



April 7, 2020

Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 North 9th Street, Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Re: Ordinance 20-174 requesting to create a chapter in the Milwaukee General Ordinance, titled Achieving Racial Equity

Dear Mr. Chairman and Supervisors,

I'm writing to support Ordinance 20-174, requesting the County Board of Supervisors to create a chapter in the Milwaukee County General Ordinance, titled Achieving Racial Equity and Health. The ordinance commits Milwaukee County in collaboration with its departments, to advancing the strategic priority of achieving racial equity to improve the health of the entire community by eliminating any racism in the County's policies, procedures, practices, and power structures. Given the current global pandemic, Coronavirus (COVID-19), it is essential more now than ever, for Milwaukee County to approve Ordinance 20-174.

The Office on African American Affairs (OAAA) was created in 2016 via resolution (15-636) with the following objectives: the examination and definition of issues central to the rights and needs of African Americans; recommendations for changes in programs and laws that disparately impact African Americans; development and implementation of policies, plans, and programs related to the special needs of African Americans; and the promotion of equal opportunities for African Americans.

Furthermore, as noted to File No. 19-416 (Informational Report – Office on African American Affairs Racial Equity Update), government has a key role in advancing racial equity; to help develop an inclusive and effective democracy. Historically, government has played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequities. Policies and practices have created and continue to create disparate results (even when the intention to sustain racial inequities are not present). The overall goal of the Office on African American Affairs is to improve the disparate outcomes that impact the underserved communities, those communities consisting of people of color; and this ordinance supports the operation and objectives of the office.

The Office on African American Affairs (OAAA) has led the organization's equity work in support of the countywide goal of improving equitable service delivery and organizational culture; by using an equity lens and framework - implementing county-wide trainings and the Racial Equity Ambassador Program. Obtaining full County Board support for this ordinance will ensure racial equity efforts will continue to support enterprise-wide initiatives by addressing racial bias in decision making through the implementation and use of racial equity tools, trainings and evidenced based models.

As part of OAAA's long-term vision to eradicate racial inequities, the office is embracing the Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE) national framework of: *Normalizing, Organizing and Operationalizing*. Using GARE's three-pillar model, ensures that Milwaukee County will deliberately work to sustain racial equity by developing long-term solutions. This framework also incorporates the use of tools for improved equitable decision-making and incorporates the voice of 'community'; creating more impactful programs and services.

It is imperative to highlight the strong community push to drive a collaborative effort across all units of government; at the local, regional, state and federal levels. Creating an inclusive Racial Equity plan starts at the top and must include all elected officials. This ordinance does just that. I encourage each and every member of the board to support this important ordinance to ensure that disparate outcomes, those currently being experienced by the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, are never again repeated.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole', written in a cursive style.

Nicole M. Brookshire

Executive Director, Milwaukee County's Office on African American Affairs