

City of Bloomington

Plan to Advance Racial Equity

DRAFT

Nestled in the rolling hills of southern Indiana, Bloomington is home to 85,000 residents and serves as home away from home for tens of thousands of Indiana University students and alumni. The city's dynamic energy, spectacular scenery, outdoor activities, world-class educational and entertainment opportunities, Big Ten sporting events, thriving local businesses, vibrant art scene and unique shopping and dining experiences make Bloomington a destination location in the Midwest.

Nonetheless, Bloomington is not immune to race related incidents such as have occurred in other communities both near and far away. The city and university both have their own history of racism and racist incidents. To some Bloomington might seem idyllic while others feel unsafe, unwanted and unwelcome.

Many Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) in Bloomington and beyond still fare worse than their white counterparts in the areas of employment, housing, healthcare and a general feeling of safety in their communities. These racial inequities are destructive individually and to communities. Local governments have a unique responsibility to all residents. Although it is important that individual racial discrimination is ended, local government must go beyond intentional discrimination or acts of bigotry and address the systems in which we all live.

The City of Bloomington and Mayor John Hamilton are committed to addressing these destructive systems and cultivating and preserving a culture of equity, inclusion and connectedness. This commitment is woven into our values and belief that our community is stronger when we embrace the full spectrum of humanity. Our administration and our community is the collective sum of our individual differences.

This is not work that can be completed overnight or in a year or two. However the Hamilton administration is committed to ongoing work that will result in the reduction of racial inequities and continuous improvement of outcomes for all residents. Although City staff cannot ensure an end to intolerance and discrimination, we strive to create an environment where community members:

- Have the courage to stand up and speak out without fear of retribution
- Listen with patience and empathy
- Ask questions, respect the answers and be open to fresh perspectives

The following plan is a work in progress outlining preliminary recommendations for actions to be undertaken collaboratively with residents to identify and address challenges to racial equity in the community and initiatives that have been already developed. This plan is shared in its early stage to encourage engagement in its evolution and elaboration.

Goals

As the plan evolves, the City of Bloomington will seek to achieve the following goals:

1. Change existing services within the City using racial equity best practices
2. End disparities in City government hiring and promotions
3. Strengthen outreach and public engagement for communities of color
4. Provide equitable access to City services to all residents
5. Set and meet citywide contracting goals for Minority Owned Businesses

Proposed Internal Actions to Support These Goals

- Implement anti-racism training for elected officials, department heads and city council members
- Implement implicit bias training for front line, first responders and management staff
- Implement de-escalation training for all staff
- Review and update incident reporting and response protocol for all departments to increase the public's ability to understand processes, timelines and contact people
- Develop a Crisis Communications Plan
- Review City purchasing processes and procedures and increase purchase of products and services from Black- and/or minority-owned businesses
- Create "Talking to Neighbors," an inclusive language guide
- Develop a Racial Equity Impact Assessment to integrate explicit consideration of racial equity in decisions about policies, practices, programs and budgets.
- Add race of subject as a category for the recording of "nuisance calls"
- Revise format of "The Rights Stuff" Human Rights Commission newsletter to highlight local information and resources
- Recognize racism as a public health crisis through council resolution and/or executive order
- Create Anti-Racism Tool Kit for Small Businesses

Proposed External Actions to Support These Goals

- Form Racial Equity Task Force tasked with researching, evaluating and recommending actions to be taken by city government to promote racial equity and social justice. The

actions recommended by the task force will be advanced using the convening power of the city for discussions among members of our community and with leaders of organizations, the delivery of resources that acknowledge address issues of inequity, diversity and inclusion in city government and beyond.

- Form Diversity Officers Collaborative – area diversity officers meet periodically for support, collaboration, communication.
- Form task force to address the future of policing in Bloomington/Monroe County- addressing a vision for 3-5 years.

Some Existing Initiatives to Broaden and Support Inclusion and Equity

- Commission on the Status of Black Males
 - Black Males Leadership Summit
 - Outstanding Black Leaders of Tomorrow Awards
- Young Women's Leadership Summit
- Commission on the Status of Hispanic and Latino Affairs
 - Outstanding Latino Student Awards
 - Award to agencies & organizations who have given outstanding support to Hispanic/Latino community
- Heritage Month Celebrations – Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month; Asian-Pacific Islander Heritage Month; support to IU's Juneteenth Celebration
- Partnership with the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce, Indiana University, and the Indiana Historical Bureau to install a commemorative marker in People's Park recognizing site of the Black Market and its firebombing in 1968
- Support to Bloomington United and Monroe County Branch NAACP projects
- Implementation of Banneker Center Advisory Council's recommendation to install BLM Murals on City streets
- Spanish-to-English translation services for City departments and nonprofit agencies
- Collaborations with El Centro Communal
- Production of [Hola Bloomington](#) weekly Spanish language public affairs program on WFHB
- Our Table Our Talk Video Discussion Series
- Human Rights Commission
 - The Rights Stuff newsletter
- [Bloomington Housing Study](#), July 2020
- [Digital Equity Survey](#), August 2020