 9 percent Latino, 4 percent Asian, and less than 1 percent black.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of Fairfax recognizes that racism exasperates health inequities resulting in disparities not limited to accessibility, family stability, physical and mental wellness, education, employment, public safety, criminal justice, and housing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council has committed to:

1. Instituting a racial equity lens to internal policies, procedures, practices, and protocols; and

2. Identifying and deploying best practices that promote racial equity and address institutional, structural, systemic, and interpersonal racism; and
3. Enhancing educational and training efforts for Town staff and the Town Council, boards, commissions and committee aimed at increasing understanding addressing, and dismantling racism and how it affects the delivery of human and social services, economic development, and public safety; and
4. Committing to hiring, retaining, and nurturing a diverse workforce at all levels; and
5. Promoting early and ongoing community involvement by listening to and supporting non-traditional stakeholders (i.e., community leaders with lived experience, activists, and community organizers); and
6. Collaborating with the County of Marin, local jurisdictions and community partners to identify and deploy best practices that promote racial equity and address institutional, structural, systemic, and interpersonal racism in Fairfax.

The foregoing resolution was duly and regularly adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Fairfax held in said Town on the 7th day of September 2022, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:

Stephanie Hellman, Mayor

ATTEST:

Michele Gardner, Town Clerk