



Staff Reports

File #: 289-2020, **Version:** 1

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Steve Potter, City Manager

Prepared By: Liz Habkirk, Deputy City Manager

TITLE:

Affirming Discrimination and Systemic Racism as a Public Health Crisis

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Adopt a resolution affirming that discrimination and systematic racism is a public health crisis that results in disparities in family stability, health and mental wellness, education, employment, economic development, public safety, criminal justice experience and housing.

DISCUSSION:

The murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25, 2020, sparked a heightened sense of national awareness regarding police brutality and excessive use of force, particularly against people of color. Other tragic events throughout the country have reinforced the need for communities and their leaders to actively affirm that Black lives matter and to denounce discrimination and systematic racism of all kinds, recognizing the negative consequences these actions and attitudes have on the health and vibrancy of a community.

Discrimination and systemic racism manifest in distinct ways across many social intersections, including race, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, disability, immigration status and age, and collectively reinforces the racial divides within the country and communities. A study issued in 2011 by PolicyLink and The California Endowment found that race “remains our deepest fissure, compounding disadvantage and perpetuating it across generations.”

The adverse impacts of discrimination and racism on health are well-documented, and social determinants - the conditions in which an individual is born and in which they live, work, and recreate - are key drivers of health inequities. For generations, Black, Latinx, Indigenous and other people of color have faced vast disparities in job opportunities, income, health care, education and inherited family wealth. They are less likely to have housing security, healthy food, and green spaces, ultimately leading to otherwise preventable deaths. The magnitude of these issues constitutes a public health crisis. By definition, a public health crisis is defined as a problem affecting large numbers of people, threatens health over the long-term, and requires the adoption of largescale solutions (Boston University School of Public Health).

The City of Napa, much like others across our nation, is in transition. A 2019 study by the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Study, found that Napa’s population is 55 percent white, 39 percent

Latino, 3 percent Asian, and less than 1 percent black. The adverse impacts of discrimination and systematic racism to Napa's community members are evident. Of the families who live below the self-sufficiency standard in Napa County, 55 percent of them are Latinx, 28 percent of them are Black, and 16 percent are Caucasian. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic is demonstrating how these divides directly impact health. The virus is disproportionately infecting Latinx residents in Napa County, with 51 percent of cases being Latinx individuals compared to 19 percent of cases being Caucasian individuals. These examples highlight the significant issues faced in our own community.

To provide equity and inclusiveness for all who live and visit here, the City recognizes the need to address discrimination and systemic racism.

Recent Actions

On June 23, 2020, the City Council received a report from Police Chief Robert Plummer which detailed the Napa Police Department's Use of Force Policy and committed to an analysis of the use of force policy and increased public engagement programs. Chief Plummer returned on August 18, 2020 and presented the Council with an update with recommendations that included:

- Implementation a quarterly Defensive Tactics training program (including covering non-deadly force training, "shoot don't shoot technology" and officer wellness/physical fitness training to improve mental health of officers)
- Improved record keeping for use of force tracking and transparency
- Continued and expanded community engagement programs
- Cultural and ethnicity awareness training
- Establishing a Community Police Advisory Committee to review Police Department policies and procedures

The City Manager has also directed the Acting Human Resources Director to establish and implement a multi-year, mandatory training for all employees to include the topics of Implicit Bias, Cultural Awareness & Celebrating Diversity, Racial Justice & Equality, Age & Ability, LGBTQ+, Gender Identity & Equality. This list is not all inclusive and additional topics may be added. The goal of providing these topics is to educate the City workforce so that we provide greater access to government, equity and inclusion to all members of our community.

Next Steps

In addition to efforts specific to the Police Department and employee training, the City Manager will lead an effort to seek and obtain input from employees and members of the community to: (a) identify areas of systemic racism, discrimination, or potential bias that may exist within the City government; and (b) identify proactive actions that may be taken by the City to address the concerns, and to communicate and celebrate diversity and recognize the experience and struggles of marginalized communities.

Based on the input received, the City Manager will direct and manage staff efforts on the identified issues and actions. This will include a review of the City's guiding documents, policies, and programs related to City employment, training and development, and housing programs. The City will also identify changes that may be made to the City's communication programs, such as the City's public art program.

The City Manager will use the feedback received to develop strategies to strengthen partnerships

with local organizations to address the negative impacts of discrimination and systematic racism. These efforts will help to focus the City's participation on community-wide conversations and provide guidance on the most impactful use of City resources in these areas.

The City Manager will report to Council semi-annually on progress in this area, in addition to bringing forward modifications to policies or other actions for the Council's consideration.

The City of Napa is taking these actions to affirm its commitment to serving all members of the community and help to erase barriers to a healthy and successful life for each citizen. The City of Napa is committed to addressing discrimination and systemic racism and the public health crisis that has resulted because of them.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS:

None

CEQA:

The City Manager has determined that the Recommended Action described in this Agenda Report is not subject to CEQA, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060 (c).

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

ATCH 1 - Resolution

NOTIFICATION:

None