

Board of County Commissioners of Boulder County Resolution No. 2020-_____
AND
Boulder County Board of Health Resolution No. 2020-04
Joint Resolution Declaring Structural Racism as a Public Health Crisis in Boulder County

Introduction: “Structural racism” is a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequities. It identifies aspects of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with “whiteness”¹ and disadvantages associated with “color” or being a person of color to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice; it is instead a construct of the social, economic, and political systems within the United States.

The United States is at a critical crossroads in coming to terms with the legacy of slavery and white supremacy.² Slavery and “Jim Crow” laws (a collection of state and local statutes that legalized racial segregation) concentrated workers of color in chronically undervalued occupations. According to 2018 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “People of color remain overrepresented in some of the lowest-paying agricultural, domestic, and service vocations.”³ These findings help to explain why, in 2016, the net worth of a typical white family was \$171,000, while the net worth of the typical African American family was \$17,150.⁴

Many governmental entities have struggled with structural racism, including law enforcement, as most recently evidenced by the recent murders of George Floyd and Elijah McClain.⁵ As a result of discriminatory government housing policies, white families received 98% of federal home loans between 1934 and 1962. This practice resulted in segregated neighborhoods and public schools.⁶

Closer to home in Colorado, the racial disparities are stark. The African American infant mortality rate was 11.4 in 2016, while the white infant mortality rate was 4.9.⁷ Pregnancy-associated deaths for African American women in 2019 were 70.6 per 100,000 live births, while the number for white women was 20.5 per 100,000 live births.⁸ In 2019, African American youth comprised 9.1% of all victims of child maltreatment while being just 4.5% of the child population. In addition, Latinx children represented 36.9% of all child maltreatment victims, although they were only 31% of the total child population.⁹

Racial disparities unique to adolescents in Boulder County are particularly alarming. For example, 28.2% of Boulder County Latinx high school students in 2017 experienced overweight or obesity compared with 9.7% of white high school students.¹⁰ During the 2016-17 school year, the Latinx student dropout rate in both Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley School Districts was two times higher than that for white students.¹¹

¹ <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2016/why-talk-about-whiteness>

² “White supremacy” is the belief that white people are superior to those of other races and thus should dominate them.

³ <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaatl.htm>

⁴ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/02/27/examining-the-black-white-wealth-gap/>

⁵ <https://scholar.harvard.edu/fryer/publications/empirical-analysis-racial-differences-police-use-force>

⁶ <https://www.propublica.org/article/living-apart-how-the-government-betrayed-a-landmark-civil-rights-law>

⁷ <https://www.coloradotrust.org/content/story/why-it-so-risky-be-black-mother>

⁸ https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/health-of-women-and-children/measure/maternal_mortality_a/state/CO

⁹ Bridging the Achievement and Opportunity Gaps in Boulder County – Maximizing Our Resources to Achieve Optimal Outcomes for Families and Children through Cross-sector Partnerships. Melissa Frank-Williams, Strategic Initiatives Manager, IMPACT Care Management Division, Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services; September 20, 2019

¹⁰ Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, 2017

¹¹ [Boulder County Status of Children Report 2018](#)

According to Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services 2019 data, Latinx families with children were more than five times as likely to live in poverty than white non-Latinx families with children.¹²

WHEREAS, structural racism causes persistent racial discrimination in housing, education, employment, healthy food systems, transportation, health systems, and criminal justice, and research demonstrates that racism is a social determinant of health; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics in 2019 announced a policy stating that failure to address racism in the United States, “will continue to undermine health equity of all children, adolescents, emerging adults, and their families;”¹³ and

WHEREAS, structural racism manifests today in Boulder County in many ways. It lies beneath the struggle for water quality in manufactured housing developments and in the persistent overrepresentation of the Latinx population in the number of new COVID-19 case;¹⁴ and

WHEREAS, Boulder County recognizes that it cannot honor its strategic priorities – affordable living, climate action, equity and justice, land and water stewardship, and organizational and financial stewardship – without making significant reforms to dismantle structural racism and white supremacy; and

WHEREAS, Boulder County agrees that it cannot create opportunities for all Boulder County residents to live healthy and fulfilling lives – in a way that celebrates intersectional identities, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, refugee/immigration status, education level, age, socioeconomic status, language, religion/spirituality, ability status, and geographic location – without the cooperation of all Boulder County agencies and offices and local municipal governments; and

WHEREAS, the future vision of this institution is one that has overcome systemic racism and all other forms of oppression. To that end, Boulder County’s institution of government will reflect inclusion and shared power with diverse racial, cultural, and economic groups in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies, and practices; and

WHEREAS, in Boulder County, race matters. We center race in our equity work because we know historically and currently that race is the biggest predictor of disproportionate outcomes and disparities in the United States. Good government is impossible without racial equity; and

WHEREAS, Colorado Governor Jared Polis signed an Executive Order on August 27, 2020, directing the Colorado Department of Personnel and Administration to lead efforts on furthering equity, diversity, and inclusion within the state of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, Boulder County’s journey to dismantle structural racism began with the rollout of the Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusion (CRI) Road Map in 2016. Designed to create and maintain a more culturally responsive and inclusive workforce and work environment, the CRI Road Map prioritizes the following in

¹² Bridging the Achievement and Opportunity Gaps in Boulder County – Maximizing Our Resources to Achieve Optimal Outcomes for Families and Children through Cross-sector Partnerships. Melissa Frank-Williams, Strategic Initiatives Manager, IMPACT Care Management Division, Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services; September 20, 2019

¹³ Maria Trent, Danielle G. Dooley, Jacqueline Dougé, SECTION ON ADOLESCENT HEALTH, COUNCIL ON COMMUNITY PEDIATRICS and COMMITTEE ON ADOLESCENCE Pediatrics August 2019, 144 (2) e20191765; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2019-1765>

¹⁴ <https://www.bouldercounty.org/families/disease/covid-19/covid-19-illness-and-recovery/>

its goals and objectives: accountability; leadership; policy and sustainability; recruitment, hiring, and retention; and training; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery effort in Boulder County, known as “Forward Together Safely” (FTS), has caused Boulder County to re-examine its organizational structure through an equity lens to address the disparate impact of COVID-19 on priority populations. The FTS Racial Equity Team is integrating a racial equity lens through adaptive leadership, teaching, and learning, as well as the development and nurturing of key partnerships.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOULDER COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH and COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, BOULDER COUNTY, COLORADO, that structural racism is a public health crisis in Boulder County that requires the following actions:

1. Development of a centralized warehouse for COVID-related data.
2. Reporting of disaggregated data (by race and ethnicity) from each Boulder County department and office.
3. Expanded support for individuals and groups who serve as connectors between priority populations and county government agencies.
4. Continuation of the rollout of the Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusion (CRI) Roadmap, which includes:
 - a. Courageous Conversations about Race (CCAR) trainings and ongoing discussions for all Boulder County employees.
 - b. Advanced training in the CCAR Protocol for Boulder County employees.
 - c. Implementation of CRI workgroups in Boulder County agencies.
 - d. Application of a racial equity lens, using the Governmental Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Toolkit, to the work of COVID-19 FTS Teams.
 - e. Participation in GARE trainings and membership in the GARE Network.
 - f. Administration of the GARE Racial Equity Survey in Boulder County.
 - g. Launch of the COVID-19 FTS Community Task Force.
5. Development and implementation of the Boulder County Office of Transformational Racial Equity and Justice, a structure that supports and drives the ongoing and evolving work of a transformational, racially equitable, multiracial, anti-racist organization.

ADOPTED this ____ day of November, 2020.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
BOULDER COUNTY

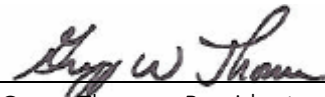
Deb Gardner, Chair

Matt Jones, Vice Chair

Elise Jones, Commissioner

ADOPTED this 9th day of November, 2020.

BOULDER COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH



Gregg Thomas, President